

JFK AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS



A Re-creation of "The Missiles of October" Crisis



JFK AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

A re-creation of President Kennedy's striving
to handle the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962

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Interact

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Can you help your students appreciate the fear Americans felt in October 1962?

This re-creation examines John Fitzgerald Kennedy's role in resolving the critical Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. It reconstructs the anger, tension, and agitation President Kennedy and his advisers experienced while they sought the best way to pressure Russia into removing its missiles from Cuba. By participating in this re-creation, students will be able to master the following:

Knowledge

1. Tracing and explaining the origins of the Cold War
2. Identifying at least two specific clashes which characterized the Cold War
3. Discussing the record of our relationship with Cuba and Castro
4. Determining the military, political, and psychological implications of the Soviet missiles in Cuba
5. Analyzing President Kennedy's role in ending the Cuban missile crisis

Attitudes

1. Developing tolerance for how persons' backgrounds shape their different points of view
2. Appreciating how the structure of a group may help or hinder the free flow of ideas

Skills

1. Writing paragraphs explaining points of view
2. Defending opinions and questioning conflicting ideas orally
3. Identifying and writing down valuable notes
4. Playing an historical role convincingly

OVERVIEW



Interact's re-creations
take only a few hours
of class time.

During four days students acquaint themselves with the background of the crisis and view and participate in two presidential meetings, a presidential speech, a debriefing activity, and a test.

Day 1

Introduce the re-creation with an interest catcher. The students read the Student Guide. Explain and assign the roles.

Day 2

After you introduce Scene 1, the role players—John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Dean Acheson, Robert McNamara, and Adlai Stevenson—meet to consider their alternatives. The president chooses his initial option.

Day 3

Acting as a commentator in Scene 2, you introduce the president to the TV audience before he makes his address to the nation. Then, recounting the major events between John Kennedy's speech and the receipt of Nikita Khrushchev's second message, you introduce Scene 3 during which the Kennedy brothers, Dean Rusk, and General Curtis LeMay discuss the president's next move.

Day 4

On the final day students discuss a debriefing case study and take a test.

SETUP DIRECTIONS



Note: You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for Interact has given you different colored handouts for those students playing roles. If you choose to use the recommended optional UNIT TEST, you will have to duplicate it. All other items necessary for the re-creation are in the Student Guide.

1. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
 - JOHN F. KENNEDY (one: five pages, back to back)
 - ROBERT KENNEDY (one: four pages, back to back)
 - DEAN ACHESON (one: two pages, back to back)
 - ROBERT McNAMARA (one: two pages, back to back)
 - ADLAI STEVENSON (one: two pages, back to back)
 - DEAN RUSK (one: two pages, back to back)
 - GENERAL CURTIS LeMAY (one: two pages, back to back)

Optional:

- * UNIT TEST (class set: one page)

2. **Assign roles** There are seven roles in this re-creation. Since the moderator's role is unusually demanding, you should play that role. Carefully match roles with appropriate student ability. President Kennedy's and his brother Robert's roles particularly require intelligence, sophistication, and preparation.

Helping students grow...

*as persons
as well as
historians ...*

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Consider seeing your friendly school librarian so that she/he will set up a JFK AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS RESERVE SHELF just for your class.

Certain students—the one playing Kennedy for example—just might go to scholarly works such as Theodore Sorensen's analytical work in order to "flesh out" his/her character.

Cook, Fred J., *The Cuban Missile Crisis*, Franklin Watts, Inc., New York, 1972. This book written for students presents a clear, concise interpretation of the events surrounding the crisis.

Detzer, David, *The Brink: Cuban Missile Crisis*, 1962, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1979. Detzer authors a very readable and interesting account of the entire Cuban affair. He takes a somewhat jaded view of the participants' motivations and actions in relationship to that of the standard textbook.

Kennedy, Robert F., *Thirteen Days*, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1969. Robert Kennedy's own recollection of his role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The book, while an interesting display of Kennedy's mind and perspective, lacks real depth and analysis since he died before its completion.

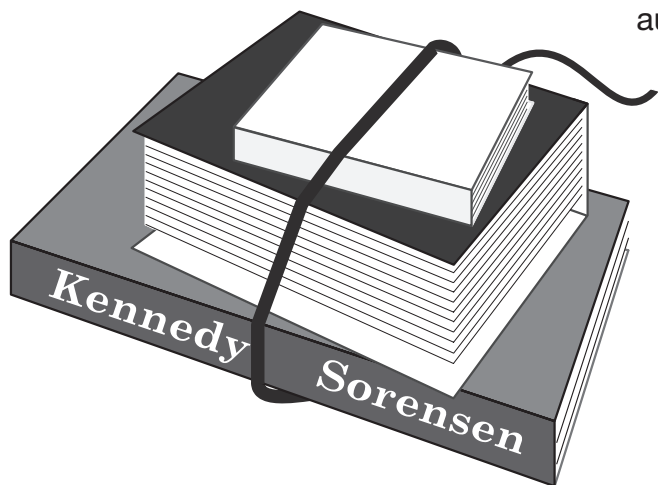
Matthews, Herbert L., *Fidel Castro*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1969. A sound and interesting biography of the Cuban premier offering valuable insight into the "other side's" point of view.

Roberts, Arthur D. and Weinland, Thomas P., *Confrontation: The Cuban Missile Crisis*, Xerox, Connecticut, 1973. This part of the Xerox *Values and Decisions* series lays out the background and personalities involved in the crisis. Provocative questions are included in an ending exercise.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1978. The author puts together a valuable biography for any Kennedy-phile to read. His description of the entire crisis is vivid and captivating.

Sorensen, Theodore C., *Decision Making in the White House*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1963. Sorensen, a close Kennedy aide, analyzes the components of presidential decisions during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Sorensen, Theodore C., *Kennedy*, Harper and Row, New York, 1965. Written shortly after JFK's assassination, the author affectionately and accurately discusses Kennedy's career, his opinions, his values, and his actions.



DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



Be certain you have carefully planned how to integrate this re-creation with the Cold War history chapters you have had your students read in their textbooks.

Before Day 1 Be sure you have thoroughly examined this Teacher Guide, the various handouts, and the Student Guide.

Day 1

1. Introduce the topic with an interest catcher that will sensitize students to the issues they will examine. A lecture, filmstrip, or an appropriate current events discussion would achieve this objective.
2. Try asking the students about the length of time it takes an ICBM (intercontinental ballistics missile) fired from the Soviet Union to hit Washington, D.C., (about 20 minutes). Most students don't realize this and will likely be doubly appalled at the prospects in 1962 of nuclear armed rockets 90 miles from Florida.
3. Distribute the Student Guides and have the students read the Purpose and Background Essay.
4. Assign the seven roles. **Note:** *Point out that JFK had several more advisers than the six who take part in this re-creation.*
5. Satisfy yourself that everyone understands his/her tasks.
 - a. Separate the actual role-players from the audience and distribute the proper handouts.
 - b. Have the audience prepare their two note-taking sheets.
 - c. Move from group to group and satisfy yourself that all students understand their individual tasks. Help any who need it.

Day 2

1. Get the room and participants ready.
 - a. Arrange the desks properly.
 - b. Make props available (e.g., a presidential seal, some mock photographs of the Cuban missiles, a map of the Western Hemisphere that clearly shows Cuba's proximity to the United States). If you can, draw circles on the map, with Cuba at the center, indicating the limits of the Cuban missiles. The MRBM had an 1,100-mile range; the IRBM had a 2,200-mile range.
2. Introduce Scene 1 to the audience. **Example:** *"On the morning of October 16, 1962, McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's aide, reported to him with photographic evidence of Soviet missile base construction in Cuba. President Kennedy recognized the danger immediately*

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



Encourage your students to speak passionately. Work to get them truly involved in their characterizations.

If you have a quality class and you are considering using this re-creation next year, videotape the presidential decision so that you can show portions next year to stimulate students' performance. (Such a video is also useful for open house when you want parents to see the participatory nature of your instruction.)



and ordered a secret meeting that day of his top advisers. After much heated debate these men are now to meet with the president to present their refined opinions. It is now October 21. Present besides JFK are his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy; Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara; U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson; and former Secretary of State Dean Acheson."

3. **Scene 1:**

- a. The president opens the meeting.
 - b. Implications of the missiles' presence are discussed.
 - c. The alternatives are analyzed.
 - d. The president announces his quarantine decision.
4. If time permits, set up a presidential press conference and allow the class to question the president on his reasoning.
 5. Remind all of Day 3's participants to be thoroughly prepared.

Day 3

1. Open this day with a summation of yesterday's events.
2. Inform students that they are now the national TV audience gathered before their sets to hear what has only been described as an urgent presidential address. You might "hype" the audience by speculating on the speech's subject (e.g., a new Berlin crisis, a flare-up in Vietnam, a declaration of war, a personal problem, another Bay of Pigs).
3. **Scene 2:** The president delivers his speech.
4. After his speech, quickly sum up his points, possibly interview an average citizen for his/her reaction. Then quickly reset the room for the final scene.
5. **Scene 3:** Introduce the final scene by carefully tracing the events between JFK's speech and this October 27 meeting:
 - a. The military has gone on full alert and American citizens have reacted by practicing air raid drills and hoarding food.
 - b. We've received full support from the OAS (Organization of American States).
 - c. Adlai Stevenson has confronted the Soviet U.N. ambassador in a televised debate.
 - d. Cuba has been quarantined by the U.S. Navy.
 - e. Some ships have been allowed to go on to Cuba.
 - f. One ship, the *Maracula*, was boarded, searched, and allowed to continue.

