

The Cuban Missile Crisis: The American Perspective

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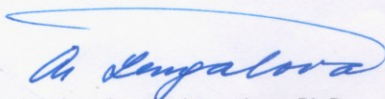
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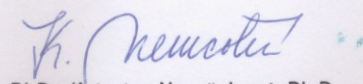
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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce pojednává o Krabiské krizi, která se odehrála v říjnu roku 1962, konkrétně od 16. října. Oficiálně byla tato krize ukončena 20. listopadu 1962. Hlavní příčinou 13 denní krize, která postavila svět na práh jaderné války, bylo vybudování vojenských základen a rozmístění sovětských raket středního doletu na Kubě. V reakci na to, byla Spojenými státy Americkými vyhlášena blokáda Kuby, která měla zabránit dopravení dalších zařízení na Kubu. V první části práce je popsáno historcké pozadí a příčiny krize, následuje průběh krize a v poslední části jsou prodiskutovány faktory rozhodnutí a následky krize.

Klíčová slova:

Karibská krize, Spojené státy americké, Sovětský svaz, Svaz sovětských socialistických republik, operace Anadyr, invaze v Zátocě Sviní, 13 dní, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Nikita Sergejevič Chruščov

ABSTRACT

This work concerns the Cuban Missile Crisis, which took place in October 1962, namely from 16 October. Officially, this crisis ended on November 20, 1962. The main causes of the 13-day crisis, which set the world on the threshold of the nuclear war, were building of a military bases and deploying Soviet mid-range missiles in Cuba. As a reaction, the naval blockade was announced by the United States of America, to prevent the transport of other equipment to Cuba. The first part of the thesis describes the historical background and causes of the crisis, followed by the crisis, and the last part discusses the factors of the decision-making process and the consequences of the crisis.

Keywords:

Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, operation Anadyr, Bay of Pigs, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

Two men, two superpower countries but matter of the whole world. Those were the main characters and symbols of the greatest danger of a nuclear world so far.

The Cuban Missile Crisis is one of the most important events of the second half of the 20th century. It is dated to 16th October 1962. This crisis had been preceded by many causes and events that had taken place over the last four years before the crisis itself. After the Second World War, spheres of influence in Germany were divided among the victorious powers. The Soviet Union was particularly concerned about the division of Berlin, which was surrounded by Soviet dominated GDR. Although the Soviet Union tried to reduce the sphere of influence of the United States, the signing of peace treaties and the negotiations in Geneva and Paris were unsuccessful. Following problem which led to the Cuban Missile Crisis was the communist putsch in Cuba. After Castro's putsch, the United States attempted another effort to overthrow Castro's regime. However these attempts were unsuccessful and led to even greater convergence of Cuba and the USSR. In 1962, the United States intelligence service found out the presence of Soviet nuclear warheads in Cuba. This had triggered the Cuban Missile Crisis in full. The United States responded to the Soviet presence missiles by announcing the naval blockade of Cuba. Both countries had to make great concessions, but eventually, agreed on a compromise which calmed down the crisis and the threat of a potential war.

1 Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban Missile Crisis, also known as Caribbean or October Crisis, refers to the situation which occurred in 1962 after the Americans have discovered that Soviet middle range missiles had been installed in Cuba. Although Americans have already suspected some ongoing situation on Cuba due to increasing number of Soviet soldiers on the island. The real beginning of the crisis is set on Tuesday, October 16, 1962, when, according to Robert Kennedy, the President J. F. Kennedy called him to come to the White House. In that time, the photographic evidence and reports of missiles and nuclear weapons deployed in Cuba taken 2 days earlier were already in the President's hands.¹ The President immediately summoned his counsellor's meeting to look for a way out of the situation. Several solutions were offered but Kennedy eventually opted for a naval blockade. All ships carrying a bulk of offensive weapons and heading to Cuba were returned to the port they were sailing from. On October 22 in the evening, Kennedy gave a speech on television and radio introducing the situation to the American people. Two days later at 10 o' clock in the morning, a quarantine was imposed on Cuba. In Khrushchev's letter to Kennedy on October 26, the First Secretary confessed for the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba and suggested a possible compromise which should secure a guarantee for the Castro's regime in Cuba by the US in exchange for withdrawing Soviet missiles from the island. On the contrary, the US president insisted that the removal of missiles and nuclear material would be carried out under the supervision of UN inspectors. The secret addition of this agreement was the dismantling of US missiles in Turkey. On October 28, Khrushchev announced Kennedy's withdrawal of missiles from Cuba. Castro's role in the Cuban Missile Crisis itself was minimal although it was his territory and the security of his country he was not involved in the negotiation either in the solution.²

On November 20, President Kennedy officially announced the end of the crisis at a press conference. The same day, the Cuba blockade was revoked. The crisis which had brought the world to the threshold of a nuclear war was averted.³

¹ Robert Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Prague: Paseka, 1999), 11.

² Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 173.

³ Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 263.

2 The American perspective

The Cuban Missile Crisis had its origins in complicated events on the international scene during the Cold War. In the 1950s and 1960s, several serious crises emerged in the relations between the Eastern Bloc and the West. The most significant events in connection to the later event in Cuba in 1962 were the Berlin Crisis and the political developments in Cuba, which at that time began to indicate the direction of Fidel Castro.

2.1 The German question

Before the Vienna summit, the meetings were held in Germany between Khrushchev and Eisenhower. The German situation has not been resolved due to the US presidential election. The US administration with elected President Kennedy officially negotiated only once with the USSR and Khrushchev. The meeting of two leaders took place in Vienna at the beginning of June 1961. And was to deal mainly with the German question. Negotiations were, however, marked by unsuccessful invasion in the Bay of Pigs. Kennedy was for Khrushchev only a beginner, who just started his career on the political scene. The Soviet leader believed that he could be able to dictate conditions through intimidation and ultimate. However, Kennedy proved to be a great politician.

