

## **US History**

### **The Cold War – B**

#### **Learning Target:**

*I can evaluate the evolving performance of JFK in dealing with the Soviets from the Bay of Pigs to the Cuban Missile Crisis.*

### **3. The Cuban Missile Crisis**

#### **Causes of the Crisis**

##### *Soviet Insecurity –*

- Soviet Union had fallen behind in the arms race
- Incapable of striking the US mainland with offensive weapons
- US had also installed offensive weapons in Turkey

##### *Possible Cuban Invasion –*

- Fidel Castro feared a possible US invasion
- Asked the Soviets for help and embraced the idea of nuclear weapons

#### **The Crisis Begins**

- October 1962 – US spy planes show missile sites being built in Cuba
- Capable of handling medium & long range nuclear missiles
- Missiles not believed to be in place yet - Incorrect
- They would be capable of hitting most of the United States

##### *Kennedy's Options –*

1. Bomb the missile sites
2. Launch an invasion
3. Blockade Cuba and insist that the sites be dismantled

##### *Kennedy's Choice –*

- Kennedy eventually chooses to blockade Cuba and calls it a quarantine
- Used the term quarantine because it was more diplomatic
- Received tremendous pressure to launch an air strike against Cuba
- Learned from his Bay of Pigs experience

##### *Kennedy Addresses the Nation –*

- Monday, October 22 at 7:00 PM Kennedy came on TV
- Explained the situation to the nation and announced the quarantine
- Also gave a warning that any launch would be considered an attack by the Soviet Union and the US would retaliate immediately
- The speech infuriated Khrushchev and he considered the quarantine an act of war

### *Tension Increases –*

- Soviet ships carrying missiles were headed towards Cuba
- For almost a week world on brink of nuclear war
- Khrushchev does not break the quarantine and has his ships turn around

### **Two Offers**

#### *First Offer –*

- Khrushchev sends an impassioned appeal to Kennedy to end the conflict
- Offers to remove the missiles if the US publicly announced to never invade Cuba

#### *Second Offer –*

- Khrushchev second letter has a more formal tone
- Speculated that Soviet hard-liners pressured him to take a more aggressive stance
- Added the condition that the US needed to remove their missiles from Turkey

#### *Turkey Missiles –*

- Kennedy could not publicly remove these missiles from a NATO ally
- Privately Kennedy had wanted to remove the outdated missiles anyway
- Khrushchev had backed Kennedy into a corner
- Kennedy could ask no more of Khrushchev and could also not accept the offer

### **A Deal Is Reached**

- Kennedy decides to respond to the first letter as if he never received the second letter.
- Khrushchev accepts Kennedy's offer and a deal is made with the following conditions

1. US would not invade Cuba
2. USSR would remove missiles
3. US would privately remove Turkey's missiles at a later date

### **Conclusions**

1. A successful and diplomatic application of Containment
2. JFK learned from his mistake of weakness at Bay of Pigs