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3



Having students speak about the activity they have experienced will intensify their learning. Such speaking experiences also help students' personal growth.

- g. At the tensest moment so far, several Russian ships stopped just short of the quarantine line and turned around.
- h. A note from Khrushchev on Friday, October 26, was received which expressed hope for negotiation and offered to remove the Cuban missiles in exchange for a no-invasion pledge from us.
- i. A second note, different in tone, arrived Saturday. It demanded that we remove our missiles from our bases in Turkey and then the Russians would remove theirs from Cuba.
- j. The latest U-2 pictures indicate Russian missiles will be installed and ready for firing by October 30!
- k. Time is growing short for a peaceful solution.
- 6. Point out the date (October 27) and the role players: the president, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, General Curtis LeMay, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk.
- 7. The president opens the scene.
 - a. He discusses the immediate problems they face.
 - b. Everyone reacts to the U-2's downing.
 - c. The alternatives are analyzed.
 - d. The president announces his decision.
- 8. If time permits, set up a press conference and allow the class to question the president about his choice. However, try to save the crisis' outcome for tomorrow. Doing so may enhance the tension and highlight the uncertainty of the president's gamble.

Day 4

- 1. End the crisis by reporting something such as the following: *"On Sunday morning Radio Moscow responded to the president's message: 'In order to eliminate as rapidly as possible the conflict which endangers the cause of peace ... the Soviet government ... has given a new order to dismantle the arms which you described as offensive and to crate and return them to the Soviet Union.' "*
- 2. The crisis is over. Ask the class how they feel now.
- 3. Administer the UNIT TEST and/or essay question to the class. Here is the key: 1. d, 2. e, 3. b, 4. g, 5. a, 6. j, 7. l, 8. f, 9. m, 10. c, 11. t, 12. k, 13. p, 14. s, 15. n, 16. o, 17. h, 18. r, 19. i, 20. q.
- 4. Have each activity group discuss and analyze the Debriefing section. After the groups have choosen their options, have the chairpersons report to the whole class.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HANDOUT - 1



You are the prime mover in three scenes which re-create the decisions President John Kennedy faced during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. In Scene 1 you and your advisers discuss and analyze the wisest means to get rid of the Soviet missile bases in Cuba. In Scene 2 you deliver a television speech to the nation in which you advise your citizens of the actions you have taken in their behalf. Finally, while a nuclear confrontation seems imminent, you meet in Scene 3 to choose the best option available in order to preserve the country's security.

To play President Kennedy convincingly you must carry out several tasks:

1. Imagine and depict your role as chief executive and leader of the Free World in a nuclear age. Never forget that the harshness of the times and the perils of nuclear weapons magnify the results of every decision you make.
2. Read the Student Guide so you'll be able to weave the background issues of the Cold War into the immediate circumstances of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
3. Thoroughly study your role in each scene so that you will be able to successfully lead each to its proper conclusion.
4. Carefully analyze the strong and weak points of each alternative.
5. Choose and announce your decision to the class.

Background information

Study the Background Essay in your Student Guide to acquaint yourself with your political career, your rise to the presidency, and your role in the Cold War struggles of the early 1960s. Here are some basic points to focus on.

1. The second son of the influential Kennedy family, you served as congressman and senator from Massachusetts before you won the presidency in 1960.
2. Yours is an energetic and decisive administration committed to vigorous action.
3. In foreign affairs you have dealt with several Cold War "hot spots" such as Laos and Berlin. In these contests you sought to avoid war without sacrificing national will or policy.
4. During your presidential campaign you criticized President Dwight Eisenhower's policy toward Fidel Castro. You stated that no communist threat should be allowed near our borders.
5. As president, however, you backed out of an Eisenhower-CIA invasion plan for Cuba. You took the blame for the resulting Bay of Pigs fiasco which cost much in personal and national prestige.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HANDOUT - 2

6. As Cuba and the U.S. became increasingly hostile to one another, Castro allied his government more closely with the Soviet Union. Nikita Khrushchev, in a move to upset the balance of power, ordered installation of Soviet missiles in Cuba. These weapons would threaten most of the United States in the same manner that our own missile bases in Greece and Turkey threaten the Soviet Union. (Later this becomes a sticky point. You thought that our Turkish missiles had been removed at your order. They had not been removed.)
7. Operational Soviet missiles in Cuba would gravely threaten American security. Naturally you must take firm action. You have already formed a committee of advisers whom you have charged to argue and distill the best options you might use. This group, known as Ex Comm, is a dynamic blend of the best military, diplomatic, and political minds in your administration.
8. Now you are ready to explore and analyze the options they have identified. The choices before you potentially affect the security and future not only for the United States but also for the entire world.

Re-creation participants

The gravity of the crisis requires three scenes and two sets of decisions.



If you have not already viewed President Kennedy on a video, ask your teacher to help find one for you to watch. Then pattern your behavior after some of his mannerisms.



Challenge: Try to speak with JFK's eastern accent.

Scene 1 During this first scene you and your advisers will meet to review the crisis and its implications. You will meet with the following individuals:

- Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, a man you respect very much, will support a naval quarantine of Cuba.
- Dean Acheson, former secretary of state and a distinguished career diplomat, who is a critic of this position. He will argue a “hawk” line and favor a military solution.
- U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson will take a third position; he will propose making a deal with the Soviet Union.
- Robert Kennedy, your brother and attorney general, will be present. You trust and value his opinions above all others.

After the meeting, you will examine and choose the alternative which will get the missiles out of Cuba at the lowest cost to our nation and to the world.

Scene 2 This emergency is so important that you feel compelled to advise the American people of the crisis they face, the decisions you’ve reached, and the actions you have taken. Thus, using the guidelines on page 11, you will prepare and deliver a speech to the nation.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HANDOUT - 3

Scene 3 After the moderator vividly describes the tense events between your speech and the receipt of Nikita Khrushchev's second message, you and your advisers will meet in a final scene to weigh your next choice. Present will be General Curtis LeMay, member of the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff and a hawkish hard-liner. He will forcefully argue for an air strike and invasion of Cuba. Dean Rusk, your secretary of state, will seek a more peaceful solution; he will offer valuable background information about some critical behind-the-scenes negotiations in which he's been engaged. The attorney general, Robert Kennedy, will also be there. He will argue against any military moves without first exhausting all peaceful options. Together you and these advisers will almost desperately seek the best option to take in the face of the conflicting messages from Khrushchev and the shortening time factor.

The re-creation begins

As President Kennedy you must radiate confidence and power. If you do, you will make these scenes more valuable and more interesting for your classmates. You may want to play the Devil's Advocate (i.e., you may argue strongly against each position to test the soundness of each proposal). You might even try to use people (Stevenson, for example) to air unpopular ideas without outwardly coming out for them yourself.

Use the questions for scenes 1 and 3 as general guides. *Do not repeat each question word for word.* Instead adapt the questions to your own wording and style. Call for opinions from shy participants. Ask for longer explanations whenever necessary so that your audience will clearly understand each point. Point out differences of opinions between your guests to provoke more discussion and ideas.

Scene 1 In this initial meeting you are overseeing a shocked and angry group of men. Your purpose here is to ride herd on their emotions and steer them into identifying the options you can use to get the missiles removed from Cuba. Use these questions as a general guide

1. Gentlemen, the U-2 photos confirm that the Soviet Union is building missile bases in Cuba. What does this mean for the peace and security of the United States?
2. What does the Soviet Union hope to gain from this nuclear gamble?
3. Does Fidel Castro gain any advantage in allowing these missiles in his country?
4. Can we allow the missiles to remain?
5. What risks do we face if we demand their removal?
6. What is the best way to get them out?

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HANDOUT - 4

Alternative 1: Order a series of surprise air strikes to destroy the missiles and launchers. This is the most expedient and forceful way for the United States to show the Soviets that we mean business.

Alternative 2: Order a naval quarantine of Cuba to prevent the Russians from bringing more missiles into Cuba. This symbolic act will show our determination, yet it will leave room for flexibility. For if it fails, we can later use force as a last resort.

Alternative 3: Accept the quarantine idea but also make it clear that we are ready to negotiate by considering trade-offs such as our missile bases in Turkey for theirs in Cuba. This action will demonstrate our flexibility and diplomacy as we strive to avoid war.

7. Let's summarize our situation by examining the pros and cons of each alternative. What about our first choice? (State Alternative 1 at left.)
8. Repeat #7 except use alternatives 2 and 3. You will choose Alternative 2, ordering a quarantine of Cuba. While it admittedly has its drawbacks, this alternative offers the Russians an opportunity to avoid war by complying with American demands. It is a limited flexible response which still allows for more drastic action later.

