



Alberta Model
United Nations

Kennedy's Cabinet

Background
Guide





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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear esteemed delegates,

I extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you as we embark on a remarkable journey together in the Cabinet Crisis Committee (CCC). My name is Richard Xue, and I am delighted to serve as your Director, alongside our Chair, Lincoln Pham, and Assistant Director, Leo Chen. Together, we are eager to meet you and guide you through this thrilling Model UN experience.

As a grade 11 student of Dr. EP Scarlett High School, this will be my fourth year of Model UN, and Model UN has been an integral part of both my middle school and high school career, shaping me into the individual I am today. It has provided me with invaluable opportunities to develop skills in diplomacy, negotiation, and public speaking. By choosing to participate in this committee, I am confident that you too will undergo a similar transformative journey and create unforgettable memories.

In this committee, we will journey back in time to a pivotal moment of the Cold War—the Cuban Missile Crisis. This period was characterized by intense fear, heightened tensions, and political upheaval between the world's two superpowers, and involving a smaller nation, Cuba. It will be your task to guide and lead the cabinet to avoid a nuclear disaster with the Soviet Union. Moreover, our dais team has meticulously crafted a revolutionary crisis arc that may extend the crisis to the extent that it involves more Latin American countries, ensuring an exhilarating and challenging experience for all delegates.

This background guide has been thoughtfully prepared to provide you with essential information and context for our topic. However, as an advanced crisis committee, we strongly encourage you to go beyond what is presented here. Conduct thorough research on your assigned delegation to ensure that you are well-prepared for the conference. Feel free to delve into additional resources to deepen your understanding and enhance your performance.

If you have any questions, concerns, or simply wish to discuss the committee or topic further, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [richardxue789@gmail.com]. Whether this is your first Model UN conference or you are a seasoned delegate, your dais and I are here to support you every step of the way.

Sincerely,
Richard Xue
Director of the Cabinet Committee – ABMUN 2024



COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Cabinet Crisis Committee (CCC), a simulation that takes you back to the tumultuous era of the Cuban Missile Crisis. This committee provides a unique and immersive experience where delegates can step into the roles of key figures within President John F. Kennedy's cabinet. Together, you will navigate the dangerous landscape of diplomacy, devise wartime strategies, and confront the complex political and economic implications of the crisis.

The Cuban Missile Crisis, occurring in 1962, was a pivotal moment in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. It began when American intelligence discovered that the Soviet Union was secretly installing nuclear missiles in Cuba, just a stone's throw away from U.S. shores. This discovery set off a chain of events that brought the world perilously close to nuclear war.

As delegates in the CCC, you will have the opportunity to embody various roles within President Kennedy's cabinet, such as diplomats, military strategists, and influential political advisors. Each role carries its own unique responsibilities and perspectives. By assuming these positions, you will be tasked with making critical decisions, engaging in intense negotiations, and strategizing to protect your country's interests while avoiding the catastrophic consequences of war.

To create an environment of dynamic decision-making, the committee will follow Crisis Rules of Procedure. This means that delegates will engage in perpetual moderated caucuses, allowing for real-time discussions, negotiations, and the formulation of directives. It's important to note that the committee's chairs have the authority to disregard directives that may be unfeasible, inappropriate, or untimely, ensuring a balanced and realistic simulation. Whether you are a seasoned Model UN delegate or new to the experience, the CCC welcomes participants at all levels. While prior experience is not mandatory for registration, the nature of this Crisis Committee lends itself well to those who have previous knowledge and skills in crisis committees and diplomacy. It promises to be a weekend filled with intellectual challenges, stimulating discussions, and a unique opportunity to hone your crisis management and diplomatic abilities.

As we embark on this remarkable journey, it is crucial to familiarize yourselves with the intricacies of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Extensive research will allow you to grasp the historical context, understand the major players involved, and gain insights into the high-stakes decision-making processes that shaped this critical moment in world history.



For further clarification, awards will be determined based on how you contribute to the national effort, how well you are respecting your assigned character, and your overall impact in the outcome of the committee.

Prepare for an exhilarating experience as you step into the shoes of historical figures and shape the course of history. The Cabinet Crisis Committee eagerly awaits your participation in this simulation of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

TOPIC OVERVIEW

The tense geopolitical landscape of the early 1960s set the stage for a critical confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis. At the heart of this crisis lay the persistent hostility and rivalry that characterized the Cold War between these two superpowers.¹

The escalation began when the United States deployed intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Turkey and Italy in 1961. These missiles, positioned in close proximity to the Soviet Union, significantly amplified the threat perceived by the Soviet leadership. The strategic advantage gained by the U.S. was seen as a direct challenge to Soviet influence and security in their own sphere of influence.

In response, Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Premier, sought to rebalance this perceived asymmetry by deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba. Cuba, freshly aligned with the Soviet Union after Fidel Castro's successful revolution, presented an ideal location for the placement of Soviet missiles. Khrushchev recognized an opportunity not only to defend Cuba from potential U.S. aggression but also to shift the balance of power in the Cold War. This move by the Soviets to station missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles off the coast of the United States, was a deliberate and bold maneuver.² It aimed to provide a strategic deterrent and level the playing field, forcing the U.S. to reconsider its military advantages in the region and potentially prevent any future invasion attempts on Cuba.

As tensions mounted, the world now watches anxiously for tense days, fearing a potential nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. As advisors, associates, and allies of the Cabinet of John F. Kennedy, you bear the responsibility of guiding the United States through these tumultuous times. In this committee, some have roles in domestic affairs, such as the Secretary of Treasury or the Secretary of Health, and others have a role in foreign affairs. This

¹<https://www.britannica.com/event/Cuban-missile-crisis>

²<https://www.cia.gov/resources/csi/books-monographs/cuban-missile-crisis-1962/>



multidisciplinary approach, combining expertise in diplomacy, military strategy, intelligence, law, economics, and international relations, is crucial in formulating a comprehensive and strategic response. The collaborative efforts of this diverse committee are essential in guiding the United States through this unprecedented threat to national security posed by the Cuban Missile Crisis.

TIMELINE

1933: Military Coup and Batista's Ascendancy³

- The military coup, supported by the United States, propelled Sgt. Fulgencio Batista to power, marking the beginning of his influence in Cuban politics. This event stemmed from the U.S.'s concern about maintaining stability and protecting its economic interests in Cuba.

1952: Batista's Authoritarian Rule⁴

- Batista's rise to power through a coup led to an authoritarian regime that disregarded democratic processes and prioritized the interests of Cuba's wealthy elite and U.S. corporations. His rule perpetuated corruption and social inequality, leaving many Cubans marginalized.

1920s-1958: American Economic Dominance in Cuba⁵

- ⁶During this period, Cuba experienced significant American influence, particularly due to the Prohibition era in the United States. Cuba became a hotspot for American tourists, leading to the growth of casinos, hotels, and businesses catering to U.S. interests. This period also provided fertile ground for organized crime figures to establish illegal operations in Cuba.

1959: Cuban Revolution⁷

- Fidel Castro's successful revolution overthrew Batista's regime, promising social reforms and an end to corruption. The revolution significantly altered Cuba's political landscape and led to the establishment of a socialist government under Castro's leadership.