The German question was reopened in autumn 1958 by the First Secretary of USSR. He gave a speech proposing the transformation of West Berlin into a free and demilitarized city. He demanded the abolition of Berlin's four-member statute and warned that the USSR was willing to hand over control over entry into the city. Even though his propose was refused by NATO, he submitted a new proposal with drafts of peace agreements with both German states in January 1959. Those agreements contained a request for West Germany to resign from NATO and East Germany from the Warsaw Pact. The reaction of the Western World to this proposal was not united. While French President Charles de Gaulle was against any concessions of Moscow, the USA and the United Kingdom have been considering a compromise.⁴ Problematic of the Germany question was supposed to be resolved at the Geneva Summit attended by the Foreign Ministers of the US, the USSR, France and Great Britain. The negotiation lasted for three months but ended without any

⁴ Vladimír Nálevka, *Karibská Krize* (Praha: ISV, 2001), 12.

result.⁵ President Eisenhower made a move to improve tense relations between the US and the USSR. Inviting Khrushchev to visit the U.S.A. which should take place in September 1959. Eisenhower was willing to concessions with the West Berlin issue. He intended to guarantee a free city of West Germany via UN. Both leaders agreed on the next summit to be held in May 1960 in Paris. However, the expected conference in Paris, which was due to begin on May 15, 1960, ended even before it started. The U-2 spy plane was shot down by the Soviet Union two weeks before the conference.⁶ When Khrushchev arrived in Paris he asked for an apology for espionage. Refusing the apology by Eisenhower only meant a worsening of the tense situation. Moscow eventually withdrew its delegation from Paris and launched a massive propaganda campaign against the U.S.A. Moreover, Khrushchev announced he would no longer deal with the president Eisenhower but the newly elected president of the United States.⁷

2.2 U.S.A. awareness of Soviet involvement in Cuba

Increased Soviet activity in the Caribbean region during 1962 was recorded by the CIA. The first evidence of the construction of a missile base in Cuba was acquired in August. Four memoranda were sent to the White House by the CIA Director, John McCone. However, none of these clearly records an effort to transform Cuba into a Soviet base. Instead they highlighted the Soviet intent to designate Cuba as a hub for the spread of communism throughout Latin America.⁸ Soviets ambitions were decidedly underestimated by the CIA while stressing out the fact that the Soviet Union would not consider the risk of retaliation by the United States.⁹ Other important piece of information was contained in the report from a National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy. It covered increased shipping between Cuban and Soviet ports and twenty ships carrying military material. According to this report, the Americans concluded that an air defence system was under construction in Cuba.¹⁰ During the routine U-2 surveillance over Cuba on August 29, 1962 the first construction of SAM missile ramps in the province of Pinar del Rio in western Cuba was

⁵ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 13.

⁶ Karel Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír* (Praha: Karolinum 2004), 505.

⁷ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 13.

⁸ Vladimír Nálevka, *Světová Politika ve 20. Století I.* (Praha: Aleš Skřivan 2001), 71-72.

⁹ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 13.

¹⁰ Nálevka, *Světová Politika ve 20. Století*, 72.

beheld. However, such information did not call attention, as the SAM missiles were often sent to Soviet's allied countries. Furthermore, the White House ordered avoiding Cuban airspace during observing flight.¹¹ Director of Central Intelligence Agency John McCone introduced the presumption that the aim of SAM missiles in Cuba is to deter Americans from further exploration of the area. The main pretence was, according to his hypothesis, import of medium-range missiles capable of reaching US targets to the island. As this detection could mean decreasing of US superiority in amount of missiles, John McCone therefore requested more reconnaissance flights over Cuba territory.¹²

On September 4, a warning was sent to Moscow by President Kennedy that he and the US government disagree with deploying missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev responded on September 11, with denial the allegation of supplying Cuba with missiles and assault weapons. Khrushchev insisted that Cuba which is threatened from being invaded, has every right to be supplied with military material. He included a denial of any intentions to deploy strategic missiles outside the USSR territory.¹³ Statement which criticized the USSR activities in Cuba was released. This statement contained another warning to protect security and safety of its allies. Thus US were willing to do everything. As a result, resolution which would authorize the President to launch an armed action against Cuba if necessary to prevent the consolidation of a military power that would corrupt US security, was adopted. Even though the President refused a direct attack on Cuba, he has agreed with Congress's request to call 150,000 midfielders and launching a military exercise in the Caribbean territory for October.¹⁴ A comprehensive report on the Soviet air defence intention in Cuba was submitted by Colonel John R. Wright Jr. to Minister of Defence on October 1. Wright was persuaded of existence of 15 bases for S-75 missiles located in the middle of the province of Pinar del Rio fully controlled by Soviet soldiers. The US Government reacted to this statement by increasing the US Armed Forces.

¹¹ Alice L. George, *Awaiting Armagedon: how Americans Faced the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 13.

¹² Max Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), 27-28.

¹³ Michael H. Hunt, *Crisis in U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 238.

¹⁴ Gott, *Cuba: A New History*, 257.

Eventually explorative flights to monitor suspected locations were agreed by Kennedy and the CIA.¹⁵ Mid-range missiles were undoubtedly discovered. During the reconnaissance flight of U-2 plane on October 14, photographic evidence was taken. Analysis of these pictures revealed a ballistic missile near San Cristobal. Subsequently, the missile base in Guan Jay and 21 transport containers with military material and bombers in San Julian were identified. The crisis has become a terrifying reality. President did not want to believe the presence of missiles. However, an unconditional act was expected from him. If not, the Soviets could take similar actions elsewhere in the world because tolerating the Soviet base near the US territory and its sphere of influence could be understood as a concession. As a response to newly discovered fact, he established the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, called ExComm, formed by members from several departments. This should ensure the diversity of opinions. The main task for the ExComm was to develop the best variants of possible solutions to the crisis.¹⁶

2.3 Relations between U.S.A. and Cuba

Impact of a Cuban Revolution was world-wide but especially in Latin America region and the USA. Although the US Government and President Eisenhower were not well-disposed to Castro's regime they have officially acknowledged it in January 1959.¹⁷ The US government sent a protest note to Cuba, requesting adequate compensation for the expropriated land after enacting the land reform. On June 7, 1959, the US government supported opposition forces in an attempt to overthrow Castro's regime and to establish a US loyal government in Cuba. This unofficial support proposed sabotage in Cuban sugar factories and attacks by small aircraft with CIA-funded Cuban exiles.¹⁸ After Havana was attacked by unmarked aircraft a protest to Washington has been sent from Cuban government claiming that the aircraft took off in Florida. According to Nálevka, the Americans have never admitted the participation in this incident.¹⁹ As a response to reducing the quota for imports of Cuban sugar into the US, Castro had nationalized all

¹⁵ Nálevka, *Světová Politika ve 20. Století*, 74-75.

¹⁶ Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 40-41.

¹⁷ John F. N. Bradley, *Válka a Mír po Roce 1945: Dějiny Vztahů mezi Sovětským Svazem a Západem* (Praha: Victoria Publishing, 1994), 115.

¹⁸ Gott, *Cuba: A New History*, 230-231.

¹⁹ Vladimír Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora* (Praha: Epoque, 1997), 37-38.