Scene 2 At the teacher's direction you will deliver your written speech to the class. It should cover these ideas.

1. We have evidence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. They are capable of striking most of the United States and the Western Hemisphere.
2. The missiles' presence poses a grave and intolerable threat to our security.
3. The Russians must therefore remove these weapons.
4. You have taken a series of *initial* steps to remove the missiles and avert war.
 - a. You have ordered a strict quarantine of offensive military equipment to Cuba. All ships will be stopped. Those with military equipment will be turned around.
 - b. You have ordered strict surveillance of Cuba to watch the missile buildup. If it continues, further action might take place.
5. Any Cuban attack on any Western Hemisphere nation will require a response from the United States.
6. The United States will go to the Organization of American States for support for our actions.
7. You will ask for a United Nations resolution demanding Soviet dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons.
8. Call upon Khrushchev to avoid deceit and work with you to avert war and to promote peace.
9. State your intention to achieve these goals without compromising our country's interests or principles.

Scene 3 Since you delivered your speech, a series of contradicting and tension-filled events has brought the world to the brink of a nuclear showdown. On the one hand the quarantine has worked but only in a limited way. No more new missiles have entered Cuba, but construction of the existing weapons has continued. Soon Khrushchev or Castro might unleash them on American cities. You had received an encouraging letter from Premier Khrushchev which advised caution and suggested that he might dismantle the missiles in exchange for our promise not to invade Cuba. However, you have just received a second letter, much more menacing in tone, which now demands our pledge to remove our own missile bases in Turkey. This second letter

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HANDOUT - 5

proposes an unacceptable bargain and now seems to force your next move. Thus, you oversee a grim group of advisers who must wrestle with the best way to proceed. You're aware of the significance of any move you make. Because of this, you're particularly wary of any rash act or response to Khrushchev's second letter, in spite of the fact that the pressure for attacking Cuba is gaining more strength.

1. Gentlemen, you're all aware of the demands Chairman Khrushchev has made in this second letter. What are the differences between these messages? Are there any acceptable conditions in either letter?

2. Let's assess the present military situation. General LeMay, have the Russians stopped constructing the missile bases?

3. What does this mean?

(Note: At this moment the teacher will slip you a note informing you that Major Rudolph Anderson's U-2 spy plane has been shot down over Cuba by Russian anti-aircraft fire. Inform the group of this news and ask members for their reaction. General LeMay will angrily remind you that all had previously agreed that we would respond militarily to any such attack. However, you will resist this, stating, "It isn't the first step that concerns me but both sides escalating to the fourth and fifth step We must remind ourselves that we are embarking on a very hazardous course.")

4. Perhaps the biggest problem we face now is to determine where Khrushchev really stands. Mr. Rusk, I believe you have information about some behind-the-scenes peace feelers the Russians have made. Tell us about them. *(Rusk presents.)*

5. Does anyone have a reaction to this?

6. Even as we discuss what to do, time shortens our options. Do I order invasion now, or are there any other choices?

7. Let's examine our options by analyzing each of the alternatives we've identified. (State Alternative 1 at right.)

8. Repeat #7 except use alternatives 2 and 3.

9. Gentlemen, I have made my decision....

You will choose Alternative 3. In the face of harsh military criticism, you remain steadfast in your wish to exhaust all peaceful solutions before resorting to war. You don't believe Khrushchev wants war either, and you wish to do nothing that will endanger the future of the world's younger generations unless you have to.

Alternative 1: Order an air strike on the missile installations followed the next day by an invasion of Cuba. In order to protect our security interests we must not delay any longer before the Soviets launch a surprise attack against us.

Alternative 2: React to Khrushchev's second message by angrily rejecting any trade-off proposal. This measure will force Khrushchev to meet our demands or face perilous consequences.

Alternative 3: Ignore Khrushchev's second message. Respond instead to his first note by accepting his offer to remove the Cuban missiles in return for our pledge not to invade Cuba. If the Soviets accept this ploy, the crisis will be averted and the missiles will be removed at minimum cost.

ROBERT KENNEDY HANDOUT - 1



As the president's brother and his most valued adviser, you serve as his attorney general. You play a critical role in helping President John Kennedy resolve the missile crisis.

To effectively play your role you must carry out several tasks:

1. Know your background and career.
2. Thoroughly understand the issues that surround the crisis.
3. Recognize how the missiles' presence in Cuba affects our national security.
4. Know and be able to forcefully argue your positions in scenes 1 and 3.
5. Write a paragraph summarizing your role throughout the crisis.

Background information

Early career As the third brother within the close-knit Kennedy family, you have played a valuable role in John's political career. When he became president in 1960, he appointed you his attorney general. However, your role in the administration has far exceeded your post. In fact, you are the president's alter-ego and closest adviser.

First news You first found out about the Cuban danger when the president called you into his office on the morning of October 16. Like everyone you were shocked and angered by the Russians' deceit. Only a month earlier you had met with Soviet ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin. When you had expressed concern about arms in Cuba, Dobrynin had assured you there was no problem. You had skeptically accepted his word, but now the president's news has confirmed your fears.

Role in Scene 1 The president has made you a part of a group known as Ex Comm, which he has charged to probe and identify the best course he should take. In some of the discussions which preceded this scene, the president deliberately absented himself. He did so to avoid hindering the free flow of ideas. Secretary of State Dean Rusk was also frequently absent and Vice President Lyndon Johnson offered few opinions. Thus you assumed the chairman's role and led the group's heated discussions by playing Devil's Advocate; you pushed, prodded, and forced the participants to clarify their positions.

Now President Kennedy has called you together to present members' crystallized conclusions. Your relationship with the personalities in the group should have much to do with how you play your role. For example, you have been quite wary of the military "hawk" viewpoint. You once wrote, "If I thought of the many times I have heard the military take positions which, if wrong, had the advantage that no one

ROBERT KENNEDY HANDOUT - 2

would be around at the end to know” While you disagree with Dean Acheson’s hawk position, you admire him greatly and are reluctant to test his considerable debating talents. On the other hand, you don’t care much for Adlai Stevenson personally. You respect his right to differ with the group, but you vehemently disagree with his proposal that we offer to trade our Turkish missiles for the Russians’ Cuban missiles.



If you have not seen a video in which Robert Kennedy appears, ask your teacher to help you locate one. You and the student playing JFK could certainly pick up some acting tips by watching your historical personalities on the screen.

There is little disagreement that the Cuban missiles must go. You all recognize the grave threat these weapons pose to our security and prestige. Persons disagree strongly, however, about the means the president should use to erase this danger. This is the focus of the first scene as you, the president, Acheson, Stevenson, and Robert McNamara try to identify the best option your brother can use.

Alternatives in Scene 1 You will strongly oppose an air strike on the Cuban missile bases. In fact, when the group considers its strike option, slip a note to the president saying, “I now know how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor.” You believe you have sound and compelling reasons for your opposition to bombing. For one thing, no one can predict Nikita Khrushchev’s reaction to an air strike. You consider the Soviet premier unstable and fear that he might feel forced to respond by launching a surprise nuclear attack. Another factor you weigh carefully is world reaction to an American air strike. Russians and Cubans would surely die. Their deaths would be condemned by most of the world. Furthermore, the military can’t assure the president that an air strike would be 100 percent effective. If only a few bases were left, these might be used to launch nuclear weapons against defenseless American cities. Moreover, the extreme and absolute nature of an air strike would turn the initiative to the Russians. In turn, our own air attack would give the Russians little room to react except by stepping up the violence we had started. Finally, and most emphatically, you consider a surprise air attack *morally wrong*. The United States, the free world leader, stands for principles and ideals which would be contradicted if we were to launch a surprise air attack on a nation much smaller than ours. We would be giving up our moral position and bombing innocent Cubans.

You will equally oppose Stevenson’s proposal. He will recommend that America offer to trade our missile bases in Turkey in exchange for the Russians’ doing the same in Cuba. All will loudly object to Stevenson’s idea because it implies that we have done something wrong and that we are bargaining out of weakness. This is not the case. Recommend that perhaps we can talk about the Turkish missiles later. (They are obsolete and JFK had previously wanted them dismantled anyway.)

ROBERT KENNEDY HANDOUT- 3



Challenge: Try to speak with Robert Kennedy's eastern accent.

In the face of these unsatisfactory proposals, you and McNamara will support the idea of a naval quarantine around Cuba. The president would order the Navy to surround Cuba. Our ships would not permit any more missiles to enter Cuba. You favor this idea because this response allows for a limited Russian response. We can increase pressure later if it becomes necessary. But for now it would serve as sufficient warning to the Russians of our resolve. Obviously this option is more desirable than an air strike or a Turkey-Cuban missile trade-off.

Role in Scene 3 The president's quarantine decision in Scene 1 produced several results, but it did not remove the Russian rockets. A nervous world looked on as our alerted armed forces stood ready for any action, including sinking any Russian ships which defied our quarantine. Tension rose higher as the Russian ships approached the quarantine line. But the incredible strain eased when they stopped and turned around. However, the anxiety wasn't over yet. The missiles in Cuba have not been removed. In fact, their construction has speeded up! In a day or two they will be ready for launching against us. Plainly this situation cannot continue.

