The Cuban Missile Crisis: Evolving Historical Perspectives

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MANY AMERICANS STILL RETAIN VIVID IMPRESSIONS of what appeared to some to be a nuclear poker game between the United States and the Soviet Union in October of 1962. For more than a quarter century, the Cuban missile crisis has been studied, analyzed, and reflected upon by hundreds of people ranging from historians to journalists, from participants to observers, from experts to amateurs. In the brief space of this article, it is not possible to review all of the principal interpretations. What is presented here is a synthesis of the views of the participants and a synthesis of some of the counterviews of scholars. The article will conclude with a review of three recent works on the crisis.

While there remain several issues over which interpreters differ, this article is limited to four critical areas of conflicting interpretations, which include: 1) the basis for Soviet emplacement of missiles in Cuba, 2) the response of the United States to the missiles in Cuba, 3) the leadership of President John F. Kennedy during the crisis, and 4) the consequences or results in the aftermath of the nuclear confrontation.

Why did the Soviet Union emplace missiles in Cuba? The traditionalists of the Kennedy Administration submit six plausible hypotheses: 1) the Soviets sought to test American determination and will (Sorensen, Schles-

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inger); 2) they sought to strengthen their bargaining position on Berlin (Sorensen, Taylor, Schlesinger, Hilsman, Rostow); 3) Khrushchev and his associates sought to defend Cuba from an American attack while simultaneously extending the communist influence in the Western Hemisphere (Sorensen, Taylor, Schlesinger, Hilsman, O'Donnell); 4) the Soviets sought to alter and equalize the strategic balance of power, that is, to compensate for the missile gap (Sorensen, Taylor, Schlesinger, Hilsman, Rostow); 5) Khrushchev and/or the Russians sought to reassert their authority and prestige as the leader in international communism (Sorensen, Taylor, Hilsman, Rostow); and 6) Khrushchev sought to divert attention away from a host of Soviet domestic problems (Schlesinger, Hilsman).[1] These motives were summarized succintly by Walt Rostow in 1972 in his book *The Diffusion of Power*:

> Khrushchev was looking for a quick success which would enhance his political prestige and power in Soviet politics; enhance his authority in the international communist movement...redress the military balance cheaply in terms of resources...and provide leverage for the resolution of the Berlin problem he had sought without success since 1958.[2]

Today especially there seems to be more agreement as to the Soviet motive, at least from the traditionalist or participant perspective. According to Arthur Schlesinger, the most plausible reason for the emplacement of Soviet missiles in Cuba in 1962 was that Nikita Khrushchev sought to repair his own missile gap. "Khrushchev saw the missiles as a quick fix."[3] Raymond Garthoff in his *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* claims that, "We saw the principle Soviet objective as redressing a strategic inferiority, publicly revealed, and growing in diversity."[4] Whatever the motive, the participants claim that the emplacement of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba did alter, either literally or in appearance, the status quo of the balance of power, especially in an area of vital interest to the United States (Sorensen, Schlesinger, Hilsman).[5] Hence the missiles were classified as offensive by the administration and, therefore, President Kennedy had no other option than to act.

According to the participants, the Kennedy Administration initially rejected an air strike on the missiles because it could not be surgical and the problem of advance warning was unsolvable. An attack without warning would not be understood by the world and, furthermore, the option of an air strike or an invasion would run counter to American tradition (Sorensen, Kennedy).[6] Therefore, the President supported a quarantine, for such action provided, according to Hilsman, "a step by step progression up the ladder of coercion."[7] It also permitted a more controlled escalation on the part of the United States and required Khrushchev to be

the first to initiate any military action (Sorensen, Rostow).[8] Furthermore, international law influenced the choice of a quarantine; legal considerations restrained the United States because Article Two of the United Nations Charter ruled out the use of land aggression and surprise attack. The United States wanted the United Nations to endorse its response to the missiles in Cuba and, therefore, did not want to respond in a way that violated the U.N. Charter. Also, such considerations influenced the choice of the term "quarantine" because a "blockade" was considered an act of war under international law (Chayes).[9]

How well did President Kennedy perform during the missile crisis? According to the participants, it was Kennedy's finest hour; he was neither hasty nor hesitant; he was neither reckless nor afraid (Sorensen). He demonstrated toughness, restraint, and determination (Schlesinger). He always exercised wisdom, analysis, and a keen sense of strategy; he was not only a leader but also a hero (Hilsman).[10] The crisis under Kennedy's leadership displayed to the world "the ripening of an American leadership unsurpassed in responsible management of power" (Schlesinger).[11]