1961: Bay of Pigs Invasion⁸

³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Fulgencio-Batista>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/papers/2008/P2923.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/comandante-cold-war/>

⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/the-bay-of-pigs-invasion/>

⁸



- The Bay of Pigs Invasion, orchestrated by the CIA and involving Cuban exiles, aimed to overthrow Castro's government. However, the operation failed, resulting in a major embarrassment for the United States and further solidifying Castro's position.

1962: U.S. Embargo Imposed⁹

- The United States imposed a comprehensive embargo on Cuba, cutting off trade and diplomatic relations, in response to Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union and the nationalization of U.S. properties in Cuba. This embargo aimed to isolate Cuba economically and politically.

1962: Operation Mongoose¹⁰

- Operation Mongoose was a covert CIA operation designed to destabilize and undermine the Cuban government. It included various tactics, such as sabotage, propaganda, and attempts to assassinate Castro, escalating tensions between the U.S. and Cuba.

October 14, 1962: Discovery of Soviet Missile Installations¹¹

- The reconnaissance mission by a U.S. U-2 spy plane identified newly constructed Soviet missile installations in Cuba, raising fears of a direct threat to U.S. security and initiating the Cuban Missile Crisis.

October 15, 1962: Confirmation of Soviet Missile Sites¹²

- Following the U-2 reconnaissance, CIA analysts confirmed the existence of Soviet missile sites in Cuba, equipped with missiles capable of reaching major U.S. cities. This confirmation escalated the Cuban Missile Crisis to a critical level, bringing the U.S. and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear confrontation.

INITIATING CRISIS

In the hours following the confirmation of Soviet missile sites in Cuba on October 15, 1962, the situation escalated rapidly, leading to a profound sense of urgency within the cabinet. Tensions soared as the United States grappled with the immediate threat posed by these missiles positioned just miles off its shores.

The clock ticks relentlessly, each passing moment intensifying the sense of peril. Every decision carries monumental consequences for not just the United States and Cuba, but for the entire world teetering on the edge of a nuclear precipice. The gravity of the situation demands a

⁹ <https://www.wola.org/analysis/understanding-failure-of-us-cuba-embargo/>

¹⁰ <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/01/operation-mongoose/549737/>

¹¹ <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/cuban-missile-crisis>

¹² Ibid



delicate balancing act—showing unwavering resolve to protect national security while cautiously navigating away from actions that could spiral into irreversible conflict. As members of the Cabinet, you have a duty of avoiding an all-out nuclear war, while ensuring that Cuba does not become a threat to your nation.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Cold War Context:

The Cold War, spanning roughly from the end of World War II in 1945 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, was a defining era of global history. Its origins lay in the ideological divergence between the United States and the Soviet Union, which led to a prolonged struggle for supremacy and influence on a worldwide scale.¹³

At its core, the Cold War represented an ideological battle between two distinct socio-economic and political systems. The United States championed democratic capitalism, advocating individual freedoms, free-market economies, and a system built on the principles of liberty and private enterprise.¹⁴ Conversely, the Soviet Union propagated communism, promoting state-controlled economies, collective ownership of resources, and a centrally planned society. This ideological rivalry formed the ideological backdrop against which much of the global political landscape was shaped.

One of the most defining features of the Cold War was the intense nuclear arms race between the superpowers. Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union stockpiled vast arsenals of nuclear weapons, developing increasingly sophisticated and powerful means of mass destruction. This accumulation of nuclear power resulted in a state of mutual deterrence, where each side was aware that engaging in direct military conflict would lead to catastrophic consequences for the entire world—an idea encapsulated by the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).¹⁵

Geopolitically, the world became divided into spheres of influence. The U.S. established military alliances, notably the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact, solidifying their respective spheres of influence.¹⁶ This division was not just ideological but also geographical, with regions across the globe becoming battlegrounds for proxy wars and ideological struggles. Conflicts such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and

¹³<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/cold-war>

¹⁴<https://www.britannica.com/summary/Cold-War>

¹⁵<https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/arms-race>

¹⁶<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato>



various conflicts in Africa and Latin America were emblematic of the larger power struggle between the two superpowers.

The repercussions of the Cold War were felt globally. It influenced international relations, shaped alliances, and often dictated the course of conflicts in different regions. The Cuban Missile Crisis, occurring at the peak of tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, epitomized the brinkmanship and high-stakes brinksmanship that characterized this era. This event, where the world stood on the precipice of nuclear conflict, serves as a stark reminder of the dangers and complexities inherent in the Cold War rivalry.

Cuban Revolution's Impact:

The Cuban Revolution, a seismic event in the mid-20th century, was more than a mere political upheaval; it was a multifaceted movement that reshaped the very fabric of Cuban society, profoundly altering its socio-political and economic landscape. Born from a complex interplay of historical grievances, social inequality, and a deep-seated desire for self-determination, the revolution became a symbol of resistance against external dominance and a catalyst for transformative change.¹⁷

At its core, the revolution was a response to decades of exploitation and oppression under the rule of Fulgencio Batista, whose government represented the interests of a wealthy elite closely aligned with U.S. corporations. This alignment not only deepened social and economic disparities but also curtailed democratic freedoms and perpetuated widespread corruption.¹⁸ Fidel Castro, along with a diverse coalition of revolutionaries, emerged as a beacon of hope for those seeking liberation from this system of exploitation and inequality.

The revolution's success in toppling Batista's regime in 1959 marked a turning point in Cuban history. Castro's leadership, combined with the support of guerrilla fighters like Che Guevara and a groundswell of popular support, ushered in a new era. The revolutionary government wasted no time in implementing sweeping reforms that aimed to address systemic injustices. Land reform sought to break up large estates and redistribute land to peasants, while nationalization efforts targeted key industries previously dominated by foreign corporations, aiming to place control in Cuban hands.¹⁹

This radical restructuring of Cuban society, however, triggered a seismic shift in international relations. The United States, concerned about the spread of communism and the loss of influence in its backyard, viewed Castro's socialist government with suspicion.²⁰ This suspicion led to

¹⁷<https://www.history.com/topics/latin-america/cuban-revolution>

¹⁸<https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/10229/1/fulltext.pdf>

¹⁹<https://www.britannica.com/event/Cuban-Revolution>

²⁰<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/26/world/americas/fidel-castro-dies.html>



strained relations, economic embargoes, and eventually the severance of diplomatic ties between the two countries. The revolution's socialist orientation and defiance against U.S. dominance became a lightning rod in the broader global ideological struggle of the Cold War era.

The Cuban Revolution's impact extended far beyond its shores, influencing anti-colonial movements and inspiring revolutions across Latin America and the developing world. It became a symbol of resistance against imperialism and a beacon of hope for those seeking self-determination. Despite subsequent challenges and isolation, the revolution's legacy endures, leaving an indelible mark on Cuban identity, politics, and the ongoing discourse on sovereignty, social justice, and national autonomy.

U.S. Policy and Aggression:

The United States' approach to Cuba post-revolution was a reflection of its deeply entrenched concerns about the spread of communism, the protection of its geopolitical interests, and the preservation of influence in its neighboring hemisphere.²¹ The Cuban Revolution and Fidel Castro's ascent to power presented a fundamental ideological challenge to U.S. hegemony, which led to a series of responses characterized by a mixture of containment strategies, covert operations, and economic isolation.

Castro's rise to power signaled a shift in Cuba's orientation from a U.S. ally under Batista to a socialist state openly critical of American imperialism.²² This ideological divergence set the stage for a strained and antagonistic relationship. The U.S., viewing Castro's Cuba as a potential Soviet foothold in the Western Hemisphere, responded with a combination of covert actions and overt hostilities.