On the diplomatic front Khrushchev has sent conflicting signals. In an emotional letter received yesterday (Friday, Oct. 2) the Soviet premier pleads against any rash actions which would result in World War III. Instead he suggests that if the United States would guarantee Cuba's safety from invasion he would agree to remove the missiles—under U.N. supervision. Today, however, a second Khrushchev letter has raised the ante. Apparently not written personally by Khrushchev but instead by the Russian foreign service, this message demands that we remove our Jupiter missile bases in Turkey!

As a result, the pressure is mounting on your brother to move quickly. He must get the Cuban missiles out before they are operational or risk our nation's survival. Thus, you are meeting with the president, Secretary of State Rusk, and General Curtis LeMay. In the teeth of the showdown soon approaching, this group must consider the next road the president must travel.

Alternatives for Scene 3 Once again you must resist the military's push to attack and invade Cuba. This act must be saved as a last resort. You believe that an all-out nuclear war—which such an attack would provoke—is not in the nation's or the world's best interests. Surely there is room somewhere for less drastic action.

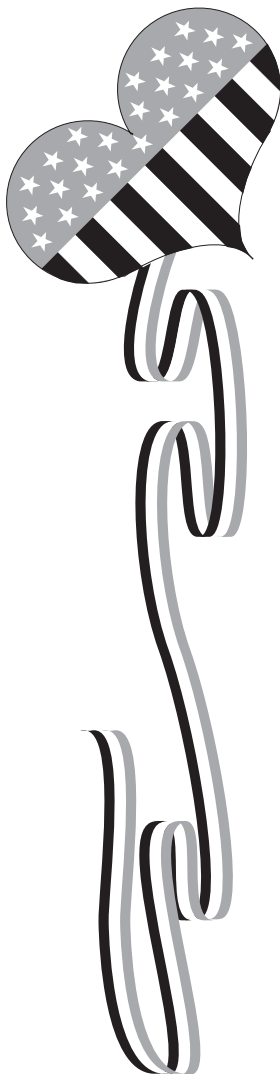
ROBERT KENNEDY HANDOUT - 4



Besides being attorney general, you are also the brother of the president. However, that doesn't mean you can call him "Jack" in front of others. At all times speak to him as "Mr. President" or "President Kennedy..."

Often when a group is under great pressure its participants generate the most creative solutions. Suddenly a thought strikes you. You realize that all of you have perhaps mistakenly assumed that Khrushchev's second message has canceled out his first one. This may be wrong. The United States can easily promise not to invade Cuba and to end our quarantine in exchange for a Soviet promise to dismantle the Cuban missile bases. Since Khrushchev made this offer in his first letter, why not respond to this proposal and ignore his second message? You might hint unofficially that the president might consider removing our bases in Turkey later—but not now. Such a strategy affords Khrushchev a face-saving offer and presents itself as a peaceful option to use before turning to a military one. It also fits with the information Rusk has about a quiet offer he has received through John Scali. Urge Rusk to support your proposal by telling the president about this. Thus, your role in Scene 3 is to urge the president to have you write a response to Khrushchev essentially accepting the offer Khrushchev made in his first message. Such a response just may avert the war the whole world dreads.

DEAN ACHESON HANDOUT - 1



Since you are a respected diplomat and architect of America's post World War II foreign policy, President John Kennedy has invited you to join him and his other advisers. Together you will search for the best means to remove the newly discovered Soviet missiles from Cuba. In that capacity you will push your "hawk" line by urging the president to use prompt force.

To realistically and vigorously fill your vital role in Scene 1 you must carry out several tasks:

1. Study this handout and the Student Guide to reflect your background and career while you deal with JFK and Ex Comm.
2. Know the background and circumstances around the missile crisis. Interpret this information in light of your tough anti-Soviet stance.
3. Forcefully argue your support for an immediate air strike on the missile sites.
4. Attack opposing viewpoints as weak and dangerous measures.
5. Write a paragraph detailing your role and views in this re-creation.

Background information

Cold War diplomat While you were President Harry Truman's secretary of state, you were largely responsible for the containment foreign policy which was structured to stop the spread of communism after World War II. In that light you view the Russian move in Cuba as an overt attempt to extend communism right up to our doorstep.

Role in Scene 1 As a member of the president's Ex Comm group, you are prepared to argue for a hard line against this most recent Soviet aggression. You intend to remind the president that his awesome responsibilities include safeguarding the security of the United States and the free world. Therefore, you must use all your talents to convince him of the best course to rid Cuba of its deadly arms.

Alternatives in Scene 1 Your premise is that the United States must always bargain from strength while dealing with the Russians. Furthermore, *a test of wills such as this requires a showdown from which we cannot retreat.* Therefore, the president has only one real choice. Urge him to order an immediate air strike against the missile installations before they are ready for use against us. To delay might enable the Russians to camouflage the weapons for later use. Wavering might also prompt the Soviets to increase pressure in other trouble spots such as Berlin. Hence a quick, clean, air strike, as you and the military favor, would erase this immediate threat to our security.

DEAN ACHESON HANDOUT - 2



Find a picture of what Dean Acheson looked like and how he dressed. He was dignified ... and impeccable.

How do you suppose he acted while advising presidents?

You see many reasons to vehemently oppose the quarantine alternative. It would take weeks or months to have any noticeable effect. By that time the missiles would be operational. The president, too, would be subject to great pressure and criticism, politically, from our allies who trade with Cuba and from the world as a whole. Furthermore, such an act might force drastic countermeasures from Cuba and the Soviet Union. For example, Fidel Castro could execute the Bay of Pigs prisoners and Nikita Khrushchev might order a move on Berlin. Most importantly, the quarantine itself “closes the barn after the horses have left” because this policy prevents getting any missiles out of Cuba that are already there. In effect, this measure does not solve the underlying problem (i.e., how to get the missiles out of Cuba).

You are appalled by Ambassador Adlai Stevenson’s proposal to offer a trade-off with the Soviets. This sort of flabby measure is exactly the wrong way to deal with the Russians. Join with the others in ridiculing his suggestion.

Finally, remember to argue strongly the pros and cons of each alternative. Urge President Kennedy to use the air strike option since it is his moral responsibility to preserve our safety. This is the most expedient means to accomplish that goal. To underline your sincerity when it appears that President Kennedy will choose the quarantine measure over your suggestion, you should get up and leave the conference room in disgust!

ROBERT MCNAMARA HANDOUT - 1



As John F. Kennedy's secretary of defense you are a respected and vital part of his administration. Thus, he will rely on your expertise to aid him in choosing the wisest solution in this Cuban Missile Crisis.

Your tasks include the following:

1. Know your background, career, and role in President Kennedy's administration.
2. Be able to discuss the issues and possible results of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
3. Prepare yourself to propose and to explain your support for a naval quarantine of Cuba as the best first step towards ending the Cuban Missile Crisis.
4. Be ready to point out weaknesses in other alternatives.
5. Write a paragraph summarizing your role and views in the entire crisis.

Background information

You were a successful head of the Ford Motor Company. When President Kennedy formed his new cabinet, he asked you to serve as his defense secretary. As such you are the civilian in charge of the entire United States armed forces. Your hard work, good organization, and competent staff have earned you Kennedy's praise and respect. Consequently, your role has exceeded mere defense matters. Naturally, the president made you a member of the group known as Ex Comm, which is to advise him how to settle the Cuban missile situation.

Role in Scene 1 At first you attached less importance to the presence of Russian missiles in Cuba than the others. "A missile is a missile" It didn't matter much where it came from if it killed you. However, after all the discussion, you have changed your mind and you now agree that we cannot allow the rockets to remain.

In dealing with the others present you must adopt an interesting posture. To insure that everyone recognizes the complete consequences of each alternative, you must assume a negative stance. Point out and emphasize what's wrong with each proposal, particularly the alternatives you don't favor such as an air strike. Your behavior should then force group members to clarify each position carefully.

ROBERT McNAMARA HANDOUT - 2



Find a picture of what Robert McNamara looked like and how he dressed. He was a forceful personality, used to having his own way. Try to dress and act as you feel he must have dressed and acted in the presence of JFK.

Alternatives in Scene 1 You completely oppose any talk of an air strike on the Cuban missile bases. As defense secretary you feel qualified to blunt Dean Acheson's push for such an attack. Point out that even with an 800-plane attack there is no guarantee that all the missile bases would be destroyed. Any remaining bases might unleash their weapons on the United States. Furthermore, such a massive assault during which many Russians and Cubans would die would at least prompt strong world protest and at worst provoke nuclear war. Finally, you must argue strongly that an air strike represents an extreme action. It would leave the Russians little flexibility except to respond with stronger action. Such a final scenario would spell disaster for all.

Greet Ambassador Adlai Stevenson's proposal with stony silence. Then attack it as a feeble response. Proposing a trade of our missiles in Turkey for the Russians' in Cuba, as Stevenson will suggest, is repugnant to you and your colleagues. For it places us in a position where we are bargaining from weakness instead of strength. At a moment when each nation's will is under scrutiny, such an action is unacceptable.