According to the participants, President Kennedy's leadership in the crisis led to a reduction in the tensions of the Cold War and to the installation of the teletype "hot line" between the White House and the Kremlin as well as to the signing of the nuclear test ban treaty; the crisis thus helped to promote peaceful coexistence and détente between the United States and the Soviet Union (Sorensen, Schlesinger, Hilsman).[12] Also, the resolution of the crisis led to open controversy between Russia and China which served to accelerate the diffusion of power in the world (Rostow, O'Donnell).[13]

The composite perspective of the participants then is one of a President acting courageously, selecting an appropriate response, and managing the crisis to a successful resolution. The participants view positively the results which followed in the aftermath of the crisis. However, scholars writing on this subject tend to take a contrary perspective, a perspective that represents a revision of traditional views held by the participants.

Why did the Soviet Union emplace missiles in Cuba from a revisionist perspective? According to an early revisionist account by Leslie Dewart, the Soviet objective was to force a settlement of the Cuban issue within the broad context of the Cold War. That is, the Soviet Union sought to deter an attack on Cuba while simultaneously compelling the United States to negotiate a settlement of the Berlin problem in favor of the communists.[14] Yet Ronald Steel claims that the President's concern about the Berlin issue led him to misread the Soviet motives. According to Steel, the President believed that the Cuban missile maneuver was an attempt by the Soviets to force the American allies out of Berlin in exchange for the withdrawal

of the missiles in the Western hemisphere. Thus, the Kennedy Administration failed to understand the real Soviet motives which were: 1) to redress the strategic imbalance, 2) to protect Castro's communism, and 3) to strengthen the Soviet position in the Caribbean and in Latin America.[15]

According to Barton Bernstein, the Soviets did seek to support a revolutionary communist regime in the Western hemisphere; however, and this is a critical difference between the participants and revisionists, the missiles did not alter the strategic balance of power. The missiles neither gave the Soviets a first strike capacity nor did the missiles increase the Soviet capacity for a retaliatory second strike (Bernstein, Hagan).[16] According to Bernstein, the President's definition of the missiles as offensive, and therefore strategic, did not rely on the nature of the weapons but rather on his assumptions about the intentions of the possessors of the weapons.[17] Given the nuclear superiority of the United States in 1962, the nuclear power of the Soviet Union remained relatively unchanged by the introduction of missiles in Cuba (Horowitz).[18] The missiles in Cuba only complicated an American response to a nuclear attack whether it be from the Soviet Union or Cuba.

This concept that the missiles did not alter the strategic balance of nuclear power, that is, did not represent a military threat to the security of the United States, is either explicitly or implicitly evident in the works of many revisionists (Horowitz, Clinch, Miroff).[19] The Kennedy Administration, therefore, according to the revisionists, arbitrarily and superficially made a distinction between the Soviet "offensive" missiles in Cuba and the American "defensive" missiles in Turkey when in fact both were emplaced in allied countries for defensive purposes (Hagan, Walton).[20] This distinction permitted Kennedy to accuse the Soviets of deception (Hagan)[21] and to treat the incident as a military rather than as a political matter; Kennedy, therefore, decided on what was really a blockade, an act of war (Horowitz, Miroff).[22]

Some revisionist scholars claim that the President rejected diplomacy and initiated a confrontation because he feared diplomacy might mean a loss of American prestige (Bernstein); diplomacy or negotiation might give the impression of appeasement (FitzSimons) and ultimately result in a loss of faith in American commitments (Miroff).[23] However, other revisionists view the situation quite differently; they claim that the President, for the sake of personal prestige, converted an issue in foreign affairs into a personal issue (Hagan, Stone, Clinch).[24] As a Cold War warrior and a believer in crisis politics, John Kennedy, without sufficient reason (Walton) and without rational need (Clinch), was prepared to risk a thermonuclear showdown.[25] According to Thomas Paterson, President Kennedy personalized issues and converted them into tests of will.

