

Analysis of the cuban missile crisis history essay



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Introduction

The Cuban Missile Crisis was an event occurred in October 1962 when the USA detected that the USSR had deployed medium range missiles in Cuba, which was ninety miles away from Florida. It was the period that the cold war reached its peak because of the possible confrontation between the two superpowers, the US and the USSR, at the time. The Cuban Missiles Crisis was a very important part of the world history because of the risk of nuclear war that could lead to the destruction of the world. Therefore, it is very fascinating to identify what happen before the crisis, the causes, the actual events in the crisis, and the impacts of the crisis (Rich 2003, 416-428).

Prior to the Crisis

The Cuban Revolution, began in 1956, was the outcome of extensive economic oppression of Cuba by the USA. During Batista's, the ruthless ruler of Cuba, regime, Cuba per capita income was twice greater than other countries in general. The Cuban economy was controlled by the USA, which owned 90% of Cuba's telephone and electronic services, 50% of Cuba's railway, and 40% of Cuba's sugar production (Johnson 1965, p 443).

Furthermore, the USA put a very strict controlled on Cuban sugar production. The USA also controlled Cuban import quota, divided lands in to estates, and forced the Cuban farmers to grow monoculture crop, which was sugar (Dye& Sicotte 2011, p. 674). These USA's investments in Cuba were massive. By the end of Batista's rule, Cuba had the highest investment from the USA than any other countries in Latin America at that time; thus, Cuba's per capital income was the highest in Latin America (Johnson 1965, p. 445).

However, the distribution of wealth was not equally distributed. The majority

of people were illiterate, and the mortality rate was very high because the health care system was not extended to the poor in the rural areas, who remained in poverty (Mabry 2003). Furthermore, Batista was a corrupted dictator, and a pro western ruler. These political and economic oppressions from Batista and the USA inspired Fidel Castro, the charismatic revolution leader, to revolt for reforms (Rich 2003, p. 417).

Between 1956 to 1959, Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, and his younger brother Raul used the tactic Guerilla warfare to fight against Batista's army at Mount Sierra Maestra in Cuba where he gained support from the local farmers. The guerrilla warfare proved to be successful. On January 1959, Castro and his troops were able to overthrow Batista and his government. After the overthrow of Batista government, Fidel Castro set up a shadow government consisted of major Cuban political figures. Still, the majority of power was in the hand of Castro. When the shadow government failed to put forward his reforms, he dismissed them, and took control of the government as he appointed himself Cuba's prime minister (Rich 2003, p 418).

Two months after the victory of the Guerrilla force, Castro paid his first visit to the USA where his story was romanticized by the media. He was supposed to have a meeting with Eisenhower; however, the President refused to have a meeting with him, and went to the golf court. He was accommodated by Nixon, who was the vice president at that time. During the meeting, he refused to accept USA financial support because he believed that it would continue the USA influence in Cuba. After Castro visited the USA, the relation between the USA and Cuba began to decline (Rich 2003, 419). One month after the visit, Fidel Castro began his reforms. He nationalized Cuban lands, <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-the-cuban-missile-crisis-history-essay/>

cattle ranch, bank, railroads, oil, and other utilities, which were once owned by the USA (Perez 2011, p. 230-231).

On the other hands, the relation between the Cuba and the USSR had become more dynamic. In order to reach economic independency from the USA, Castro turned to the USSR for support. As a result, in 1960, Cuba trade with the USA declined to 0%; while, trade with the USSR increased to 43% (Leogrande& Thomas 2002, p 325-363).

The Bay of Pig Invasion

The Bay of Pig Invasion, January 3, 1961, was the CIA's plan to overthrow Castro government by launching thousand of Cuban exiles on Cuba's Bay of Pigs believing that only thousand of trained exiles would be able to overthrow Castro government. However, the mission was a total failure because the Cuban army was already waiting for the Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs. As a result, one hundred people were killed and thousands of people were taken as political prisoners. The Bay of Pigs invasion was the last Eisenhower administration plan, which took action during Kennedy presidency (Rich 2003, p. 420). There were several reasons for the causes of the Bay of Pigs Invasion. However, the main reason was the US insecurity of its decline in Latin America domination. The USA based their policy on Latin America policy accordingly to the Monroe Doctrine, which stated that the USA must contain its influence in the Latin America (Perez 2011, P. 233). In other words, the idea that the communist Cuba could influence other Latin America countries to transform their political systems to communism was intolerable for the USA's standard (Ferguson 1961, 288-290).

Causes

The Soviet Union's Hidden Agendas

There were several reasons for the USSR to installed missile in Cuba.