Instead you and Robert Kennedy will urge the president to order a naval quarantine of Cuba which would prevent the Russians from bringing any more weapons into Cuba. The Navy could easily put such a blockade in place at no immediate threat to life. Such an act would advise the Russians of our resolve and thus prompt them into serious negotiations. Perhaps, most importantly, a presidential blockade is a *limited* response which will give Khrushchev time to mull and identify all the implications of any responses he might consider. Finally, since it is a limited response, the president could always take stronger actions if this limited response were to fail.

ADLAI STEVENSON HANDOUT - 1



Your considerable political background and your job as President John Kennedy's ambassador to the United Nations qualify you to advise the president on the Cuban crisis.

To be an effective adviser during the re-creation's first scene you must complete these tasks:

1. Bring your political background and skills to the Ex Comm discussion.
2. Know your role in JFK's administration and your real relationship with the other Ex Comm members.
3. Recognize and discuss the threat the Cuban missiles pose to the United States.
4. Prepare yourself to offer your own solution and be ready to argue its strong points against the merits of the others.
5. Write a paragraph explaining your role in the re-creation.

Background information

You are a Democratic party stalwart who served as Illinois governor and as a two-time presidential nominee (1952 and 1956). You had also been a rival of the president for the 1960 nomination. After Kennedy's election he appointed you to his administration as ambassador to the United Nations. You have ably represented American interests there among the swirl of Cold War rhetoric and disputes. You have been brought into the Ex Comm discussions to help the president plan his best course of action. Like the others you recognize the dangers of the Soviet rockets, but you are also fearful of rash reaction by anxious "hawks."

Role in Scene 1 You bring caution into the group's deliberations. You are also aware that the other members present do not really like you. Kennedy aides haven't forgotten that you were once a political rival of their leader. They regard you as too liberal and too soft to stand up to the Soviets. For your part, you later described Bob Kennedy's behavior like "a bull in a china shop." In spite of this antagonism, you are prepared to state your beliefs courageously, no matter how unpopular they may be.

ADLAI STEVENSON HANDOUT - 2



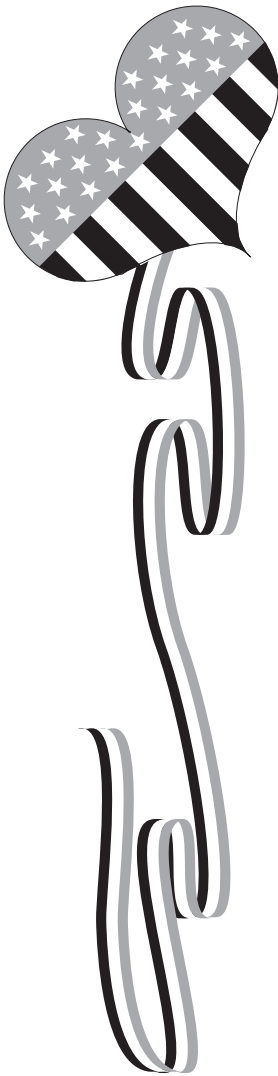
Find a picture of what Adlai Stevenson looked like and how he dressed. He was an erudite, charming personality, who won persons over through the integrity which he radiated. Try to dress and act as you feel he must have dressed and acted in the presence of JFK.

Alternatives In Scene 1 You abhor the very idea of an air strike and you're alarmed that the president might even consider this. You should respond to such a proposal by saying, "Let's not go to an air strike until we have explored the possibilities of a peaceful solution." You believe that "bombing invites counterattacks." Further, you feel that it is "vitally important that we go to the U.N. with a reasonable cause." World reaction would surely reject our attack. You can expect a vigorous challenge to your views about bombing. However, remain firm in your beliefs by remarking, "It seems in our age that anyone who is for war is a hero and anyone who is for peace is a bum."

While you favor the thrust of Robert Kennedy's and Robert McNamara's idea for a naval quarantine of Cuba over Dean Acheson's air arguments, you believe that their proposal doesn't go far enough. Drawing on your diplomatic background, you believe that the United States should offer a reasonable solution to the crisis. For example, we might offer to discuss dismantling our bases in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. We might also *consider* removal of our Jupiter missiles in Turkey in exchange for the Soviet removal of their rockets in Cuba. The base in Guantanamo is of questionable value, and the Jupiter missiles are obsolete anyway. In fact, President Kennedy had wanted them removed months before, but they haven't been. Following your proposal, the United States could erase the missile threat in Cuba at a small price.

Expect a strong reaction to your suggestion. The others will ridicule you for weakness and for "paying the Russians for removal of the missiles." They will possibly accuse you of "selling out." Nevertheless, stick to your guns and press for your proposal as a safe and reasonable alternative.

DEAN RUSK HANDOUT - 1



As President John Kennedy's secretary of state, you have executed JFK's foreign policies. Naturally you've become part of the president's group who must attempt to solve the missile crisis in Cuba.

To accurately portray this role you must complete several tasks:

1. Know your background as a career diplomat and your role in JFK's administration.
2. Identify the potential dangers the United States faces if the crisis isn't resolved soon.
3. Prepare yourself to explain the significance of some of the behind-the-scenes negotiations in which you had a part.
4. Be ready to argue the merits and faults of the alternatives your group will analyze.
5. Write a paragraph summarizing your role in the re-creation's final scene.

Background information

You served as deputy under secretary of state in Harry Truman's administration and later as president of the Rockefeller Foundation. Known as an intelligent, unassuming, and able diplomat, you were chosen over more notable men to serve as Kennedy's secretary of state. In that post you have already ably dealt with other Cold War confrontations such as the Berlin crisis.

Your record in the Ex Comm deliberations started slowly. Your attendance to other duties prevented you from attending several meetings. This diluted your influence with other Ex Comm members. Your opinions have often switched between the Hawks (those favoring military action) and the doves (those favoring more peaceful solutions). However, after JFK's initial decision to impose a naval quarantine, you coordinated a massive diplomatic effort to communicate the president's actions to the world's governments. You also worked hard to marshal support for our position in the OAS (Organization of American States).

At this point time is becoming a critical factor. The missiles still remain in Cuba, and the completion of their launching pads is fast approaching. The president now must interpret the meaning of conflicting signals from the Kremlin. Earlier in the week John Scali, TV news correspondent for ABC News, contacted you. He had been in contact with Alexei Fomin, a Russian whom many believe is Nikita Khrushchev's personal representative in the United States. Fomin extended a possible peace feeler through Scali. *If the United States pledged not to invade Cuba, Russia would remove the offending missiles in Cuba!*

DEAN RUSK HANDOUT - 2



Find a picture of what Dean Rusk looked like and how he dressed. He was soft-spoken in public, an intelligent man who won persons over through the knowledge which he possessed. Try to dress and act as you feel he must have dressed and acted in the presence of JFK.

When Scali reported this to you, you immediately brought him to the president to inform him firsthand of the news. JFK then told Scali to encourage Fomin that the United States might favor such a deal.

A letter to Premier Khrushchev further buoyed everyone's hopes for a peaceful settlement. It repeated Fomin's offer and urged that both sides practice caution. However, this morning a new letter from Khrushchev has dangerously raised the stakes. In a much more formal and threatening tone, Khrushchev's latest letter demands that the United States remove its missile bases in Turkey or face grave circumstances. Thus the president and his advisers must meet again to plot the American response to Khrushchev's demands.

Alternatives in Scene 3 You recognize the need for the president to take action, but you regard an air strike and invasion of Cuba as premature. The results could be catastrophic for the whole world. Support Robert Kennedy's proposal. He has suggested that we ignore Khrushchev's second message. Instead we should opt for Khrushchev's first letter in which he offered an acceptable solution (i.e., an American no-invasion pledge and a Russian promise to remove the missiles under U.N. supervision). You like this idea because it coincides with the Scali-Fomin behind-the-scenes offer. It also allows the Russians to save some "face" without appearing to back down completely. Furthermore, this tack will avoid the thorny Turkish missile issue. Finally, it is not an ultimate extreme action, like Curtis LeMay's attack option, from which there is no return. Therefore, encourage the president that this ploy may favorably break the awesome deadlock.

GENERAL CURTIS LEMAY HANDOUT - 1



As a vocal and tough-minded member of the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff, you are eager to urge President John Kennedy to use military force against the Russian missiles in Cuba.

To meet the responsibilities of your role you must complete several tasks:

1. Be prepared to assess the Cuban missile threat against the United States.
2. Know the constitutional relationship of civilian authority over the military and recognize your limited authority as a military leader.
3. Forcefully offer your military expertise to support your views that an invasion is necessary to end the crisis.
4. Vigorously attack viewpoints that call for anything less than military force.
5. Write a paragraph summarizing your role and views in the re-creation.

Background information

As Air Force chief of staff, you sit with the other service heads to coordinate our nation's defenses. Indeed you've devoted your professional career to protecting the United States' security. Despite your obvious military knowledge, however, you must remember that constitutionally our armed forces are always subordinate to the civilian authority of the president. You sometimes chafe at this dictum, but you grudgingly accept it.