Therefore, he rejected diplomacy in favor of a public confrontation via his television address, even though such action significantly increased the chances of war.[26] Paterson states:

> The president's desire to score a victory, to recapture previous losses, to flex his muscle accentuated the crisis and obstructed diplomacy....Kennedy gave Khrushchev no chance to withdraw his mistake or to save face.... He left little room for bargaining but instead issued a public ultimatum and seemed willing to destroy, in Strangelovian fashion, millions in the process.[27]

While the participants view the successful resolution of the crisis and its subsequent consequences as very positive, many scholars take exception to this perspective; many view the ultimate results of the American-Soviet confrontation as negative in both the short and long term. According to the revisionist perspective, the crisis unfortunately served no long range legal or pacific goals (Hagan). While the crisis initiated détente between America and Russia, it primarily served as an impetus for a new nuclear arms race, a new stage in the competition for massive nuclear weapons (Bernstein, Horowitz, Miroff, Paterson).[28] Thus, the world became a much more difficult place to disarm. As a result of the crisis America gained a renewed confidence in its military power and in its politics of escalation which soon turned to arrogance; this arrogance in turn led the United States to escalate its action in Vietnam (Miroff, Paterson).[29] Having enshrined force as an instrument of policy, the United States began to seek military solutions to purely international political problems.

The essential revisionist perspective was formed within a decade and a half following the 1962 crisis. The composite perspective of the revisionists is one of a president rejecting diplomacy via private negotiations for a policy of public confrontation. These critics claim Kennedy rejected a political solution to a political problem and instead instituted a military response. The aftermath of the crisis brought not victory, but arrogance; it brought forth a new nuclear arms race.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis has sparked renewed interest in this crucial episode of the Cold War. A number of scholarly books and articles have been published in recent years on this topic. Among the more interesting books are Raymond Garthoff's *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, McGeorge Bundy's *Danger and Survival*, and James Blight and David Welch's *On the Brink*.[30]

Raymond Garthoff's *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* is a reflective memoir by a Soviet specialist in the State Department in 1962. Garthoff's book draws on his own recollections, declassified documents

and scholarly sources. He does not detail the background or the development of the crisis; rather he attempts to analyze the Soviet understanding of the crisis and the lessons they may have drawn from the experience.

According to Garthoff, the primary Soviet motive for introducing nuclear missiles into Cuba was an attempt to change the strategic balance of power. They were not bargaining chips to settle the Berlin problem; they were not there to defend Castro.[31] He rejects the contention that the conclusion of the missile crisis led the Soviet Union to increase immediately its military power; there was no "crash" program to accelerate military power. While the Soviet Union did later develop rough parity with the United States, it was not a direct result of the missile crisis.[32]

Garthoff maintains that the short term consequences were positive in that the crisis did lead to détente and to arms control; it ended any new flare up about Berlin; and it ended the threat of an American invasion of Cuba. While American foreign policy remained hostile to Cuba, the missile crisis initiated a belief in Washington that the United States had to accept the fact that Castro and communism would remain in Cuba.[33]

Garthoff concludes his reflections with an analysis of what he believes is the long-term legacy for the Soviets. The Soviets learned: 1) not to bluff; 2) not to challenge an adversary who is stronger; and 3), most importantly, to avoid crises. Crisis avoidance is better than crisis management; political accommodation is possible and preferable to crisis management. Since no crisis of the magnitude of October 1962 has occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union, Garthoff concludes that both sides had learned this lesson.[34]

McGeorge Bundy, former Special Assistant to President Kennedy for National Security Affairs, analyzes the Cuban missile crisis within the context of the first fifty years of the nuclear bomb. *Danger and Survival* traces the history of the bomb from the discovery of fission in 1938 to the American-Soviet summit meeting of 1988. Detailing the political choices about the bomb in this period, Bundy concludes that this fifty year tradition of "no use" provides the basis for reducing the nuclear danger.[35]

Bundy claims that President Kennedy had no other option than to act forcibly in the Cuban missile crisis. Given the attitudes of the American people, the Congress, and the administration in 1962, thermonuclear missiles in Cuba were unacceptable. Kennedy promised effective action and, therefore, could not accept ineffective diplomacy.[36]

Bundy takes exception to Ted Sorensen's 1987 statement at a conference at Hawk's Cay (see below) that President Kennedy in his 1962 September statements drew the line precisely where he thought the Soviets were not and would not be. Sorensen had indicated that Kennedy would have drawn the line at 100 missiles instead of zero if he had known the

Soviets were emplacing forty missiles in Cuba. Bundy, however, claims the American public would not have permitted such a choice. The strong national conviction was that missiles in Cuba were totally unacceptable.[37] Furthermore, he now concedes that Khrushchev was induced to put missiles in Cuba so as to protect Cuba and to change the highly unfavorable strategic nuclear balance of power. He further concedes that the United States at the time utterly failed to perceive these Russian motives.[38]

