

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Students will have a solid understating of the Cuban Missile Crisis, America's role and U.S. Presidential foreign policy throughout this historic event.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson Objective:

The student will:

- Learn about significant historical figures and events of the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Work cooperatively in teams to select the appropriate sequence of events as they happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Present their findings to the class

Purpose:

This class is designed to teach the students the importance of history and to answer these historical questions regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis' significance:

- What was the background to the events in Cuba?
- How successful were early attempts at 'containment'?
- Why was the USSR interested in helping Cuba?
- What happened during the Cuban Missile/October Crisis?
- What was the outcome of the crisis?
- What was the initial reaction from both U.S. & USSR public?
- What did this event in history teach the world?

Introduction:

If one speaks to the generations of the 1950s and early 1960s and asks them to name one of the most significant and frightening events of their lifetime, the responses will most definitively include the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a series of events that occurred in the early 1960s where the USSR worked with and supplied munitions and nuclear capabilities to the Island of Cuba. These events led to massive tensions between the quietly waring nations of the United States and the USSR. This crisis led to massive panic and showed the world that these two nations were near the brink of war. This lesson plan will allow students to understand the threat of this event and the role played by major policy makers in the United States and in the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Grade Level: 9 – 12 (High School)

[Ohio Learning Standards/Social Studies \(2018\)](#)

American History

The Cold War (1945 – 1991)

[22.](#) Use of atomic weapons

[23.](#) Containment

Modern World History

The Cold War (1945 - 1991)

[17.](#) U.S. & USSR became superpowers

[18.](#) Treaties & agreements

[21.](#) Political and social struggles

Materials Required:

- Attached PowerPoint
- Attached "order" activity cards (page 4)

Procedures:

A. Warm-up

1. The teacher will review with the class the history and key terms included in the attached PowerPoint presentation. This overview will allow students to have a solid understanding of the concept of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
2. Begin by showing the Cuban Missile Crisis PowerPoint presentation. Emphasize the key names and terms significant to this event.
3. Explain to the students that each team will be implementing these names and terms at the conclusion of class.

B. Activity

1. Students will be assigned to work in groups of 3-4.
2. Handout the “order” activity cards to each group.
3. Their task is to decide in what order the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred.
4. They will be given 5 minutes to complete this task.
5. Students will then present their group’s findings to the class.

Extension:

1. Divide students into groups A or B.
2. Group A must produce a short press release explaining the background, key events and outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis from a Soviet perspective. Keep in mind anti-capitalist Soviet propaganda.
3. Group B, must do the same but, from an American perspective. Keep in mind anti-communist U.S. propaganda.
4. Teachers should also ask, what would be the response today with the current political and economic climate? How would the public respond? Politics? Would we encounter an actual conflict?

Resources:

Cuban Missile Crisis:

<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/197542/cuban-missile-crisis/>

<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/195974/lockheed-u-2a/>

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/colc.html>

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/msc_cubamenu.asp

<http://library.thinkquest.org/11046/days/timeline.html>

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

Cuba Blockade:

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/kennedy-press-secretary-misleads-press>

<https://sites.google.com/site/cubancrisisdtsma/discovery-of-missiles>

Cuba Missile Sites:

<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=94>

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

Mutual Assured Destruction:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/mutually-assured-destruction-1221190>

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

PUT THE EVENTS IN ORDER
ACTIVITY

Bay of Pigs occurs	U.S. spy planes take pictures over USSR	Cuba receive thousands of armaments from USSR
Spy planes observe Soviet ships loaded with missiles headed for Cuba	U.S. breaks off diplomatic relations with Cuba	Khrushchev asks Kennedy to move U.S. missile from Turkey
Fidel Castro overthrows Battista	Kennedy lifts "quarantine"	Kennedy "quarantines" Cuba

<p>Photos show continued construction on Cuban missile sites</p>	<p>Khrushchev agrees to remove missiles</p>	<p>Kennedy asks Khrushchev to remove weapons from Cuba</p>
<p>Khrushchev agrees to negotiate if the “quarantine” is lifted</p>	<p>Khrushchev refuses to acknowledge “quarantine”</p>	<p>U.S. spy plane is shot down over Cuba and the pilot is killed</p>
<p>Soviets deny that missiles are “in place”</p>	<p>Soviet ships head toward “quarantine” zone</p>	

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

(Answer Sheet)