You believe that Russian aggression must be met and stopped wherever it arises. Because of our superior industrial and military might, you're convinced that any confrontation between the Soviets and the U.S. would result in our victory. In fact, you believe that Nikita Khrushchev put the missiles in Cuba in a gamble to tip the balance of power in Russia's favor.

Role in Scene 3 Although you weren't present in Scene 1, you know that Dean Acheson strongly pushed the military's view that an air strike was necessary. You didn't and still don't believe that the Russians would do anything about an air strike. The United States military power, after all, is vastly superior to the Soviet's. Any Russian response might spell their nation's utter destruction. Therefore, as the meeting opens, you should smugly inform the president that his earlier decision was wrong and that it is responsible for our current predicament. Not only are the missiles still in Cuba, they are almost ready for firing against us. Make plain your distaste for any dovelike options which fall short of a military solution.

GENERAL CURTIS LeMAY HANDOUT - 2



Find a picture of what General LeMay looked like in uniform and what was always in his mouth—a cigar! He was an aggressive, forceful personality used to giving orders and being obeyed. Try to dress and act as you feel he must have dressed and acted in the presence of JFK.

Shortly after the scene opens, the president will announce that U-2 pilot Major Rudolph Anderson has been shot down over Cuba by Russian antiaircraft fire. Angrily respond to this act and remind the president that he had previously agreed that if our aircraft were fired upon, we would retaliate. Insist that he immediately order an attack.

Alternatives In Scene 3 You're not particularly interested in either of Khrushchev's letters. They merely represent stalling tactics to allow the Russians time to ready their rockets for use against us. You feel compelled to convince the group that an air strike, followed the next day by an invasion of Cuba, is the only viable alternative. This is the only way to remove the Soviet menace on our shores. Our certain victory, although admittedly at a heavy loss, would demonstrate our will. Conquering Cuba also means ridding that country of its infamous leader, Fidel Castro. You don't believe that the Russians will respond at all. If they do, we will defeat them at minimal cost.

Since an invasion would eliminate the missile threat, face down the Soviets, and eliminate Castro, you must argue that the president take this alternative. Anything less would be disastrous for the entire Free World.

UNIT TEST

 Your name: _____

Objective test

Directions: Match the terms in column B to the most appropriate terms in column A. There is one answer for each.

A

- _____ 1. Adlai Stevenson
- _____ 2. John Kennedy
- _____ 3. Curtis LeMay
- _____ 4. Dean Acheson
- _____ 5. Dean Rusk
- _____ 6. Robert Kennedy
- _____ 7. Robert McNamara
- _____ 8. Karl Marx
- _____ 9. Fidel Castro
- _____ 10. Nikita Khrushchev
- _____ 11. Harry Truman
- _____ 12. CIA
- _____ 13. quarantine
- _____ 14. U-2
- _____ 15. Turkey
- _____ 16. NATO
- _____ 17. Berlin
- _____ 18. Cuba
- _____ 19. hawks
- _____ 20. doves

B

- a. JFK's secretary of state
- b. "The quarantine hasn't worked."
- c. Soviet Union leader
- d. U.N. ambassador
- e. decision maker
- f. communism's founder
- g. "Always bargain hard with the Russians."
- h. split between east and west
- i. favor military actions
- j. "Bombing is morally wrong."
- k. originated the Bay of Pigs plan
- l. secretary of defense
- m. overthrew Juan Batista
- n. U.S. missile bases
- o. fit the containment strategy
- p. prevent Russian ships
- q. favor peaceful solutions
- r. 90 miles from U.S.
- s. spy plane
- t. instituted Marshall Plan

Essay test

Below are five possible factors President Kennedy weighed in making his fateful decisions about the Cuban Missile Crisis. Describe which of these you believe should have been his prime consideration. Cite at least three reasons justifying your choice.

- fear of the spread of communism
- danger of nuclear war
- security of the United States
- United States prestige
- a change in the balance of power

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JFK AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

A re-creation of President Kennedy's striving to handle the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962

PURPOSE

This re-creation examines the facets of leadership President John Fitzgerald Kennedy displayed as he led the nation through its most perilous episode of the nuclear age. In October 1962 President Kennedy was faced with formulating and carrying out policies which would force the Soviet Union to remove its newly constructed missile bases from Cuba. If these missiles weren't taken out, they would threaten the United States with nuclear destruction.

After sound preparation several of you will re-create the Cuban Missile Crisis by involving yourself in three scenes. In the first scene the president and his advisers will meet to discuss the gravity of this emergency and agonize over the best way to ease this crisis. Later, in the second scene, the class will listen to President Kennedy deliver a "televised" speech to the nation. He will describe the dangers the United States faces and inform the audience about the actions he will take to protect the nation's security. In a final scene, President Kennedy will meet with his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy; with Secretary of State Dean Rusk; and with General Curtis LeMay. They will struggle to choose the best option which will achieve their objective at the least cost to America and the world.

BACKGROUND ESSAY

Kennedy's crisis On the morning of October 16, 1962, adviser McGeorge Bundy brought President Kennedy disturbing evidence. JFK suddenly sensed that his nation was being thrust into the grasp of a potential nuclear contest that would yield no winners. America's secret U-2 planes, aircraft that could fly at very high altitudes and yet take incredibly precise photographs, had returned from flights over Cuba with film that produced clear proof that the Soviet Union was constructing missile launchers in Cuba. These missiles would be operational very soon. Thus, Cuba and the Soviet Union would suddenly have the ability to destroy American cities in less time than it takes to read this essay! President Kennedy realized that prompt action was necessary. The missiles must be removed, peacefully or militarily.

Cold war The Cuban Missile Crisis represents the backwash of frictions that had been present at least since World War II. After Russia and the U.S. had been allies during World War II, a struggle broke out between these two superpowers which represent opposing ideologies: the Soviet Union, the leading missionary for communism, and the United States, the leader of the Free World. Historians have labeled this conflict "the Cold War," in contrast to a hot one in which actual fighting takes place. In order to understand the deadly 1962 contest in Cuba, you must know the background of the Cold War.

Communism Very simply put, communism is a social, political, and economic philosophy originated by a German thinker, Karl Marx. Writing in the 19th century, Marx believed that a natural historical evolution was taking place that would spread world wide. Workers who had been dominated and exploited by a few upper-class owners would rebel and take over the nations of the world. The new state would take over everyone's property and eventually eliminate profit and greed. Following the rule, "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs," the new rulers would insure that all citizens, working for the good of the state, would prosper and be satisfied.

Russia was the first scene of a communist take-over in 1917. Nikolai Lenin and later Josef Stalin turned Russia into a totalitarian and brutal regime while they changed their country into a communist state.

The U.S. and communist Russia From 1917 on most American citizens viewed the new communist government in Russia as a threat to America. After all, they reasoned, America is a capitalist nation: we believe in private businesses run competitively for profit. Americans devoted to private ownership of goods were worried that our workers might be infected by communist ideas. They then might try to unite and overthrow all their bosses as the communist slogans urged.

After World War I the United States and other allied countries actually invaded western Russia in an effort to help non-communist Russians to overthrow Lenin. In our own country, Attorney General Alexander Palmer arrested and deported alien “Reds” (red is the communist color) for their supposed communist sympathies. We had even withheld our diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union’s official existence until Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1933. For these and other reasons mutual distrust between the Soviet Union and non-communist nations grew.

World War II During World War II, 1939-1945, the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain, and France entered an uneasy alliance. They united, of course, against the common threat of Nazi Germany. But even as they worked together, they were wary of each other. At war’s end American and Soviet troops faced each other across Europe.

Quickly Stalin moved to consolidate his war gains in eastern Europe. His armies installed and propped up communist governments in new “satellite countries” such as Poland. The Russian leader wanted these nations as a buffer zone to protect his Soviet Union from future western invaders. They would also serve as a base to spread the communist revolution.

For its part the United States had emerged from the war as the world’s only nuclear nation and strongest power. However, Stalin’s bold moves naturally appalled us. Other events such as the successful communist revolution in China and Russia’s apparent theft of our atom bomb secrets further disturbed the United States. Thus many Americans believed that we must respond vigorously to the Soviet Union’s aggression.

Containment To this end President Harry S. Truman instituted a containment strategy. Containment meant the United States would stop communist advances by ringing the Soviet Union with powerful military alliances, called NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in Europe and SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) in southeast Asia.

Truman also began a massive foreign aid program called the Marshall Plan. American money was used to bolster the war-ravaged European countries’ economies. Thus, these nations were strengthened against the lure of communism. Later the United States also became embroiled in wars in Korea and Vietnam to check Communist expansion. Perhaps the Cold War is best found in microcosm in Berlin. In 1945 the Allies had divided Germany among themselves after the war. Berlin, although located inside the Russian sector, was similarly divided. When we proposed a reunified Germany, the Russians refused. The result was the creation of a pro-western West Germany and a pro-Soviet East Germany. In 1948 the Russians suddenly sealed off the only road into West Berlin. This action was an effort to starve the West Berliners into accepting reunification with East Germany. Our response was the Berlin Airlift: we flew in virtually all the city’s supplies for nearly a year. This moral victory provided concrete proof to the Russians of our resolve to face intimidation.