One of the most interesting subsections in Bundy's chapter on the Cuban missile crisis is entitled "The Role of Nuclear and Conventional Balances." Herein Bundy states that the decisive military element in successfully resolving the missile crisis was American superiority in conventional weapons in this hemisphere. Furthermore, Bundy contends that the result of the confrontation would have been the same even if the United States and the Soviet Union had strategic parity. In effect, Bundy alleges that the nine to one American nuclear superiority was inconsequential in effecting a resolution of the crisis.[39] Bundy concludes:

> Nuclear ambition caused the crisis; a sense of nuclear affront forced the response; an awareness of nuclear danger drove both governments toward rapidity of resolution; but it was conventional superiority on the scene that determined the eventual outcome.[40]

On the Brink by James Blight and David Welch is a critical oral history of the Cuban missile crisis. The book contains an edited version of the Hawk's Cay Conference held in Florida on March 5-7, 1987 where several members of Kennedy's Executive Committee (ExCom) met with scholars to review and discuss the crisis. The book also contains an edited version of the Cambridge Conference held at Harvard on October 11-12, 1987 where three knowledgeable Soviets, three former members of ExCom, and several American scholars met to dialogue about the events of October 1962.[41]

Perhaps the most significant revelation at the Hawk's Cay Conference came not in the discussions from the participants but in a letter written by Dean Rusk to Jim Blight which was read by McGeorge Bundy. The letter refers to the issue of the removal of American Jupiter missiles emplaced in Turkey. Barton Bernstein and others have questioned whether President Kennedy was sufficiently brave to accept the political consequences of a public pledge to remove the Jupiter missiles in Turkey in order to get the Russian missiles out of Cuba without the use of force.[42] According to the Rusk letter, Kennedy was prepared to use the necessary diplomatic machinery for a public trade. Rusk states:

> It was clear to me that President Kennedy would not let the Jupiters in Turkey become an obstacle to the removal of the missile sites in Cuba

> because the Jupiters were coming out in any event. He instructed me to telephone the late Andrew Cordier, then at Columbia University, and dictate to him a statement which would be made by U Thant, the Secretary General of the United Nations, proposing the removal of both the Jupiters and the missiles in Cuba. Mr. Cordier was to put that statement in the hands of U Thant only after further signal from us. That step was never taken and the statement I furnished to Mr. Cordier has never seen the light of day. So far as I know, President Kennedy, Andrew Cordier and I were the only ones who knew of this particular step.[43]

Rusk's statement indicates that President Kennedy at the height of the crisis indeed was prepared to suffer the political consequences inherent in a trade of the Jupiter missiles in order to bail himself out of the missile crisis.[44]

While the Cuban missile crisis is one of the most widely studied events of the post World War II era, our understanding and perceptions of this event have been formed almost exclusively by western accounts. The Cambridge Conference was an attempt to rectify this situation by including as participants Fyodor Burlatsky, former speechwriter for Khrushchev and Political Advisor for Socialist Countries of Eastern Europe, Sergo Mikoyan, son of a former First Deputy Premier (Anastas I. Mikoyan), and Georgi Shaknazarov, currently personal aide to General Secretary Gorbachev.

Some of the insights provided by these Soviets regarding the Cuban missile crisis are that:

1. The Soviets truly believed that the United States would repeat the attack on Cuba after the Bay of Pigs (Mikoyan/Shaknazarov).[45]
2. The missiles were emplaced in Cuba for defense of the Castro regime (Mikoyan) but also as a first step toward strategic parity (Burlatsky/Shaknazarov).[46]
3. Khrushchev first raised the question of deploying missiles in Cuba six months before the crisis with a small group of six Soviets (Mikoyan).[47]
4. The missile crisis was the result of adventurism on the part of the Soviets, especially Nikita Khrushchev (Mikoyan).[48]
5. Anatoly Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. in 1962, was not informed of the decision to deploy missiles to Cuba (Shaknazarov).[49]
6. Contrary to U.S. intelligence estimates that there may have been as many as 22,000 Soviet military personnel in Cuba at the time, Mikoyan claimed there were 42,000 troops in Cuba to defend it against an American invasion.[50]

7. Following the conference in a private conversation with Sergo Mikoyan, Blight and Welch were informed that the decision to shoot down Major Rudolf Anderson's U-2 spy plane over Cuba on Saturday, October 27 was made by a Soviet one star general on the scene, Igor Statsenko, then a senior Soviet officer in Cuba.[51]

These and other disclosures are expanded and explained in Raymond Garthoff's article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled "Cuban Missile Crisis: The Soviet Story."[52] Given the Soviet perspective expressed in Cambridge in October of 1987 and the existence of glasnost in the Soviet Union today, perhaps now is the time to reassess the historical and analytical accounts of the Cuban missile crisis. Now is the time to develop an international perspective relative to this crucial episode in the nuclear age.

