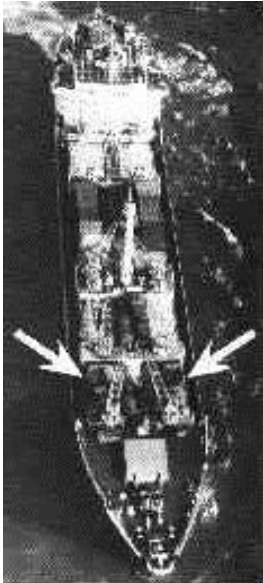




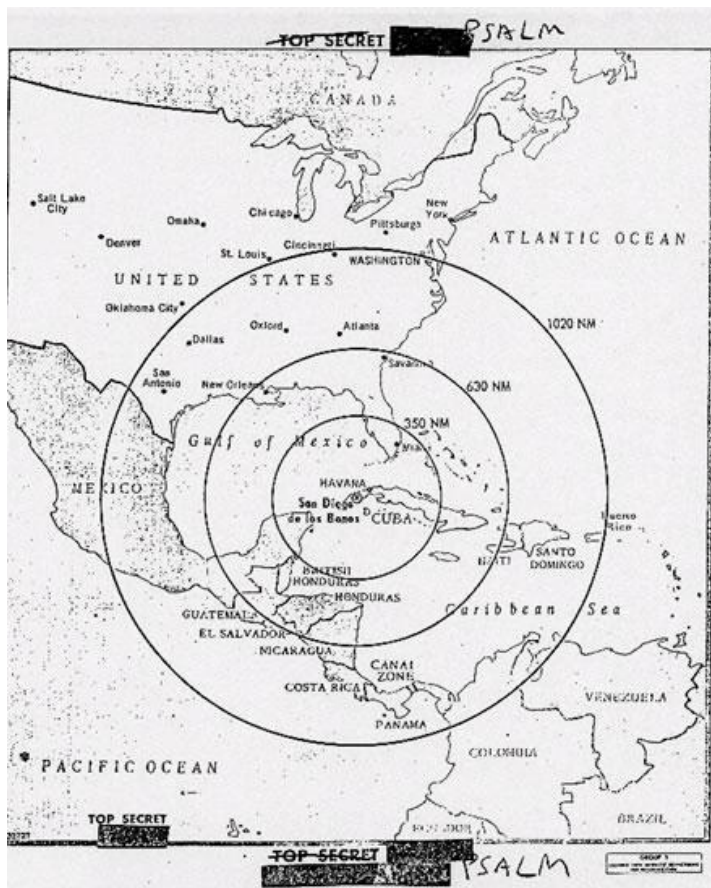
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THE WORK OF A NATION. THE CENTER OF INTELLIGENCE.

Monday 15th October 1962



These ships were photographed in port with missile parts being unloaded. This was further proof of the increased military build up on the island of Cuba.



The SS-4 and SS-5 missiles were the primary Soviet missile systems based in Cuba. Together, they had a range capable of reaching most of the continental United States.

- What danger does the US face?
- What do the photos show?



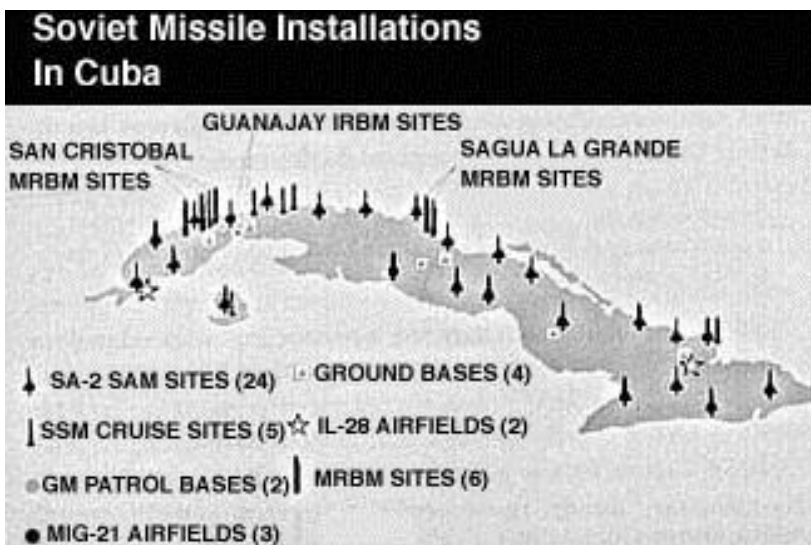
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Sunday, October 21st 1962

The next day, Kennedy asked if the Air Force could take out all the missiles. The reply was, "Only the ones we know about." The President then asked about casualties, both civilian and military. The answer was 10 to 20,000. This influenced Kennedy's decision to forego an air strike and set up a blockade around Cuba.

Another U-2 flight discovered bombers being rapidly assembled and cruise missile sites being built on Cuba's northern shore.



The press learned there were offensive weapons in Cuba and questioned Kennedy. The President asked the reporters not to break the news until he informed the American people on network television the next evening. If they denied him the element of surprise, he warned, "I don't know what the Soviets will do"

- What options were available to the US Air Force?
- Why did Kennedy want the press to keep quiet?



