Forum: **Historical Security Council (HSC)**
Question of: **Discussing the Cuban Missile Crisis (Time Freeze: October 1962)**
Student Officer: **Dominique Lachica**
Position: **Vice President**
Contact: nicolitjd38@gmail.com

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I. Description of the Issue

In October of 1962, the world stood at the brink of nuclear annihilation. Two nuclear-armed global powers, each capable of destroying the other and much of the planet, are locked in a direct military and diplomatic confrontation unlike anything the international community has faced before. The trigger was the discovery of Soviet nuclear missile installations on the island of Cuba, just 145 kilometers from the coast of Florida. What followed is an escalating standoff between the White House and the Kremlin, and its outcome remains entirely uncertain.

On October 14th, 1962, an American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft captured photographic evidence of Soviet long-range ballistic missile sites under construction on Cuban soil. Within 48 hours, President John F. Kennedy was briefed, and a secret crisis cabinet, the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, known as ExComm, was convened to deliberate

the U.S.'s response. On October 22nd, Kennedy addressed the American citizens and the world, announcing a naval quarantine of Cuba in which U.S. ships formed a 926 km barrier around Cuba and demanding the immediate withdrawal of all Soviet arms.

The United Nations finds itself in the center of the situation; Secretary General U Thant has already appealed directly to both the White House and the Kremlin to suspend arms shipments and allow space for negotiations. On October 25th 1962, U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson confronted Soviet Ambassador Valerian Zorin in an emergency Security Council session, where he presented aerial photographs of the missile installations.

As of the current situation, Soviet cargo ships have approached and halted near the quarantine line. Whether this represents a pause for negotiation or a temporary tactical move is still unclear. Meanwhile, Soviet missiles on Cuban soil are believed to be approaching operational readiness. The delegates in this council must now consider what role the United Nations can and should play as the nations of the world are watching the conflict unfold. Each decision may determine the start of another war or the safekeeping of world peace

II. Definition of Key Terms

- Operation Anadyr
    - Confidential military operation by the Soviet Union to deliver nuclear weapons capable of defense and attack. This was the Soviet Union's response to the aftermath of the U.S.'s failed invasion in the Bay of Pigs.
- ExComm
    - Stands for "Executive Committee of the National Security Council" and was a special emergency committee set up by U.S. President John F. Kennedy during the crucial events of the crisis.
- "Quarantine"
    - The use of the term "Quarantine, rather than blockade, was deliberate: under international law, a blockade constitutes an act of war
- MRBMs
    - Medium-range ballistic missiles
- IRBM
    - Intermediate-range ballistic missiles
- ICBM

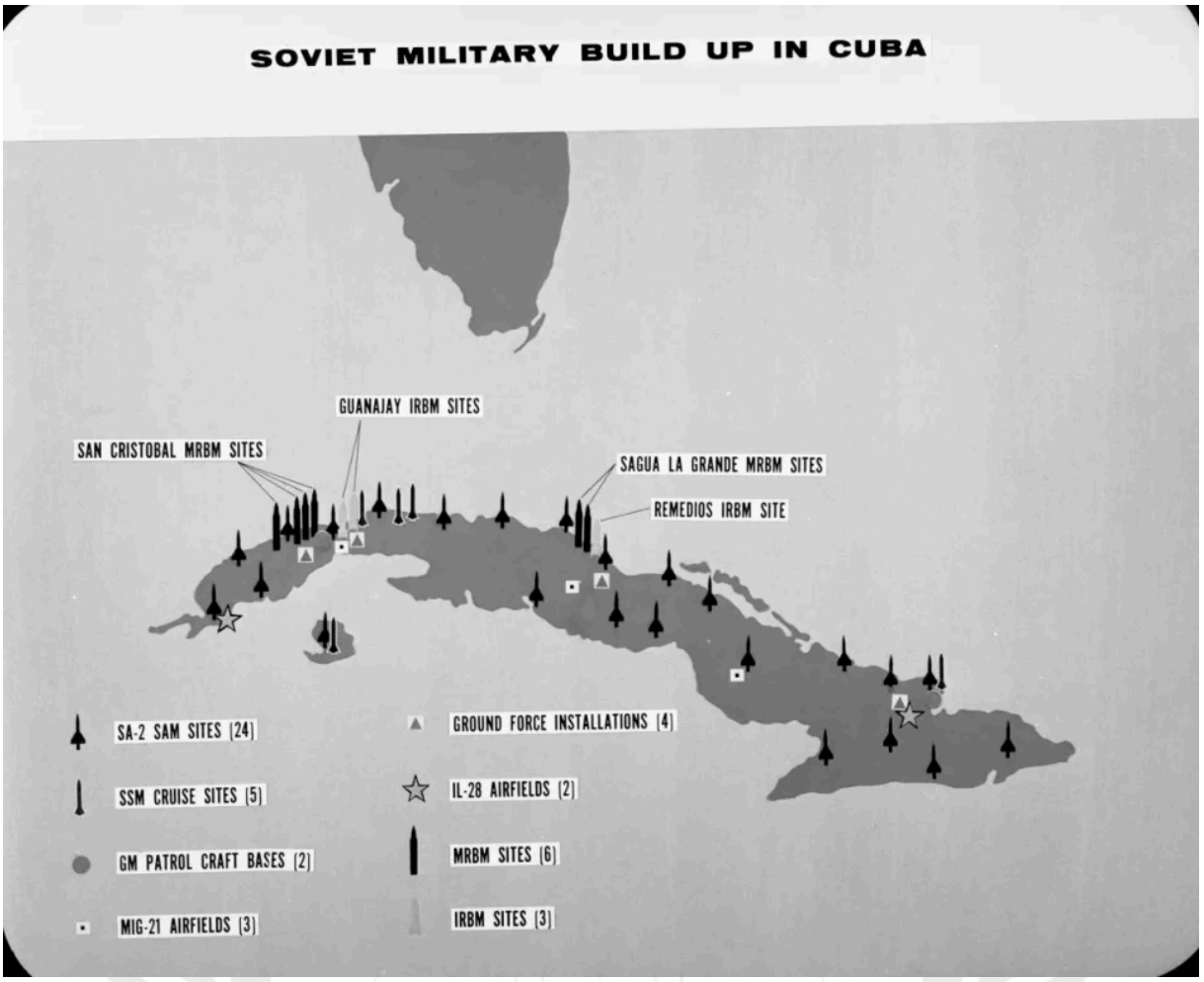
    - Intercontinental ballistic missiles
- DEFCON
    - Ranking used by the U.S. Military for “Defense Readiness Condition” for potential threats such as nuclear attacks. It ranges from 5-1, with 5 being defined as the default state of military preparedness and 1 as the highest level possible and also a warning for the state of war. So far, the U.S. Army has never reached DEFCON 1.
- Non-aligned states/ Non-aligned movement/ NAM
    - An organization that consists of newly independent countries, with the condition being that a member can not be a part of a bilateral or a multilateral military agreement with the big powers.