Notes

1. Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965; paperback ed., New York: Bantam Books, 1966), pp. 277-79; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (paperback ed., Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1966), pp. 729-30; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), p. 504; Roger Hilsman, *To Move A Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 161-64; Walt W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power: An Essay in Recent History* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 252; Kenneth P. O'Donnell, David F. Powers, and Joe McCarthy, *We Hardly Knew Ye: Memories of John Fitzgerald Kennedy* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), p. 308.
2. Rostow, *Diffusion of Power*, p. 253.
3. Quoted in James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), p. 28.
4. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1987), p. 25.
5. Sorensen, ibid., p. 764; Schlesinger, ibid., p. 506; Hilsman, ibid., p. 202.
6. Sorensen, ibid., pp. 771-73; Robert Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 37-38.
7. Hilsman, ibid., p. 205.
8. Sorensen, ibid., p. 776; Rostow, ibid., p. 258.
9. Abram Chayes, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: International Crisis and the Role of Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 40, 49, 68.
10. Sorensen, ibid., p. 795; Schlesinger, ibid., p. 767; Hilsman, ibid., pp. 581-82.
11. Schlesinger, ibid.
12. Sorensen, ibid., p. 833; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, p. 530; Hilsman, ibid., p. 581.
13. Rostow, ibid., pp. 260-63; O'Donnell, ibid., p. 15.

14. Leslie Dewart, "The Cuban Crisis Revisited," *Studies on the Left* 5 (Spring 1965): 19-24.

15. Ronald Steel, "Endgame," review of *Thirteen Days*, by Robert F. Kennedy, in *The New York Review of Books* 12 (13 March 1969): 20; reprinted in Ronald Steel, *Imperialists and Other Heroes: A Chronicle of the American Empire* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1971). See also Roger Hilsman and Ronald Steel, "An Exchange on the Missile Crisis," *The New York Review of Books* 12 (8 May 1969): 36-38. There are a number of interesting studies on Soviet decision-making and on Soviet motives. See Herbert S. Dinerstein, *The Making of a Missile Crisis: October 1962* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976); Arnold D. Horelick and Myron Rush, *Strategic Power and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Michael Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev to Kosygin*, trans. by Helen Katel (New York: Viking, 1969); John L. Scherer, "Deinterpreting Soviet Behavior During the Cuban Missile Crisis," *World Affairs* 144 (Fall 1981): 110-125.

16. Barton J. Bernstein, "The Cuban Missile Crisis," in *Reflections on the Cold War: A Quarter Century of American Foreign Policy*, eds. Lynn H. Miller and Ronald W. Pruessen (Philadephia: Temple University Press, 1974), pp. 121-25; Roger Hagan, "Cuba: Triumph or Tragedy?", *Dissent* 10 (Winter 1963): 15, 19. See also Barton J. Bernstein, "Courage and Commitment: The Missiles of October," *Foreign Service Journal* 52 (December 1975): 9-11, 24-27.

17. Bernstein, ibid., p. 114.

18. David Horowitz, *The Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), p. 103.

19. Horowitz, ibid.; Nancy Gager Clinch, *The Kennedy Neurosis* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1973); Bruce Miroff, *Pragmatic Illusions: The Presidential Politics of John F. Kennedy* (New York: David McKay, 1976).

20. Hagan, ibid.; Richard J. Walton, *Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), pp. 107-17, 127.

21. Hagan, ibid.

22. Horowitz, ibid., pp. 383-87; Miroff, ibid., pp. 92-94.

23. Bernstein, ibid., p. 130; Louise FitzSimons, *The Kennedy Doctrine* (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 160-61; Miroff, ibid., pp. 88-90. These interpreters find Kennedy overreacting to the crisis. Early right-wing critics were equally critical of Kennedy for underreacting, that is, for being soft on the communism. See David Lowenthal, "U.S. Cuban Policy: Illusion and Reality," *National Review* (January 29, 1963): 61-63; James Daniel and John G. Hubbell, *Strike in the West: The Complete Story of the Cuban Crisis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963); Mario Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart: American Policy Failures in Cuba* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968).

