

Cuban Missile Crisis: mediating a sustainable and mutually beneficial approach to protect peace and security

1) Introduction

The morning of October 16, 1962, McGeorge Bundy, the National Security Advisor of USA, informed President John F. Kennedy that U.S. surveillance aircraft has discovered the presence of Soviet missiles on Cuba, just 90 miles from the state of Florida. They were stunned to learn that the Soviet Union is, without provocation, installing nuclear-armed medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles, which now poses an existential threat to America, being capable of striking a number of major cities in the United States, including the capital Washington D. C. The president of the United States clearly expressed that America would not tolerate the existence of missile sites this close and this day is remembered ever since as the day the world was pushed to the threshold of a nuclear war. Welcome to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

2) Definition of Key Terms

a) Ballistic missile

A ballistic missile is a type of a self-propelled precision-guided munition system (call it a flying weapon if you wish) that is designed to be guided in the ascent of a high-arch trajectory and left without control to a free fall in the descent. It is launched directly into the high layers of the earth's atmosphere. It travels well outside of it and then the warhead detaches and falls back on earth. It follows a path of a ball thrown upwards which then falls down by gravity. The range varies from 5,000 km to 11,000km and weight between 30-35,000 kg.

3) General Overview

a) Causes

The true reasons behind the Cuban Missile Crisis (CMC) are not easy to determine as they might even be traced back to the Russian Revolution in 1917, however the official hostility between capitalist and communist countries, in particular between USSR and USA began after the WW2. The United States commenced a new era when it dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, ending World War II. Although the two superpowers worked together as allies to defeat Germany and Japan, they emerged from the war as potential rivals with absolutely opposite ideologies. The former allies from the WW2 (Britain, USA, USSR) couldn't settle on an agreement about post-war Germany's economic and political reconstruction, which led to rising tensions between these nations and was only supported by their disagreement over the United Nations and control of nuclear weapons. This eventually led to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance.

The Soviets detonated their first nuclear device in Central Asia in 1949, breaking the US monopoly on weapons of mass destruction. Shortly after the Korean War ended in 1953, the Soviets detonated their first thermonuclear device, raising the stakes even higher. The US struggled to uncover the true numbers of Soviet bombers as they lacked adequate means and they feared another sneak attack,

as happened in Pearl Harbor. This, again, led to increasing rivalry between the two superpowers.

Although the Cuban Missile Crisis was a direct confrontation between the US and USSR, involving neither NATO nor Warsaw Pact, it had a profound impact on the Cold War both in Europe and throughout the world.

The Cuban Revolution

During the 1950's, the Soviets accepted that South America falls into US sphere of interest. They had not protested, for example, when the CIA intervened in 1954 to topple the pro-communist President of Guatemala, Jacobo Árbenz. The US's domination did, though, cause increasing disagreement among South American intellectuals and nationalists and was one of the factors that influenced Fidel Castro to launch a war against the government of Fulgenico Batista in Cuba in December 1956. Unexpectedly, Castro's forces were able to take control of Cuba by January 1959.

The new leader quickly declared himself a Marxist, nationalized Cuba and fostered relations with the USSR. Eisenhower, as a response, severed diplomatic relations with Cuba. In 1960, Castro invited Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers, Anastas Mikoyan, to visit Havana. Mikoyan returned to Moscow with a glowing account of the Cuban Revolution that reminded him of his heroic early days of the Russian Revolution, 1917. In March 1960, Eisenhower ordered the CIA to begin training anti-Castro Cuban refugees for possible future operations against this man. The US also put Cuba under pressure by no longer buying Cuban sugar or supplying Cuba with oil.

The Bay of Pigs

In April 1961, USA sent about 1400 CIA-trained Cuban exiles to the Bay of Pigs, south of Havana. Their aim was to cause a revolt against Castro, yet he, in anticipation of such move, imprisoned thousands of suspects. Kennedy then at last moment cancelled bombing raids by US aircraft and a landing by US marines, thus dooming the invasion to failure. He began to fear that excessive US involvement would cause Khrushchev to retaliate by causing a crisis in Berlin. Without US support, the Cuban exiles were rapidly defeated.

Khrushchev was delighted by the US failure, however he still considered it as a warning that the US would quite inevitably attempt to topple Castro again. He was correct. The CIA continued developing plans for Castro's assassination and large-scale military manoeuvres took place in 1962 in the Caribbean in anticipation of an invasion.

