

# Diffusion of the cold war assignment

[History](#)



These attacks showed the power and devastation bombs like this old cause. Following World War II, the Cold War began. This was a time period of extreme hatred between the Soviet Union and the United States, and both nations had access to weapons of mass destruction. Have, therefore, decided to investigate the point of the Cold War where the tension was eased and this era of high tension began to diffuse. This paper will identify the role that the Cuban Missile Crisis played in diffusing the Cold War by forcing communication.

This will be achieved by examining primary sources from both countries viewpoints to gain insight on the event from both angles. In addition, the letters exchanged between Khrushchev and Kennedy will be examined and analyzed to determine the influence that the letters had on the event. The results of the communication between the Soviet Union and United States will also be assessed to determine the role it played in easing tensions and diffusing the Cold War. The communication between the United States and Soviet Union proved to ease tensions between the two nations.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was an event of such a magnitude that no matter what decision Kennedy made in response to the missile presence in Cuba, communication was a necessity. During the communication process, both Khrushchev and Kennedy realized and agreed that World War III should be avoided at all cost, as well as, the use of nuclear weapons. The Cuban Missile Crisis may not have directly ended the Cold War, but it did ease tensions between the two nations and forced the realization that war should be avoided at all cost.

Introduction During the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis forced communication between the Soviet Union and the United States. Throughout this period, the United States and the Soviet Union had little or no direct contact. Many events caused this increasing tension between the two nations, and the ideological differences made effective communication implausible. However, on October 8, 1962, United States spy planes captured images of Soviet Missiles in Cuba. The United States felt that their national security was being threatened by the presence of nuclear missiles 90 miles south of Florida in Cuba.

The United States feared that if the Soviet Union used these warheads, the United States would need to retaliate, and these events may lead to a nuclear war. In many nations, the fear of the use of nuclear missiles still remains, specially when the leadership of the country is viewed as unstable. The worry of nuclear weapons placed or aimed at a nation by an enemy is a concern. This concern is intensified when the proper defense system is lacking in the threatened nation. However, the threat has somewhat diminished because of the diplomatic ties between the nations and the understanding that World War III should ultimately be avoided.

This viewpoint is largely due, to the communication between the United States and Soviet Union in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis. The response to the Soviet missiles being brought to Cuba took long hours of threatening, debating, and frustration between John F. Kennedy and his advisors. The United States did not want to allow the missiles to reach Cuba, but could not attack Cuba directly in fear of conflict with Cuba and the Soviet Union. John F. Kennedy was faced with many options; however, no matter what option he

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took, communication with the Soviet Union would be necessary to resolve the crisis.

US and Soviet Relations prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis After World War II ended, the divisions between the Soviet Union and United States began to resurface. During World War II, the two nations became allies to defeat Nazi Germany and the Japanese. Following the end of the war, the Soviet Union began expanding their communist influence into Eastern Europe. This expansion provoked worries in Western democratic nations especially the United States. The United States had established democracy and political primacy in the western portion of Europe.

The two nations' ideologies were very different, politically and economically. Each nation was promoting their ideologies throughout Europe. This competition for international influence caused high tension between the two nations. This period of tension between the Soviet Union and the United States became known as the Cold War. The United States adopted the policy of containment as an attempt to maintain the spread of communism. This policy was adopted in response to the Soviet Union's intention to do just that. Immediately, the United States stepped in to counter the spreading influence of communism.

With the competition to spread their respective ideologies, and the United States attempting to stop the spread of communism, tension rose exponentially. The United States began to send financial aid and even military aid to stop the spread of communism. In Greece and Turkey, the Truman Doctrine (a doctrine created by president Harry S. Truman that

stated the United States would provide economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey) worked to stop communism from spreading to those nations. However, the doctrine did not work in every nation.

Although the United States may not have had much direct contact with the Soviet Union, there was indirect contact. The United States believed in the domino theory, which stated if one nation fell to communism, the other nations around them would fall as well. This belief was the driving force behind much of the policy that was adopted. Communist ideology began to spread from North Communist Korea to South Democratic Korea. The United States, with the help of the United Nations sent military aid to Korea in hopes of stopping the spread of communism.