24. Hagan, ibid., pp. 15-17; I. F. Stone, "The Brink," review of *The Missile Crisis* by Elie Abel, in *The New York Review of Books* 6 (April 14, 1966): 12-13; Clinch, ibid., pp. 199, 202-03.

25. Walton, ibid., pp. 103-04; Clinch, ibid., p. 198.

26. Thomas G. Paterson, "Bearing the Burden: A Critical Look at JFK's Foreign Policy," *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 54 (Spring 1978): 204.

27. Paterson, ibid., p. 206.

28. Hagan, ibid., pp. 25-26; Bernstein, ibid., p. 135; Horowitz, ibid., pp. 396-97; Miroff, ibid., pp. 100-09; Paterson, ibid., p. 107.

29. Miroff, ibid., pp. 100-09; Paterson, ibid., p. 207. See also James A. Nathan, "The Missile Crisis: His Finest Hour Now," *World Politics* 17 (January 1976): 256-81.

30. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington,

DC: The Brookings Institution, 1987); McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988); James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989).

31. Garthoff, ibid., p. 9.
32. Ibid., p. 87.
33. Ibid., pp. 87-93.
34. Ibid., pp. 127-28.
35. Bundy, ibid.
36. Ibid., pp. 412-13.
37. Ibid., p. 413.
38. Ibid., pp. 413-20.
39. Ibid., pp. 445-53.
40. Ibid., p. 453.
41. Blight, ibid.
42. Barton Bernstein, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Trading the Jupiters in Turkey," *Political Science Quarterly* 95 (Spring 1980): 97-125.
43. Rusk quoted in Blight, ibid., pp. 85-86.
44. Blight, ibid., p. 114.
45. Ibid., pp. 239, 258.
46. Ibid., pp. 239, 257, 229. See earlier Soviet accounts on this issue. Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970); *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, trans. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974); Anatolii A. Gromyko, *Through Russian Eyes: President Kennedy's 1036 Days* (Washington, DC: International Library, Inc., 1973).
47. Ibid., pp. 238-39.
48. Ibid., p. 284.
49. Ibid., p. 256.
50. Ibid., p. 241.
51. Ibid., p. 303.
52. Raymond L. Garthoff, "Cuban Missile Crisis: The Soviet Story," *Foreign Affairs* 70 (Fall, 1988): 61-80. See also Fyodor Burlatsky, Sergo Mikoyan, and Georgi Shaknazarow, "New Thinking About an Old Crisis: Cuba, 1962," in Graham T. Allison and William L. Vry, eds., *Windows of Opportunity: From Cold War to Peaceful Competition in U.S.-Soviet Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1989).

Bibliography: A Few Materials Especially Useful for Teachers

Books

Abel, Elie. *The Missile Crisis*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966.

Written in a journalistic style by a former NBC news correspondent, this book follows the hour by hour, day by day development of the crisis from October 14, through October 28. The text includes for the first time the rambling and emotional

contents of the letter from Nikita Khrushchev to President Kennedy; however, most of the letter is paraphrased. The author constructed his text from interviews with such key participants as Robert Kennedy, Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara and John McCone. The text is bound to capture the interest of the reader as are the 12 pages of photographs.

Allison, Graham T. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971.

Professor Allison of Harvard University has written perhaps the single best scholarly text for understanding the role of decision-making in the Kennedy Administration during the crisis. The author analyzes the crisis in terms of three frames of reference for decision-making: 1) the rational actor model which is the classical model, 2) the organizational process model, and 3) the governmental (bureaucratic) politics model. Allison demonstrates that the three models produce different explanations of any single event and may produce different explanations of quite different occurrences. Allison has made a significant contribution to our understanding of decision-making during the crisis by applying organizational and political theory to the events of October 1962.

Brune, Lester H. *The Missile Crisis of October 1962: A Review of Issues and References*. Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1985.

Professor Brune has written a useful 100-page survey of the events and interpretations of the crisis. The author covers the events and issues of the period from Castro's assumption of power in 1959 to the final withdrawal of the quarantine on November 20, 1962. This is an excellent and inexpensive paperback for high school teachers who may have limited time to review the events and sources of interpretations pertinent to the missile crisis.

