We are fortunate to be able to use a lecture by **Professor Mark White of UCL** to help us analyse this question. The lecture has been split into manageable chunks on the website. To help you to use and analyse the lecture, the frame below has been developed – each section connects to one of the instalments. Look over what information you are looking for each time before you start listening.

**Responsibility for the crisis:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Evidence that the Cuban Missile Crisis was caused by Kennedy?** | |
| **Aggravating Cuba / Castro** (anti-Castro activities) | **Aggravating USSR** (arms race) |
|  |  |
| **Evidence Khrushchev has some responsibility?** | |
|  | |
| **What new evidence implicates Kennedy?** | |
|  | |

**Judging Kennedy’s handling of the crisis:**

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| **What does White identify as Kennedy’s strengths? Evidence?** |
|  |
| **What does White identify as Kennedy’s weakness? Evidence (focus on Cold War / arms race)** |
|  |

**The first week of the crisis:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Summarise Key Sequence of Events** | |
| **Week 1** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Evidence that we can judge Kennedy’s handling of the first week was a success/failure?** | |
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**The second week of the crisis:**

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| **How does Khrushchev act in the second week?** |
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| **How does Kennedy’s attitude change in the second week?** |
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| **How is the crisis diffused? Should either side get more credit?** |
|  |

**The Role Played by Robert Kennedy:** *(Note – a hawk is an advisor that advocates war)*

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| **How has Robert Kennedy been regarded in relation to the Cuban Missile Crisis?** |
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| **Why do we have this view?** |
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| **What decision did Robert say he influenced?** |
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| **How are historians now challenging this interpretation?** |
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**What was the impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis?**

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| **What did the Missile Crisis do to Kennedy’s attitude?** |
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| **What real change is there in his policies/public statements?** |
|  |

Chronology of the Crisis

January 1959 Cuban is taken over by Castro

January 1961 Diplomatic relations are broken off (USA bans sugar imports and Cuba retaliates by nationalizing US businesses)

April 1961 The Bay of Pigs invasion

May 1962 Soviets admit publicly that they are supplying Cuba with arms

July 1962 Cuba has the largest army in Latin America

11th September 1961 Kennedy announces publicly that there were SAMs on Cuba but warned the USSR that the USA would not tolerate nuclear missiles on Cuba.

# October Crisis

Sunday 14th October 1962 U2 spy plane spots missile sites on Cuba

(Further flights between the days confirmed the Soviets were building missile sites)

Tuesday 16th Kennedy informed of missile build up and calls Excomm-“Hawks”: swift military action-Acheson, “Doves”-Caution and work through the UN-Adlai Stevenson and “Moderates”-McNamara-naval blockade

Wednesday 17th Kennedy follows schedule so as not to raise the alarm-U2 flight confirms long range missiles are on Cuba, therefore air-strike risky.

Thursday 18th Excomm’s discussions continue with the Hawks strongly arguing for an air strike. JFK meets Gromyko.

Sat 20th Decides on a blockade as majority of Ex Comm agree but will call it a “quarantine” so as not to seem like an act of war.

Sun 21st Kennedy told by JCS that air strike could not take all missiles out so rules out option of a first strike.

Mon. 22nd 7.PM. (EST) Announces the crisis and the blockade to public and calls on Soviets publicly to withdraw

Night of Mon/Tuesday 23rd Kennedy receives letter from Kruschev informing him that the ships will not observe the blockade and he does not admit that the missiles are there. Although he was sent a copy of the speech beforehand he is not happy. OAS approves blockade and it would take effect on 10.AM on the 24th. Although Kennedy did agree to pull the line back 300 miles to give the soviets more time.

Wednesday 24th 10.AM Blockade begins mood tense.

Thursday 25th Tanker is let through Marcula boarded and JFK informed missiles in Cuba are now operational. However work is still proceeding in Cuba on the bases

Friday 26th Kennedy gets a letter from Kruschev claiming that the missiles are defensive and that if he assures Cuba will not be invaded then he will withdraw them. First time he admits they are there. Later that night in a secret meeting RK meets Dobrynin and hints that a trade for the missiles in Turkey might be possible.

Sat 27th U2 Spy plane shot down over Cuba, a U2 plane drifts into soviet airspace and a second letter arrives revising the proposals saying that US missiles in Turkey had to be removed first. Also broadcast publicly so JFK had to respond. Kennedy ignores the second letter and replies to the first but says unless the soviets withdraw an attack will follow. He agrees to the terms but mentions that the withdrawal of Turkish missiles would have to be done secretly as it was a NATO ally. (If Kruschev did not agree then they had planned to withdraw Turkish missiles publicly)

Sunday 28th Kruschev replies to this saying he will dismantle and remove the missiles; effectively the immediate crisis was over.