All of these factors combined to solidify a staunch even militant stance against the spread of communism anywhere. This attitude would characterize our foreign policy during the 1950s and much of the 1960s.



United States and Cuba The United States has historically asserted its dominion over the Western Hemisphere. Cuba, in particular, has been of vital importance to our interests. An 800-mile long island, less than 100 miles from Florida, its strategic location protects the Caribbean sea lanes and the Panama Canal. Cuba was the last jewel in the once glorious Spanish empire. Spain had prized Cuba for its fine port in Havana and for its tobacco and sugar crops. The Cubans, however, had revolted many times to overthrow Spanish rule. At the same time American expansionists and business interests had coveted Cuba for ourselves. They got their wish in 1898 when we intervened in the bloody Cuban Revolution. During this “splendid little war” (the Spanish-American War) America freed Cuba from Spain, but the Cubans exchanged their servitude to Spain for a semi-colonial relationship with America, their powerful northern neighbor.

The United States had pledged never to annex Cuba. We did, however, establish a military base there, at Guantanamo Bay. We also proclaimed our right to step into Cuban internal affairs when we felt they were unable to maintain order. Our involvement then became a two-edged sword. On the one hand we protected Cuba from interests we felt were more ravenous than ours; on the other, we modernized their economy and society. However, Cubans resented this interference as being an exploitation of their sugar and tobacco resources.



Interesting research topic:
What were the key factors that made Fidel Castro feel that communism was appropriate for Cuba?

Dictatorship in Cuba During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s a series of dictators ruthlessly plundered the Cuban economy. The country was mired in corruption, upper-class privilege, and widespread poverty. For example, under the Juan Batista regime, only one of 20 Cubans ever ate meat and only one of eight drank milk! Factors such as these ripened the scene for a revolution.

Castro Fidel Castro was born the son of a Spanish rancher in Cuba’s Oriente province. Educated as a lawyer, Castro found his true calling as a revolutionary. On July 26, 1953, he led an attack on a Batista army barracks. It failed. Castro was arrested and imprisoned but freed two years later. In November 1956, he returned to Cuba with a small group of guerrillas committed to Batista’s overthrow. On January 1, 1959, Castro and his revolutionaries triumphantly entered Havana. Batista had fled. Castro was Cuba’s new leader.

U.S.-Cuban relations crumble Although Castro was not a card-carrying communist, his brother and some key followers were. As the Cuban leader he began changing the Cuban economy and society. His changes alarmed anti-communist Americans and Cubans alike. To the distress of upper-class landlords, he reduced tenants’ rents. He also broke up and communized large land holdings. He angered Americans by seizing American property in Cuba and by delivering fiery anti-American speeches. Clearly if Castro wasn’t a communist, he was certainly under its influence.

President Eisenhower In the latter days of his presidency President Dwight Eisenhower had first accepted Castro’s new government—but warily. Now Castro’s actions required a strong response. Ike instituted an embargo on Cuban sugar trade and cut diplomatic relations with Castro. The president also opened the doors to the flood of Cuban refugees who wanted to flee Castro’s rule. The most serious Eisenhower response involved supporting secret plans for an invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro Cuban guerrillas. Our CIA assured the president that this act would rid Cuba and the United States of the troublesome Castro. However, Eisenhower’s term ran out before the invasion could take place. His successor, John F. Kennedy, would direct the final scene.

JFK The kind of personality, intelligence, and leadership that Kennedy brought to the presidency had a particular imprint on the subsequent chain of events leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis’ successful conclusion. Therefore, we must place Kennedy’s record and values into perspective.

His background The second son of Joseph Kennedy, a wealthy financier and ambassador to Great Britain, John Kennedy was groomed for a successful political career. Following a Harvard graduation he earned hero’s honors during World War II. After the war he became a congressman from Boston and, later, was elected U.S. senator from Massachusetts in 1952. He had even won the Pulitzer Prize for his book Profiles in Courage. Kennedy received national attention in 1956 when he narrowly missed the Democratic party’s nomination for vice president. However, in 1960 he ran for and won the presidency against Richard Nixon. Kennedy was the first Catholic and the youngest man ever elected.

JFK and Cuba Early in his administration the president ordered a poorly executed invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. This invasion made by American-trained Cuban guerrillas failed miserably. How he came to make this decision is best explained by examining several prior events. During his campaign JFK had criticized Eisenhower for allowing a communist regime “just 90 miles from our shores.” After Kennedy’s election the CIA presented him with its plan to overthrow Cuba. Waiting in Guatemala were 1500 American-trained and equipped guerrillas. With the president’s approval and with U.S. air support, these men would invade Cuba and overthrow Castro. Kennedy had serious misgivings about this plot, but his advisers assured him that the invasion would be 100 percent successful. Reluctantly the president agreed, but he withdrew American air support. The invasion was an utter disaster. Castro’s forces easily squashed the attackers and imprisoned most of them. Domestic and international furor against American participation and duplicity was swift and bitter. President Kennedy grimly accepted the blame and rode out the storm.

Even after this fiasco at the Bay of Pigs, our government tried to overthrow or eliminate Castro. Under the cloak of Operation Mongoose, the CIA made numerous attempts to harass the Cuban economy and promote unrest in Cuba. It even made several assassination attempts on the Cuban premier. Obviously American-Cuban relations were worsening ominously.

JFK’s cold war record President Kennedy, a staunch anti-communist, was committed to maintaining our vigil against communism’s threat. However, he also recognized that needless confrontation might provoke a catastrophic nuclear war. Therefore, Kennedy advocated nuclear disarmament and believed in negotiating Cold War issues whenever possible. In his 1961 inaugural address he said: “Let us never negotiate out of fear but let us never fear to negotiate.” Thus, he was willing to deal flexibly with the Soviets.

Nikita Khrushchev JFK’s Soviet counterpart was a different type of leader. The Russian premier, Nikita Khrushchev, was a tough, pragmatic leader totally committed to communism. He had been quite pleased with Cuba’s transformation into a communist nation and had bolstered his new ally with money, arms, and trade. He was also a tough bargainer. He liked to quote: “If a man sticks out a bayonet and strikes mush, he keeps pushing. If he strikes steel, he pulls back.” Based on Kennedy’s Bay of Pigs record, Khrushchev resolved to test the president’s will at their summit conference in 1961.

The two superpower leaders met in Vienna, Austria, where they discussed a variety of topics and freely exchanged views. This discussion grew livelier when Khrushchev brought up the subject of Berlin. Khrushchev stated that the Soviet Union would design a separate peace treaty with East Germany by year’s end. This action would mean that West Berlin, actually a part of West Germany although deep within East Germany, would have to be reunified with East Berlin. President Kennedy stated that the United States would maintain its commitments to the West Berliners and that we would never allow the city to fall. Both leaders clearly realized that such rhetoric might easily lead to war.

JFK was convinced that he could avert this crisis only with a firm foreign policy. Thus he increased the military budget and the draft call. He also readied the reserves for duty. During this “saber rattling,” the president still expressed his willingness to negotiate. When the Soviets saw our resolve, the crisis eased somewhat and some talks progressed. However, a leader as wily as Khrushchev might be expected to step up the pressure somewhere else.

Russian missiles in Cuba Communism’s Western Hemisphere outpost in Cuba provided a perfect opportunity to carry the Cold War to the United States’ doorstep. American involvement in the Bay of Pigs invasion and the increasing enmity between the United States and Cuba solidly entrenched Castro’s new alliance with the Soviet Union. Khrushchev was sure to use this new friendship to his advantage.



Khrushchev knew that Russia at this time badly trailed the United States in nuclear weapons and ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles). His ICBMs were inaccurate and undependable. Furthermore, the cost of a massive building program to catch up would sorely strain Russia's troubled economy. Nevertheless, he realized that he must find a way to blunt the Americans' missile advantage. One solution would be to install some of Russia's smaller, more accurate missiles in Cuba. Their placement there would radically shift the balance of power in the Russians' favor. They would be so close to the United States that their launching would provide virtually no time for the United States to react to a nuclear attack.

Khrushchev had other reasons for placing his missiles in Cuba. His Chinese allies had criticized him severely for his mishandling of the Cold War. Installing nuclear weapons right under America's nose would boost his own prestige. This gamble would also provide added pressure on the United States when Khrushchev might decide to heat up the Berlin situation again. The weapons might easily be used as a bargaining chip in a crisis situation. For these reasons, then, Khrushchev decided the advantages outweighed the risks. Thus he undertook to install in Cuba by October 30, 1962, 42 medium-range missiles (a range of 1,100 miles), 24 intermediate-range missiles (a range of 2,200 miles), nuclear bombers, anti-aircraft missiles, and 22,000 Soviet troops.

Buildup discovered Rumors of a weapons buildup in Cuba had circulated in Washington, D.C., for several weeks. Soviet ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin had promised the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, that no offensive weapons would be placed in Cuba. Nevertheless, the president ordered U-2 flights over the island to keep an eye on any suspicious activity.

