

# **CRISIS: MISSILES IN CUBA**

## **Teacher's Notes and Simulation Guide**



©1989

Zenger Media  
10200 Jefferson Blvd  
Culver City CA 90232

# NOTE TO THE TEACHER

**Crisis: Missiles in Cuba** can be a flexible component in any secondary-level social studies course, particularly U.S. history and government. The program uses documentary footage to reconstruct step by step the events which brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war in October 1962.

The video gives students an opportunity to observe the build-up and resolution of an important historical crisis; in addition, the accompanying simulation activities allow them to re-create in the classroom the dilemmas faced by the Kennedy administration.

Whether or not you choose to use all the activities in your class, the video offers thought-provoking information about the crisis and at the program's conclusion students will be left to ponder this question: What lessons from the Cuban Missile Crisis will help us improve our ability to resolve future crises?

## OBJECTIVES

After viewing **Crisis: Missiles in Cuba** and completing the simulation activities, students will be able to:

- list the options faced by the president and his advisors, including advantages and drawbacks of each position
- offer alternative solutions to the situations faced by the advisors and speculate on possible outcomes
- demonstrate the ability to arrive at a consensus decision when faced with a number of options

## RUNNING TIME

<b>Part I</b>	<b>12:30 (minutes)</b>
<b>Part II</b>	<b>10:00</b>
<b>Part III</b>	<b>6:00</b>
<b>Total running time</b>	<b>28:30</b>

## HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

The video is divided into three segments which allow the program to be used in three different ways:

- 1) Full simulation: Each segment is viewed separately and followed by simulation activities that reconstruct the decision making process.
- 2) Three-part viewing: The video is stopped at the end of each part for discussion and debriefing.
- 3) One-period viewing: The program is viewed from beginning to end. This should be followed by discussion and debriefing.

No matter how the program is viewed, you are encouraged to stop the program at any time for clarification or discussion. (Discussion questions are provided on page 12. Permission is granted to photocopy any of the worksheets for educational use.)

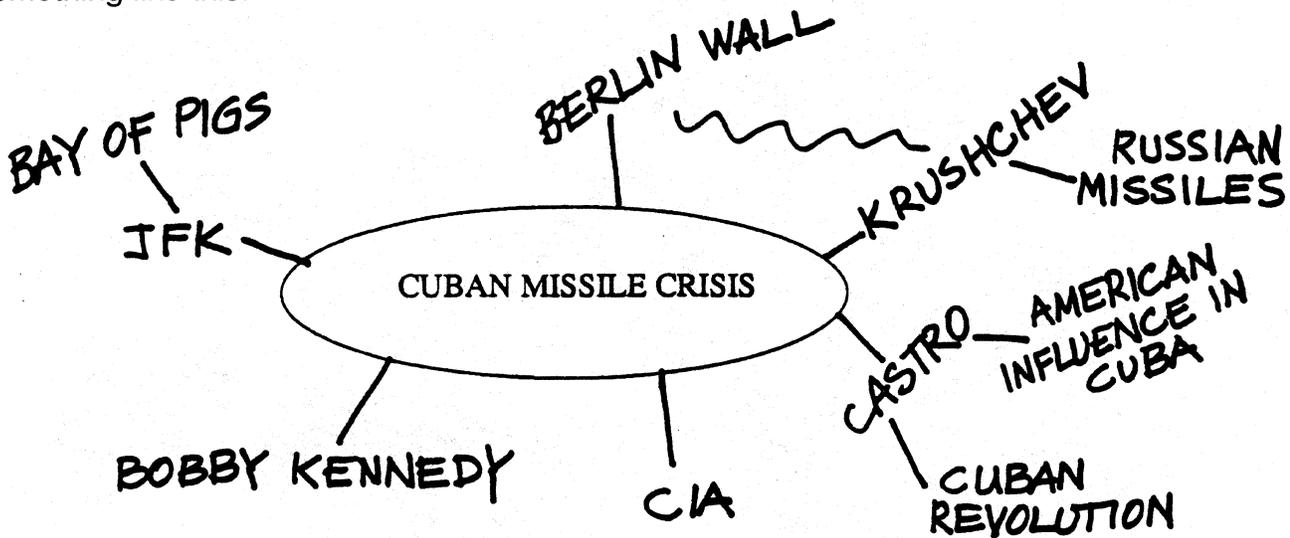
## INTRODUCING THE PROGRAM

Prior to showing the program, you may want to review the vocabulary worksheet with your students. Note: If you are conducting the full simulation, you may wish to limit introductory discussion to topics that will not reveal the outcome of the crisis (e.g. cold war, Berlin Wall, Bay of Pigs).