American property on the island. Later that year, in September, Castro had a speech known as the First Haven Declaration. The United States was blamed for interfering with internal politics of the Latin America states. He has also declared receiving a missile aid from the Soviet Union in case of Cuba being attacked by the United States military forces.²⁰ The US ambassador has been recalled from Havana in October as well as export embargo has been imposed by the US government. This embargo covered all commodities except food and medicine. As a result of these actions, Castro's government had to find a new way how to mitigate the effects of the economic struggle with the US. A solution has been found in the Soviet Union along with other Eastern Bloc countries. The diplomatic relations were broken in January 1961.²¹

2.4 U.S.A. approach

Although the US government did not succeed in overthrowing Castro's regime in Bay of Pigs at first, it had not prevented them from planning other similar events. As Oskar Krejčí claims, the crisis was not only USSR's responsibility. The USA can be marked as an accomplice. Whether for supporting exile Cubans arriving in the USA or manoeuvring in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. These US steps have been evaluated by the Soviets as interfering with Cuba's internal affairs attempting to disrupt the communist regime on the island. The Soviets saw this manoeuvres as a catalyst for the crisis. For those reasons, the crisis is known with the Caribbean attribute.²²

In 1961, the deployment of US mid-range missiles in Great Britain, Turkey and Italy could provoke the Soviets to an operation Anadyr. Moreover, Soviets claimed that Jupiter rockets would hit the Moscow in sixteen minutes.²³

²⁰ Gott, *Cuba: A New History*, 234-236

²¹ Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora*, 41-42.

²² Oskar Krejčí, *Zahraniční Politika USA: Ideje, Doktríny, Strategie* (Praha: Professional Publishing, 2009), 177.

²³ *Ibid*, 178.

3 Bay of Pigs Invasion

Invasion in the Bay of Pigs was an unsuccessful operation of Cuban exiles led by the CIA, which attacked Cuba in April 1961. The operation was funded and supported by the US government and was supposed to overthrow Fidel Castro. Due to underestimation of preparations, it ended up with a complete defeat. Invading warriors were defeated by trained Cuban armed forces equipped from the Eastern Bloc countries within three days. As a result of these actions, Fidel Castro had fallen under the influence of Soviet Union even more. Howard Jones states that invasion in the Bay of Pigs was a prelude to the Cuban Missile Crisis.²⁴

3.1 Prelude of Cuban Missile Crisis

After J. F. Kennedy had been elected a President he considered reasons of convergence between Cuba and USSR. According to Robert Dallek, the USSR was converging with Cuba because of the offer to deploy Soviet missiles as a response to the deployment of American rockets in Turkey and Italy.²⁵ The Soviets could use Cuba as the centre of communist expansion in Latin America. Therefore, President Kennedy evaluated USSR-orientated Cuba as a security threat to the Western Hemisphere and considered the military invasion. However, the President was terrified of invasion as it could result in retaliatory action by the USSR and possibly China and good image of USA would disappear.²⁶ This action could be understood as a violation of the principles of self-determination and freedom. Despite this fact, the invasion seemed to be necessary although Kennedy has doubted the success of just 1,500 Cuban exiles. On the other hand, he was confronted with an undemocratic regime which subverted the order in Latin America. Moving away from Eisenhower and his policy could mean an accusation of appeasing Castro.²⁷ After all, it was Eisenhower who directed the CIA to start training the Cuban exiles to invade Cuba in order to overthrow the regime in March 1960.²⁸

²⁴ Howard Jones, *The Bay of Pigs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 23-27.

²⁵ Robert Dallek, *Nedokončený Život: John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963* (Praha: Argo, 2006), 259.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 314.

²⁷ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 536.

²⁸ Gott, *Cuba: A New History*, 243–244.

3.2 Invasion

The project of an invasion was submitted to the new President Kennedy by CIA assistant, Allan Dulles, on January 20, 1961. Despite his sceptical approach and negative view of seven members of the government, the action was marked as approved. The date was set on April 17, 1961, in conjunction with the location selected in the south of the Cuba island in the Bay of Pigs.²⁹ The invasion began the day as it had been settled. One group of exiles landed on Girón beach, the other on Largo beach. Fidel Castro expected the invasion since the bombing of the air base in Havana and Santiago as well as high rise activity of Castro's regime opponents a week before. A high alert was immediately announced for air forces to bomb the exile troop's ships. Simultaneously, the arrest of people suspected of counter-revolutionary activity was ordered to prevent a rebellion against the regime.³⁰ Nevertheless, exile troops were defeated within two days. 100 men were killed and 1,200 men captured out of the total number of 1,500 men.³¹ According to Bradley, main reasons for failure were the absence of air support during the invasion and the fact that the invasion did not initiate the rebellion among people of Cuba.³² Other factors of the failure were caused by underestimation of Castro regime from the CIA side, choice of the swampy bay to proceed with the invasion together with the second air attack. These factors made the operation much more difficult.³³

3.3 Consequences

As a result of the debacle in the Bay of Pigs relations between the USSR and United States were deteriorating. Ensuring Cuban security has become an opportunity for USSR to get militarily closer to the US. Furthermore, the prestige of Moscow increased on the contrary to decreased prestige of Kennedy and his administration.³⁴

²⁹ Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora*, 43-44.

³⁰ Gott, *Cuba: A New History*, 245-246.

³¹ *Ibid*, 246.

³² Bradley, *Válka a Mír po Roce 1945: Dějiny Vztahů mezi Sovětským Svazem a Západem*, 116.

³³ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 33.

³⁴ Dallek, *Nedokončený Život: John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963*, 314.

4 Operation Anadyr

Operation Anadyr was a secret designation for the Soviet bases building project for Cuba's medium-range missiles, named after a river in north-eastern Siberia.

Although President Kennedy was assured that the Soviet Union did not and would never have its base in Cuba, the decision to build it was declared by Khrushchev on May 21, 1962. Khrushchev considered the US President too inexperienced and intellectually based politician who would not dare to intervene against the Soviet plan.³⁵ After debates with Khrushchev's closest advisors, a final decision had been made. The main ambition of Anadyr was to balance the strategic stability of military forces and to respond to the deployment of rockets in Turkey and Italy.³⁶

4.1 The scheme of the operation

On May 27, 1962, a diplomatic mission with the leadership of Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, Saraf Rashidov, was held in Cuba. Their plan was to acquaint Cuban government with Soviet's intention to build a military base.³⁷ The delegation travelled undercover with devisable names and was presented as a group of agricultural experts.³⁸ A meeting had been assembled, where Rashidov met Fidel Castro and presented him the first draft of the potential military facility. Castro requested a day to think out the plan and discuss it with other members of his government. The proposal was adopted ultimately the day after that. In particular, Castro strongly wanted the Soviet strategic base to be built. The leadership of the Communist Party of Soviet Union presented results of the mission and all participants expressed their consent to emplacement of missiles in Cuba. The preparation began on the same day. Issa Plijev, the Second World War veteran was named the military commander of the operation. He recruited over 44,000 soldiers and sailors and the missile division.³⁹ In the course of next months, the form of the new Soviet-Cuban treaty was discussed. Treaty included an agreement that all military equipment including nuclear missiles would

³⁵ Nikita Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Volume 3, Statesman, 1953 - 1964* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2013), 185

³⁶ Ibid, 186.

