

Historical Security Council (1962)

The Cuban Missile Crisis



Forum: Security Council 1962

Issue: Cuban Missile Crisis

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Introduction

It is October 22nd, 1962. President Kennedy has just made public, during a national television address, the presence of nuclear missile sites in Cuba. The evidence for this was based on aerial photographs taken by U-2 spy planes on the 14th of October indicating the Soviet Union has been installing medium-range nuclear weapons in the country.

After the Second World War, the USA (United States of America) and USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) were the main military influences and ideological superpowers of the world. Both nations initially seemed to work well together in settling terms for the defeated German nation and other issues in Europe. However, the situation changed drastically after President Truman, an anti-communist, became the American leader. The USSR sought to spread its communist ideology throughout its 'sphere of influence' in Eastern Europe. The leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin, was skeptical of the West and its intentions. Soviets were convinced that the USA intended to destroy communism potentially through the use of nuclear weapons whilst Americans feared that the spread of communism threatened their freedom and way of life with a system of government based on terror, oppression, and loss of individual liberty. This conflict between respective economic and political systems created tension between these two superpowers, resulting in the use of other nations for the spread of ideologies. This must be the Security Council's priority: to reduce the tension between the Capitalist USA and Communist USSR as the tension is impacting nations whose political situations allows them to be key in the conflict.



Definition of Key Terms

Communism

A theory or a system of social organization in which all property and resources are owned collectively by society and not by individuals. These resources are available to all when needed. During the Cold War this was the system in the Soviet Union.

Capitalism

An economic and political system in which there is private ownership of goods and thus a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners rather than the state. There is private ownership of the means of production. In the context of the Cuban Missile Crisis, this is the system followed by the United States of America.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is an intergovernmental military alliance established on the 4th of April, 1949. It was founded after the Second World War to protect against communist threats. It was also created to secure peace in Western Europe and prevent the outbreak of another war. Its main members include France, the United Kingdom and the United States.



Background Information and Context

Cold War

The USA and USSR were on opposite sides of the Cold War - an ideological conflict between Capitalism and Communism. There is little direct military engagement between the two nations up to this point. The USA threatens the USSR with its Policy of Containment and the USSR threatens the USA with its expansionist ideology. The Policy of Containment was pursued by the USA, in particular by President Truman during the 1940s and early 1950's, in order to control USSR's expansionist policies. Part of the policy included the Truman Doctrine, America's promise of helping countries in threat of a Communist take-over economically. For instance, the Marshall Plan was established to support Europe with \$13 billion to rebuild Western European economies after the Second World War and strengthen them economically against the spread of communism, as political stability was believed to be tied with financial stability. After the Yalta conference in 1945, it had been decided that Germany would be divided into 4 zones: American, French, British and Soviet. The further breakdown of the USA-USSR alliance led to the merging of the USA, UK, and French partitions to form West Germany. Prior to the tension that arose from the presence of missiles in Cuba, the Berlin wall was built providing a physical barrier between West and East Germany or in other words, communism, and capitalism. This occurred in 1961 and marked a change in the state of war.

Cuba – USA

A small nation, especially when compared to the USA or the USSR, that is situated just off the coast of Florida, USA. In the 1950's, Cuba was led by dictator Fulgencio Batista. Batista was in favour of the U.S. and the support he did receive within Cuba was from the army. During the 1950's the U.S. controlled 80 percent of Cuban utilities, 90 percent of Cuban mines, close to 100 percent of the country's oil refineries, 90 percent of its cattle ranches, and 40 percent of the sugar industry (Dr. Birsen Filip, 2015). This meant that the



USA had absolute power over Cuban domestic and foreign policies. The Batista regime collapsed in 1959 leaving Fidel Castro in charge. Fidel Castro, the leader of the Revolution that occurred from 1953 - 1959, is now Prime Minister and favours the USSR - engaging diplomatically, economically, and sharing the same Communist ideology. Initially, Fidel Castro was backed by the USA in his revolution. The USA sought to remove Fulgencio Batista, Castro's predecessor, from power and funded Castro imposing an arms embargo against Batista's government. However, the Castro regime suspended ties with the USA by expanding its connection with the USSR. The strong ties with the USSR made Cuba an important element in the Cold War, further increasing tension between both superpowers.

