

Cuban Missile Crisis: On the Brink of Nuclear War

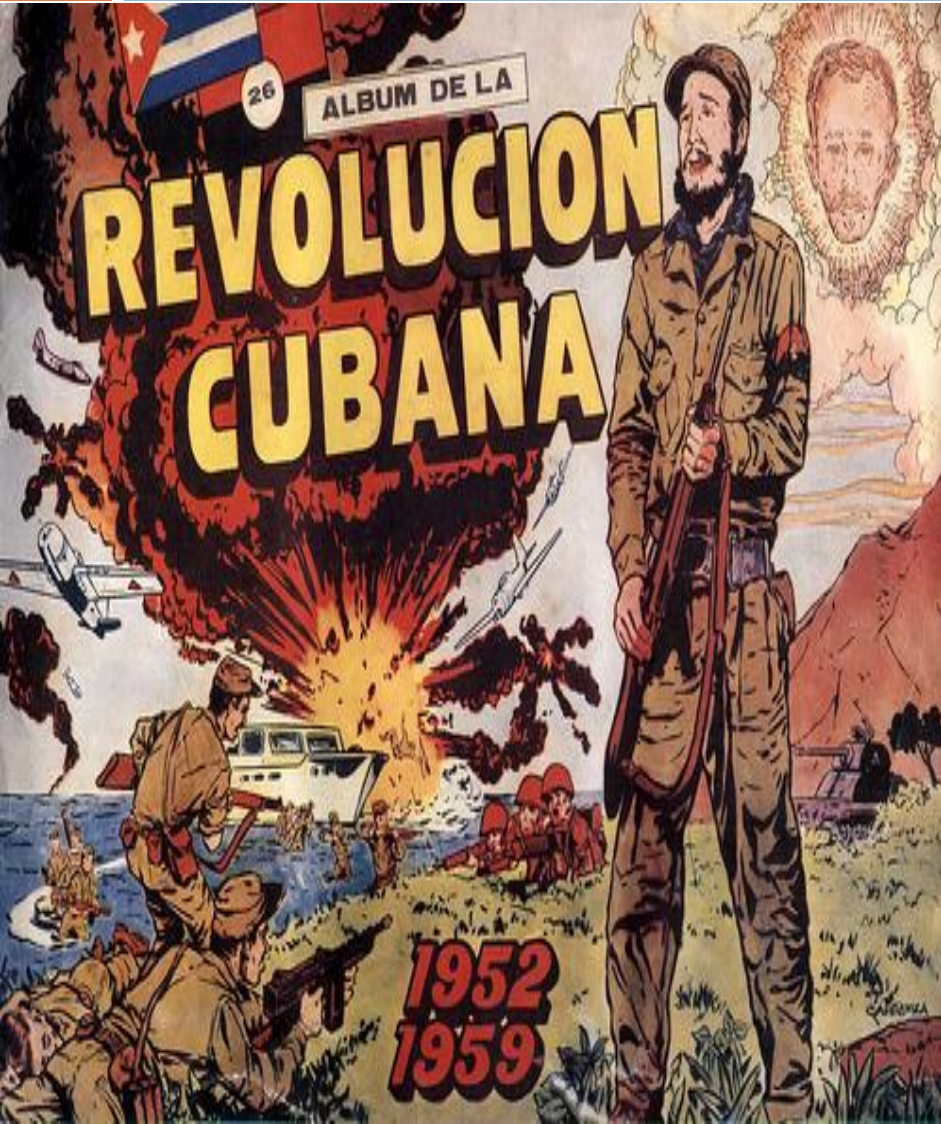
# Cuban Missile Crisis: Background

- Cuba was ruled by a corrupt dictator, **Batista** (who was supported by the US).
- Batista's rule angered many poor Cubans.
- **Fidel Castro** organized a revolution against Batista.
- Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1959, the day after Batista fled, Castro's forces declared victory.