b) The Missiles, 1962

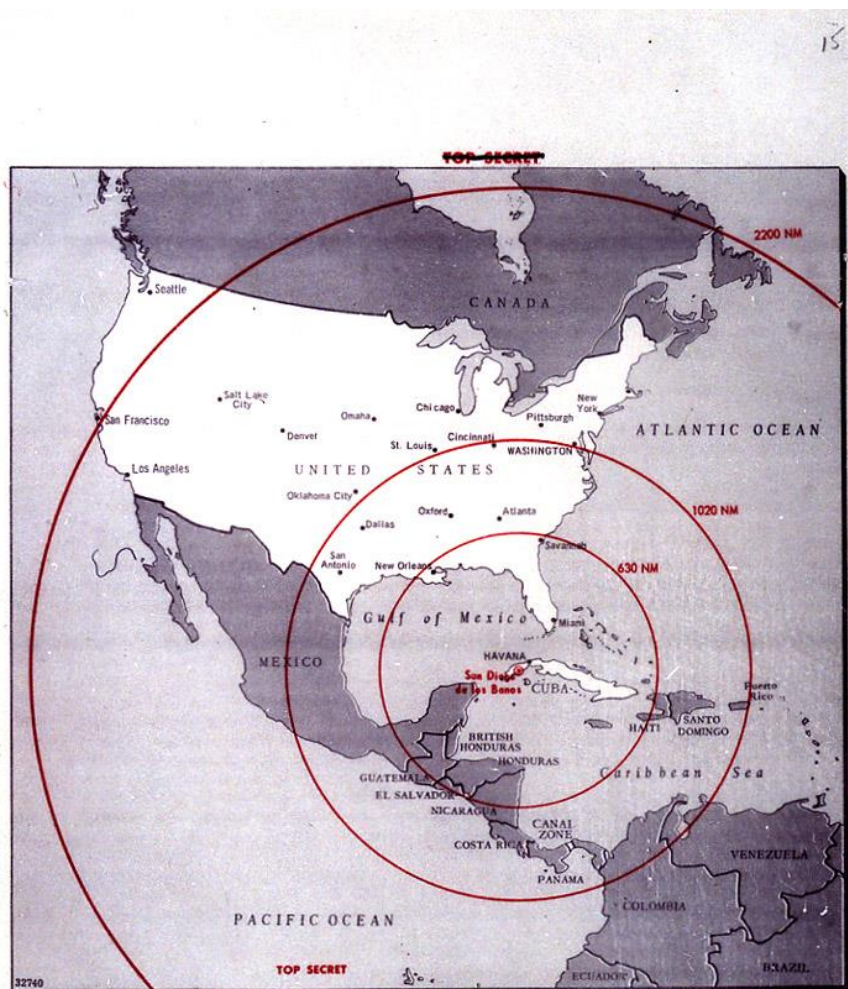
In August 1962 a secret Soviet-Cuban treaty was signed, allowing the USSR to place missiles in Cuba. During the time of next few weeks, the Soviets began to secretly deploy medium-range nuclear missiles in Cuba. They had a thorough defense for them, short-range battlefield rockets, anti-aircraft batteries, fighter planes and solid 40,000 Soviet troops. By 4 October, Soviet ships had imported

sufficient amount of material for the construction of 158 ballistic missiles which could reach the majority of the US within minutes.

Despite the enormous risk this operation faced, the Soviets had their reasons.

- They wanted to gain a base from which the US could be threatened by minimum-range Soviet missiles.
- They needed to correct the strategic imbalance caused by the creation of NATO missile bases in Turkey, which could target major industrial and population centers of the USSR.
- They wanted to defend Cuba's socialist revolution, because the Soviets saw the revolution as a major success for Marxism-Leninism.

On 14 October, a US U-2 spy plane discovered the missiles installation. President Kennedy was informed two days later and initially the news was kept from the US public.



Map of the western hemisphere showing the full range of the nuclear missiles under construction in Cuba, used during the secret meetings on the Cuban crisis, 1962.

From: <http://microsites.ifklibrary.org/cmc/oct16/>



*A photograph showing a medium-range ballistic missile launch site in Cuba, October 1962.
From: <http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/cm/oct16/>*

4) Major parties involved

- United States of America in alliance with Italy, Turkey, Western Europe supported by NATO
- Soviet Union in alliance with Cuba supported by countries of the Warsaw Pact

5) Timeline of Key Events

- 1959, January – Fidel Castro assumes power after the Cuban Revolution
- 1960, December – Cuba openly aligns itself with the Soviet Union and their policies
- 1961, January – the US terminates diplomatic relations with Cuba
- 1961, April – “The Bay of Pigs”
- 1961, June – Khrushchev and Kennedy hold summit talks in Vienna regarding the CMC
- 1962, August – American Senator informs the Senate about existing evidence of Soviet missile installations in Cuba
- 1962, September – Soviet Foreign Minister warns that American attack on Cuba might cause war with the Soviet Union
- 1962, October – A U-2 aircraft flying over the western Cuba obtains photographs of missile sites

6) Appendix

The chair doesn't wish to include any useful websites. She is certain that all delegates can utilize Google just as well as she can.

7) Sources

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- Alchin, Linda. "Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline." *Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline*. N.p., Mar. 2015. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. Available on: <http://www.datesandevents.org/events-timelines/04-cuban-missile-crisis-timeline.htm>
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