Cuba-USSR

The new Cuban regime led by Castro did not completely trust the USSR initially. However, in 1960 the USA had placed an embargo on exports. This could have deeply hampered Cuban economic growth as the biggest source of income was from sugar exports. The trade embargo did provide the USSR with the opportunity to buy Cuba's sugar and drive Castro towards Communist ideologies.

Bay of Pigs

The USA started to become deeply concerned by the strong ties formed between Cuba and the Soviet Union especially because it's greatest enemy was only 50 km away. The American government now feared Cuba as a source for Communism to spread in Latin America. There was already known evidence of interference by the USA in countries like Brazil and Chile, in an attempt to oppose communism spreading. On the 17th of April, 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower directed the CIA to put forward a plan in order to overthrow the communist leader, Fidel Castro. The CIA trained one thousand four hundred Cuban exiles. The exiles were known as *Brigade 2506*. When John F. Kennedy was elected as president of the USA in 1960, he allowed the CIA to proceed with the plan to invade Cuba as he had soon come to the consensus that Castro was a communist threat to not only the USA



but also to other Latin American countries. On the 17th of April, 1961, the trained Cuban exiles were deployed in an attempt to overthrow the regime. The exiles were defeated within three days by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces. The failed attempt strengthened ties between the USSR and Cuba and led to the creation of a new operation named Operation Mongoose. The operation had the same objective as the former Bay of Pigs, yet differed in its approach. Some parts of the operation included military, political, and intelligence operations whilst others included Anti-Castro propaganda and provision of arms to groups that opposed the regime. The plan was to invade Cuba in October of 1962. This did not occur and thus was considered another failure of the USA in deterring Fidel Castro.

The situation escalates

Prior to the Soviet placement of missiles in Cuba, the USA already had nuclear missiles placed in Turkey - giving them a 'first-strike' advantage over the USSR due to Turkey's proximity to the Soviets. This occurred on the 28th of October, 1959 when the USA and Turkey agreed to deploy nuclear-tipped Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy. This was a result of NATO's objective of deterring the Soviet Union. NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, imposed a threat to the USSR by allying many Western nations militarily, potentially against the USSR in case of active military conflict. In 1960, a United States U-2 spy plane had been shot down by the Soviet Air Defense Forces whilst it was taking aerial photographs of Soviet Territory. This could be viewed as an "act of war" considering the impact it had on the relationship between the USA and the USSR. In 1962, other U-2 spy planes sent to Cuba confirmed that the USSR has been providing Cuba with nuclear-tipped missiles as they were able to photograph and prove the existence of these missiles.

Thus, during the spring and summer of 1962, the USSR has been and is continuously importing military components to Cuba. This is due to the geographical proximity of the USA to Cuba, giving the USSR a 'first-strike' advantage. This is a dangerous change of situation that



placed the balls on the American's side of the court. At this point, the issue should be taken into account by the UN in order to deter the threat of nuclear war and the potential extinction of life on earth. A war or military conflict between the USA and USSR could mean the death of over 100 million Russians and Americans.

Major Countries Involved

USSR

Prior to the cold war conflict, the USSR had undergone a series of invasions by the Poles, Lithuanians, Swedes, and Turks as well as Napoleon and Hitler during WWI and II. The countries sensitive and devastating history shaped their protective approach towards maintaining both internal and external sovereignty, in hopes to regain security and dignity. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was a personal victim of the invasion by Austrian troops of his village in WWI. During WWII his life was dangerously close to being compromised at the battle of Stalingrad. This gives context to his decision to place missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev wanted his country to regain pride and save Cuba's revolutionary government from obtaining a capitalistic ideology. Moreover, Russian politicians considered themselves victims of various invasions. In an interview conducted with the son of leader Nikita Khrushchev, Sergei, he stated: "because Americans were lucky that they didn't have natural enemies like Europeans they've never experienced that threat before. The USSR had a 20th century with three major wars that fully destroyed their country - Americans never had enemies on their borders, so they exaggerate this threat like the Cuban Missile Crisis" (Sam LaGrone, 2012) As for the perspective Russia's politics had on America, they didn't understand America's desperation with Russia's expansionist policies.