The October 14 flight film produced clear evidence that the Russians were indeed erecting missile sites in Cuba. McGeorge Bundy reported the confirmation to JFK on Tuesday, October 16. President Kennedy saw the implications at once. The missiles' presence in Cuba would enable the Soviet Union to bully us. They would change the balance of power forever. The missiles were a direct threat to the stability of both America and the entire Western hemisphere.

Plainly the missiles had to go. But at what cost? Overreaction might spark World War III. Insufficient response would place the U.S. at a tremendous strategic and psychological disadvantage. A deeply troubled President Kennedy had to choose his most prudent course of action as quickly as possible.

Ex Comm Therefore, JFK convened a group of advisers, known as Ex Comm (Executive Committee of the National Security Council). These persons were the administration's best and brightest minds. Kennedy would charge them with hammering out the best options he could use to resolve this crisis.

And now amidst high nuclear stakes, you will either role-play the president or members of Ex Comm as they struggle to confront the emergency and avoid nuclear war, or be a questioning witness of these leaders after their meetings.

RE-CREATION SEQUENCE

Note:

If you are not assigned one of these roles, you still have an important responsibility: preparing yourself and the whole class for the debriefing following the re-creation.

See pages 6 and 7...

The re-creation will need two days (or classroom hours) and three scenes.

Scene 1: President Kennedy, Dean Acheson, Robert Kennedy, Robert McNamara, and Adlai Stevenson will argue and analyze the best first step the president must take.

Scene 2: The president will deliver a speech to the class as though it were a national TV audience. He will inform you of the crisis, its implications, and the decisions he has made.

Scene 3: The president will meet with Robert Kennedy, Dean Rusk, and General Curtis LeMay. In Scenes 1 and 3 JFK will make, announce, and explain his decisions to the class.

Presidential news conference: If time permits, you will have a chance to ask questions of him as though you were a member of the press.

Role players The re-creation needs seven role-players to accurately reproduce the three scenes. The first scene's players will confront the initial crisis and analyze alternatives the president might use. In the third scene the participants will seek to avert a potential nuclear war.

Each participant will receive a handout detailing his biography, his role in the crisis, and several suggestions on how to react to the situations.



AUDIENCE MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Those of you who are not actually playing a role in the decision-making sessions nevertheless fill a vital part of the re-creation as a member of the audience. You have several important responsibilities:

- listening carefully to the discussions and to the president's speech
- identifying the key factors JFK must weigh
- analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the options available to the president
- developing questions to ask the president about his decision
- evaluating his decisions

Note-taking On the day before the re-creation begins, take out two sheets of paper and prepare them for the next two days' note-taking. The two sheets—and the directions they include—should look like the two models found on this page and the next page. During Scene 1 you will take notes as President Kennedy's advisers debate several alternatives. (These alternatives are listed on the top of page 7.) Briefly write down sentence fragments that pinpoint the advice each person is giving the president.

At right is a sample of Scene 1's note-taking sheet. Please take considerable notes, writing down what is said during this mini-unit. You will then be prepared for a meaningful debriefing experience.

Research shows us that when persons write as they are learning, they retain considerable knowledge—and for a long time period.

President Kennedy and Cuban Missile Crisis	
Suggestions from advisers/critics	
Robert McNamara Secretary of Defense	
Dean Acheson Career diplomat	
Adlai Stevenson Ambassador to U.N.	
Robert Kennedy Attorney General	

Scene 1 alternatives:

Alternative 1: Order a series of surprise air strikes to destroy the missiles and launchers. This is the most expedient and forceful way for the United States to show the Soviets that we mean business.

Alternative 2: Order a naval quarantine of Cuba to prevent the Russians from bringing more missiles into Cuba. This symbolic act will show our determination, yet it will leave room for flexibility. For if it fails, we can later use force as a last resort.

Alternative 3: Accept the quarantine idea but also make it clear that we are ready to negotiate by considering trade-offs such as our missile bases in Turkey for theirs in Cuba. This action will demonstrate our flexibility and diplomacy as we strive to avoid war.

Scene 3 alternatives:

Alternative 1: Order an air strike on the missile installations followed the next day by an invasion of Cuba. In order to protect our security interests we must not delay any longer before the Soviets launch a surprise attack against us.

Alternative 2: React to Khrushchev's second message by angrily rejecting any trade-off proposal. This measure will force Khrushchev to meet our demands or face perilous consequences.

Alternative 3: Ignore Khrushchev's second message. Respond instead to his first note by accepting his offer to remove the Cuban missiles in return for our pledge not to invade Cuba. If the Soviets accept this ploy, the crisis will be averted and the missiles will be removed at minimum cost.

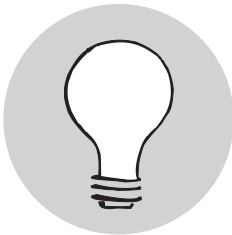
Here is the note-taking model for you to fill out during Scene 3. Consider having another sheet of paper available upon which you can write questions as they occur to you. Later, you may get to ask questions if there is a press conference.

Suggestion:

Be certain you take your notes in **sentence fragments** on your note sheets.

At right is a sample of Scene 3's note-taking sheet. Do not attempt to write down verbatim—i.e., word for word—what is said. Simply try to get the main point of each idea being presented.

Note: You will not have to take notes as President Kennedy speaks to the nation in Scene 2.



Another idea:

Before the **Debriefing** and **Testing** which end the unit, you may wish to come back to your notes and carefully write in your own opinions of what was said. (If your note sheets are full, use a different sheet of paper.)

Research about writing has also found that if a person writes down personal reactions or relationships to what is being studied, the information becomes increasingly real to the person.

President Kennedy and Cuban Missile Crisis		
Alternatives	Good Points	Bad Points
1 Use surprise air attacks to destroy the missiles and launchers. Invade Cuba the next day.		
2 React to Khrushchev's second message by angrily rejecting any trade-off proposal.		
3 Ignore second message. Accept offer to remove missiles and promise not to invade Cuba.		



This culminating activity will be enjoyable and a real learning activity if you have studied and listened carefully enough to get truly involved in JFK's decision.

Good luck!

DEBRIEFING

For one or two class periods your class will be divided into four activity groups which will analyze the case study below. After your group has discussed the case, your chairpersons will report to the entire class what your group believes the president should do.

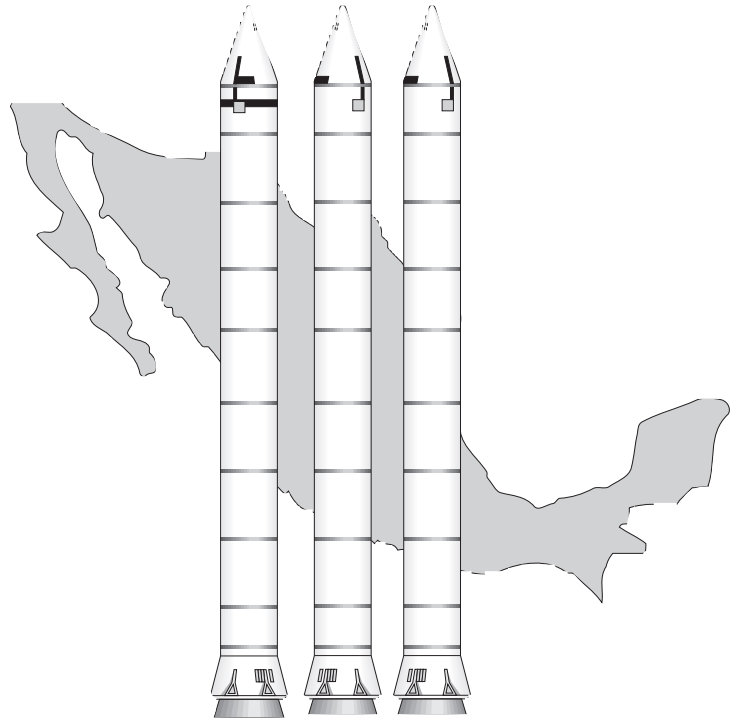
The Cuba/Mexico/China Case Study

Many historians believe that American nuclear superiority over the Russians won the day in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The Soviet Union simply wasn't able to stand up to our nuclear forces. Shortly afterward the Soviets vowed to spend billions to catch up and pass the United States' nuclear capability. Today many defense experts believe that although the nuclear threat from the Soviet Union has lessened, the leadership in Cuba, which has been aided for decades, still poses a threat to the United States.

Suppose that there is a world-wide economic depression in the near future and that the Mexican communist party, with aid from Cuba and China, takes over Mexico. Mexico swiftly allies itself with Castro's Cuba. Shortly afterward our spy satellites photograph Cuban nuclear missile sites under construction near Mexico City. Even more ominous is evidence of Cuban troops and tanks in Mexican states bordering the U.S. (The tanks and nuclear missiles, although old, are still operable; they were obtained from the Soviet Union during the 1970s.) The troops gathering in northern Mexico could easily invade the United States.

Questions:

- What should a future president do?
- What are the implications of any actions the president might take?
- Do you believe the president and the United States would act unilaterally, or would our leaders see that the United Nations and other nations were immediately involved?



TESTING

Take a 20-question two-column matching test covering key concepts and personalities in the re-creation. This objective test will be followed by an essay question which will require you to analyze President Kennedy's role in the affair.