³⁷ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 553.

³⁸ Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora*, 67.

³⁹ Ibid, 68.

be subject only to the Soviet leadership. This fact was highly emphasized.⁴⁰ The agreement should be concluded for five years with the possibility of further extension. Castro has highlighted the political significance of the treaty and suggested its title. The title “Treaty between the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on military cooperation in defence of the Cuban territory against aggression”⁴¹ was fully complied by the USSR.

First ships loaded with the military technology and cargo sailed from the harbour on Anadyr River on July 12, 1962. It should have taken less than four months to get the cargo to Cuba under complete secrecy, although, the units responsible for the transfer of material did not know where they were going. The true intent was revealed to them after passing Gibraltar on ships.⁴² Mariel, a city situated approximately 40 kilometres west of Havana, was appointed a landing place. Nuclear warhead missiles were never completed during the installation of devices. From the beginning, they were stored and strictly guarded in Mariel port during the crisis. Furthermore, they could only be triggered by direct command or permission from Nikita Khrushchev himself.⁴³

At the end of September, it was obvious that the predefined schedule of the operation Anadyr could not meet its end as not all of the ships were transported by October, 20 and the rocket complexes could not be in full operation sooner than a week later. Soviets were also not satisfied with the plan of hiding rockets and technology which were previously developed by Rashidov's military experts. According to this plan was the equipment hidden in the palm grove.⁴⁴ The United States was acknowledged about increased traffic in the Atlantic by secret service of the Federal Republic of Germany. Even though a large number of shipping boat between Soviet and Cuban ports must have been transcribed, the Americans were not alarmed.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora*, 69.

⁴¹ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 554

⁴² *Ibid*, 555.

⁴³ Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora*, 69.

⁴⁴ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 70.

⁴⁵ Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora*, 70.

5 Thirteen days

5.1 The course of the crisis until the declaration of the blockade

It was October 16 when the president was informed about aerial photographs from his National Security Adviser McGregor Bundy. He immediately summoned session in Oval Hall in White House. At noon that day, all the closest co-workers and advisors arrived. The group was later given an official name - the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExComm). From the first day of the crisis, this committee has almost continuously met in virtually same composition. McGregor Bundy, Dean Rusk (Secretary of State) Maxwell Taylor (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), Robert McNamara (Minister of Defence) and John McCone Dillion (Minister of Finance). Ted Sorensen (Presidential Advisor), Llewelyn Thompson (Russian Affairs Advisor), George Ball and Alexis Johnson (United States Under Secretary of State and his Deputy), Edward Martin (Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America), Rosewell Gilpatric (Deputy Minister of Defence), Paul Nitze (Assistant Secretary of Defence), Adlai Stevenson (US Ambassador to the United Nations), Don Wilson (Deputy Director of USIA), President's brother and Minister of Justice Robert Kennedy and Vice-President Lyndon Johnson were also attended.⁴⁶

After examining the pictures taken by the U-2 spy planes no one was convinced of Soviet's creating a military missile base in Cuba. However, the CIA experts identified captured missiles close to San Cristobal as SS-3 and R-12 assault rifles. Everyone in the Oval Hall, including Kennedy, was surprised even though there had been presumptions and indirect evidence from several Cuban refugees, that the Soviet Union was operating with military equipment in Cuba. At the moment of revealing Soviet plans in Cuba, ExComm realized that any assurances given by Khrushchev or Ambassador Dobrynin were lies. Kennedy asked his counsellors for an explanation of how it was possible for Soviets to do so. There was a predominant view that the Soviet Union did not have confidence in its intercontinental ballistic missiles and by building a base in Cuba, they wanted to achieve launch ramps for its mid-range missiles.⁴⁷ Most consultants have come to the conclusion

⁴⁶ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 80.

⁴⁷ Dallek, *Nedokončený Život: John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963*, 465.

that the situation calls for urgent solution and proposals for an immediate air strike against missile base.⁴⁸ The idea of quarantine and naval blockade of the island was brought to light. This idea has formed two almost ideological teams in ExComm. One supporting the blockade and the other supporting military intervention.

New photographic evidence was discovered on Wednesday, October 17. They showed the presence of up to 32 rockets with a range of up to 1,600 kilometres. Military experts said they would be operational by the end of the week and according to their estimates, they could hit important military and civilian targets in the Southeast of the United States within a few minutes. Probable victims among civilians were estimated at 80 million. According to Fidel Castro's memoirs, the ramp launching was rapid. Even though there was not one functional tee hole available on October 16, five days later, there were 20 of them.⁴⁹ New reports, however, showed that even the most accurate air strike would not have destroyed all of the assault missiles in Cuba and the whole action would require bombing of a military base and subsequent invasion. Although the president was sceptical about the military action, he knew that if his government would not react, the Soviets would get the impression that the Americans were completely incompetent.⁵⁰

Kennedy held a meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko on Thursday 18. This meeting was scheduled for a long time period and its cancellation could cause unnecessary speculations. Kennedy's intention was not to confront Gromyko with the photographic evidence of the Soviet base, but only to listen. The Soviet minister introduced the issue of threatening Cuba by the United States and assured Kennedy that the only aid provided to Cuba is purely agricultural. The president Kennedy felt astonished of how did Gromyko lie to his face even after reading the presidential statement pointing to the serious consequences of the deployment of the Soviet offensive weapons in Cuba. Despite this Gromyko did not change his mind and assured Kennedy that there is no military base being built in Cuba and left the meeting.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 15.

⁴⁹ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 555.

⁵⁰ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 17

⁵¹ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 556.

The ExComm adopted the blockade by the end of Thursday. The idea of quarantine triumphed among the members of the committee. As the final decision was only under president's competence, he should have clearly decided whether to run a blockade or a military action. In the meantime the United States Armed Forces were supposed to prepare for the smooth process of both above-mentioned options.⁵² Although the president received arguments for both the blockade and the military intervention, he finally decided to blockade with and he wanted to familiarize the world with his decision in a public speech scheduled for Monday, October 22.⁵³ From the point of view of the United States, it was necessary to carry legal support from Organization of American States which would gain the entire Western Hemisphere against Cuba and the Soviet Union on its side. In the meantime, Kennedy received support from his closest allies - France, Great Britain, Canada and Germany.⁵⁴

5.2 Events after the declaration of the blockade

The moment President Kennedy delivered his evening speech and presented plans for the naval blockade, the crisis became a serious worldwide public matter. Until then, events from the previous week did not bring any attention to the world.⁵⁵ The speech was delivered by the television and the radio. The President announced the blockade coming into force on October 24 at 10 o'clock in the morning and mentioned that this is only the first step in the prepared plan, stressing out that if any ships trying to break the blockade, the US Navy will respond with a military force.