II. Background information

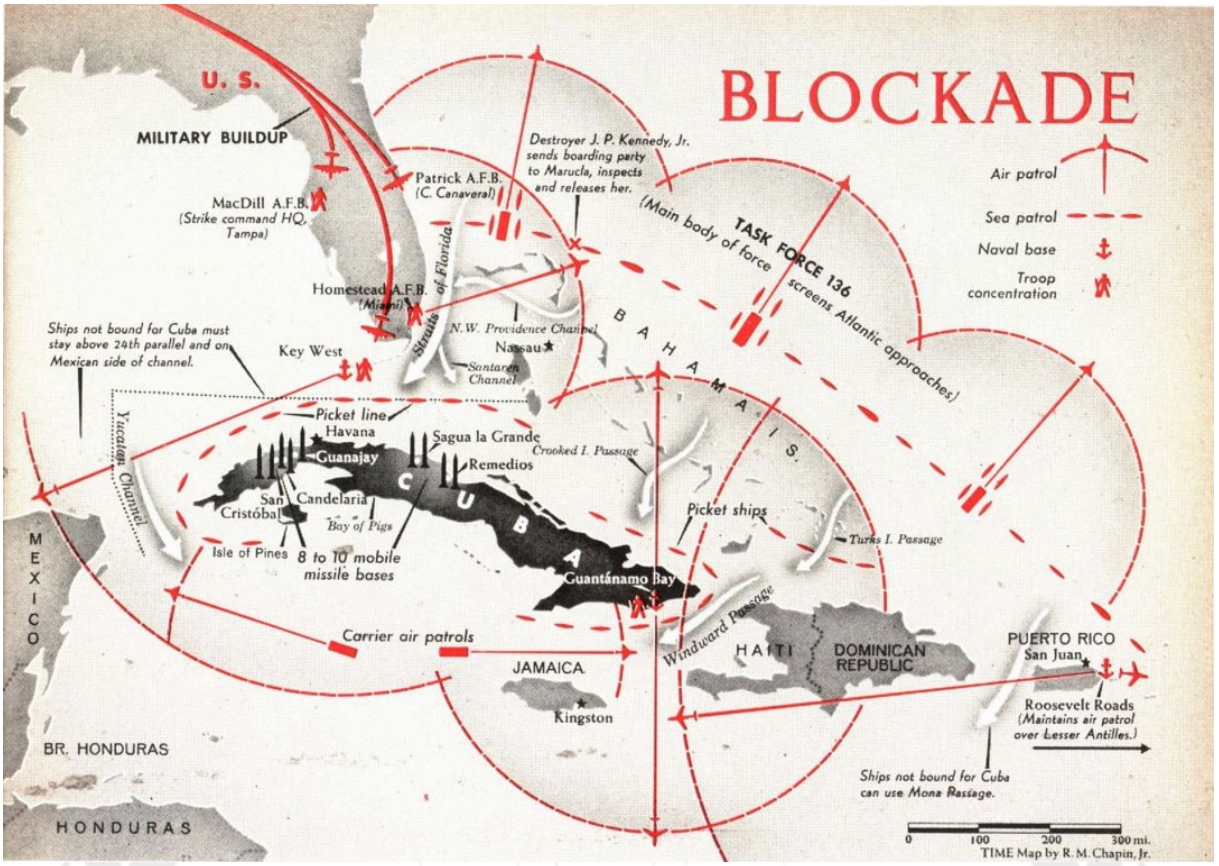
To understand the crisis unfolding in October of 1962, it is necessary to examine the broader historical and political context from which it emerged. Following the end of the Second World War, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the world’s two dominant superpowers, each possessing nuclear arsenals of destructive potential that would be devastating once utilized. The Cold War is defined not by direct military conflict but by proxy wars, espionage and an escalating arms race. By the early 1960s, both nations had developed the capability to strike each other’s territory with nuclear warheads. Cuba became entangled in this rivalry after the revolution of 1959, in which Fidel Castro and his forces successfully overthrew the U.S.-backed government of Fulgencio Batista. As Castro gained power and moved Cuba towards a socialist concept, relations with the White House deteriorated heavily and rapidly. Two years afterwards, more precisely in April of 1961, the U.S. sponsors the Bay of Pigs invasion, in which a CIA-trained force of Cuban exiles attempted and failed miserably to overthrow Castro. This act of humiliation from the U.S. further pushed Cuba into the hands and support of the Soviet Union, and by 1962 the island had become a key strategic partner for Moscow.