The ill-fated Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961, backed by the CIA and aimed at toppling Castro's regime, marked a significant escalation. The operation's failure not only embarrassed the U.S. administration but also amplified tensions between the two nations.²³ Subsequently, the U.S. intensified its efforts, engaging in a campaign of state-sponsored terrorism against Cuba. This campaign included acts of sabotage, assassination attempts, and economic warfare designed to destabilize the Cuban government.

Moreover, the United States imposed an extensive economic embargo on Cuba in 1962, cutting off trade and diplomatic relations. The embargo sought to isolate Cuba and exert pressure on its leadership to capitulate or incite internal unrest.²⁴ These aggressive measures were part of a

²¹<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/post-revolution-cuba/>

²²<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24487082>

²³<https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/the-bay-of-pigs>

²⁴<https://www.state.gov/cuba-sanctions/>



larger strategy to contain the perceived communist threat in the Western Hemisphere and maintain U.S. dominance in the region.

However, the U.S. policy of aggression towards Cuba faced criticism both domestically and internationally. Domestically, it spurred debates about the efficacy of such harsh measures and their impact on the Cuban people.²⁵ Internationally, it drew condemnation from nations viewing the U.S. actions as imperialistic and interfering in the self-determination of a sovereign state.²⁶

CURRENT SITUATION

Cuba–US relations:

The relationship between the United States and Cuba remains deeply entrenched in a history fraught with complexities and animosities that have shaped the contemporary landscape of their diplomatic interactions. Throughout the mid-20th century, the United States wielded considerable influence over Cuban affairs, providing extensive support to the Batista regime. This support, ranging from arms and financial backing to political endorsement, sowed seeds of discontent among the Cuban populace, leading to widespread resentment and discontent due to the socioeconomic issues intertwined with American dominance.²⁷

The seismic shift brought about by the Cuban Revolution in 1959, spearheaded by Fidel Castro, marked a pivotal departure from the prior U.S.-backed governance. The revolution aimed to address Cuba's structural vulnerabilities perpetuated by U.S. intervention. However, this radical shift collided head-on with U.S. strategic interests, especially within the charged climate of the Cold War, characterized by heightened fears of communist expansion.²⁸

During the Eisenhower era, these fears prompted the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to orchestrate covert plans for paramilitary actions against Cuba. The ill-fated Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961, publicly exposed as a U.S.-backed operation, triggered an escalation in state-sponsored terrorism targeted at Cuba. This aggressive stance from the U.S. government intensified hostilities, effectively contributing to a deepening chasm between the nations.²⁹

The subsequent imposition of a comprehensive embargo against Cuba in 1962 only exacerbated tensions, further straining an already tumultuous relationship. This period was marked by

²⁵<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1299&context=major-papers>

²⁶<https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1869&context=jil>

²⁷<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-cuba-relations>

²⁸<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/batista-forced-out-by-castro-led-revolution>

²⁹<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/bayofpigs/chron.html>



ongoing threats of invasion and sustained campaigns of terror, factors that significantly influenced the Soviet Union's decision to position missiles within Cuban territory, escalating the situation to a dangerously critical juncture.

Right now, the legacy of U.S.-Cuba relations is a tapestry woven with a history of mutual antagonism, covert interventions, and actions that perpetuated mutual distrust. The Cuban government's steadfast view of U.S. imperialism, coupled with the U.S.'s relentless efforts to destabilize the Castro-led regime, has forged a legacy of hostility and suspicion that continues to echo through the present, shaping the contours of their contemporary diplomatic discourse. The Cuban Missile Crisis stands as a vivid reminder of the precariousness of their relationship and the enduring repercussions of past confrontations.

U.S. Soviet relations

Post-World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as superpowers, but their wartime alliance quickly gave way to ideological differences and geopolitical ambitions. The Soviet Union, aiming to consolidate its influence in Eastern Europe, established satellite states along its borders, sparking concerns in the West about Soviet expansionism.³⁰

One pivotal moment that fractured their fragile alliance was the U.S.'s decision to deploy atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki without full consultation with the Soviets.³¹ While the U.S. had informed the Soviets of its nuclear capabilities, the actual use of these devastating weapons heightened Soviet suspicions about U.S. intentions and marked the onset of a nuclear arms race.³² Both nations rapidly escalated their nuclear arsenals, with the Soviet Union successfully testing its own atomic bomb in 1949. This development intensified the arms race, leading to an exponential increase in nuclear capabilities on both sides.

The advent of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in the mid-1950s further heightened tensions. The successful testing of these long-range missiles by both countries showcased their technological prowess but also raised fears of a potential nuclear conflict that could be waged across continents. In 1957, the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite rocked the United States. The fear of Soviet technological superiority, particularly in space exploration, ignited a sense of urgency within the U.S. to bolster its own space program to maintain parity.³³

Amidst this competition, the concept of a "Missile Gap" emerged, with the U.S. suspecting that the Soviet Union had overtaken them in missile technology. Though later debunked by

³⁰<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/ACFB73.pdf>

³¹<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Trumans-decision-to-use-the-bomb-712569>

³²<https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-russia-nuclear-arms-control>

³³<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/sputnik>



intelligence reports, this belief instilled a sense of vulnerability and a push for increased military preparedness within the U.S. establishment.³⁴

This backdrop of escalating tensions, fueled by technological advancements, ideological differences, and mutual distrust, set the stage for the Cuban Missile Crisis. The accumulation of military capabilities, combined with the geopolitical positioning of both nations, created a precarious environment where any misstep could lead to catastrophic consequences, setting the stage for the most intense confrontation of the Cold War era.

Tensions escalated further due to events such as the Berlin Crisis of 1961, highlighted by the construction of the Berlin Wall, which heightened the Cold War's stakes.³⁵ Khrushchev's perception of Kennedy as indecisive and weak solidified with what he saw as a tepid U.S. response during this crisis and the perceived failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba.³⁶ Amidst these perceptions and misperceptions, both nations engaged in an arms race, vying for supremacy in nuclear capabilities while maintaining a delicate balance to avert direct military confrontation.

The precariousness of this geopolitical climate lay in the potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding to escalate into catastrophic conflict. The lack of direct communication channels between the superpowers, combined with the ever-looming threat of nuclear warfare, amplified the tension and underscored the fragility of global stability.

Soviet military deployments and Prelude to Crisis

In May 1962, Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev conceived a plan to counterbalance the United States' substantial lead in strategic missiles by deploying Soviet intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Cuba.³⁷ Despite opposition from the Soviet Ambassador in Havana, who doubted Castro's acceptance of the missiles, Khrushchev was motivated by a strategic reality. The U.S. possessed what was perceived as a "splendid first strike" capability, rendering the Soviet Union significantly disadvantaged. With only a limited number of unreliable ICBMs, the Soviets focused more on medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs and IRBMs).³⁸

Strategically, Khrushchev aimed to address several critical issues by placing missiles in Cuba. Firstly, he sought to bring West Berlin into the Soviet orbit, considering Western control over part of Berlin a severe threat to East Germany. By using missiles in Cuba as leverage, he aimed

³⁴<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/collection/what-was-missile-gap>

³⁵<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/berlin-crises>

³⁶<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Berlin-Wall>

³⁷<https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cuban-missile-crisis>

³⁸https://archive.org/details/essenceofdecisio00alli_0/page/92/mode/2up



to pressure the U.S. into relinquishing control over West Berlin. Secondly, the deployment of missiles in Cuba aimed to balance the perceived threat posed by U.S. nuclear missiles stationed in Turkey, which could potentially strike the USSR before Soviet forces could react. By establishing a mutual assured destruction scenario, Khrushchev sought to deter the United States from launching a nuclear strike.³⁹

Moreover, the move aimed to support Cuba against what the Soviets and Cubans viewed as escalating American aggression. Actions such as attempting to expel Cuba from the Organization of American States, economic sanctions, direct invasion attempts, and the ongoing CIA-led campaign of terrorism and sabotage against the island led Cuba and the USSR to believe that the U.S. intended to overrun Cuba.⁴⁰ Placing missiles in Cuba was seen as a defensive measure to neutralize this perceived threat. The deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba was agreed upon by Khrushchev and Castro, with the latter reluctantly accepting the missiles to protect Cuba against a potential U.S. attack and to support the interests of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc.