Burlatsky, Fyodor; Mikoyan, Sergo; and Shaknazarow, Georgi. "New Thinking About an Old Crisis: Cuba, 1962." In *Windows of Opportunity: From Cold War to Peaceful Competition in U.S.-Soviet Relations*. Edited by Graham T. Allison and William L. Vry. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1989.

The book is the product of a series of Soviet-American meetings on crisis management; this particular article reflects the extent to which "glasnost" has liberated Soviet members from official constraints. These three Soviets provide new and revealing insights into the Cuban missile crisis. Burlatsky was a speech writer for Khrushchev; Mikoyan was an aide to his father, the First Deputy Premier in 1962; and Shaknazarow currently is an aide to Mikhail Gorbachev.

Dinerstein, Herbert. *The Making of a Missile Crisis, October 1962*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Dinerstein's text is one of the few scholarly books on the crisis that attempts to explore the assumptions and perceptions of all three nations that were involved in the crisis: the United States, the Soviet Union and Cuba. The author demonstrates that the crisis erupted from the interplay of America's years of anti-communist politics, the Russian desire for nuclear equality, and Castro's revolution. For Dinerstein, the roots of the crisis go back to America's intervention in Guatemala in 1954.

Divine, Robert A., ed. *The Cuban Missile Crisis*. 2nd ed. New York: Marcus Weiner, 1988.

This is perhaps the best introduction to the crisis available to date. Divine's opening chapter is a well written 50-page description of the crisis. The book's remaining four chapters contain original writings of interpreters of the crisis which focus on: 1) initial reactions to the crisis, 2) the problem of Soviet motivation, 3) the continuing debate, and 4) recent scholarly reassessments. The text is particularly adaptable to college courses on the Cuban missile crisis.

Kennedy, Robert F. *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1969.

Here is a unique account by the President's brother which provides an insider's perspective of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering during those tension-filled days of the crisis. Despite the fact that RFK initially sought a military response, one senses that the author truly had an anti-military bias; perhaps he alone influenced the President to respond with restraint in the crisis. The text is supplemented by a documentary appendix that contains letters, proclamations, and statements from the crisis. The book also includes 30 pages of photographs. The combination of short text, documents, and photographs makes this book an ideal selection for use as supplementary reading in American history survey courses.

Medland, William J. *The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Needless or Necessary*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988.

This is a study of selected historiographical perspectives on the missile crisis incorporating primary sources. The initial two chapters describe the national clandestine and the international confrontation phases of the crisis. The author then devotes chapters to the perspectives of: 1) participants in the crisis, 2) observers of the nuclear confrontation, 3) conservative revisionists, 4) liberal revisionists, and 5) sovietologists. Each chapter contains a summary composite of the various interpretations analyzed in that chapter. This is an excellent source of historiographical information for those who do not have the time to read the original interpretive books and articles on the crisis.

Articles

Alsop, Stewart, and Bartlett, Charles. "In Time of Crisis," *Saturday Evening Post*, December 8, 1962, pp. 16-20.

This is one of the first articles to present a traditional interpretation of the Cuban missile crisis. The article is noteworthy in that it is the first to identify the "hawks" and "doves." It also is the first to praise Robert Kennedy for his advocacy of the quarantine and for his suggestion to use the "Trollop Ploy" in responding to the two contradictory letters of Nikita Khrushchev.

Bernstein, Barton J. "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Trading the Jupiters in Turkey?" *Political Science Quarterly* 95 (Spring 1980): 97-125.

Professor Bernstein of Stanford University was an early and persistent critic of the Kennedy Administration's response to the missiles in Cuba; he has written numerous articles on various aspects of the crisis. In this article, he reviews and

analyzes the role of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey from the decision to emplace them there in the Eisenhower Administration to the day the Attorney General secretly pledged to the Soviet Ambassador that they would be removed within months of the successful resolution of the crisis. Bernstein suggests that President Kennedy might have been willing to make a public pledge to remove the Jupiters from Turkey had the secret pledge failed to resolve the crisis. Ironically, in 1987, Dean Rusk stated that the President indeed had instructed him to make a pledge through the United Nations to swap the missiles in Turkey for the missiles in Cuba.

Hagan, Roger. "Cuba: Triumph or Tragedy?" *Dissent* 10 (Winter 1963): 13-26.

