

## Scenario 4: “The Cuban Missile Crisis”

*Adapted using information obtained at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban\\_Missile\\_Crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis)*

The Cuban Missile Crisis was a confrontation between the United States of America, the Soviet Union, and Cuba during the Cold War. The crisis was one of the War’s most significant confrontations, often regarded as the moment in which the Cold War came closest to escalating into a nuclear war.

After the Cuban Revolution, the United States became concerned about the political orientation of Cuba’s new leader, Fidel Castro. In 1959, Castro had declared Cuba a socialist republic and established formal ties with the Soviet Union. As a result, the country became a major focus of the new Kennedy administration when it assumed power in January 1961. The United States feared any country's adoption of communism or socialism, but for a Latin American country to openly ally with the USSR was regarded as unacceptable. In late 1961, Kennedy engaged Operation Mongoose, a series of covert operations against Castro's government which were to prove unsuccessful. More overtly, in February 1962, the United States launched an economic embargo against Cuba (which still exists today).

In the summer of 1962, the Soviet Union dispatched a fleet of commercial cargo ships filled with nuclear missiles, launchers and anti-aircraft guns--all under false manifests--across the Atlantic Ocean to Fidel Castro's Cuba. Forty thousand Soviet soldiers and technicians began secretly erecting an extensive array of armed missile sites, and aiming their nuclear-tipped medium range ballistic missiles at the United States. Khrushchev and his key military advisors thought that the missiles would remain unnoticed until November, and then he planned to suddenly reveal them to the United States. They were nearly successful, but in mid-October, with the Soviet tankers still en route, American spy planes and CIA photo analysts detected several Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs) on Cuban soil, their sites still under construction. In the weeks that followed, both nations stood at the brink of nuclear holocaust. Never before in history has the world come closer to a general nuclear war.

Kennedy, in his first public speech on the crisis given on October 22, 1962, gave the key warning: “It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.” Khrushchev responded in a message that stated, in part, "You are disturbed over Cuba. You say that this disturbs you because it is ninety miles by sea from the coast of the United States of America. But... you have placed destructive missile weapons, which you call offensive, in Turkey, literally next to us... I therefore make this proposal: We are willing to remove from Cuba the means which you regard as offensive... Your representatives will make a declaration to the effect that the United States ... will remove its analogous means from Turkey ... and after that, persons entrusted by the United Nations Security Council could inspect on the spot the fulfillment of the pledges made."

After much deliberation between the Soviet Union and Kennedy's cabinet, which took place secretly, Kennedy agreed to remove all missiles set in Turkey on the border of the Soviet Union in exchange for Khrushchev removing all missiles in Cuba.

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the information provided and your own research, recreate a 3-5 minute secret meeting that might have taken place between Kennedy, Castro, and Khrushchev, in which they attempt to negotiate a “peaceful” resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Be sure to discuss the events that led to meeting and convey the tension felt among the participants.

**In your discussion, be sure to address the following discussion questions:**

- 1) **What was the Cuban Missile Crisis and who was involved?**
- 2) **How would you have reacted when finding out that spy planes found weapons in Cuba if you were President Kennedy?**
- 3) **Since the last role play, have your thoughts changed regarding the importance or necessity of a fallout shelter? Explain?**

**BE CREATIVE, but stick to the FACTS!**