# Cuban Revolution: 1952-1959



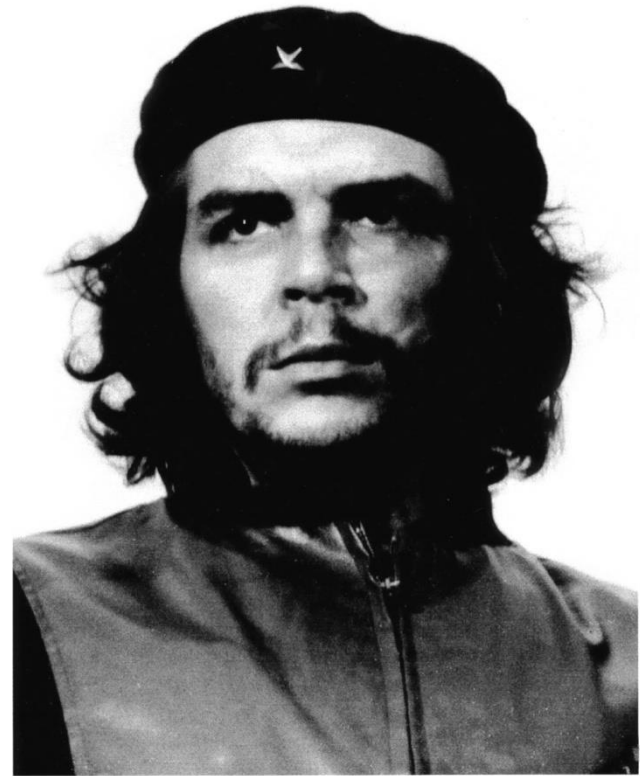


# Castro Rules Cuba



# With a Little Help from my Friends

- Castro was helped by the famous socialist, Argentinean revolutionary, **Che Guevara**.