In addition, North Korea received aid from China and the Soviet union. The United States sent over 5 million troops to fight in Korea to stop the spread of communism. In the end, an armistice was signed, and the 38th parallel was used as the division between the northern and southern portions of Korea. Similar to the events in Korea, the United States also became heavily involved in Vietnam to stop the spread of communism. Although this time, the results were not as favorable. The United States failed to stop the spread of communism and lost over fifty thousand troops in combat.

North Vietnam won the war and spread communism to South Vietnam, but communism didn't spread outside of Vietnam and the reason for the United States involvement proved to be pointless. The hostility and aggression between the United States and Soviet Union was not direct, but was very apparent. During this time, both nations were preparing militarily and

expanded their paeans exponentially. Both the Soviet Union and the United States were making major increases in their technological advancements. Both the nations had developed massive artilleries of nuclear weapons.

With both of the nations holding weapons capable of leveling countries, conflict seemed to be inevitable. Nikkei Khrushchev believed that Cuba was subject to an invasion from the United States. Khrushchev wanted to place intermediate- range and short-range missiles in Cuba. These missiles in Cuba could easily strike targets throughout the eastern and southern United States. Khrushchev was very careful in concealing the nuclear weapons for transport. The nuclear weapons were stored below decks on transport ships to avoid detection and were guarded by forty-two thousand troops.

However, Khrushchev was wrong, and CIA analysts were able to identify the intermediate and short-range missiles from aerial photographs. Kennedy was now faced with a difficult decision on how to handle this situation. He did not want to make a decision that would jeopardize the United States' safety, so he consulted with his staff before reaching a conclusion. Jiff's decision process General Mascara statements did not influence Kennedy's decision process. Even though General Mascara may actually have been correct in arguing that the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba would not significantly alter the overall strategic balance of power.

From Kennedy's standpoint, the fact that it didn't change the balance was irrelevant. Kennedy was stunned by the bold action taken by Khrushchev and was limited by his public statement that " offensive weapons in Cuba were unacceptable. " He feared that if he took a do-nothing approach in the

face of this blatant Soviet challenge, it would be detrimental to his politics and diplomacy. To make sure that every aspect of this event was discussed and to fully assess his options, Kennedy gathered an Executive Committee of top advisers to meet regularly.

The committee's input would help Kennedy's decision-making process in resolving the crisis. Kennedy and the Executive Committee (Coxcomb) were faced with many different options that they could approach in order to resolve the conflict. The Soviet Union had placed their missiles in Cuba secretly and deceived the United States about their intentions. Negotiating under these conditions would portray Kennedy as weak. Also, he had suspected that it was the Soviets' intention to drag out the negotiations until they could get their missiles operating. The Executive Committee narrowed it down to four main options.

These options were presented and debated on during Coxcomb deliberations: the do-nothing approach, the diplomatic approach, creating a blockade, and an airstrip. The first approach was the do nothing approach. This approach would contain conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and would not lead to aggression between the two nations. However, as Kennedy stated, owing nothing and allowing the Soviet Union to place missile just 90 miles from the United States was unacceptable. This option would leave Americans vulnerable to Soviet missiles.

This would not be new though, as the United States had previously been vulnerable to Soviet long-range missiles. The newly placed missiles in Cuba had a very minute difference on the military balance. The second approach

that Kennedy and Coxcomb faced was the diplomatic approach. Kennedy said, ‘ ‘ The placement of missiles in Cuba is an affront that we cannot bear. ” However, this did not mean the United States could not show their anger to get the better of them and take actions that would provoke a series of events that could take millions of lives. This option declared that the United States should pursue only diplomatic actions.

The underlying beliefs of this option were that military action could lead to a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. In addition to that, diplomacy and communication held the largest possibility of resolving an issue of this magnitude and severity. Also, at Coxcomb deliberations, it was argued that this was the only feasible option that would not risk the lives of Americans, as well as, give the United States time to assess the situation while negotiating. The third option that Kennedy was faced with was the option to place a blockade around Cuba.

The Coxcomb members presenting this option believed that the United States should blockade Cuba. The naval blockade would represent a diplomatic and military response. It would not cause the danger that would have been associated with an immediate attack from the United States. The ideals behind the concept of the blockade were that the consequences of military attack were unpredictable. Since diplomacy could take months, or even years, which would allow the Soviets plenty of time to transport and activate more missiles. The United States still maintained a significant nuclear superiority, even with the current missiles located in Cuba.