Meanwhile, in the Kremlin, a meeting was summoned between Khrushchev and his closest advisors. Khrushchev apparently became fully aware of the seriousness of the situation because he arrived in the session upset and irritated. He obviously did not want to launch a nuclear war but only intended to push the US to the corner. This theory is also

⁵² Krejčí, *Zahraniční Politika USA: Ideje, Doktríny, Strategie*, 175.

⁵³ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 18.

⁵⁴ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 557.

⁵⁵ Gott, *Cuba: A New History*, 253.

supported by the fact that missiles in Cuba were obsolete and unsatisfactory for both the first strike and the retaliatory attack on the United States.⁵⁶

The second day, Tuesday, October 23, a meeting of the Organization of American States was held. As a surprise to the White House, all Latin American countries unanimously supported and legitimized the blockade. Meanwhile, the ExComm has reunited in Washington and decided to interpret the issue of the crisis in the UN meeting. As the blockade was due to enter into force the next morning, the various situations were discussed as for example, what would happen if any of the ships did not stop on their way to Cuba. The US ships should avoid any military confrontation and only in the extreme case would have to shoot the enemy's bolt and rudder. Shattered boats should be taken to the ports of Jacksonville or Charleston. In the same day, the Guantanamo base was surrounded by Cuban troops and the Warsaw Pact troops and placed in combat alert. These measures were cancelled almost a month after the end of the crisis.⁵⁷ Even before the official beginning of the blockade of Cuba, negotiations took place at UN. There, the United States demanded the end of the Soviet intervention in the Caribbean Sea. On the other hand, the Soviets accused the US of aggressive politics towards Cuba and demanded the immediate abolition of the blockade. This led to an inevitable confrontation between the US and the Soviet members.⁵⁸ The US representative Adlai Stevenson was equipped with photographs of military missiles bases awaiting the right opportunity to unveil them. After exposing these photographs, Cuba and the Soviet Union have lost the support from the Third World states. At the same time, Stevenson suggested that these photographs and the whole situation be investigated by the United Nations Inspection Panel.⁵⁹

At ten o'clock in the morning of October 24, the blockade came into force. The US military Forces moved to standby 2, followed by readiness for warfare. The Soviet ships continued their course in Cuba. McNamara provided information that the Soviet ships Gagarin and Komiles arrive in the US Navy boundary between half-past ten and eleven

⁵⁶ William Taubman, *Chruščov: Člověk a Jeho Doba* (Praha: BB Art, 2003), 555.

⁵⁷ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 96.

⁵⁸ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 557.

⁵⁹ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 102.

o'clock. Although Robert McNamara was responsible for the implementation of the blockade and the naval forces were to be subject to his direct command, he often had to argue with his military commanders, even with respect to his competences. McNamara never had a complete control over the Navy operations during the crisis. ⁶⁰

The tense situation in the White House was complemented by the report that one of the Soviet submarines took the position between the ships and approached along the border with them. The Essex aircraft carrier was supposed to contact the submarine and identify it. According to his brother Robert, President Kennedy was experiencing the worst fears during the crisis at this time. At 10 o'clock and 25 minutes, it was reported that the ships had stopped its moving towards the sea. On the Soviet side, during these events, Khrushchev was lost in his indecision. First, he ordered the Soviet submarines to return fire immediately but on the day the blockade came into force, he suggested shutting down most of the ships. He then announced that all the necessary weapons and materials were already in Cuba and hence decided not to overcome the situation. ⁶¹ After finding that the Soviet ships did not brake maritime blockade and that Khrushchev has not yet taken any retaliatory action in Berlin, the Americans gained confidence and according to them, the isolation of Cuba gained international credibility.

On Thursday, October 25, other aerial photographs pointing to the fact that the construction of rocket bases continues at an extraordinary speed, were sent to the White House. On that day, Khrushchev declared that the situation over the Caribbean territory should be resolved peacefully. He made a proposal to dismantle missile facilities in Cuba and proposed that the Soviet would withdraw missiles in exchange for the US not invading Cuba. ⁶²

The day after that, the first inspection of the passing ship was carried out at the border of the blockade. Marcula was a Panama-owned ship of American production, registered in

⁶⁰ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 33.

⁶¹ Taubman, *Chruščov: Člověk a Jeho Doba*, 559.

⁶² *Ibid*, 561.

Lebanon and leased by the Soviets.⁶³ Kennedy decided to demonstrate to Khrushchev the seriousness of the blockade and let it search through. The ship did not transport any weapons or military material so it was allowed to continue the journey. On the same day, the President was more serious about the invasion of Cuba but was told by McNamara that this action would not be uncomplicated and easy to implement and would require the lives of many US soldiers.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, in Kremlin, Khrushchev received an intelligence file stating that the United States is planning an immediate invasion of Cuba. This information, however, turned out to be counterfeit and was based on an interview by two American journalists. This report, however, shocked the First Secretary so rapidly that he decided to end the crisis by offering Kennedy a peaceful solution. In this mood, he sent a very emotional letter to the White House describing the war as a world-wide disaster for all people and assured the United States that missiles in Cuba would never be used for the attack and suggested the possibility of withdrawing the missiles in exchange for Cuba's safety.⁶⁵ This letter was basically the mainstay of the crisis solution. In this letter, the Soviets admitted the existence of missiles for the first time.⁶⁶

Saturday could be described as the most critical day of the crisis. First, the ExComm received a second letter from the Khrushchev office, which was carried in a much more formal spirit than the previous one. In this relatively aggressive text, the Soviet Union demanded the withdrawal of US missiles from Turkey and Italy and at the same time promised not to take any action on Turkey. President Kennedy was aware of this exchange trade and its disadvantages for both the US and the NATO allies. After all, he did not seek to withdraw missiles under the Soviet threat but did not want to step into a warfare because of already outdated Jupiter missiles in Turkey.⁶⁷ Everyone was surprised by the contents of the above-mentioned letter in the White House. With a risky solution came up Llewellyn Thompson, who suggested that the President should only answer the letter from October 26 and completely ignore the latest one. This truly risky plan was backed by

⁶³ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 38.

⁶⁴ Taubman, *Chruščov: Člověk a Jeho Doba*, 562.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 563.

⁶⁶ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 40.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 43.