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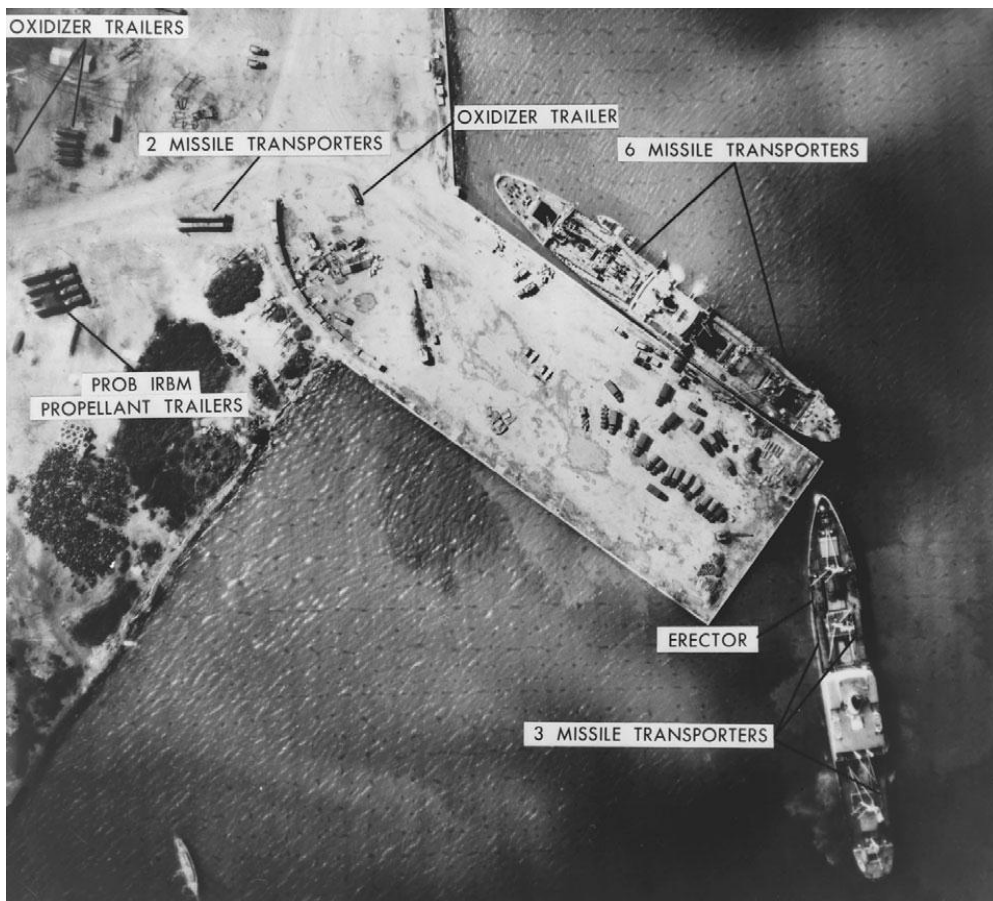
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Tuesday 16th October 1962

Kennedy was informed of the missiles at breakfast the next day. He convened his 12 most important advisors, known as EX-COMM. Most of them supported an air strike followed by an invasion. However, they weren't aware that Khrushchev, knowing communications between Moscow and Cuba were unreliable, had authorized Soviet field commanders in Cuba to use tactical nuclear missiles if the U.S. invaded.

Kennedy wanted to appear tough yet avoid military confrontation. Some advisors recommended a blockade.

No matter what action the U.S. took regarding Cuba, EX-COMM expected Khrushchev to retaliate.



- Who were EX-COMM?
- What options were available to Kennedy?



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Wednesday, October 17th to Saturday, October 20th 1962

Kennedy met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrie Gromyko. He told him the U.S. would not tolerate offensive weapons in Cuba. Gromyko denied the Soviets had anything of the kind on the island.



➤ Can Gromyko be trusted?



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Monday, October 22nd 1962

Senate leaders were told about the missiles in Cuba, they called for air strikes, but Kennedy stood firm on his decision for a blockade.

U.S. ships prepared for the quarantine. Marines reinforced the base at Guantanamo Bay. Military alert was raised to DEFCON 3. Instructions were given to be ready to launch missiles within minutes of the President's speech.

In response to Kennedy's speech, Castro mobilized all of Cuba's military forces.



- What action did Kennedy take?
- How did Castro respond?