The Soviet operation in Cuba, known as "Operation Anadyr," was shrouded in secrecy and deception, involving elaborate plans to conceal the true nature of the mission. Soviet specialists, disguised as agricultural workers, arrived in Cuba in July, and the deployment of missile sites commenced in September, despite growing suspicion from U.S. intelligence agencies.⁴¹ By early October, U.S. intelligence agencies received alarming reports of Soviet activities in Cuba, with evidence pointing to the construction of missile sites capable of targeting much of the continental United States. The lack of definitive reconnaissance coverage over Cuba due to restrictions on U-2 flights resulted in a crucial period known as the "Photo Gap."⁴² When U-2 flights eventually resumed, they captured photographic evidence on October 14, 1962, confirming the presence of Soviet missile installations in Cuba, escalating what would become the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁴³

Case Study: Korean War

The initial stages of the war saw rapid movements by both sides, with the UN forces facing near defeat before a bold amphibious landing at Incheon turned the tide. Subsequent UN advances led to a push towards the border with China. However, China's entry into the war in October 1950, along with Soviet support, altered the dynamics significantly. The conflict escalated, leading to the capture of Seoul by Chinese and North Korean forces and subsequent retaking by the UN. The war eventually settled into a stalemate near the 38th parallel, resulting in years of attrition and devastating consequences. The signing of the armistice in 1953 established the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and halted active combat, but no peace treaty was ever signed. As a

³⁹<https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12020.12>

⁴⁰<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP65B00383R000200250020-3.pdf>

⁴¹<https://www.cia.gov/static/205b8c27be0286b9a0d19fbf90d2382a/Soviet-Deception-Cuban-Missile.pdf>

⁴²<https://www.cia.gov/static/df2ab56225a9cbc6dbc634699e15d768/Photo-Gap-Delayed-Discovery.pdf>

⁴³Ibid



result, North and South Korea technically remain at war, with sporadic tensions continuing to define their relationship.⁴⁴

During the Korean War, the tensions between the USSR and the United States were already strained by the broader geopolitical landscape of the Cold War. The conflict further exacerbated these tensions and reshaped the dynamics between the two superpowers.⁴⁵ The Korean War served as a proxy conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. The involvement of both nations' proxies, North Korea and South Korea respectively, underscored the intensifying global competition for influence and control between the two superpowers. The conflict highlighted the deep ideological divide between communism and capitalism. The Soviet support for North Korea aligned with their communist ideologies, while the U.S. backing of South Korea showcased its commitment to preserving democratic values in the face of communist expansion. The war intensified the global rivalry between the USSR and the United States. It added to the perception of each side's aggressive posturing, escalating fears of further communist expansion countered by U.S. containment efforts. This deepened mistrust and solidified the two superpowers' commitment to competing ideological and geopolitical agendas.⁴⁶

Case Study: Berlin Crisis of 1961

Berlin, located deep within East Germany but divided among the Allied powers, stood as a vivid representation of the ideological chasm between the East and West during the Cold War.⁴⁷ The confrontation at the Vienna summit between Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and US President John F. Kennedy laid bare the irreconcilable differences over Berlin's status. Khrushchev's demand for the withdrawal of Western forces from West Berlin served as a stark reminder of the Soviet desire to control the entire city and eliminate the Western presence, intensifying the East-West standoff.

East Germany, grappling with a substantial outflow of its population to the more prosperous West through Berlin, viewed this migration as detrimental to its stability. Walter Ulbricht, with Khrushchev's backing, made the fateful decision in August 1961 to construct a physical barrier – the Berlin Wall – aiming to halt this mass emigration and solidify East Germany's grip on its population. The sudden erection of the Wall shocked the world, evoking condemnation internationally.⁴⁸ However, it served as a poignant emblem of the Cold War's stark realities – families were divided, friends separated, and communities torn asunder overnight. The tension reached a perilous point at Checkpoint Charlie, where American and Soviet tanks faced off in October 1961. This standoff underscored the precariousness of the situation, raising fears of

⁴⁴https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2024/01/177_366075.html

⁴⁵<https://www.rbth.com/history/328182-ussr-and-korean-crisis>

⁴⁶<https://www.britannica.com/event/Korean-War>

⁴⁷<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/berlin-crisis>

⁴⁸<https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/the-cold-war-in-berlin>



direct military conflict between the superpowers. Fortunately, both sides recognized the dangers, leading to a diplomatic resolution and the withdrawal of the tanks, averting an immediate crisis.

The Berlin Wall's construction entrenched the division of Germany and Berlin for almost three decades. Beyond its physical purpose of preventing migration, the Wall became a haunting symbol of repression under communist rule in Eastern Europe, a testament to the iron-fisted control exerted by authoritarian regimes.⁴⁹

Case Study: Atomic Diplomacy

During World War II, multiple nations, such as the United States, Britain, Germany, and the USSR, were involved in developing atomic bombs.⁵⁰ However, by mid-1945, only the United States had succeeded and utilized these atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to promptly end the conflict with Japan. The decision to employ these bombs wasn't extensively debated among U.S. leaders, viewed as a way to swiftly conclude the Pacific war and potentially minimize conventional war casualties.⁵¹ Yet, they also pondered the bomb's implications for future relations with the Soviet Union.

President Franklin Roosevelt opted not to share information about nuclear advancements with the Soviet Union. Following Roosevelt's death, President Harry Truman had to decide whether to continue this policy. Truman did mention the existence of a formidable bomb to Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin during the Allied meeting at Potsdam, yet he withheld specific details regarding its capabilities or intended use.⁵² By mid-1945, it became evident that the Soviet Union would enter the Pacific war, thus influencing the postwar power balance in the region. U.S. officials acknowledged their limited ability to prevent this but preferred a U.S.-led occupation of Japan over a joint effort.

During the early Cold War era, both the United States and the Soviet Union employed atomic diplomacy in various ways. For instance, President Truman dispatched B-29 bombers capable of delivering nuclear bombs during the Berlin Blockade and the Korean War, signaling America's nuclear strength and willingness to utilize it if necessary.⁵³ President Eisenhower contemplated using nuclear pressure during the Korean War ceasefire talks but ultimately dismissed the idea. Right now, the Soviets are practicing atomic diplomacy by flexing nuclear capabilities near American soil.