Robert Kennedy and Ted Sorensen, who produced a response which was signed by the President on Saturday and delivered to the Moscow in the evening that day. Another unfavourable news which occurred on Saturday was the high-speed construction of jet bombers IL-28 which continued in San Cristobal.⁶⁸ The most serious situation, which nearly threw both superpowers into the war on Saturday, October 27, was the downing of the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft with Rudolf Anderson. He has been conducting a series of a spy aerial missions over Cuba in recent days. The aircraft was hit by a land-air missile and the pilot died.⁶⁹ Everything was about to escalate the crisis, even the President's advisor Kenny O'Donnell commented the situation as the most unpredictable and most depressing during the time of Kennedy's agency at the White House.⁷⁰ Conclusively, it was the President himself who ceased the military action planned for Sunday morning against Cuba and the Soviet Union. He decided to negotiate despite the action supported by his military chiefs.⁷¹ Robert Kennedy met the Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin on Saturday. Robert clarified that the United States did not want to launch a conflict and introduced a letter addressed to Khrushchev. He also stated that no agreement between the US and the USSR could contain a commitment to withdraw missiles from Turkey but he indicated that the President is willing to withdraw them within a next few months.⁷² Simultaneously, he drew the attention to the fact that the United States is demanding an immediate response, which unless it involves the withdrawal of missiles, will take military operations against Cuba on Monday, October 29.⁷³ After Robert returned to the White House, no one actually believed in the positive outcome of the situation. The President warned through the Pentagon, the US headquarters in Germany and the West Berlin against the Soviet attack.⁷⁴

Despite not believing in the positive outcome of Robert's meeting with Dobrynin, the crisis was jeopardized on Sunday, October 28. The Soviet Union reply arrived in the White House saying that the Soviets are interrupting the work on missile devices and are

⁶⁸ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 117.

⁶⁹ Nálevka, *Fidel Castro: Podzim Diktátora*, 75.

⁷⁰ Dallek, *Nedokončený Život: John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963*, 483.

⁷¹ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 45-46.

⁷² *Ibid*, 50.

⁷³ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 559.

⁷⁴ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 119.

dismantling them before the return to the USSR,⁷⁵ The Soviet Union has agreed to remove the military material, and later, the United States has pledged to withdraw its missiles from Turkey.⁷⁶

It was probably the result of the fact that Khrushchev and his advisors were fully aware of the huge predominance in both nuclear warheads and the number of long-distance bombers on the US side. The crisis ended and President Kennedy, ExComm and the rest of the American public could calm down. Kennedy has received great recognition for his role in resolving the crisis by diplomatic means.⁷⁷ Kennedy announced the official end of the crisis at a press conference on November 20, 1962. On the same day, the island's naval blockade was revoked.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 559.

⁷⁶ Barton J. Bernstein, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: Trading the Jupiters in Turkey?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 115.

⁷⁷ Dallek, *Nedokončený Život: John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963*, 486.

⁷⁸ Gott, *Cuba: A New History*, 263.

6 Decision-making process

6.1 Time

In the case of Cuban Missile Crisis, the time was for US administration a scarce commodity. The main variable of the solution of the crisis was certainly time factor. President Kennedy appreciated an extraordinary report of CIA after the discovery of missile bases. However, if the incriminating photographs were taken about three weeks before, there would be more time for consideration of all alternatives by the US administration. Their decision would not be affected by the possible completion of Soviet nuclear missiles in few days and its preparedness.⁷⁹ Kennedy's top priority was to determine whether the missiles are already operational and if not when they will be completed. President's advisors were, however, unable to answer this question. Their estimation of the completion deadline was two weeks. While considering possible alternatives the uncertainty about the time which played the significant role was a problem.⁸⁰ Four basic military options were identified. Invasion, blockade and limited or mass air attack. All of them were limited by time. The invasion required at least eight days of preparation. It is assumed that president would insist on the detailed and more sophisticated action after experience in Bay of Pigs. The alternative of air attack depended on the exact location of all nuclear missiles on the island and those had to be precisely targeted and destroyed. These alternatives, however, were time-consuming as the rain season is during October a frequent phenomenon in Cuba supported by numerous occurrence of hurricanes. Therefore mapping the whole island would take several weeks. McNamara though argued that for air attack it would be necessary to know whether the missiles are working or not with certainty. He also mentioned how concerned he is about launching an air attack. According to him, it could cause launching of Cuban missiles. This could affect the US territory.⁸¹ CIA needed more time for detailed analyzes. Previous considerations and estimates were still based on photographs taken during espionage flight.

⁷⁹ Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 675.

⁸⁰ Aleksandr Naftali and Timothy Fursenko, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 224.

⁸¹ Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard university Press, 1997), 57.

While Kremlin still suspected that Anadyr's operation was secret the US administration had to use the moment of surprise. If the completion of missiles were announced to the public, the US would suddenly be in a subordinate position.⁸²

6.2 U.S.A policy determinant

The political and military subsidy of USSR to the country in the Western Hemisphere area approximately 145 kilometres from US territory and escalation of Soviet - Cuban cooperation had a significant influence on the US internal political scene. The political approach against Cuba has become an oppositional instrument to possible criticism of the current administration since the Cuban Revolution. In his presidential campaign, Kennedy has blamed Republicans for allowing Cuba to become a communist area. On the contrary, After he took the office, he became a target of criticism of the Republicans.⁸³ The pre-election campaign for November elections was graduating in summer 1962. As Kennedy's Democratic Party held a majority any victory for Republicans could result in blocking of Kennedy's political proposals and it would imply complications in defending his presidential post in the next presidential election. The Cuban question became a dominant theme in Republican's pre-election campaign.⁸⁴ The Republicans would use their campaign to draw the attention to the conclusion of the American public derived from the unsuccessful anti-Cuban action and the possible threat of Castro's regime to the US. As a result, people would call for action which should have been promised by Republicans.⁸⁵ Kennedy was among to face many pressures in the pre-election period. On the one hand, it was the Republican demand to intervene Cuba and influencing American public opinion. On the other hand, there was no evidence proving the presence of offensive weapons in Cuba. President was also instantly assured by Khrushchev and other Soviet officials that imported military arsenal serves only to defend Cuba and can be no threat to the United States. President had to balance the position of the Democratic Party leader and the US

⁸² Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 14.

⁸³ Thomas G. Paterson *American Foreign Policy: A History*, eds. Garry J. Clifford and Kenneth J. Hagan (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1986), 94.

⁸⁴ Artur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), 708-709.