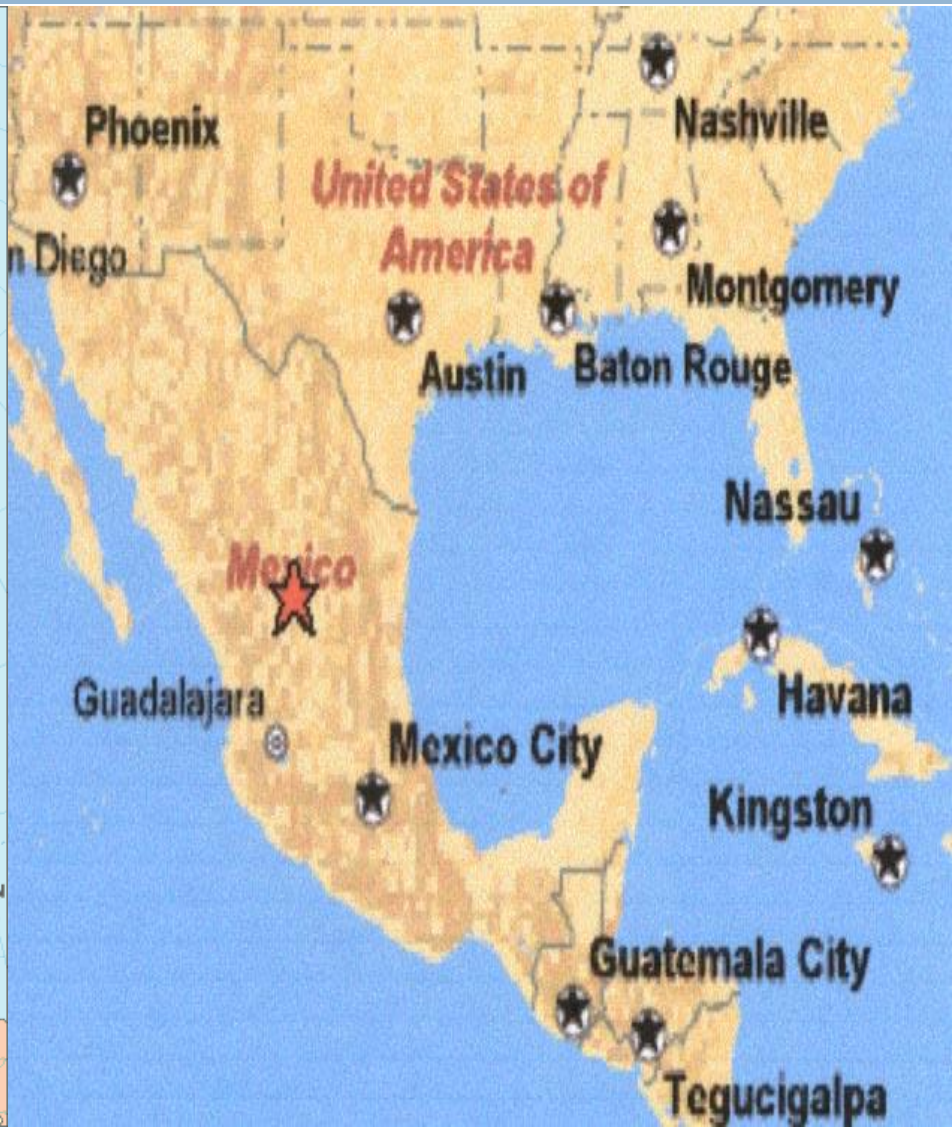
# Cuban Missile Crisis: Causes

## 1. Cuban Revolution puts communist country close to US.

- Initially Castro appealed to the US for aid.
- BY 1960 the US refused aid and stopped trading with Cuba, they felt Castro was a socialist (close to a communist)