Questions to ask your students:

1. What do you know about the Cuban Missile Crisis?
2. Who was involved?
3. When did the Cuban Missile Crisis occur?
4. Why was it called a crisis?
5. Do you know anyone who remembers the event? What do they remember?

Another idea to assess student understanding of the event would be to do a clustering activity on the chalk board. Students brainstorm by suggesting ideas related to the crisis. The result might look something like this:



Suggested introduction to students:

"You are about to see a documentary on the Cuban Missile Crisis. You will see the events that brought the U.S. and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear conflict in October 1962, and the decision-making process that prevented nuclear war."

## DIRECTIONS FOR SIMULATION ACTIVITY TO FOLLOW PART I

(Handouts 1, 2, and 3 may be given out the day before the class views the video. The teacher may want to go over the vocabulary in class.)

- 1) Stop the videotape after viewing Part I. Each student should be given copies of Briefing Sheet I (Handout 4), as well as the other background materials (Handouts 1, 2, and 3) if necessary.
- 2) Discuss the meaning of "consensus" with the class:
  - a) What does "consensus" mean? (Webster's "2. a: general agreement: UNANIMITY...")
  - b) President Kennedy wanted consensus from his advisors. Why?
  - c) Do you think consensus would be easy to obtain? Why or why not?

- 3) Review the options the advisors were considering. Give students a few minutes to assess the pros and cons of each option, as well as to consider any additional options of their own. (The back of Handout 4 may be used by students to create a grid of the pros and cons of additional options such as consulting with the Allies and Congress before deciding on a plan of action, taking the issue directly to the United Nations, or doing nothing about the missiles.)
- 4) Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 students. Have each group select a spokesperson.
- 5) Inform students that they are being put in the role of presidential advisors and will be given a specific block of time (we recommend no more than 10 minutes) to arrive at a consensus decision on which response the United States should take to the Soviet missiles in Cuba. (A good rule of thumb for classroom consensus is three-quarters agreement.)
- 6) Remind students they must reach a consensus decision in the time allotted. Teachers are encouraged to devise a token "penalty" for groups that are unable to reach a decision.
- 7) Students will discuss options, working to arrive at a consensus decision. The teacher should circulate among the groups, and when necessary act as devil's advocate and encourage group discussion.
- 8) Reconvene the class as a whole when the time limit is expired. Ask the spokespersons for a show of hands on the various options to see if there is a class-wide consensus. If there is no class consensus, conduct a class discussion, polling periodically to see if a consensus can be created.
- 9) Debriefing: After reaching a decision, students should discuss the obstacles they encountered and efforts they made to reach a consensus. If a consensus decision was not reached, discussion will focus on why the obstacles were not overcome.
  - a) Were you able to reach a consensus?
  - b) How difficult was it to come to a consensus?
  - c) What obstacles did you encounter?
  - d) What steps did you take to reach a consensus or come close?

## **INTRODUCTION TO PART II**

### **Introduce Part II:**

"As you saw in Part I, JFK and his advisors met many times but were unable to reach a consensus. Let's see if they were able to agree on what to do in Part II."

## **ACTIVITY TO FOLLOW PART II**

- 1) After viewing Part II of the program, each student should be given a copy of Briefing Sheet 2,
- 2) Students should fill in as many pros and cons for each option as possible, as well as try to come up with other possible options. Once again they will be required to arrive at a consensus decision in a limited amount of time. This time, however, they should be encouraged to look beyond the options given and try to devise a creative response to the crisis.

Steps 3 to 8 are the same as for Briefing Sheet #1 activity.

# TERMS AND CONCEPTS: Teacher's Sheet

**protectorate:** country which is under the protection of another country, usually yielding control over foreign affairs, but retaining self-government in domestic matters

**Monroe Doctrine:** principle of American foreign policy enunciated in President Monroe's Dec. 2, 1823, speech to Congress that the U.S. would oppose the encroachment of any European powers in the Western hemisphere

**Good Neighbor Policy:** FDR policy that rejected U.S. domination of the Western hemisphere in favor of partnership, collaboration, and mutual assistance

**dictator:** person exercising unlimited governmental authority

**Marxist-Leninist:** a person who follows the political doctrines of Lenin; a communist revolutionary

**cold war:** military and diplomatic confrontations between the Soviet Union and the Western powers since World War II

**Berlin Wall:** erected August 1961 to prevent defections of East Germans to the West

**civil defense:** government program to minimize civilian casualties in the event of war

**moratorium:** a period of time during which some specific activity is suspended

**U-2 plane:** fast, high-flying jet spy plane developed by the CIA to collect photographic information in the Soviet Union and other countries

**aerial reconnaissance:** use of camera-carrying planes to collect information

**mobilization:** act of preparing troops for action

**Central Intelligence Agency (CIA):** agency created by the National Security Act of 1947 to gather, evaluate, and interpret information related to national defense, and for other purposes

**Joint Chiefs of Staff:** consists of the heads of the Army, Air Force, and Navy, who are jointly responsible for strategic and other military planning.