⁸⁵ Graham Allison and Philips Zelikow, *Essence of Decision, Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, 1999), 329-330.

president during the pre-crisis and crisis weeks. He could not allow the voters to start seeing him as a weak and indecisive leader because of the criticism of the Republicans and thus to reduce the electoral preferences of the Democrats. On the contrary impulsive responses to the Soviet military presence in Cuba despite the lack of evidence of the presence of offensive weapons and persistent persuasion of the Soviets could seriously aggravate not only Soviet-American relations but also alliance relations between Western allies.⁸⁶

6.3 Diplomacy factor

Another factor influencing Kennedy administration's decision-making process is a diplomatic factor that includes the issue of the legality of the possible military action of the United States towards Cuba and concerns about the allies' reaction to the surprise attack of the United States on Cuba.

The first aspect of diplomacy factor was closely linked to the minister of foreign affairs Dean Rusk, During the first talks, there was a predominant view that military intervention against Soviet missiles in Cuba would be inevitable. Rusk argued that it is necessary for the US administration not to underestimate the legality of any military action in the context of international law. He was convinced that in order to provide support to the public and the allies the legality of the action is a necessity. Since the beginning of the crisis, Kennedy's administration has been considered several options to justify a possible military intervention against Cuba. The Ministry of Justice has submitted a proposal to appeal to the doctrine of self-defence. This possibility was however disproved by the Foreign Ministry's legal department claiming that doctrines of self-defence cannot be invoked when no attack was thrown.⁸⁷ Legal issue would also have to be addressed in the case of a naval blockade. With regard to the possible problems associated with defining the blockade in the context of international law, Kennedy decided to use term 'quarantine', which better represented the specificity of the American counter-attack. As Rusk remarked, no

⁸⁶ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision, Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 330.

⁸⁷ Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It / by Dean Rusk as told to Richard Rusk* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 232-233.

one knew what quarantine signify and as a result, the likelihood of a violation of international law would have been reduced.⁸⁸

The second aspect of this factor is the fear of allies' reaction in the event of a surprise US military attack on Cuba. Leaving aside the query of what would Khrushchev's reaction be or the moral dilemma of the United States, Kennedy could not be sure of the reaction of Western allies in the event of a surprise air attack. This alternative entailed a high risk of Soviet retaliation which was primarily aimed at West Berlin or bases in Italy and Turkey.⁸⁹ However Soviet military activity in Cuba did not pose a significant problem for western Europe so the United States' response would be considered anxious as the Western European countries were used to live under the constant threat of Soviet nuclear weapons or other conventional military means. The question was whether the western allies of the US would be willing to risk launching a nuclear war because of the deployment of offensive weapons on the western hemisphere and the United States feels threatened and whether they would be willing to risk a retaliatory attack on their own territory. Therefore it was a serious concern in Kennedy's administration that possible supporting or rejecting the US could cause a confusion and conjecture in the NATO.⁹⁰

6.4 Psychology determinant

While considering alternatives, a psychological factor had to be included in the decision-making process by Kennedy and his administration. This determinant implied two American approaches to Soviet administration and Khrushchev himself - the inability of US administration to understand Khrushchev's intentions and the distrust of US administration against Khrushchev.

While selecting a suitable alternative, Kennedy's advisors often considered the reason why Khrushchev's team had organized such a risky action because they hoped that understanding the motives would lead them to better determination of an appropriate

⁸⁸ Rusk, *As I Saw It / by Dean Rusk as told to Richard Rusk*, 233.

⁸⁹ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 681.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 682.

counter-reaction. Even nowadays after the end of the bipolar conflict, when all declassified records of negotiations made during this period and testimonies of top leaders are available and archives of both superpowers are opened, there is no consensual output defining the reason for the Anadyr operation. Kennedy's administration had faced the more complicated decision-making process. The Soviet Union was indeed sealed and Khrushchev's actions were known only from his public statements or appearances. The United States did not know whether Khrushchev had faced the internal pressures and had no detailed knowledge of the tensions in the Eastern Bloc. The US administration has even wondered if Khrushchev was still holding a leading position and is the one who decided fully.⁹¹ US administration identified four possible reasons for Soviet action. First, the exchange of Cuba for Berlin. The resolution of the German situation in West Berlin was one Khrushchev's main interests. The US administration believed that Soviets could propose a possible way to resolve the exchange of Cuba for Berlin.⁹² Continuously, there were political reasons. The Soviet Union tested the extreme limit of American patience. If the United States did not face the Soviet challenge, it would shake the Western Bloc's confidence in the possible protection from the United States.⁹³ Furthermore, the military impact of installing Soviet nuclear missiles close to the United States in the context of a change in nuclear balance would be marginal, given the significant nuclear surplus of the US over the USSR.⁹⁴ The argument about the defence of Cuba against possible US intervention was corrupted by the verity that the Soviet Union equipped Cuba with offensive nuclear missiles of medium and long range.

As it is obvious from above, Kennedy's advisors were not convinced that the Soviet operation had been triggered in order to start a war.⁹⁵

Kennedy could not trust Khrushchev. This caused a relatively rapid rejection of diplomatic pressure on the Kremlin as one of the possible alternatives which could significantly influence the US response to Soviet military activity. The transfer of military

⁹¹ Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), 201.

⁹² May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 254.

⁹³ Schlesinger Jr. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*, 796.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 797.

⁹⁵ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 58.

arsenal began on July 12 and Khrushchev lied to Kennedy and his advisors from the very beginning. In this case, the US administration could not start negotiations as they did not know precisely whether Khrushchev would be able to meet the agreed conditions or utilize the whole action to get enough time to complete the operation. When the photographic evidence from the U-2 reconnaissance flight proved that the Soviet missiles had been built in Cuba, it was presented to the President. He and his advisors could not believe it.⁹⁶ Even though the US administration has been informed by the CIA about increased Soviet activity in the Caribbean, the reports did not contain any information on the possible installation of offensive weapons on the island.⁹⁷ After the burst of Cuban - Soviet relations Khrushchev declared that Soviet Union did not need to build missile base outside the USSR and that the missiles were being deployed purely as a support to the Cuban people.⁹⁸ During September and first two weeks in October, Soviet Union delimited the possible installation of offensive weapons in Cuba several. October 18, two days after Kennedy had clear evidence of the existence of offensive weapons in Cuba; Khrushchev was still refusing any activity.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 11.

⁹⁷ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 71.

⁹⁸ Ellie Abel, *The Missile Crisis* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1966), 15-16.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 16.

