

# International Scenario: The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)

The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1962 when the Soviet Union began to place nuclear missiles in Cuba. The U.S. government refused to allow this, and after 13 tense days and many secret negotiations, the Soviet Union agreed to remove the missiles.

## Leading up to the Crisis

The U.S. put several nuclear missile sites in Turkey and Italy that were within range to strike Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union. As a result, the Soviet Union government believed they needed missile sites that could strike at the U.S. At the same time, the Cuban government wanted protection from the United States. They decided to work together and have the Soviet Union put nuclear missiles in Cuba that could strike the U.S.

## How the Crisis Began

On October 14, 1962 an American spy plane flying over Cuba captured pictures of long-range Soviet missiles in Cuba. The missiles could reach any place in the U.S. and cause mass destruction. President Kennedy called a meeting with his main security advisors. President Kennedy and his advisers considered a number of options from diplomacy to a full attack and invasion of Cuba. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended an invasion to the president. They believed it was the only practical option. However, Kennedy was concerned that this would start World War III between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Instead, he decided to set up a naval blockade.

## Blockade

Kennedy announced his plan on October 22, 1962. He showed the world the missile bases in Cuba and said that the U.S. would block Cuba from receiving any additional weapons. He also said that any attack on the U.S. from Cuba would be considered an act of war from the Soviet Union. Over the next several days the crisis became more intense. The Soviet Union said they would not back down. By October 24th, Kennedy believed the U.S. would have to invade Cuba.

## Negotiations

Although the Soviet Union publicly said they would not back down, they secretly negotiated with the U.S. Eventually the two sides reached an agreement. The Soviet Union would remove the missiles from Cuba as long as the United States agreed to never invade Cuba again. In secret, the U.S. also had to agree to remove their nuclear missiles from Turkey and Italy. The crisis was over, and it was seen as President Kennedy's greatest moment of world leadership.



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