**National Security Council:** created by statute in 1947 to coordinate the defense and foreign policy of the U.S.; includes President, Vice President, Secretaries of State and Defense, and other advisors

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):** formed in 1949; an international association for collective defense; in 1962 it included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, the U.S., and West Germany

**Organization of American States (OAS):** formed in 1948; a regional association of 21 republics in the Western hemisphere

**Strategic Air Command:** the bombing division of the U.S. Air Force, formed March 1946 as the first U.S. nuclear delivery system

**Secretary of State:** head of the State Department, ranking member of the cabinet, and chief advisor to the President on foreign affairs

**Foreign Minister (USSR):** chief diplomat of the Soviet government

**Attorney General:** head of the Department of Justice and highest legal officer of the federal government

# TERMS AND CONCEPTS TO KNOW (CRISIS, Handout 1)

protectorate: \_\_\_\_\_

Monroe Doctrine: \_\_\_\_\_

Good Neighbor Policy: \_\_\_\_\_

dictator: \_\_\_\_\_

Marxist-Leninist: \_\_\_\_\_

cold war: \_\_\_\_\_

Berlin Wall: \_\_\_\_\_

civil defense: \_\_\_\_\_

moratorium: \_\_\_\_\_

U-2 plane: \_\_\_\_\_

aerial reconnaissance: \_\_\_\_\_

mobilization: \_\_\_\_\_

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): \_\_\_\_\_

Joint Chiefs of Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

National Security Council: \_\_\_\_\_

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): \_\_\_\_\_

Organization of American States (OAS): \_\_\_\_\_

Strategic Air Command: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary of State: \_\_\_\_\_

Foreign Minister (USSR): \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney General: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE PARTICIPANTS (CRISIS, Handout 2)

## The President and his principal advisors

John F. Kennedy — U.S. President (1961-1963)  
Dean Rusk — Secretary of State  
Robert McNamara — Attorney General of the U.S.  
General Maxwell Taylor — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Lyndon B. Johnson — Vice President  
Adlai Stevenson — U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations  
Dean Acheson — Former Secretary of State under Truman

## The Soviets

Nikita Khrushchev — Premier of the U.S.S.R.  
Andrei Gromyko — Soviet Foreign Minister  
Vladimir Zorin — Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations  
Anatoly Dobrynin — Soviet Ambassador to the United States

## Others

Dwight D. Eisenhower—U.S. President (1953-1961)  
Fidel Castro — Premier of Cuba  
U Thant — Secretary-General of the United Nations  
Bertrand Russell — Philosopher and peace activist  
Fulgencio Batista — Cuban dictator deposed by Fidel Castro

## CHRONOLOGY Part 1 (CRISIS, Handout 3)

1492	Columbus discovers Cuba, claims it for Spain.
Early 1800s	U.S. businesses begin to dominate Cuban sugar trade.
Dec 2, 1823	President James Monroe proclaims his Monroe Doctrine.
1895	Cuban revolution against Spanish rule launched.
Feb 15, 1898	U.S.S. <i>Maine</i> sunk. Spanish-American War begins.
1901	Platt Amendment makes Cuba a U.S. protectorate.
1933	Pres. Roosevelt initiates Good Neighbor Policy. Colonel Fulgencio Batista leads a rebellion in Cuba.
1934	Nullification of the Platt Amendment
1952	General Fulgencio Badsta seizes power in Cuba.
1959	Fidel Castro overthrows Badsta government. Castro visits the United States.
1960	Castro regime nationalizes many U.S. industries.
Jan 1961	Pres. Eisenhower breaks off relations with Cuba. John F. Kennedy becomes U.S. President.
Apr 17, 1961	Ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion is launched.
June 1961	JFK and Premier Khrushchev hold Vienna summit meeting.
Aug 1961	Berlin Wall is erected.
Dec 1961	Castro declares himself a Marxist-Leninist

### 1962

August	Surface-to-air missile base in Cuba sighted
Mon, Oct 15	U-2 flights over Cuba show nuclear missile sites.
Tue, Oct 16	JFK, informed of missile sites, convenes advisors.
Wed, Oct 17	JFK and advisors discuss options. JFK meets with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko.
Thur, Oct 18	JFK leaves for Chicago. Advisors debate options.
Fri, Oct 19	Advisors are still unable to reach a consensus.

