



# The Cuban Missile Crisis: 13 Days that Brought the Cold War to the Brink

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures.

\*Includes descriptions of the crisis written by important officials.

\*Includes a bibliography for further reading.

\*Includes a table of contents.

“For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s future. And we are all mortal.” – President John F. Kennedy, June 1963

When young president John F. Kennedy came to power in 1961, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was eager to test his mettle from the start, and Khrushchev’s belief that he could push the inexperienced American leader around grew in the wake of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the inconclusive Vienna summit in June 1961 that left Kennedy complaining to his brother Bobby that Khrushchev was "like dealing with Dad. All give and no take."

Given the events of the previous year, 1962 saw Khrushchev made his most decisive decision. Still questioning Kennedy’s resolve, and attempting to placate the concerns of Cuban leader Fidel Castro following the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, Khrushchev attempted to place medium range nuclear missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles off the coast of the United States. Though Castro warned him that the act would seem like an act of aggression to the Americans, Khrushchev insisted on moving the missiles in quietly, under the cover of darkness. These missiles could serve not only as a deterrent against any invasion of Cuba but also as the ultimate first-strike capability in the event of a nuclear war.

However, in October 1962, American spy planes discovered the Soviets were building nuclear missile sites in Cuba, and intelligence officials informed Kennedy of this on October 16th. It went without saying that nuclear missile sites located just miles off the coast of the American mainland posed a grave threat to the country, especially because missiles launched from Cuba would reach their targets in mere minutes. That would throw off important military balances in nuclear arms and locations that had previously ensured the Cold War stayed cold. Almost all senior American political figures agreed that the sites were offensive and needed to be removed, but how?

Ultimately, some of the biggest arguments during the crisis took place among members of the Kennedy administration and the military. Members of the U.S. Air Force wanted to take out the sites with bombing missions and launch a full-scale invasion of Cuba, but Kennedy and his brother feared that military action could ignite a full-scale escalation leading to nuclear war. Though he had previously taken aggressive stances on Cuba, Bobby was one of the voices who opposed outright war and helped craft the eventual plan: a blockade of Cuba. That was the decision President Kennedy ultimately reached as well, but it remained to be seen whether Khrushchev would test Kennedy’s resolve yet again.

The Cuban Missile Crisis: 13 Days That Brought the Cold War to the Brink comprehensively covers the fateful days that brought the two superpowers closer to nuclear war than they had ever been before or would

ever get again. The origins of the conflict, and the confidential manner in which the crisis was defused are also discussed. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Cuban Missile Crisis like never before, in no time at all.

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