From the perspective of the Soviet Union, the deployment of nuclear missiles to Cuba was a rational response to an unfavorable strategic situation, as American Jupiter MRBMs had been stationed in Turkey and Italy at the beginning of 1961. The Soviet leaders did not anticipate that the installations would be discovered before they became operation and this miscalculation brought the world to the brink of war.

By October 1962, all of these tensions converged on a single flashpoint. The Security Council now faces a crisis rooted in years of ideological competition, mutual suspicion and the reckless logic of nuclear superiority.



Picture 1.



Picture 2.

III. Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Primary parties

- United States of America
    - The U.S. is one of the primary actors opposing the Soviet missile deployment, viewing the installations in Cuba as an unacceptable threat to global and national security. The White House, under President JFK, is heavily divided between advisors pushing for an immediate airstrike and others advocating for the naval quarantine already in effect; however, Washington's position is firm, stating that the missiles must be removed at all costs.
- Soviet Union (USSR)
    - The USSR authorized and oversaw the deployment of nuclear missiles to Cuba, while framing this initiative as both a defensive measure for its ally as well as a response to American Jupiter missile installations in Turkey and Italy.

- Cuba
    - Cuba and the Castro administration directly requested military assistance from the Soviet Union after the Bay of Pigs invasion and considers the nuclear weaponry as a matter of sovereign self-defense. Castro's government is deeply frustrated by its exclusion from direct negotiations between Washington and Moscow, as decisions about Cuban territory are being made without Cuban input. Havana's position is uncompromising on the question of sovereignty and will resist any outcome that appears to treat Cuba as a bargaining chip.

Secondary parties

- Turkey
    - As a NATO member and part of strengthening NATO's defense, the U.S. stationed Jupiter missiles in Turkey, as it shared a border with the Soviet Union
- Italy
    - After France refused to house American weapons in their home territory, medium-range missiles were deployed to deter any future attacks from the USSR.
- UK
    - As one of the United States' closest allies and a permanent member of the Security Council, the UK has expressed full support for the quarantine. Britain's primary concern is preventing escalation to open conflict and maintaining the unity of NATO.
- France
    - Another permanent member of the Security Council and a close ally of NATO, France stands firmly behind the American position.
- West Germany
    - West Germany faces no direct threat in this confrontation, but is strategically disadvantaged due to its geographical location. Situated in the heart of Europe, Germany fears that an escalation in the Caribbean could rapidly destabilize the situation on the European continent and force another War.
- NATO
    - NATO completely agrees with the U.S. in this crisis, as according to Article 5 of the NATO treaty, an attack on one member state is considered an attack on

all. However, not all members are equally comfortable with America's unilateral decisions.

- Yugoslavia
    - A state that broke with the USSR in 1948 and became a founder of the NAM. Yugoslavia is likely to advocate for immediate de-escalation, while respecting Cuban sovereignty without endorsing the Soviet side.
- Egypt
    - Egypt, under President Nasser and as another member of the NAM, is particularly sensitive to the principle of sovereignty and will likely express sympathy for Cuba's right to self-determination while simultaneously urging a peaceful solution.