7 Consequences

The fact that the United States and the Soviet Union were able to solve such a serious situation by diplomatic means had a positive impact on the development of the Cold War. In general, the atmosphere between the two sides improved. The American - Soviet rapprochement increased America's popularity together with presidential prestige. However, President Kennedy has remained worried. The confidence of the US defence guarantee has rapidly decreased in Europe.¹⁰⁰

7.1 Reverberations of the Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban Missile Crisis is often considered an American victory because the United States has succeeded in removing the Soviet missiles from Cuba. Therefore, the Soviet Union lost its ability to have a strategic base near the United States. At the same time, the security guarantee for Cuba was secured as well as removal of US missiles from Turkey.¹⁰¹ Although Kennedy's administration received support from Western European allies during the crisis, there was growing doubt about America's commitment to defending Europe in the event of a conflict with the Soviet Union. Kennedy was afraid of the loss of prestige within the NATO and he publicly denied Soviet requests to remove missiles from Italy and Turkey.¹⁰² However, in private talks, President Kennedy pledged to withdraw them in the five months since the termination of the crisis.¹⁰³ It is unlikely that North Atlantic allies were aware of the strict secrecy of the pledge but during NATO Council meeting in December 1962, foreign ministers approved the US government's procedure during the crisis. At Ottawa meeting in January 1963, the decision to dismantle Jupiter missiles from Turkey and Italy and replace them with Polaris submarines deployed in the Mediterranean was made. All missiles were dismantled by the end of April 1963.¹⁰⁴ The removal of Jupiter missiles was presented as a refinement and renewal of NATO armaments within the wider nuclear power regrouping. The US administrative consistently denied any connection between the withdrawal of Jupiter missiles and the crisis. Although these

¹⁰⁰ Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé I: Válka a Nukleární Mír*, 559.

¹⁰¹ Nálevka, *Karibská Krize*, 51.

¹⁰² Bradley, *Válka a Mír po Roce 1945: Dějiny Vztahů mezi Sovětským Svazem a Západem*, 120-121.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 121.

¹⁰⁴ Jiří Fidler and Petr Mareš, *Dějiny NATO* (Praha: Paseka, 1997), 125–126.

allegations were being questioned for the next years, there was no reliable evidence which could confirm these assumptions.¹⁰⁵ President Kennedy and his administration were criticized by right-wing opponents for not taking advantage of the opportunity and not resolving Cuban problem forever, especially when the US had a clear predominance in both the number of strategic nuclear and conventional weapons. Others have reproached his willingness to risk a nuclear war just to delay that one day the US would be equally threatened by Soviet nuclear weapons. They were blamed also for the factual support of Castro's regime and Cuban exiles could not forgive them the promise of non-aggression in Cuba. However, Kennedy, however, came out of the crisis as a winner and his popularity among the US citizens reached the maximum level.¹⁰⁶ Whereas Castro did not allow the Americans or the UN inspectors to review the complete withdrawal of offensive weapons from Cuba and did not terminate supporting of the guerrilla movement in other Latin American countries, Kennedy refused to officially confirm the non-aggression commitment. The mutual understanding that Cuba would not threaten its neighbours and the United States would not attack Cuba, was officially announced in August 1970 by Nixon's government.¹⁰⁷ In 1963, Kennedy and his advisors discussed possible ways to weaken the alliance between Cuba and the USSR and considered negotiations with Castro, who seemed to be interested in improving relations between the US and Cuba. However, these considerations did not lead to any clear results.¹⁰⁸ Later on June 10, 1963, Kennedy appeared at the American University in Washington D.C. with a speech that reflected improving relations with the Soviet Union. Kennedy talked about peace and warned of the dangers that nuclear weapons could bring. Therefore he called for cooperation and negotiations especially on the issue of an arm race stressing out that it was a common American and Soviet interest to avoid the war.

7.2 Kennedy's role in the Cuban Missile Crisis

Kennedy's initial failure in the position as the US leader position has fundamentally influenced his approach. If there was not the debacle in the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy would

¹⁰⁵ Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 169.

¹⁰⁶ Nálezka, *Karibská Krize*, 171.

¹⁰⁷ Robert E. Quirk, *Fidel Castro: o Jeho Cestě k Moci, Jeho Režimu a Jeho Spojencích a Protivnicích* (Ostrava: Oldag 1999), 492–493.

¹⁰⁸ Michael H. Hunt, *Crises in U.S. foreign policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 247.

probably still rely on generality and CIA. Therefore, he relayed that consulting with the US security experts is not always the best choice. Learning to listen to councils and other counsellors he considered the potential benefits and disadvantages of consulting solutions and creating his own opinions.¹⁰⁹ This approach is evident from the Oval Office meetings during the thirteen days. Kennedy accepted advice from experts focusing on the Soviet Union. During the Crisis, Kennedy was influenced by his experience and knowledge. He thought of the next generation and what would squeeze of the nuclear knob mean to them. The abnegation of a nuclear superiority was considered not a surrender but necessity with

¹⁰⁹ Dallek, *Nedokončený Život: John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963*, 103.

CONCLUSION

The US president has faced threats and ultimate from the USSR since his oath as the 35th president. At the end of World War II it turned out that the US and the USSR would not be able to cooperate together due to different ideological opinions but even those countries will compete thanks to the great potential. The Soviet Union did not admire the considerable influence of the United States in Europe. Although the Soviets maintained with the United States peaceful coexistence in Germany, this measures should be only temporary. The Soviet Union did not have any military base near the United States, and therefore they focused on Cuba and Fidel Castro. The United States tried to solve the situation immediately but Fidel Castro declared and inclination to the USSR. This inclination signified the first state emerged with the Western Hemisphere located in the so-called Eastern Bloc.

This was of course, not accepted by the United States who felt threatened. Therefore, they interrupted all diplomatic relations with Cuba and began to plan a putsch in Castro's Cuba. This plan took place shortly after Kennedy's election to the White House but ended up with a massive international scandal for Kennedy's government. The Soviet Union took advantage of the situation and with the direct support of Fidel Castro deployed nuclear weapons to Cuba. Even though the United States discovered the military equipment in Cuba later, they did not provoke a military attack. However, the Soviet missiles in Cuba did not serve only as a tool for the intimidation of the United States but also for a possible trade.

As the Soviets neither the United States did not want to launch a war on this level, both countries have agreed to withdraw their missiles from their bases simultaneously convincing each other for negotiating a compromise when it comes to the fate of all humanity, and even cooperate in certain matters.

There are several determiners behind the termination of a crisis. First, President Kennedy was aware of what would nuclear war mean. Thanks to the ExComm advisors was the whole crisis resolved diplomatically. Even though the First Secretary Khrushchev was under much greater pressure than Kennedy, he still managed to keep his common sense and head cool and accepted a compromise, which concerned the withdrawal of

nuclear missiles from Cuba in exchange for the withdrawn of nuclear weapons from Turkey and Italy. Third, it was the international pressure from the United Nations which forced both sides to act and come up with a peaceful solution.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

US	the United States
USA	the United States of America
USSR	the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UN	the United Nations
CIA	the Central Intelligence Agency
NATO	the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ExComm	the Executive Committee of the National Security Council
GDR	German Democratic Republic