- 1.** Fidel Castro overthrows Battista
- 2.** U.S. breaks off diplomatic relations with Cuba
- 3.** Bay of Pigs occurs
- 4.** Cuba receive thousands of armaments from USSR
- 5.** U.S. spy planes take pictures over USSR
- 6.** Spy planes observe Soviet ships loaded with missiles headed for Cuba
- 7.** Kennedy “quarantines” Cuba
- 8.** Kennedy asks Khrushchev to remove weapons from Cuba
- 9.** Soviets deny that missiles are “in place”
- 10.** Khrushchev refuses to acknowledge “quarantine”
- 11.** Soviet ships head toward “quarantine” zone
- 12.** Photos show continued construction on Cuban missile sites
- 13.** Khrushchev agrees to negotiate if the “quarantine” is lifted
- 14.** Khrushchev asks Kennedy to move U.S. missile from Turkey
- 15.** U.S. spy plane is shot down over Cuba and the pilot is killed
- 16.** Kennedy lifts “quarantine”
- 17.** Khrushchev agrees to remove missiles

The Cuban Missile Crisis

October 1962

Lesson objectives/questions

- What was the background to the events in Cuba?
- How successful were early attempts at 'containment'?
- Why was the USSR interested in helping Cuba?
- What happened during the Cuban Missile/October Crisis?
- What was the outcome of the crisis?



What was the background to the events in Cuba?

- Cuba, small island, approximately 90 miles from coast of Florida
- US ally, US businesses & US military base (Guantanamo)
- 1959, Fidel Castro overthrows Battista (US-backed dictator), establishing Communist government.

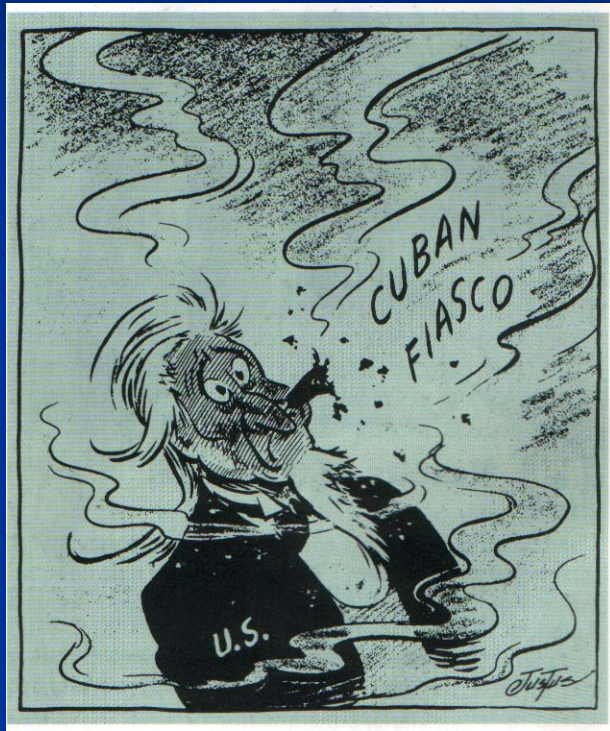


Why was Cuba so important to the Americans?



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How successful were early attempts at 'containment'?



- Castro takes over US businesses
- January 1961, US breaks off diplomatic relations
- April, 1961, Bay of Pigs – 1,400 anti-Cuban exiles attempted to overthrow Castro (U.S. supported)
- Autumn 1962, Cuba has received 1000s of USSR missiles, jets, boats & personnel

The US committed \$100 million to overthrowing Castro, the CIA tried to sabotage the economy, they even planned to send him an exploding cigar! Why did they go to such lengths after April 1961?

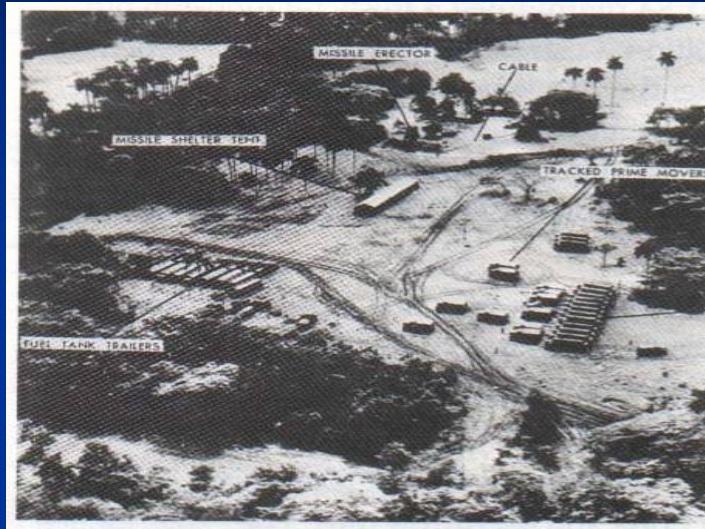
Why was the USSR interested in Cuba?