According to Khrushchev, his two main motives were to balance the missile gap between the USA and the USSR, and to prevent any further America invasion on Cuba (Cimbala 1999, p. 199). Khrushchev believed that the only way to prevent Cuba from the USA invasion was to install missiles in Cuba (Allyn et al 1989-1990, p. 138). He believed that it would protect the Cuban national pride. Moreover, in 1959, the US installed Jupiter and Thor missiles, intermediate-range ballistic missiles, in Turkey, which pointed directly at the USSR. Furthermore, during the 50s and the 60s the US had advanced the USSR in terms of the arm race, therefore, Khrushchev decided to deploy missiles in Cuba as a mean to for the USSR to reach symmetry with the USA, which would provide him with negotiation power for the missile trade. He wanted to propose to US that the USSR would remove missiles from Cuba if the USA would remove missiles from Turkey (Allyn, Blight & Welch 1989-1990, p. 139). His motive to reach symmetry in terms of arm race with the USA could be seen as a mean for the USSR to boost its nation prestige. If the USA could deploy missiles in Turkey and Italy, the USSR could also deploy missiles in Cuba, which was ninety miles away from the USA (ibid).

Nevertheless, President John F. Kennedy already planned to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey. (Berstein 1980, p. 120-121). Thus, there should be hidden agendas under Khrushchev's actions. According to many American scholars, the deployment of missiles in Cuba were Khrushchev's plans to test USA reaction for future war, to demonstrate the USSR nuclear superiority to

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the Soviet and Chinese governments, to persuade the USA that the arm race was useless, and to increase Khrushchev popularity at home and in the Communist bloc, so that he could have freedom to reduce USSR arm built (Cimbala 1999, p. 199).

Cuban insecurity

The main reason for Cuba agreement on the installation of missile with the USSR was its insecurity. After the Bay of Pig Invasion in 1961, the CIA planed many assassin plots on Fidel Castro. According to the BBC, the CIA and the Cuban exiles came up with more than 600 plots to assassinate him. The plots varied from poisoning, car bombs, to massive underwater explosion. The suspects involved in the plot varied from the mafias to one of Castro's ex lovers (Campbell 2009, n. d.). One of the assassination plots that actually took place was a strafe in Havana hotel by Alpha 66, which killed several Cubans and Soviet technicians (Brenner 1990, p. 121). On the same hand, the USA began a serious trade embargo against Cuba. If other countries trade with Cuba, they would not receive financial aids from the USA. The Cuban government viewed the US's policy as a mean to weakening the Castro government by weakening Cuba's economy (Brenner 1990, p. 188). Moreover, the Cuban intelligent discovered that the CIA planed another invasion on Cuba, Operation Mongoose, which would be more substantial than the previous invasion. In order for the Cuban government to protect Cuba sovereignty, they believed that they need military aids from the USSR (Brenner 1990, p. 189). Therefore, Castro decided to let the USSR installed missiles on their island.

The Crisis and the Resolution

In 1962, the USSR sent a cargo ship to Cuba. The ship carried sixty missiles with forty launchers, and 40, 000 Soviet technicians for the deployment of middle range missiles in Cuba (Kozak 2009, p. 19). On October 14, the U-2, USA' spy plane, spotted missiles in Cuba, which pointed directly to the US. The US intelligent informed the President on October 17 (Berstein 1980, p. 9). After the President was informed, there was a meeting between President John F. Kennedy and the EXCOMM, the Committee of the national Security. Many plans were proposed during the meeting. One of the most obvious plans was the scheme to use air strike to remove missiles from Cuba. However, Robert Kennedy, John F. Kennedy's younger brother, advised the President not to use air strike because there was no way to guarantee that the air strike could remove all of the missiles from Cuba. If the air strike could not remove all missiles from Cuba, it would give the Cubans time to deploy missiles against the USA. Similarly to the air strike, any military strikes against the Cuban could lead the Cubans to deploy missiles against the USA. Therefore, President Kennedy and his advisors came up with the naval blockade method as a way to deal with the Cubans (Rich 2003, p. 422).