⁴⁹<https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-wall>

⁵⁰<https://www.thoughtco.com/atomic-diplomacy-4134609>

⁵¹Ibid

⁵²<https://www.britannica.com/event/Potsdam-Conference>

⁵³<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2538737>



POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Do nothing

Opting for inaction during the Cuban Missile Crisis acknowledges the historical vulnerability of the United States to potential Soviet missile attacks. This approach recognizes the prolonged concern for American national security due to this vulnerability. It acknowledges that the U.S. has lived with a certain level of exposure to potential Soviet missile threats for some time, indicating a stance of maintaining the status quo.

However, this choice carries substantial risks. Opting for inaction may be perceived as a sign of weakness or indecision by the American leadership, potentially undermining the credibility of the United States globally. It risks projecting an image of passivity or hesitancy in the face of a significant threat, possibly emboldening the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, this approach might signal to the Soviets that the U.S. is not prepared to take decisive action to defend its interests or protect its territory, potentially encouraging further aggressive actions or escalation. In the context of the Cold War, where perceptions of strength and resolve are crucial, choosing to do nothing might be interpreted as a concession or a lack of commitment to national security interests.

Diplomacy

The diplomatic approach to the Cuban Missile Crisis hinges on leveraging negotiation, diplomatic channels, and international pressure to de-escalate the mounting tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Instead of relying on military measures, this strategy places paramount importance on engaging in dialogue and seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

At its core, this strategy prioritizes initiating talks and negotiations through established diplomatic channels. Both the United States and the Soviet Union would be engaging in discussions, exchanging proposals and considerations aimed at finding common ground. These dialogues serve as a critical platform to convey concerns, explore potential concessions, and seek an agreement for the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba.

Furthermore, this diplomatic approach extends beyond direct conversations, involving efforts to rally support from global allies and leaders. The engagement of international bodies, such as the United Nations, plays a pivotal role in mediating and facilitating discussions, employing a multilateral approach to ease tensions and seek a resolution acceptable to all parties involved.

Ultimatum to Fidel Castro



This secretive tactic entails discreetly communicating the proposal to Castro's government, away from public scrutiny. It establishes covert negotiations or backchannel communications specifically designed to deliver this ultimatum to the Cuban leadership.

At its core, this covert approach seeks to exploit potential fractures within Castro's regime and the Soviet Union. It aims to capitalize on any underlying disagreements or tensions within the Cuban leadership, intending to create a rift between Cuba and its key ally, the USSR. The proposal essentially intends to drive a wedge between the two nations, potentially weakening their collective resolve and influence over one another.

Implicit within this proposal is a veiled threat of military intervention if Cuba refuses to sever its ties with the Soviet Union. It covertly warns Cuba of the repercussions of maintaining its allegiance to the Soviets, implying that non-compliance could trigger a forceful intervention by U.S. military forces—a full-scale invasion of the island.

This covert strategy operates on the premise of leveraging secrecy, coercion, and the manipulation of alliances to potentially shift the dynamics of the crisis. By clandestinely coercing Cuba to reconsider its alliance with the USSR, it aims to avert direct military confrontation by subtly influencing Cuba's strategic choices.

Full-force invasion of Cuba

An option looming in the tense atmosphere involves a forceful and direct approach: a full-scale invasion of Cuba with the explicit aim of overthrowing Fidel Castro's government. This approach advocates for a robust and comprehensive military intervention by the United States. It proposes a large-scale deployment of ground troops, naval vessels, and air support to launch a coordinated and forceful attack on Cuban soil. The ultimate goal isn't solely the neutralization of the perceived Soviet threat posed by the missiles but rather the complete overthrow of Castro's regime.

The invasion strategy involves a meticulously planned and executed military operation, aiming to swiftly incapacitate Cuban defenses and dismantle Castro's governance structures. It envisions a decisive display of U.S. military might to achieve regime change in Cuba, eliminating what is perceived as a Soviet stronghold in close proximity to American borders.

However, executing such a plan entails inherent risks and significant potential consequences. It carries the palpable danger of escalating the conflict to a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, possibly leading to a broader and catastrophic nuclear conflict. The invasion strategy is not without its moral and geopolitical implications, potentially igniting a chain of events that could spiral out of control and have far-reaching consequences beyond Cuba.



This aggressive approach reflects a willingness to employ overwhelming military force to decisively alter the course of the crisis. However, its implementation poses substantial risks, requiring careful consideration of both the immediate tactical gains and the potentially devastating long-term ramifications on a global scale.

Air strikes on Missile Sites

This approach proposes a tactical military intervention, utilizing the advanced aerial capabilities of the U.S. Air Force to conduct precise strikes on identified missile sites within Cuba. Its primary goal is to nullify the perceived threat presented by the Soviet missiles located near American borders.

The suggested airstrikes aim to disable the known missile installations, employing strategic and precise measures to eliminate launch pads, missile assembly facilities, and related infrastructure. This strategy emphasizes the need for quick and definitive action to eradicate the immediate danger posed by the Soviet missiles without initiating a full-scale invasion. However, executing such a plan involves inherent risks and uncertainties. The effectiveness of the airstrikes depends heavily on their accuracy, as any missed targets or incomplete destruction could leave the threat partially intact. Additionally, there's a possibility of unintended consequences, such as potential Soviet retaliation or an escalation of hostilities.

This strategy represents a deliberate effort to neutralize the imminent missile threat while circumventing a large-scale military confrontation. Nonetheless, its implementation demands a thorough evaluation of potential outcomes and the probability of wider implications in an already volatile international landscape.

Naval Blockade on Cuba

At its core, this blockade is a maritime strategy, utilizing the U.S. Navy to encircle Cuba, intercept incoming vessels suspected of carrying strategic materials, and enforce strict inspections to prevent the transport of Soviet missiles and related armaments.

The primary objective behind this maneuver is to thwart any additional augmentation of Soviet military presence in Cuba, especially the delivery of missiles and nuclear-related resources. By establishing this defensive line, the U.S. aims to send a clear message of resolve while sidestepping an immediate confrontation.

Yet, the blockade wouldn't be without its complexities and potential dangers. While intending to defuse tensions and avoid direct military clashes, there's a palpable risk of the Soviet Union interpreting it as an aggressive maneuver. Such misinterpretation could inflame an already volatile situation, escalating it into a full-scale naval confrontation.



The success of this strategy hinges on various factors, including the willingness of both superpowers to avoid direct conflict, how the international community perceives this defensive action, and the critical balance of enforcing the blockade without eliciting a forceful response from the Soviet Union.

This approach necessitates precise execution, clear communication, and delicate navigation to steer clear of misunderstandings that could precipitate a broader and potentially catastrophic conflict. The blockade functions not only as a defensive measure but also as a strategic gambit, providing a breathing space for diplomatic negotiations and international pressure to seek a peaceful resolution while attempting to stave off further escalation of the crisis.

BLOC POSITIONS

Cautious Bloc⁵⁴

This bloc, which includes the Kennedys, Johnson, and McNamara, adopts a measured stance in handling the Cuban Missile Crisis. This group doesn't entirely dismiss military action but advocates for caution, deeply concerned about potential Soviet retaliation. Their approach emphasizes limited military engagement to avoid escalating the crisis into a full-scale conflict. Members of this bloc are strong proponents of diplomatic solutions. They actively seek diplomatic channels to defuse tensions and seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Their priority lies in preventing any further increase in Cuba's nuclear capabilities. They recognize the risks posed by Cuba's newfound nuclear arsenal but are hesitant to pursue aggressive military strategies that might provoke a dangerous response from the Soviet Union. The cautious bloc's stance underscores a calculated and thoughtful approach, seeking to navigate the crisis with astuteness and circumspection. Their emphasis on diplomatic solutions and restrained military actions reflects a meticulous consideration of the potential consequences, emphasizing the importance of averting a catastrophic confrontation while pursuing avenues for peaceful resolution.