USA

Many of the policies and doctrines adopted by the USA were aimed at restricting the expansion of Communist USSR. In the US there was widespread skepticism towards communists that became known as the "Red-Scare". The people,



the government, and in fact the nation as a whole opposed communism and all that it stood for. The USA took up a Policy of Containment - directly trying to limit the spread of communism domestically and internationally. The Marshall Aid, a policy within the Truman Doctrine of Containment, sought to financially back countries in Western Europe. Although apparently harmless, it was a direct attempt to back anti-communist nations in order to prevent the ideology of spreading communism to said nations. Thus, with all this anti-communist sentiment, coming from the top and the bottom of society, the USA was very hostile towards the USSR and Cuba in this period. It is important to bear this in mind when making propositions for both parties to reach peaceful and diplomatic solutions in this crisis.

Cuba

After Castro's revolution, Cuba became communist and soon began creating economic and diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union. It was a communist hub 100 miles off the coast of Florida and posed a direct threat to the USA - as well as an opportunity for communism to expand to Latin America. Cuba is extremely favourable towards the USSR and fears the USA might attempt to invade it if the USSR removes its troops from the island. The Bay of Pigs serves as a reminder to the Cubans. The Cubans will, therefore, be prioritizing the safekeeping of their nation - even if that means maintaining Soviet nuclear missiles in their territory.

Timeline of Events

Date	Event Description
March 14th, 1958	First embargo imposed by the United States on the sales of arms to Cuba during the Fulgencio Batista regime
January 1st, 1959	



Fidel Castro assumes power after the	Cuban Revolution
October 19th, 1960	U.S. placed embargo on exports to Cuba except for food and medicine after Cuba nationalized American-owned Cuban oil refineries without compensation
February 7th, 1962	The embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba was extended to all imports
December 19th, 1960	Cuba openly aligns itself with the Soviet Union and their policies.
April 17th, 1961	"The Bay of Pigs" - A group of Cuban exiles, backed by the US, invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in a failed attempt to overthrow the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro
June 3-4, 1961	Khrushchev and Kennedy hold summit talks in Vienna regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis.
October 14th, 1962	U-2 spy planes flying over Cuba obtain photographs of missile sites.
October 22nd, 1962	Congressional leaders are shown the photographic evidence of the Soviet missile Cuban installations and the President addresses the nation regarding the Cuban crisis clarifying there is sufficient evidence of the USSR having missiles in Cuba.

Possible Solutions

The Cuban Missile Crisis is not only relevant to the USA, the USSR and Cuba. Although they are the main parties involved in the matter, this is a global issue that all present nations should seek to address in unison.



Achieving a peaceful end to this confrontation is utmost importance. The threat of nuclear warfare that could eventually extinguish life on earth, requires nations to act urgently yet intelligently. Firstly, nations should consider how to de-escalate the conflict. This is likely to be a challenge as the the USA and USSR are at the peak of the Cold War and relations between the two nations are very hostile. Specifically, since the Cold War is mostly a political and ideological conflict, it is hard to seek a 'ceasefire' since there aren't any direct military engagements. Nations should therefore consider how they should bring both parties, the USA and the USSR, to the negotiation table in order to settle this confrontation peacefully.

Consideration should also be taken to other alternatives. Nations should consider the possibility of trade sanctions, broader economic sanctions, and trade tariffs to further encourage alternative dispute resolutions. It is undeniable that this conflict, if not handled with precision and intent may have consequences expanding far beyond the borders of the two main parties of interest. Though the United Nations is a multi-governmental organisation with respect to state sovereignty, this is notwithstanding the necessity of a resolution to settle this matter.

Alternatively, nations in the Security Council seek primarily to maintain world peace. Thus, if any nation finds the situation uncontrollably hostile and does not think peaceful means can be met then direct military action can be taken. This must be done through an intervention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation with military supply provided by member states.



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