- Cuba was a new Communist state
- Cuba provided a launch base for USSR inter-continental missiles (ICMs)
- Nikita Khrushchev (USSR leader) wanted to test strength of new US president, JFK
- Khrushchev wanted to force JFK into bargaining over US missile in Europe



Why does this cartoonist think that Khrushchev was interested in Cuba?

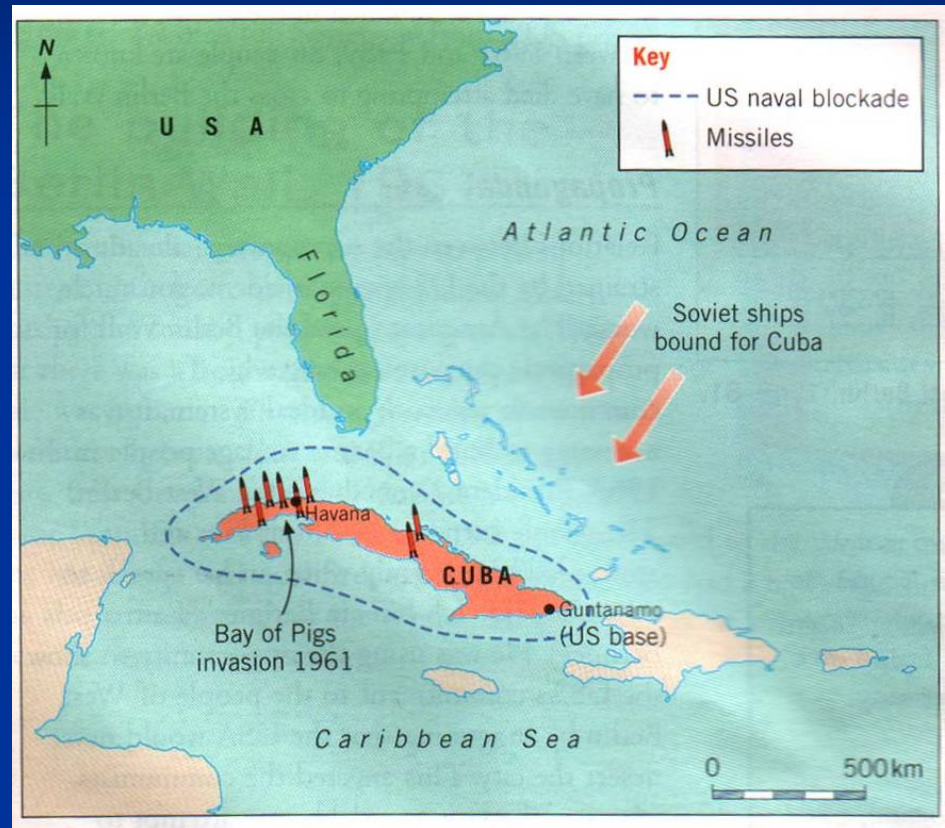
What happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis?



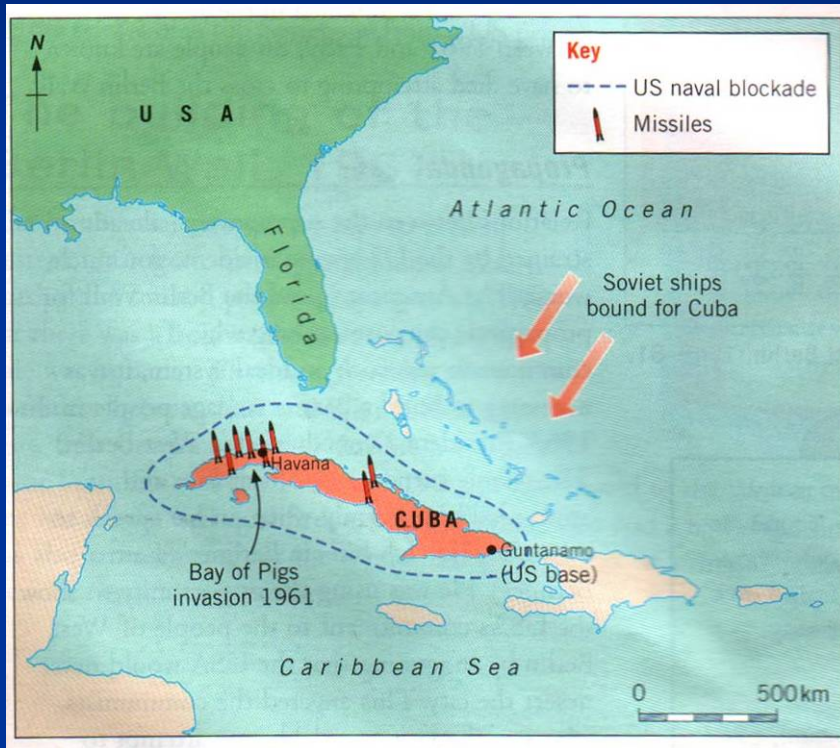
- 14 October 1962, US U2 spy plane takes photos of suspected USSR missile sites on Cuba
- Sites nearing completion, experts believe they could be ready in 7 days
- 15 October US spy planes identify 20 Soviet ships bound for Cuba carrying missiles

What happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

- 20 October, Kennedy decides to “quarantine” Cuba
- 22 October, Kennedy publicly calls on Khrushchev to remove weapons



What happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis?



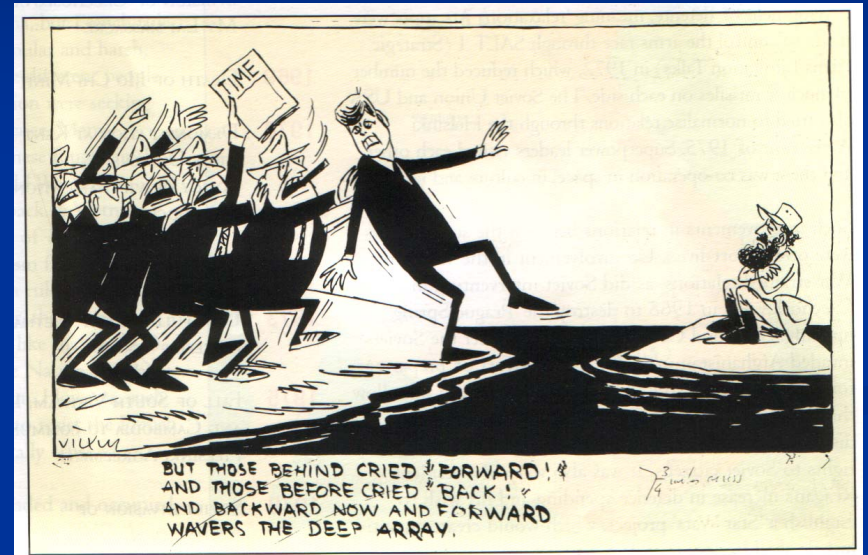
- 23 October Khrushchev refuses to acknowledge “quarantine” or presence of Soviet missiles on Cuba
- 24 October, 1st Soviet ships (accompanied by submarine) approach exclusion zone

What happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

- 24 October, 10:32 am, Soviet ships stop and turn round
- 25 October, aerial photos show continued construction of missile sites
- 26 October, Kennedy receives another letter offering to negotiate over missiles in Cuba with removal of blockade and US invasion threat
- 27 October, Kennedy receives second letter calling for withdrawal of US missiles in Turkey too

What happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

- 27 October, US U2 plane shot down over Cuba & pilot killed. Kennedy decides to ignore second letter, but accepts terms of 1st letter
- 28 October, Khrushchev agrees to dismantle Soviet missiles in Cuba



What is this cartoonist trying to say about the difficulties facing Kennedy during the Crisis?



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What was the outcome of the crisis?

- Cuba remained Communist & heavily armed (without nuclear missiles)
- Both leaders didn't lose face and came away with concessions
- Helped renew the thaw – world saw the futility of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)
- Permanent hotline between White House & Kremlin set up
- Supported theory of containment & co-existence because alternatives unimaginable

Your task

President John F Kennedy was faced with a number of extremely difficult decisions that could decide the fate of the world! Look in your envelope. Place the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis in order. Good luck, you have five minutes.....

Y Extension task

Divide into groups A and B. Group A must produce a short press release explaining the background, key events & outcome from the Soviet press perspective. Group B must do the same for the perspective of the American press.

Key Terms and People

- Communist
- Kremlin
- John F Kennedy
- Khrushchev
- “quarantine”
- U2 spy plane
- Castro
- Guantanamo
- ‘containment’