Foreign Affairs Bloc⁵⁵

This faction within the cabinet, which includes Secretary Rusk and Ambassadors Thompson and Stevenson, emphasizing the protection of the United States and advocating for sustained communication with the Soviet Union, holds a staunch position favoring diplomatic initiatives amid the Cuban Missile Crisis. Their stance revolves around pursuing peaceful resolutions while prioritizing national security. Their approach hinges on the belief that maintaining open lines of communication with the Soviet Union is paramount in averting a catastrophic escalation of tensions. Understanding the grave

⁵⁴https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/misc/CWIHP_Cuban_Missile_Crisis_Bulletin_17-18.pdf

⁵⁵<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d43>



risks posed by the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, they advocate for diplomatic engagement, dialogue, and negotiation as the primary means of resolving the crisis. This bloc acknowledges the necessity of safeguarding the nation's well-being and understands that while military preparedness is crucial, it must be complemented by astute diplomatic maneuvers. Their emphasis lies in leveraging diplomatic channels to de-escalate the crisis, seeking to mitigate the immediate threat while preventing further hostilities.

Military Bloc⁵⁶

The military bloc within the cabinet, which includes the Chiefs of Staff, adopts an assertively proactive stance amid the Cuban Missile Crisis, advocating for a robust military response as the most viable solution. This faction sees the situation through a lens of decisive action, spanning from implementing a naval blockade to considering the possibility of a full-scale invasion of Cuba. Their position rests on the belief that swift and forceful military measures are necessary to neutralize the perceived threat posed by the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. They view a direct military intervention, including invasion, as the most effective means of eliminating the immediate danger and preventing potential future threats arising from Cuba's possession of nuclear weapons. This faction maintains that a full-scale attack and invasion of Cuba would serve as a decisive deterrent, signaling American resolve and dissuading further Soviet attempts to establish nuclear bases near U.S. borders. They assert confidence that the Soviets would not intervene or resist the U.S. military action in Cuba, viewing it as an opportunity to swiftly eliminate the threat without opposition. However, the military bloc must acknowledge the potential risks and broader geopolitical implications of their proposed actions, and be mindful of the possibility that a direct confrontation in Cuba could prompt the Soviet Union to retaliate in other global arenas, particularly in Europe, potentially targeting West Berlin. The Cuban possession of nuclear weapons adds an alarming dimension to the calculations, amplifying concerns about the potential consequences of military action.

Intelligence Bloc⁵⁷

This bloc, which composes of McCone, Cabell, Bundy, and Kaysen, stands as a faction advocating for robust military actions against Castro's regime in Cuba. This group primarily focuses on intelligence-led initiatives, encompassing covert and clandestine operations to counter Cuban activities deemed threatening to U.S. interests. Their approach leans heavily on leveraging intelligence and strategic clandestine maneuvers, designed to destabilize Castro's government and curtail the perceived threats posed by Cuba. They endorse military operations with a covert nature, intending to disrupt and undermine Cuban capabilities through covert sabotage, espionage, and clandestine engagements. This bloc is inclined toward aggressive and secretive measures to address

⁵⁶https://archive.org/details/thirtee_ken_1971_00_8923/page/14/mode/2up

⁵⁷https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/94755_IV.pdf



the Cuban threat, emphasizing the use of intelligence assets and covert operations as tools for influencing the situation. Their strategy aims to manipulate and contain the Cuban regime's activities while minimizing the risk of direct confrontation that could escalate into a larger conflict.

CHARACTER PORTFOLIOS

John F. Kennedy - President of the United States:⁵⁸

As the Commander-in-Chief, Kennedy holds ultimate authority over all government actions, although this does not prevent other delegates to covertly disobey them and abuse their own given powers. He's the pivotal decision-maker, responsible for the nation's response to the looming threat. Holding the constitutional authority as Commander-in-Chief, Kennedy oversees all government actions and military strategies. In this tense moment of global standoff, Kennedy adopts a measured approach, meticulously weighing diplomatic and military solutions. He navigates the delicate balance between showing resolve against Soviet aggression while avoiding direct confrontation that could escalate into a nuclear conflict. His primary objective is to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis without compromising national security. In terms of directives, if less than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the committee supports a public directive, the President may veto it, yet in accordance with the 25th amendment, a majority of the committee can move to oust the President from office.

Lyndon B. Johnson - Vice President of the United States:⁵⁹

As Vice President, Lyndon B. Johnson holds a pivotal position in President Kennedy's administration. Beyond his constitutional role as the President of the Senate and the next in line for the presidency, Johnson acts as a trusted confidant and advisor to Kennedy. While actively engaged in high-level meetings and briefings, Johnson maintains a careful balance. He stands ready to assume leadership should circumstances require him to step into the role of the presidency. His presence in the inner circle provides continuity, assurance, and a sense of stability within the administration amidst the escalating tensions surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis. As per the United States Constitution's 25th Amendment, "In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President."

Dean Rusk - Secretary of State:⁶⁰

As the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk is at the forefront of the diplomatic efforts aimed at defusing the tensions arising from the Cuban Missile Crisis. Tasked with overseeing the

⁵⁸<https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/historic-speeches/address-during-the-cuban-missile-crisis>

⁵⁹<https://historyinpieces.com/research/lbj-excomm-notes-cuban-missile-crisis>

⁶⁰<https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/rusk-david-dean>



nation's foreign policy, Rusk plays a pivotal role in shaping the United States' response to the escalating conflict. He advocates for a measured and cautious strategy, one that seeks to find common ground while safeguarding U.S. interests and global stability. His steady leadership and diplomatic finesse are instrumental in articulating the United States' position while also exploring potential avenues for de-escalation. Amidst the tense atmosphere, Rusk remains committed to pursuing every possible diplomatic channel, leveraging his expertise in international relations and negotiation to seek a peaceful resolution that safeguards national security and promotes global peace and stability.

C. Douglas Dillon - Secretary of the Treasury:⁶¹

As Secretary of the Treasury, C. Douglas Dillon wields significant influence over the nation's financial policies. His role extends beyond the purely financial realm; he provides crucial insight into the broader economic implications that different decisions might have on global markets and trade dynamics. Dillon's expertise and analytical prowess enable him to predict and evaluate the potential consequences of any actions taken by the United States in response to the Cuban situation. In the context of Cuba, Dillon's role becomes especially pertinent. He comprehensively studies the economic conditions and vulnerabilities of Cuba, recognizing how economic strain could exacerbate the country's already fragile state. Given Cuba's socio-economic challenges and potential dependence on external aid, Dillon advises on how economic pressures could impact the country's stability. His insights into the potential economic ramifications of actions taken against Cuba or responses to the crisis aid in shaping the administration's strategies.