The positives of the blockade were that it was a flexible step that would allow the United States to move towards military action, and it would prevent the arrival of any more missiles to Cuba from the Soviet Union. The final option was a direct attack on Cuba. The invasion type would be an airstrips. The goal of this invasion was to destroy the missiles in Cuba. The Coxcomb members believed that Khrushchev had been warned, and that placing missiles in Cuba was a threat to the United States security, and the sites must be destroyed immediately.

The missiles in Cuba were a test from the Soviet Union, and failure to react meant the Soviet Union would take advantage of that and take more actions around the world. The United States military was more than capable of neutralizing the Soviet missiles in Cuba. This airstrips would eliminate the missiles in Cuba, send a clear message to the Soviet Union that the United States was ready and willing to use force to rotten its national interests, and signal to the Soviet Union that bargaining in Berlin was not going to happen.

The downfall to this approach was the threat Of escalating the conflict and military action. On October 20, 1 962, President Kennedy decided that a naval blockade of Cuba, to prevent future shipments of Soviet Missiles, was the best idea. Kennedy did not use the word blockade however. This was due to the fact that a blockade is considered an act of war. Kennedy described this event as a quarantine, not a blockade. Two days later on October 22, Kennedy addressed the nation in a televised speech. He made the American public aware of the quarantine and that many months of conflict and discussion were to be expected.

Communication between JEFF and Khrushchev In the Soviet Union, as in the United States, the first time many citizens had even heard of the event was through Kennedy's speech. Khrushchev was angered by the response and continued to argue that the missiles were only placed in Cuba for defense. He also argued that the presence of missiles in Cuba was only to protect the Cuban republic from an "aggressor's attack." Khrushchev warned the United States that military aggression directed at Cuba could possibly result in nuclear War between the two super powers.

The matter was introduced at a LLC meeting and the vote supported the U. S. Quarantine of Cuba. They decided that the Soviet Union was the clear aggressor in the event. In addition to that, Cuba was deemed a threat to security throughout the hemisphere. Due to the secret manner in which the missiles were brought into Cuba, many Latin American leaders feared Cuban support of communist movements in their own countries. Khrushchev wrote two letters to Kennedy. The first letter was received on the 26th of October.

It was an emotional appeal, directly from Khrushchev to Kennedy, asking to avoid nuclear war at all costs. Also in the letter, Khrushchev pledged to remove the missiles from Cuba in return for the united States' promise not to invade the island. The next day, another letter was received. This one, however, took a hardliner approach to the matter. It insisted that the United States remove their missiles from Turkey in return for the withdrawal of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Kennedy found the demands of this second letter unacceptable for two reasons.

The first reason was that Turkey was unwilling to allow removal of the Jupiter missiles. Turkey, and many other allies on the Mediterranean, relied on the United States' mid-range nuclear missiles for defense against attacks from the Soviet Union. The second reason was that with the entire world watching the events unfold, Kennedy did not want to appear weak, nor did he want his NATO allies to doubt the United States commitment in Europe and its defense. After many hours analyzing the letters and discussing the contents with his advisers, Kennedy decided to only reply to the first letter.

Kennedy was going to ignore the second letter entirely and not reply to it at all. In Kennedy's espouse, he assured Khrushchev that there would not be an invasion of Cuba. He also said that he would promptly remove the quarantine. In return to these compromises, Kennedy expected the Soviet missiles to be removed from Cuba. He also expected this to happen under international observation and supervision. In addition to that, in his response, Kennedy demanded that safeguards be placed around Cuba to ensure that weapons of that caliber would never reach Cuba again.

On the same evening that Kennedy sent the letter, he also sent his brother, Robert Kennedy, to meet with the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly Dobbin. Robert Kennedy informed Dobbin throughout their meeting that the events were getting out of hand and the Soviet Union needed to remove the missiles or the President would order Ignited States military forces to destroy them. Robert Kennedy also revealed to Dobbin that the removal of the Jupiter missiles from Turkey was already planned, even prior to the crisis. The missiles were outmoded and were set for removal.