# BRIEFING SHEET #1 (CRISIS, Handout 4)

**OPTION: The Diplomatic Approach** — offer to dismantle U.S. missiles in Turkey for removal of Soviet missiles in Cuba.

**Pro**

not likely to provoke war

**Con**

Russians appear to gain foreign policy victory

missiles could become operational during negotiations

---

---

---

---

---

---

**OPTION: The Air Strike** - order an immediate air strike to destroy the missile bases.

**Pro**

the most direct response to the missile problem

**Con**

may not be 100% effective

could escalate to full-scale invasion with many casualties

---

---

---

---

---

---

**OPTION: The Naval Blockade** — use the U.S. Navy to cut off sea routes to Cuba.

**Pro**

more controllable than other military options

**Con**

doesn't remove the missiles already placed in Cuba

could escalate to war if the Soviet navy challenges the blockade

---

---

---

---

---

---

## CHRONOLOGY Part 2 (CRISIS, Handout 5)

- Sat, Oct 20** Advisors decide to recommend quarantine of Cuba, enforced by a naval blockade. Advisors summon JFK to Washington. JFK cancels remainder of campaign trip and returns to White House. JFK decides in favor of blockade recommendation.
- Sun, Oct 21** Preparations begin for blockade and diplomatic efforts.
- Mon, Oct 22** JFK informs Congress and NATO allies of U.S. plan. JFK delivers televised address to the nation.
- Tue, Oct 23** U.S. blockade of Cuba gets unanimous support of OAS.
- Wed, Oct 24** Blockade is imposed. Some Russian ships heading for Cuba stop, and return to U.S.S.R.
- Thur, Oct 25** At the United Nations, Ambassador Stevenson reveals photos of missile bases in Cuba.
- Fri, Oct 26** *Marucla* is boarded but allowed to sail to Cuba. JFK receives letter from Khrushchev offering to remove missiles for a U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba.
- Sat, Oct 27** Second letter from Khrushchev arrives, demands U.S. remove its missiles in Turkey. U-2 pilot Maj. Rudolf Anderson is shot down over Cuba.

## BRIEFING SHEET #2 (CRISIS, Handout 6)

**OPTION:** Respond to both letters, asking for clarification

Pro

Con

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**OPTION:** Dismantle missile sites in Turkey in exchange for removal of Cuban missiles, as demanded in second letter

Pro

Con

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**OPTION:** Order immediate air strike or invasion to remove missile bases

Pro

Con

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**OTHER OPTIONS** (list pros and cons):

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

(Use the back of this page if you need more space.)

## **CHRONOLOGY Part 3 (CRISIS, Handout 7)**

- Sat, Oct 27** Robert Kennedy drafts response to Khrushchev's first letter, virtually ignoring second letter. Robert Kennedy meets with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin, discussing U.S. response. JFK orders further troop mobilizations.
- Sun, Oct 28** Khrushchev agrees to remove missiles for a U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba. Crisis is over.

### **1963**

- February** U.S. removes obsolete Jupiter missiles from Turkey.
- May** Hotline installed between White House and Kremlin.
- July** Atmospheric Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) How serious was the threat of Russian missiles in Cuba? Would missiles in Cuba have been a greater threat than missiles on Soviet submarines?
- 2) Would missiles in Cuba have altered the balance of power between the United States and Soviet Union?
- 3) Why was Cuba strategically important to the U.S.? To the U.S.S.R.?
- 4) Was the Monroe Doctrine applicable to the Cuban Missile Crisis? Would our allies in Europe or Latin America have agreed with the invocation of the Monroe Doctrine during the Cuban Missile Crisis?
- 5) Why did President Kennedy authorize the Bay of Pigs invasion to overthrow the Castro government in Cuba? What effect did the failed invasion have on the missile crisis?
- 6) Was it necessary for the advisors to meet in secrecy? Should the public or Congress have been informed of the crisis earlier? Why or why not?
- 7) Why did the U.S. solicit support from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization of American States (OAS)? How might lack of support from NATO or the OAS have altered U.S. actions?
- 8) How could a "hotline" between Washington and Moscow have affected negotiations during the missile crisis?
- 9) What is the difference between offensive and defensive weapons? Are nuclear weapons offensive, defensive, or both?
- 10) Why did the Soviet Union place nuclear weapons in Cuba? Were they justified in doing so? What about the U.S. missiles in Turkey?
- 11) What is the difference between a consensus decision and a majority decision? Why did President Kennedy insist that his advisors reach a consensus? Why is a consensus harder to reach than a majority?
- 12) Why didn't President Kennedy participate in all his advisors' discussions?
- 13) What reasons might Robert Kennedy have had for responding to Khrushchev's first "friendly" letter, and virtually ignoring the second, more hostile letter?
- 14) What are the lessons to be learned from the Cuban Missile Crisis?