Robert McNamara - Secretary of Defense:⁶²

Robert McNamara, as the Secretary of Defense during the Cuban Missile Crisis, holds a multifaceted stance influenced by his role and expertise in military matters, and supports a defense strategy of flexible response, which was essentially immediate retaliation. McNamara's position during the crisis reflects a delicate balance between advocating for military readiness and emphasizing the gravity of potential consequences associated with military actions. His role is multifaceted: McNamara is deeply engaged in evaluating different military options available to the United States. These options range from measured tactical responses to the possibility of full-scale military engagement. He meticulously analyzes the potential consequences, both intended and unintended, of each prospective course of action. While being a proponent of maintaining a robust defense posture, McNamara is not trigger-happy and is cautious about the potential outcomes of any military response. He understands the severe ramifications of engaging in a direct

⁶¹<https://www.jfklibrary.org/sites/default/files/archives/JFKOH/Dillon%2C%20C.%20Douglas/JFKOH-CDD-04/JFKOH-CDD-04-TR.pdf>

⁶²<https://alphahistory.com/coldwar/robert-mcnamara-reflects-cuban-missile-crisis-2003/>



confrontation with the Soviet Union, especially in the form of a full-scale military conflict.

Robert F. Kennedy - Attorney General:⁶³

Known for his unwavering loyalty to his brother and his formidable intellect, Robert Kennedy is an integral part of the inner circle during these high-stakes deliberations. His role extends beyond legal matters; he's a close advisor and confidant to the President, involved in crucial discussions shaping the government's response to the crisis. Robert Kennedy's counsel is highly regarded, leveraging his legal acumen, political astuteness, and intimate knowledge of his brother's thinking. Despite Cuba's nuclear capabilities, Kennedy leans towards diplomatic solutions, drawing on his experience overseeing CIA operations in Cuba post-Bay of Pigs. His nuanced understanding of international dynamics informs his push for dialogue and negotiation, advocating to avert conflict. His guidance aligns with the administration's cautious approach, emphasizing the importance of preventing direct confrontation. Kennedy's pivotal role shapes the President's decisions during this tense period.

Stewart Udall - Secretary of the Interior:⁶⁴

As Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall's responsibilities predominantly revolve around domestic affairs, particularly the oversight of natural resources and environmental conservation. However, his role intersects with the Cuban Missile Crisis in ways that hint at potential domestic implications and involve an unexpected encounter that serves as a prelude to the imminent crisis. In a surprising turn of events, Udall found himself unexpectedly summoned to a meeting with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, which offered Udall a firsthand glimpse into Khrushchev's veiled intentions. Khrushchev's words, "It's been a long time since you could spank us like a little boy. Now we can swat your [...]," served as an ominous precursor to the Cuban Missile Crisis, hinting at the impending deployment of nuclear missiles to Cuba. Furthermore, as the custodian of domestic resources and land management, Udall plays a crucial role in overseeing the establishment or expansion of military facilities within the country.

Orville Freeman - Secretary of Agriculture:⁶⁵

As Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman shoulders the pivotal responsibility of overseeing the nation's agricultural policies and ensuring food stability. His role extends far beyond managing farms and crop yields; during times of heightened international tension, like the Cuban Missile Crisis, his duties become even more critical. Freeman holds a crucial position in guaranteeing that the United States maintains a steady food

⁶³<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/rfks-secret-role-in-the-cuban-missile-crisis/>

⁶⁴<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d416>

⁶⁵<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d343>



supply for its citizens, the military, and potential relief efforts. His department collaborates closely with farmers, agricultural organizations, and food distributors to ensure a consistent flow of essential goods to the American population. During this crisis, Freeman is acutely aware of the potential disruption to agricultural production that could arise from heightened global tensions. Supply chains could be affected, leading to disruptions in food distribution. To prevent panic or shortages, he works meticulously to assess and address any vulnerabilities in the nation's food systems.

W. Willard Wirtz - Secretary of Commerce:⁶⁶

As the Secretary of Commerce, W. Willard Wirtz oversees the vast landscape of trade and commercial activities within the United States. In times of crisis, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, his role becomes pivotal in assessing and managing the potential economic repercussions. Wirtz is responsible for evaluating the economic implications of the escalating tension. He closely monitors trade activities, assessing how international relations, specifically with Cuba and the Soviet Union, might impact American businesses, industries, and commerce at large. During this critical period, Wirtz likely conducts thorough analyses of trade routes, examining the potential disruptions that could occur if the situation escalates. He works closely with various industries and trade associations, offering guidance to businesses to prepare for any possible trade restrictions or embargoes that might arise.

Adlai Stevenson II - Ambassador to the United Nations:⁶⁷

As the Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Llewellyn E. Thompson holds a position of paramount importance, especially during times of intense geopolitical tensions like the Cuban Missile Crisis. His role involves navigating complex diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, attempting to maintain open lines of communication and negotiation channels. Thompson is the primary liaison between the U.S. government and Soviet leadership. His deep understanding of Soviet politics, culture, and diplomacy enables him to interpret the nuances of Soviet responses and intentions, providing invaluable insights to Washington. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Thompson will likely engage in intense diplomatic negotiations behind the scenes. He will strive to communicate with Soviet officials, attempting to comprehend their perspectives and motivations while also conveying the concerns and positions of the U.S. government. His role involves not only conveying official messages but also utilizing his diplomatic finesse to navigate sensitive discussions, seeking potential avenues for de-escalation and peaceful resolution. Thompson's experience and rapport within the

⁶⁶<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP66B00403R000200170084-8.pdf>

⁶⁷<https://www.cfr.org/blog/twe-remembers-adlai-stevenson-dresses-down-soviet-ambassador-un-cuban-missile-crisis-day-ten>



Soviet hierarchy position him as a crucial player in attempting to diffuse the crisis and prevent it from spiraling into a full-blown conflict.

Maxwell D. Taylor - Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:⁶⁸

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Maxwell D. Taylor holds a position of immense influence within the U.S. military hierarchy, especially during critical junctures like the Cuban Missile Crisis. His role revolves around providing strategic military advice and counsel to the President and the Secretary of Defense, particularly regarding defense policy and operations. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Taylor serves as the principal military advisor to President Kennedy and top policymakers. He contributes to high-level discussions, offering his expertise and insights into potential military actions, their feasibility, and their potential consequences. Taylor plays a crucial role in assessing and analyzing various military options available to the U.S. government in response to the Soviet deployment of missiles in Cuba. He helps shape the military strategy, considering the strengths, weaknesses, and risks associated with each potential course of action. Taylor staunchly supports the position that a forceful invasion is necessary to address the imminent threat posed by the Soviet deployment of missiles in Cuba.

Curtis LeMay - Chief of Staff of the Air Force:⁶⁹

As the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Curtis LeMay holds a significant role in the U.S. military hierarchy, particularly during times of heightened international tension like the Cuban Missile Crisis. LeMay's position places him at the helm of the Air Force's strategic planning and execution, and his stance on military strategies often leans towards assertive and aggressive measures. Notably, LeMay is known for his hawkish and pro-invasion stance. His perspective favors direct military action and a robust show of force in resolving conflicts. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, LeMay advocates for a forceful approach, supporting the option of a full-scale invasion of Cuba as a means to neutralize the Soviet threat. His military acumen and belief in overwhelming force as a deterrent shape his recommendations to the U.S. leadership. LeMay might strongly advocate for swift and decisive action, pushing for military strikes to dismantle the Soviet missile sites in Cuba, viewing them as an immediate threat to national security. His preference for a more aggressive military strategy, including airstrikes or invasion, often contrasts with diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalation. LeMay's recommendations align with his belief in leveraging the U.S. military's might to neutralize perceived threats swiftly and decisively.