However, Robert Kennedy told the Soviet Ambassador that if the Soviet Union tried to present the withdrawal of the missiles from Turkey as a trade, the United States would not be in the discussion of the agreement at all. On October 27th, Khrushchev received the letter from President John F. Kennedy and the report by Ambassador Dobbin on his meeting with Robert Kennedy. In addition to these bits of information, Khrushchev also received a cable from Castro, the leader of Cuba. Castro expressed that he believed the United States was going to invade the island of Cuba within the next few days and that missiles be deployed against the United States.

This new piece of information only made Khrushchev's decision more difficult. He had to decide whether to decline the United States offer and risk military infiltration, as well as possible invasion in Cuba. Khrushchev had the option to stick with the plan to swap the Jupiter missiles from Turkey for Cuban missile removal. The next day, Soviet Premier Nikkita Khrushchev made the decision to defuse the situation. In order to get the message to Kennedy quickly, Khrushchev ordered that the message be broadcasted via the radio. Radio Moscow announced the Soviet's plan regarding the missiles in Cuba.

The message was that the missiles in Cuba were to be dismantled and removed in exchange for the United States promise for Cuban sovereignty. Results of Communication between Kennedy and Khrushchev Both Kennedy and Khrushchev were overly anxious about the possibility of a nuclear war. Evidence suggests that their fears of this catastrophic event were entirely justified. The head of operational planning in the Soviet union, General Anatoly Giorgo, assured that nuclear warheads had reached Cuba in the weeks prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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Although most of the missiles present in Cuba were short range, they could have dealt serious damage to America and its troops. Kennedy felt that the United States could not invade Cuba because an invasion would provoke nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The magnitude of this event forced the two nations to communicate with each other. Considering the tension that the two nations were experiencing the communication was necessary. Even though this event caused the tension to peak, it also played a significant role in diffusing the cold war.

The Cuban Missile Crisis could have ended in nuclear war and mass destruction; however, it forced the two countries to approach each other diplomatically. The forced communication between the nations not only resolved the issues associated with the Cuban Missile Crisis, but it brought both the United States and Soviet Union to the realization that nuclear war was not an answer. This event started to ease the tensions between the two nations and was the first steps in ending the Cold War. The years following the Cuban Missile Crisis were very different than the first half of the Cold War.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the Cold War participants struggled to adjust to the new complicated relations. The members were leaving the alliances and becoming individuals so the alliances no longer split into two easy opposing sides of NATO and Warsaw. In fact the tensions eased to a point that the Cold War had virtually been dismissed in 1979. However there was a reawakening of Cold War tension when Reagan began to increase the United States melodramatically. The Soviet Union responded by heavily

influencing the growth of their military. This event only lasted 6 years and tensions had eased by the 1985.

Following the communication forced by the Cuban Missile Crisis, virtually nothing occurred and tension had eased significantly in a short period of time. The United States looked at the Cuban Missile Crisis with a feeling of relief. The United States had stood in the face of communism, nuclear war had been avoided, and a possibility of better relations with the Soviet Union existed. In the years following World War II, the United States and Soviet Union developed a mutual dislike for each other and each nation had the desire to be the more powerful and influential nation.

The two nations had opposing ideologies, which created a level of high tension. The Soviet Union was hoping to spread communism across Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia. This angered the United States and actions were taken to prevent the spread of communism. The United States and Soviet Union were not communicating with each other to resolve the issue. The United States was adopting doctrines and planned to provide aid to countries that were threatened by communism. The United States also sent troops to nations to stop the spread of communism.

The Soviet Union was taking similar actions, but instead of trying to stop capitalism, they were trying to force communism by appealing to war torn countries promising economic stability. The question, is to what extent did the Cuban Missile Crisis diffuse the Cold War and forced productive communication? The Cuban Missile Crisis was the most significant event of

the Cold War. This was the first time that the threat of nuclear war had been waged and this event may have sparked World War III.

It was favorable by both the United States and the Soviet Union to avoid a third World War, especially since both had nuclear capabilities and could deploy large numbers of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) on the other at any time. The presence of the missiles in Cuba threatened the safety of the United States and forced President JEFF to make a decision. Kennedy had many options to choose from to resolve the issue, but making the right decision was dire. Kennedy did not want to adopt a policy that might put the lives of United States citizens at risk, nor did he want to allow the missiles to stay in Cuba.