On October 22 John F. Kennedy announced to the media that the Cubans had deployed missiles against the USA with the aid from the USSR. He informed the media of the quarantine, naval blockade, as a mean to bloc USSR ship that carried missile to Cuba, and if the USSR did not turn or stop its cargo ships from entering Cuba, there would be consequences (Weimasma, & Larson 1997, p. 13). However, the USSR's cargo ships did not turn back, but its cargo ships did not break the USA quarantine. It seemed that the

confrontation between the USSR and the US could happen anytime (Weimasma, & Larson 1997, p. 13). Nevertheless, from October 22 to 28, President JFK and Chairman Khrushchev exchanged several letters. Kennedy received Khrushchev's second letter on October 26. The letter proposed that the USSR would remove missiles from Cuba if the USA removed the Jupiter missiles from Turkey and, and that JFK must make a promise in front of the public that the USA would never invade Cuba (Thinkquest Cuban missile crisis: letters, 1997). On October 27, one day after Khrushchev second letter was sent, the US's U-2 plane was shot down in Cuba. This act was seen by some of American politician as an invitation to start war. This is the quote from Secretary of Defense McNamara "This means war with the Soviet Union." However, because of the secret meeting between Robert Kennedy and Soviet ambassador Dobrynin, the situation was able to cool down. Robert Kennedy assured that the President would remove the missiles in Turkey (Weimasma, & Larson 1997, p. 21) On October 28, JFK sent Khrushchev another letter proposed that in exchange for the USSR to uninstall missiles from Cuban soil within the UN inspection, the USA would never invade Cuba, and secretly uninstall missiles from Turkey. Khrushchev accepted the proposal from President Kennedy; thus, both countries were able to resolve their conflicts. In essence, the Cuban Missile Crisis was able to resolve because the USA accepted the USSR proposal. It removed missiles from Turkey, and made a public announcement that it would never invade Cuba. On the same hand, Khrushchev accepted the USA proposal, and uninstalled missiles from Cuba within inspectors from UN observation (Thinkquest Cuban missile crisis: letters, 1997). Nevertheless, JFK's motives to secretly remove of the missiles in Turkey and Italy should be emphasized.

Why would he need to do it secretly? According to many scholars, he was afraid of national resistance from the government and the American citizens as well as losing support from them (Weimasma, & Larson 1997, p. 23).

Impacts

The Cuban Missiles Crisis left several impacts on the USA and the USSR foreign policy. The first impact was the increase in communication between the US and the USSR. Because of the crisis, both superpowers had realized that they needed to improve communication between the two countries to prevent any forms of crisis from occurring again (Rich 2003, p. 425). As a result, a hotline was installed between the USA's president and the USSR's chairman (ibid). Moreover, because of the potential confrontation between the two superpowers, which could lead to nuclear war, President Kennedy began to favor the idea of coexistence (Billingsley, p. 6). Therefore, after the crisis, there was a temporary period of détente, the period that the cold war heat cools down (Billingsley p. 7). In addition, in August 5, 1963, the USA and the USSR both signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The treaty forbidden the testing of nuclear weapons on the earth surface, space, and underwater (Rich 2003, p. 427). However, the treaty itself was futile because it did not stop the built up of nuclear weapons, and prevent China from obtaining the nuclear weapons on the following year (Rich 2003, p. 428). Subsequently, the USA and the USSR continue the arm race for another twenty five years. They also competed in terms of strategic gaining (Billingsley p. 6). Furthermore, the treaty caused the relation between the USSR and China to decline. Because of the treaty, China concluded that the USSR was being weak, and more importantly, sold its soul to the capitalist camp. Hence,

China broke out from the USSR's spear of influence and gained the status of superpower by itself. This caused the balance of power to become imbalance (Rich 2003, p. 428). After the Cuban Missile Crisis, most of the US's oversea policy was focused on the Americanization of Vietnam and the Vietnam War, which required full attention from the USA military resources (Rich 2003, p. 423).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the major events prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis were the Cuban Revolution, and the Bay of Pigs Invasion. The main causes of the crisis were the Soviet Union hidden agendas and the Cuban insecurity, which was caused by the United States of America. During the crisis, President John F. Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev exchanged many letters before the resolution could be made. The period of the crisis was the period that the cold war reached its peak because both superpowers almost confront each other. If they had confronted each other, the use of nuclear weapons could have happened. After the crisis, the USSR removed missiles from Cuba under the UN supervision in exchanged for the USA to remove the Jupiter missiles in Turkey, and to never invade Cuba. The impacts of the Cuban Missile Crisis were the improvement in communication between the USA and the USSR. A hot line was established between both countries' leaders. Moreover, President Kennedy began to view the USA relationship with the USSR in terms of coexistence. As a result, there was a period of detente, and agreement of the Nuclear Test Treaty Ban, which was signed by the USA and the USSR. However, the nuclear competition still continued for the next 25

years. Furthermore, both countries began the competition in the new area, which was the strategic competition.