IV. Timeline of events

1959

The left-wing revolution had ended, President Fulgencio Batista was overthrown and a new government under Fidel Castro was formed.

March 1960

President Dwight D. Eisenhower instructs the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to develop a plan to invade Cuba and overthrow the Castro administration.

May 1960

Nikita Khrushrev promised to defend Cuba.

April 17, 1961

U.S. troops arrived in the Bay of Pigs and were defeated within 2 days by Cuban armed forces.

July 1962

U.S. government receives information about Soviet missile shipments inbound to Cuba.

August 29, 1962

U.S. U-2 reconnaissance planes spot 29 new military constructions.

October 14, 1962
Ballistic missiles were identified.

October 22, 1962
President John F. Kennedy announced a quarantine and issued a warning to seize all weapons that the Soviet Union attempted to deliver to Cuba.

V. Previous attempts to solve the issue

- **Naval Quarantine**
- **Emergency Security Council meeting on October 22, 1962**
- **U Thant's appeals**

VI. Possible solutions

- **(Mutual withdrawal of nuclear missiles)**
    - Diplomatic negotiation that involves the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba in exchange for an agreement with the U.S. to remove its Jupiter missiles stationed in Turkey and Italy.
- **Ceasefire and Standstill`**
    - Appeal to both powers to pause Soviet shipments and suspend the American naval quarantine to allow space for peaceful talks and negotiations. This option could be formally endorsed by the council and would immediately reduce the risk of an accidental confrontation at the quarantine area without requiring either side to make any further public concessions.
- **Establishing a non-invasion pledge for the U.S. government and its forces and a security guarantee for Cuba.**
    - A formal and binding non-invasion guarantee could be issued to Cuba and remove the rationale of Havana and Moscow that justified the missiles' presence.

- **Continuation of the naval quarantine.**
- **Military airstrike**
    - This solution, already advocated by President Kennedy's EcComm with the reasoning that this is the only option that guarantees their complete removal, suggests destroying the missile installations before they become fully

operational. However, this solution carries an extreme risk of escalation as Soviet military personnel are present at the sites, and an American-led airstrike could trigger direct retaliation, bringing the world significantly closer to a possible nuclear war.

VII. How to prepare as a delegate

All delegates are obligated to write at least one draft resolution and a minimum of two, preferably three position papers. As a delegate in this committee, one must conduct research on one's country's alignment during the Cold War and whether the country has signed any active bilateral or multilateral agreements, such as the North Atlantic Treaty, the Warsaw Pact, or the Non-Aligned Movement. Understanding this alone will be very helpful later on during sessions in forming alliances. Since this issue tackles topics such as national sovereignty and the ongoing threat of nuclear destruction, it is also of great importance to inform oneself on one's country's position and do research on whether any trade or diplomatic ties with the main actors (U.S.A., Cuba, and the USSR) exists or have existed. Carefully consider if your country or organization should support the intervention and defense measures conducted by the U.S., withdrawal of Soviet weaponry or a purely UN-mediated resolution.

We urge every single delegate to submit their position papers and resolution(s) by **27.08.26**. If not submitted before the deadline reaches its expiration, the following documents will no longer be corrected by us Student Officers, and the delegate will not be put in consideration in the granting of awards, regardless of their performance in the committee and the quality of their position papers. We strictly forbid the use of artificial intelligence in writing the position papers, drafting resolutions, and naturally during the conference. If one gets caught, a fitting punishment shall be chosen.

VIII. UN resolutions

- **United Nations Charter**
  - Signed on June 26, 1945 and is the founding document of the UN. It lays out basic rules on how countries should behave during any UN council. Every member state is obligated to comply with every chapter.
  - https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text
- **Letter from Khrushchev to Kennedy**
  - **https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/5954353/1.pdf**

- **U Thant's official communications**
    - **https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/jfknsf-064-014#?image_identifier=JFKNSF-064-014-p0008**

IX. Useful links

- **Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)**
    - **https://youtu.be/XbKCyQn5oTc?si=MP8EswhCDL8t8x0C**
- **The history of the Cuban Missile Crisis - Matthew A. Jordan**
    - **https://youtu.be/bwWW3sbk4EU?si=liXimRmTgaPehinw**
- **Missile locations in Cuba**
    - **https://www.atomicarchive.com/history/cuban-missile-crisis/map-missile-sites.html**

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Picture(s):

1. “Handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis - the 10 Best and 10 Worst U.S. Foreign Policy Decisions.” *The 10 Best 10 Worst U.S. Foreign Policy Decisions*, 13 Jan. 2026, www.cfr.org/ten-best-ten-worst-us-foreign-policy-decisions/handling-of-the-cuban-missile-crisis/.
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