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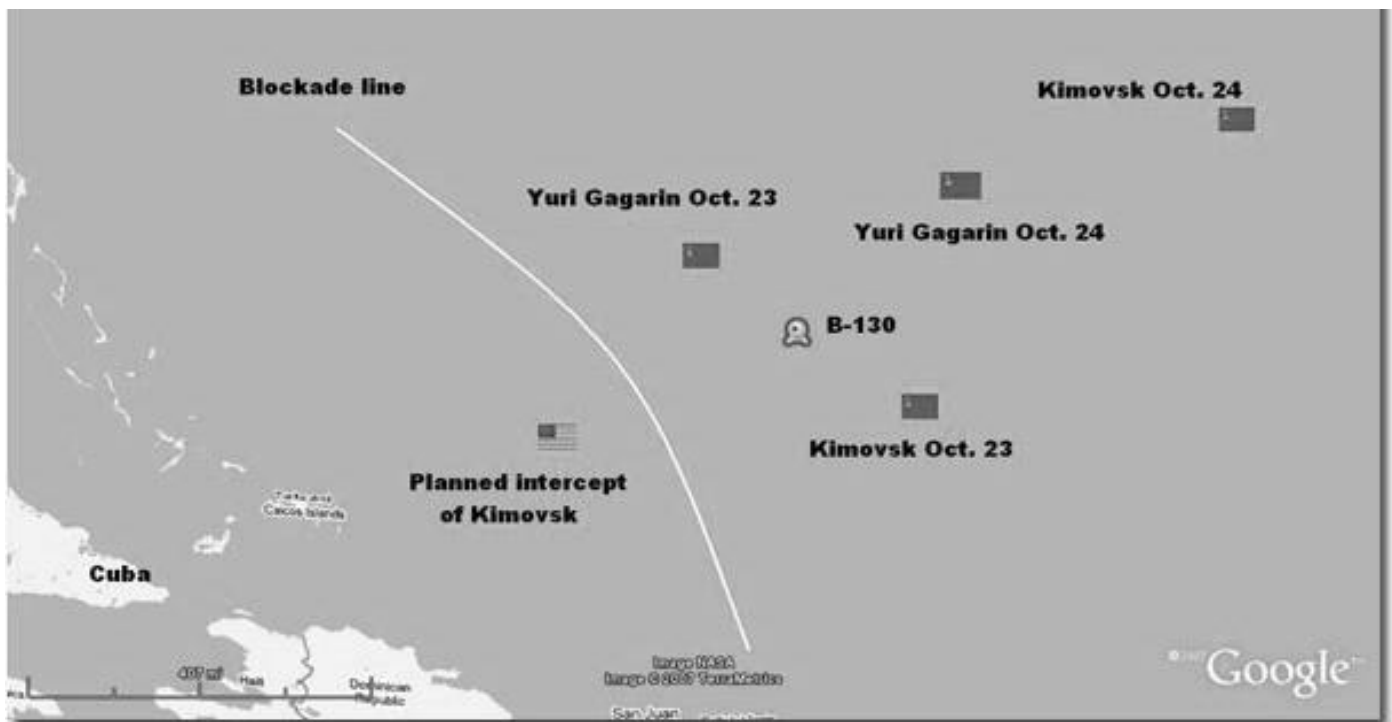
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Tuesday, October 23rd 1962

A low level reconnaissance mission brought back stunning pictures of missiles prepared for launch. One of the pilots, William Ecker, commented, "When you can almost see the writing on the side of the missiles, then you really know what you've got."

The Organization of American States unanimously approved the U.S. decision to quarantine Cuba.

By the end of the day, U.S. ships at the quarantine line were prepared to destroy any ship that failed to stop at that line.



➤ How did Kennedy change the action taken by the US?



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Saturday, October 27th 1962

One U-2 flew off course into Russia; another was shot down. A second letter arrived from Khrushchev.

A U-2 on a routine mission picked the wrong star to navigate by and wandered over Russia. In trouble, the pilot alerted the rescue station which dispatched F-105s. Unknown to the American pilot, the fighters carried nuclear tipped missiles. If the Soviets had interpreted this as a final reconnaissance mission before a nuclear attack, this could have touched off a nuclear war.

Another U-2, attempting to get updated pictures of the missile sites, was shot down over Cuba on orders of a Soviet commander on site. The orders had not come from Moscow. This worried Khrushchev. Due to poor communication, similar incidents could occur again, without his consultation.

Khrushchev's second letter to Kennedy raised the price for removing the missiles. In addition to a public statement about not invading Cuba he also wanted U.S. missiles removed from Turkey. This suggested that hard-liners had pressured Khrushchev. EX-COMM debated how to handle this letter. Robert Kennedy suggested they ignore it and respond only to the first.



- How did the crisis escalate on the 27th October?
- How was the 2nd letter different from the first letter?
- What do you think Kennedy should do?



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Friday, October 26th 1962

The U.S. Navy searched the Soviet ship *Marcula* and cleared it to Cuba when they found only paper products EX-COMM received a letter from Khrushchev in reply to Kennedy's speech. The letter clearly was painstakingly written. The Soviets would remove their missiles if Kennedy publicly guaranteed the U.S. would never invade Cuba.

Another U-2 flight revealed the Soviets were camouflaging the missiles.



- Does the failure of the search on the Soviet ship prove that USSR were innocent?
- What would you do if you were Kennedy?



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Sunday, October 28th 1962

Khrushchev announced over Radio Moscow that the Soviets would dismantle their nuclear missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev could have insisted that the U.S. respond to the greater demands in the second letter, but he did not. By backing down, Khrushchev ruined his career but prevented nuclear disaster.



➤ Was Khrushchev a hero or a villain?

