

Name: _____

Date: _____

Cuban Missile Crisis



Castro



Khrushchev and Kennedy



In April 1961, the Bay of Pigs, a mission that aimed to overthrow Fidel Castro, the communist leader of Cuba, is carried out by the CIA with the cooperation of Cuban exiles. To President Kennedy's disappointment, the mission fails, forcing the invaders to surrender.

After the failed invasion, Kennedy publicly announces plans to build thousands of nuclear missiles that are capable of hitting targets on the other side of the world. In secret, Kennedy orders military leaders to plan a full-scale invasion of Cuba, including an assassination attempt on Castro, also known as Operation Mongoose.

In 1962, Nikita Khrushchev (USSR) attempts to protect his communist ally Cuba by moving tanks, heavy bombers, and 42,000 Soviet troops and technicians into Cuba. But the most crucial step that he takes in protecting the communist regime is sneaking in dozens of nuclear missiles and constructing launching pads in Cuba. These Soviet missiles could easily hit targets as far north in America as Cincinnati, Ohio, and as far west as San Antonio, Texas. Cuba was only 90 miles off the coast of south Florida.

In response Kennedy orders a quarantine (blockade) of Cuba, telling the American navy to stop and search all vessels headed for the island and to turn back any containing "offensive" weapons. For the next several days it seems that the world hovers on the brink of a nuclear war, while feverish negotiations continue between Kennedy and Khrushchev.

Finally, the Soviets agree to remove their missiles from Cuba in return for promises from the United States not to invade Cuba, and the removal of US medium-range missiles from Turkey. On November 20, 1962, convinced that the last missile sites have been dismantled, Kennedy orders an end to the quarantine.

Read the document above and answer the questions below.

1. What does President Kennedy seek to achieve in Cuba?
2. How does Khrushchev react to America's involvement in communist Cuba?
3. What is the historical significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis and how did it affect Cold War tensions?