- Castro then got aid from the USSR.
- The US feared Cuba was a communist country too close to its border.



# The Threat of a Communist Cuba





# Cuban Missile Crisis: Causes

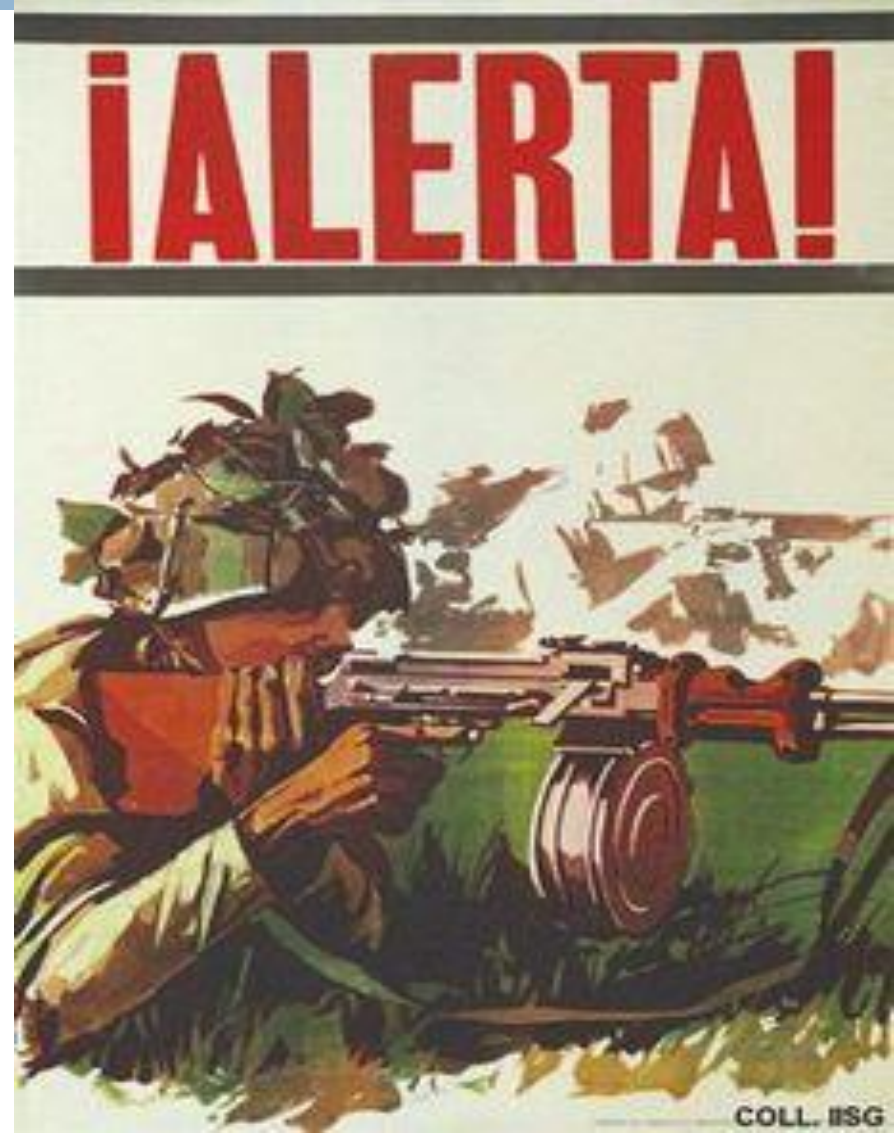
## 2. The Bay of Pigs invasion Aug 1961:

