

1962 Cuban Missile Crisis
October 15 - 28

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14	15 A U-2 reconnaissance aircraft reveals SS-4 nuclear missiles in Cuba	16 President Kennedy convenes the Executive Committee	17 An SS-5 IRBM site is detected in Cuba	18 Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko tells Kennedy the missiles are defensive only A Hydrogen bomb test is conducted over Johnston Island area	19 President Kennedy meets with Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff	20 President Kennedy is informed additional missiles have been discovered in Cuba
21	22 President Kennedy announces a naval blockade of Cuba; US military alert is set on DEFCON 3 Cuba mobilizes all its military forces; Russia conducts a nuclear bomb test	23 Reconnaissance photos reveal Soviet missiles in Cuba are ready to launch	24 Soviet ships reach naval blockade in Cuban harbor; a Soviet submarine is with them	25 US military forces are set to DEFCON 2—highest ever in US history Soviets refuse to answer confrontation at United Nations	26 Accelerated construction of Cuban missile sites is noted; Khrushchev sends a letter of negotiation; Castro cables Khrushchev urging a nuclear first strike against US if US invades Cuba US conducts more tests over Johnston Island area	27 A U-2 spy plane is shot down over Cuba Khrushchev sends second letter of negotiation terms Soviets conduct a nuclear bomb test
28 Radio Moscow airs a speech by Khrushchev announcing the dismantling of Soviet missiles in Cuba Crisis is over	29 President Kennedy orders continuation of blockade and reconnaissance flights	30	31			

Cuban Missile Crisis Background Information

When President Kennedy took office in January 1961, America was already concerned about Fidel Castro's relationship with Russia. The US feared any country's alliance with communism or socialism, but Cuba's proximity to Florida provoked special trepidation.

Cuba feared the US would resort to military intervention to thwart its alliance with Russia. In April 1961, a force of Cuban exiles, trained by the CIA, landed at the Bay of Pigs with the intent of over-throwing Castro's reign. Cuba's military trounced the invaders within three days. Shortly thereafter, Castro declared Cuba a socialist republic and established formal ties with the Soviet Union, much to the consternation of the US.

When the US placed 15 missiles in Turkey aimed at western USSR cities, Khrushchev expressed public anger. Given the speed with which the missiles could strike, Moscow was a target only 16 minutes away.

Then President Kennedy began a series of covert operations against Castro's government, all of which, however, were unsuccessful. In February of 1962, he instituted an economic embargo against Cuba.

Discussions regarding a US direct military attack continued, and Castro's fears were exacerbated as Congress authorized the use of military force if American interests in Cuba were threatened. In April 1962, Castro persuaded Khrushchev to provide Cuba with both surface-to-air missiles and surface-to-surface missiles. Under Operation Anadyr, the missiles were secretly shipped to Cuba on merchant ships.

Although French intelligence warned CIA director John McCone that the Soviets were installing missiles in Cuba, President Kennedy did not believe the report. In September, Kennedy told congress that the new missile sites photographed by a reconnaissance flight were for defensive purposes only. Khrushchev himself personally assured Kennedy that Russia had neither interest nor need to equip Cuba with offensive missiles. Cuban citizens were not so easily fooled and over one thousand reports reached Miami with news of the weapons build-up.

It was not until Kennedy saw the photographs taken by the U-2 spy plane that the administration believed the reports and warnings of other intelligence agencies. Soviet missiles on Cuban soil were indeed operational and capable of striking US cities.