Hagan initiated the first significant pacifist interpretation of the United States-Soviet nuclear showdown of 1962 with this scholarly critique. His thesis is that Kennedy rejected a policy of negotiation in favor of a policy of "righteous realpolitik." The tragedy is that the crisis served no long-range peaceful goals.

Lowenthal, David. "U.S. Cuban Policy: Illusion and Reality." *National Review*, January 29, 1963, pp. 61-63.

Lowenthal, a political scientist now at Boston College, initiated the conservative interpretation of the crisis with this essay. The author chastises the president for his inadequate and soft response to the Soviet missiles in Cuba. The president missed the opportunity to eliminate communism in Cuba; by his non-invasion pledge the president guaranteed the presence of communism in the Western Hemisphere.

Paterson, Thomas G. "Bearing the Burden: A Critical Look at JFK's Foreign Policy."*The Virginia Quarterly Review* 54 (Spring 1978): 193-212.

This is an excellent scholarly reassessment of the leadership of President Kennedy during the crisis by a foreign policy historian from the University of Connecticut. Paterson claims that Kennedy rejected diplomacy for a policy of confrontation so that he could demonstrate his toughness and manliness. Paterson concludes his assessment with an analysis of what he perceives to be the negative repercussions of the missile crisis.

Paterson, Thomas G., and Brophy, William J. "October Missiles and November Elections: The Cuban Missile Crisis and American Politics, 1962." *Journal of American History* 73 (June 1986): 87-119.

This article represents the most thorough analysis to date on the issues of the role of party politics in the deliberations of the Kennedy Administration during the crisis and the role of the crisis in the outcome of the 1962 elections. In the final analysis, Kennedy's selection of a quarantine was not dictated by politics; the effects of the crisis on the congressional elections were indiscriminate. According to the authors, one cannot find a single congressional election decided by voter reaction to the missile crisis.

Trachtenberg, Marc. "White House Tapes and Minutes of the Cuban Missile Crisis: ExCom Meetings, October 1962." *International Security* 10 (Summer 1985): 164-203.

Here are excerpts from the first two secret sessions of the ExCom to advise President Kennedy on a response to the newly discovered Soviet missiles in Cuba. The excerpts are from a 11:50 a.m. meeting and a 6:30 p.m. meeting on Tuesday, October 16. Participants in these meetings were John Kennedy, Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, General Maxwell Taylor, McGeorge Bundy, Douglas Dillon, General Marshall Carter, Robert Kennedy, Edwin Martin, George Ball, and Alexis Johnson. Also included in this documentation article are a summary record of NSC Executive Committee meetings on October 26 and October 27.

Videos

Dor-Ner, Zvi, executive producer. "At the Brink," Program 5 in *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age*. Produced by WGBH/Boston. Annenberg/CPB Collection, 1989.

"At the Brink" focuses on the background, events and results of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. The tense confrontation between Kennedy and Khrushchev is explored via television tapes from the period. Interviews with both Russian and American participants in the crisis provide the documentary with an exceptionally balanced perspective from the hindsight of more than a quarter century. The film is well suited to both high school and college classes. Run time is 60 minutes.

Sherwin, Martin, director. "The Cuban Missile Crisis," Part 3 of *The Global Classroom*. Produced by Tufts University, April 30, 1988.

This segment of *The Global Classroom* is moderated by historian Martin Sherwin and involves students from Tufts University in Boston and from Moscow State University. The interchange of discussion covers four areas: 1) the Soviet decision to emplace missiles in Cuba, 2) the American deliberations on a response, 3) the events of the crisis, and 4) the aftermath of the crisis. The American panelists include McGeorge Bundy, National Security Adviser to John Kennedy, Barton Bernstein, Abram Chayes, Ray Cline, Peter Winn, and Adam Yarmolinsky; the Soviet panelists include Fyodar Burlatsky, speech writer for Nikita Khrushchev, Igor Malashenko, and Viktor Kremenyuk, scholars at the Institute of USA and Canada. This is an excellent video for college classes. Run time is 120 minutes.

Page, Anthony, director. *The Missiles of October*. Produced by Herbert Brodkin and Robert Berger. Viacom, 1974.

This made-for-television film recreates the events of October 1962 when the United States stood on the brink of a nuclear war over Russian missile bases in Cuba. The film is both informative and gripping; it is well scripted and intellectually stimulating. William Devane is excellent as President Kennedy and Howard DeSilva is memorable as Chairman Khrushchev. Run time is 150 minutes.