- CIA trained Cuban exiles in Florida to invade and overthrow Castro.
- The invasion failed and was a big embarrassment for Pres. Kennedy

# Bay of Pigs Invasion: '61...



# ...Invasion Fail!







“Mom, I swear I thought we’d get the Commies this time...”

# But as Newton said...



“Every action has an equal and opposite reaction.”

So Castro asked the Soviets for help...

### 3. Soviets put missiles in Cuba: The arms race

- ❑ Fearing another invasion, Castro asked the USSR for military support (weapons, etc.)
- ❑ Khrushchev uses this as excuse to put nuclear weapons close to US as the US had weapons close to USSR in Turkey
- ❑ Sept 11: Kennedy warns Khrushchev US would prevent installation of Soviet nukes '*by whatever means necessary*'
- ❑ Oct 14: U2 gets photos of IRBM site in Cuba



I mean the U2 on the left...



# Missile site in Cuba



23 OCTOBER 1962  
MRBM LAUNCH SITE 1  
SAN CRISTOBAL, CUBA  
22-40N 83-18W

MISSILE ERECTOR

MISSILE SHELTER TENT

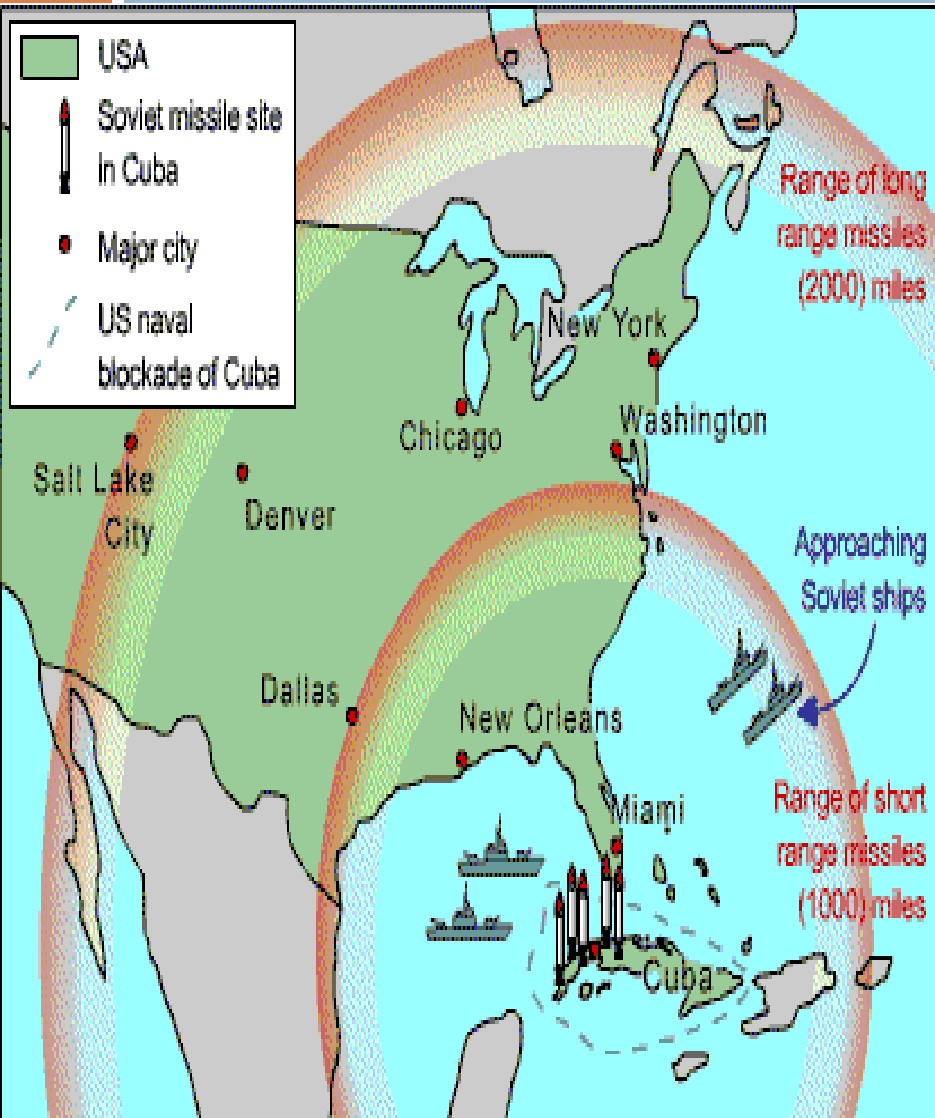
CABLE

FUEL TANK-TRAILERS

AFC 68-912 (10/62)



# Cuban Missile Nuclear Threat



**TOP SECRET**  
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 13526, SEC. 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, AND 1.8  
CIA Ltr. NLK-77-1035  
BY *my m* NARS DATE 5-23-78



# What would YOU do if you were Kennedy?

“Oh, yeah. Cuz that worked GREAT with Hitler...”

“We could appease Khrushchev and Castro and keep the peace”



# Cuban Missile Crisis: Course

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- Kennedy decides on 2 responses:
  - ▣ Naval blockade (oops) **quarantine** of Cuba
  - ▣ Followed by invasion