⁶⁸<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/16/world/americas/generals-1962-memo-addresses-nuclear-combat-on-cuba.html>

⁶⁹<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/people/lemay-curtis-e#:~:text=LeMay%20was%20SAC%20commander%20until.recommended%20that%20President%20John%20F.>



George W. Anderson - Chief of Naval Operations:⁷⁰

As the Chief of Naval Operations, George W. Anderson holds a position of significant influence within the U.S. Navy, especially during critical moments like the Cuban Missile Crisis. His role involves advising the government on naval strategy and capabilities, and during this crisis, Anderson is known to hold a stance that leans towards advocating for a military response, specifically in favor of an invasion of Cuba. Anderson's pro-invasion stance aligns with his belief in employing military force as a viable solution to address the escalating tensions arising from the Soviet deployment of missiles in Cuba. His perspective likely emphasizes the use of naval forces to support and facilitate a potential military invasion if deemed necessary. As a high-ranking naval officer, Anderson might be advocating for the strategic positioning of naval assets to support any military actions directed towards Cuba. He could be advising on naval blockade plans or potential naval operations to support a larger military intervention.

James Killian - Chair of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board:⁷¹

As the Chair of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board (PIAB) during the Cuban Missile Crisis, James Killian holds a critical position at the intersection of intelligence assessment and presidential decision-making. Killian's role revolves around overseeing and coordinating intelligence efforts and assessments provided to President John F. Kennedy. Leading the PIAB, his responsibilities encompass evaluating intelligence reports from various agencies, ensuring their accuracy, relevance, and timeliness in the context of the crisis. In this capacity, Killian acts as a bridge between the intelligence community and the President, providing synthesized and comprehensive briefings that distill complex information into actionable insights. He collaborates with intelligence agencies to collect and analyze data crucial to understanding Soviet activities in Cuba, the deployment of missiles, and other strategic developments.

John A. McCone - CIA Director:⁷²

As the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), John A. McCone holds a pivotal role in providing crucial intelligence and strategic assessments to the U.S. government, especially during critical periods like the Cuban Missile Crisis. McCone oversees a vast intelligence-gathering apparatus focused on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information vital to national security. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, his primary responsibility is to provide accurate and timely intelligence regarding the Soviet Union's actions in Cuba, particularly concerning the deployment of missiles. Under his

⁷⁰<https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/22/us/adm-george-w-anderson-85-was-in-charge-of-cuba-blockade.html>

⁷¹<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v25/d107#:~:text=On%20February%204%2C%201963%2C%20James.in%20the%20fall%20of%201962.>

⁷²<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/summary-xi>



leadership, the CIA conducts surveillance operations, including aerial reconnaissance, to gather photographic and other evidence of the Soviet missile installations in Cuba. McCone plays a central role in presenting these intelligence findings to President Kennedy and the National Security Council, offering assessments that inform high-level decision-making. His insights and assessments are critical in shaping the U.S. government's understanding of the situation. He is essentially anti-Castro, and supports a surgical airstrike on Cuba followed by an invasion.

Charles P. Cabell - Deputy CIA Director:⁷³

As the Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Charles P. Cabell serves as the second-in-command within the agency's leadership structure. His role is pivotal, especially during critical events like the Cuban Missile Crisis, where he assists the Director in overseeing intelligence operations and providing essential support to national security decision-makers. Cabell is deeply involved in the CIA's intelligence-gathering efforts, working closely with Director John A. McCone to supervise the agency's vast network of operatives and analysts. During the crisis, his responsibilities include managing intelligence collection efforts focused on Cuba and the Soviet Union, aimed at gathering critical information about the nature and scope of the Soviet missile deployment in Cuba. He will also likely play a key role in interpreting and analyzing intelligence reports related to the missile sites, collaborating closely with analysts to assess the threat posed by the Soviet presence in Cuba. Cabell's insights and assessments contribute to the intelligence briefings presented to high-level policymakers, aiding in their understanding of the situation and informing strategic decision-making.

McGeorge Bundy - National Security Advisor:⁷⁴

As the National Security Advisor to President John F. Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy plays a pivotal role in advising the President on national security matters, including the management of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Bundy's primary responsibility is to serve as the President's principal advisor on foreign policy and national security affairs. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, he acts as a key coordinator of information, intelligence, and policy options for the President and the National Security Council (NSC). Working closely with intelligence agencies, including the CIA, Bundy ensures that the President is provided with the most current and comprehensive information regarding the situation in Cuba. He synthesizes intelligence reports, briefings, and assessments to provide Kennedy with a clear understanding of the evolving crisis. In collaboration with other advisors and policymakers, Bundy helps craft the U.S. response to the crisis. He weighs the diplomatic, military, and strategic implications of available options, aiming to assist the

⁷³<https://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/22/world/cia-bares-its-bungling-in-report-on-bay-of-pigs-invasion.html>

⁷⁴<https://time.com/5899754/jfk-decisionmaking-cuban-missile-crisis/>



President in making informed decisions that align with U.S. interests while avoiding unnecessary escalation.

Carl Kaysen - Deputy National Security Advisor:⁷⁵

As the Deputy National Security Advisor to President John F. Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Carl Kaysen holds a pivotal role in assisting McGeorge Bundy and the broader National Security Council (NSC) in managing the evolving crisis. Kaysen's responsibilities encompass a range of tasks crucial to addressing the crisis effectively. He acts as a key advisor, aiding in the assessment of intelligence reports, analyzing policy options, and contributing to the formulation of recommendations presented to the President. Working closely with Bundy, Kaysen participates in NSC meetings, offering insights and perspectives on various strategic and diplomatic approaches to address the Cuban Missile Crisis. He helps synthesize complex information from intelligence agencies, military advisors, and diplomatic channels to provide comprehensive briefings to the President and senior officials. Kaysen's expertise in international relations and his ability to analyze the potential implications of various policy decisions contribute significantly to the discussions within the NSC. He assists in weighing the risks and benefits of different courses of action, aiming to guide the administration toward a resolution that aligns with U.S. interests.

Kenneth O'Donnell - Chief of Staff:⁷⁶

Kenneth O'Donnell serves as Chief of Staff to President John F. Kennedy during the intense and critical Cuban Missile Crisis, holding a central position within the administration. In this pivotal role, O'Donnell operates as the President's right-hand man, managing the day-to-day operations of the White House. During the crisis, he plays a critical part in facilitating communication between various departments, advisors, and the President himself. As Chief of Staff, O'Donnell acts as a key liaison between the President and other high-ranking officials, ensuring that critical information and decisions are efficiently conveyed and implemented. He oversees the flow of information, briefs the President on crucial developments, and coordinates meetings and briefings related to the crisis. During moments of heightened tension, O'Donnell's ability to maintain calm and facilitate effective communication within the White House becomes particularly crucial. He plays a key role in managing the stress and urgency of the crisis within the administration, ensuring that information reaches the President in a timely and organized manner.

⁷⁵Ibid

⁷⁶<https://jfkwitnesses.omeka.net/exhibits/show/secret/odonnell>



FURTHER QUESTIONS

1. How might the U.S. address the Soviet placement of missiles in Cuba concerning the inhabitants of Cuba and the UN's General Assembly Resolution 260?
2. How will the cabinet manage interactions with the Soviet government and the rising nationalist sentiment in Cuba led by Fidel Castro?
3. How will the cabinet's actions influence the economic and political conditions in Cuba during and after the crisis? How will the cabinet address any adverse effects on Cuba should they arise?
4. What is your specific stance on the Cuban Missile Crisis, and who within the cabinet might challenge your position and policies?



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