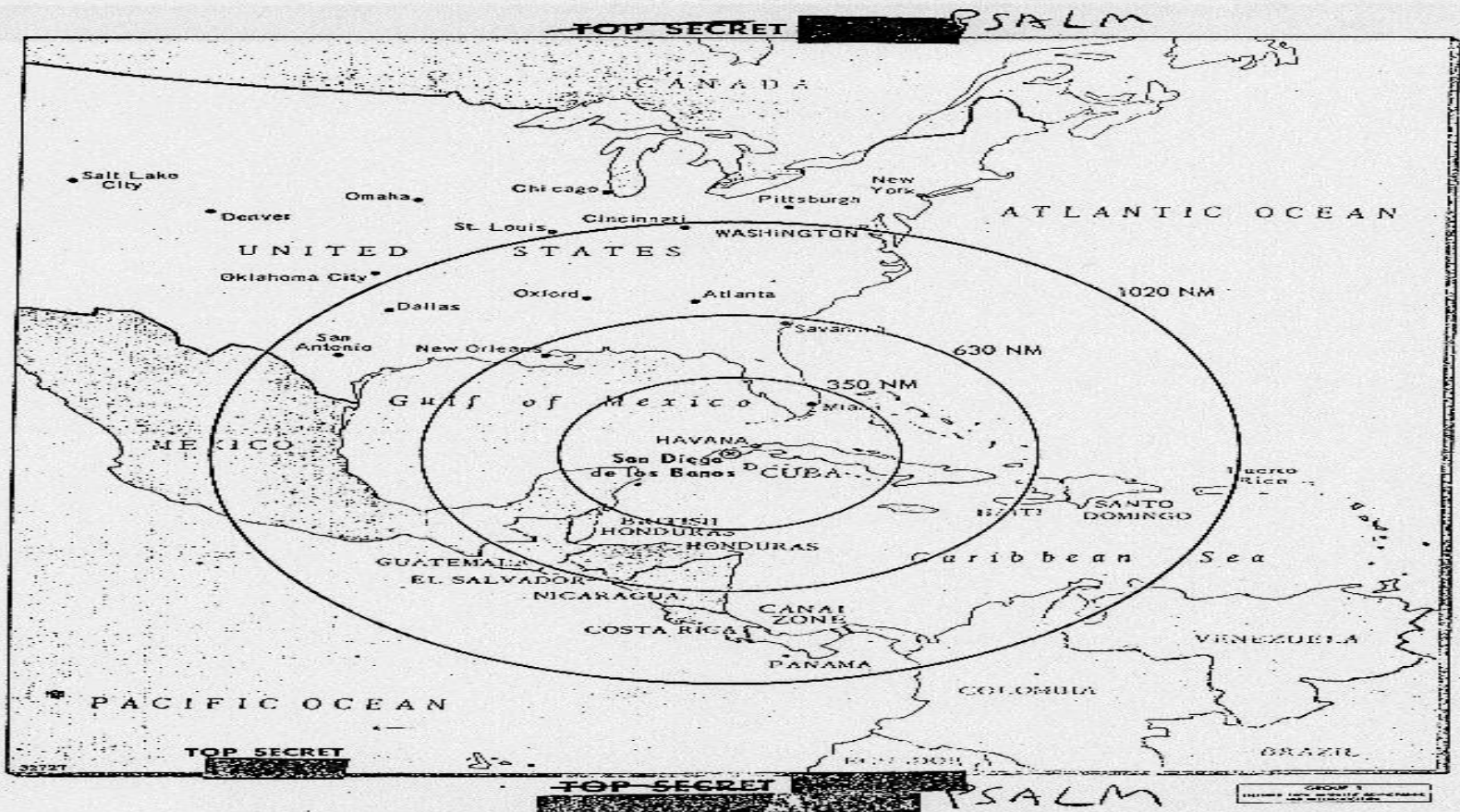
# ExComm Meets






# Briefing Board for Pres. Kennedy

17



- 
- Oct 22: US announces it will **stop and search all ships** bound for Cuba in 48 hours
  - Oct 23: Kr calls this an **act of war** and says USSR ships will not respect blockade
  - Oct 24: 18 **Soviet ships turn around** just before reaching limit set by US (phew!)

# The Washington Post **FINAL**

The Weather  
 Forecast for Washington, D.C.  
 Monday, October 22, 1962  
 Partly cloudy, 50 to 65  
 Tuesday, October 23, 1962  
 Partly cloudy, 50 to 65  
 Wednesday, October 24, 1962  
 Partly cloudy, 50 to 65  
 Thursday, October 25, 1962  
 Partly cloudy, 50 to 65  
 Friday, October 26, 1962  
 Partly cloudy, 50 to 65

WASH. POST, MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1962

## Kennedy Orders Blockade of Cuba As Reds Build Nuclear Bases There; U. S. Will Sink Defiant Arms Ships

### Navy to Stop And Search Cargo Craft

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 (AP)—President John F. Kennedy today ordered the U. S. Navy to stop and search all cargo ships from Cuba and to sink any that refuse to stop. The president also ordered the U. S. Navy to sink any Soviet or Cuban ships that attempt to break the blockade of Cuba.

The president's order, which is the first step in a new policy of containment of Communism, was issued in a message to the nation. It was the first time since the end of World War II that the president has ordered the U. S. Navy to sink ships.

The order also directed the U. S. Navy to stop and search all cargo ships from Cuba and to sink any that refuse to stop. The president also ordered the U. S. Navy to sink any Soviet or Cuban ships that attempt to break the blockade of Cuba.



**President Calls Off  
 All Campaign Trips**  
 By Robert D. Johnson

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 (AP)—President John F. Kennedy today called off all his campaign trips, including his scheduled visit to New York City, to focus attention on the Cuban crisis.

The president's decision to cancel his trips was announced in a message to the nation. It was the first time since the end of World War II that the president has called off his campaign trips.

The president also ordered the U. S. Navy to stop and search all cargo ships from Cuba and to sink any that refuse to stop. The president also ordered the U. S. Navy to sink any Soviet or Cuban ships that attempt to break the blockade of Cuba.

### U. S., Russia Now Facing Test of Will

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 (AP)—The United States and the Soviet Union are now facing a test of will, as the U. S. Navy begins a blockade of Cuba to prevent the island from becoming a nuclear base for the Soviet Union.

The president's order, which is the first step in a new policy of containment of Communism, was issued in a message to the nation. It was the first time since the end of World War II that the president has ordered the U. S. Navy to sink ships.

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### President Heeds History's Lesson

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### Hemisphere Held Periled By Missiles

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 (AP)—The hemisphere is held periled by missiles, as the U. S. Navy begins a blockade of Cuba to prevent the island from becoming a nuclear base for the Soviet Union.

The president's order, which is the first step in a new policy of containment of Communism, was issued in a message to the nation. It was the first time since the end of World War II that the president has ordered the U. S. Navy to sink ships.

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### Crisis Sends Stock Prices Plummeting

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 (AP)—The crisis in Cuba today sent stock prices plummeting, as investors reacted to the president's order to blockade Cuba.




*"We've been eyeball to eyeball and the other fellow just blinked."*

Secretary of State Dean Rusk



- US then announced it would **invade Cuba** if **all missiles not removed** at once
- Oct 25: US planned air strike for 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> . **THIS WOULD START WWIII!!!**

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- Meanwhile representatives from the US (Adlai Stevenson) and the USSR (V. A. Zorin) were each trying to get support at the UN
  - Zorin denied the presence of missiles until Stevenson famously produced pics of the sites in Cuba



- Do you, Ambassador Zorin, deny that the U.S.S.R. has placed and is placing medium- and intermediate-range missiles and sites in Cuba? Yes or no—don't wait for the translation—yes or no?
- (The Soviet representative refused to answer.)
- You can answer yes or no. You have denied they exist. I want to know if I understood you correctly. **I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over**, if that's your decision. And I am also prepared to present the evidence in this room.

# Go Adlai!!!



# Cuban Missile Crisis: End of the Crisis

- In a secret deal with the Soviet ambassador, the Soviets agreed to withdraw the missiles in exchange for:
  - ▣ **US promise never to invade Cuba**
  - ▣ **Immediate end to the naval blockade**
  - ▣ **US must withdraw its missiles from Turkey**
- ▣ The American public didn't know about the missiles in Turkey so Kennedy wanted to do that in secret at a later date



# Results and Impact

- **Most serious crisis of Cold War.**
- Portrayed as a success for the west
- Embarrassing for USSR Khrushchev forced out and Castro felt he had been used as a pawn
- Encouraged a partial thaw in relations.
- US and USSR signed Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in '63
- '63 a **'hotline'** was installed in the White House and the Kremlin to avoid such brinkmanship in future

# What up, Dawg?



# Random CMC Pics





# Land Based Missiles of the Cuban Missile Crisis



Figure 1. Soviet cargo ship carrying crated guided missile patrol boats.

# Videos:

- [The Cuban Missile Crisis for Dummies](#) (9:59)
- [Cold War Documentary Cuba 1959 - 1962](#) (46:31)