

After October: An Examination of John F. Kennedy's Foreign Policy after the Cuban Missile
Crisis

By

Andrew M. Des Roches

A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfilment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
History

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2015

© Andrew M. Des Roches, 2015

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this major research project. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis analyzes President John F. Kennedy's articulation of foreign policy after the near nuclear confrontation in October 1962. This thesis finds that the Cuban Missile Crisis had a very profound effect on the president, which became evident in his policy towards Cuba and the Soviet Union. In Cuba, the president slowly began considering other options than the destabilisation of Castro. Despite significant domestic pressure, President Kennedy developed a nuanced policy in Cuba that reflected the growing acceptance of Castro and the communist government in Havana. President Kennedy's overtures to the Soviet Union likewise demonstrate his statesmanship. Throughout 1963, Kennedy worked diligently to ensure some meaningful diplomacy could be achieved with his counterpart Chairman Nikita Khrushchev. Kennedy continued to push for better relations between the two superpowers until his tragic assassination on November 22, 1963. This paper is a contribution to the study of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the inherent limitations of nuclear weapons as a tool of foreign policy.

Keywords: Cuba, Cuban Missile Crisis, John F. Kennedy, Nikita Khrushchev, nuclear diplomacy, U.S. Foreign Policy

Acknowledgements

I will certainly not be the first to state I could not have completed this project without a great deal of assistance from a number of people who were very generous with their time. First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Andrew Hunt, for his insight, his knowledge and his support throughout the year. Although this project was not my original plan, Dr. Hunt continued to encourage my research. Professor Hunt is a fantastic lecturer, professor, mentor and advisor and I could not thank him enough.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the members of my committee, Dr. Janet Lang and Dr. James Blight. Thank you for your guidance, suggested reading, and for assisting me to determine the focus of my research and writing. I am truly grateful to have such distinguished scholars serving on my committee and I hope the project lives up to your expectations.

Thank you Donna Hayes for all the work you do on the behalf of the grad students, especially for always pointing us in the direction of free food (the lifeblood of grad school), and countless other opportunities. I would also like to thank Doctor Greta Kroeker, for whom I was very fortunate to serve as a TA, for your encouragement and support. UW is privileged to have such a dynamic and intelligent lecturer.

Thank you to the 2014-2015 History MA cohort, the “vibrant community,” for being endlessly supportive and for helping to keep things light during long periods of writing. It is no hyperbole to say that without Tim, Danielle, David, Erin, Sandra, Lisa and Preston, this project would have not gotten off the ground. You are all incredibly bright people, and I am excited to what the future holds for the lot of you. Slainte!

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family. My mother Claire and father Chris have been perpetually supportive, even during my particularly sullen or frustrated moods, and this was all possible in no small part thanks to them. Thank you to my siblings Ryan and Nicole for their support and humour. Thank you to my grandparents Lori and Nigel and Grandma Eva for always listening to my complaints and indulging the thousands of questions I tend to ask. Thank you to my extended family; Michele, Tom, Mark, Sue, Geoff, Carly, Stephanie, Phil, Rhys, Diane and Mark for your continued support. Last, and certainly not least, my friends. I have been very fortunate to have a great supporting cast of friends, and without the encouragement from Beth, Nic, Tamlyn, Melvin, Sanam, and “the fellowship,” I’d still be mired somewhere in my introduction.

Writing my thesis has taught me, above all things, that having a strong support system is essential to synthesising a coherent paper. Fortunately, the support I have had throughout the year was never in doubt. Thank you!

Table of Contents

Page II.....Author's Declaration

Page III.....Abstract

Page IV.....Acknowledgements

Page V.....Table of Contents

Page 1.....Chapter I: Introduction

Page 17.....Chapter II: Historiography

Page 45.....Chapter III: U.S.-Cuba Relations

Page 69.....Chapter IV: U.S.-USSR Relations

Page 98.....Chapter V: Conclusion

Page 101.....Bibliography

Chapter I: Introduction

The possibility of nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union was a dominant fear and cultural fixation throughout the Cold War. Precipitated by annual increases in defense and research spending, hydrogen bombs steadily evolved into a deadlier weapon system. The speed in which a nuclear strike could be delivered only increased tensions as minor provocations had serious ramifications. The United States maintained a large advantage in nuclear arms, despite popular internal assertion to the contrary, and was continuously pressured to use them during the first twenty years of the bipolar stalemate. The atomic bomb became synonymous with power and influence and this ushered in a period of American leadership on the world stage. The old British and French empires collapsed in the aftermath of the Second World War, traditional colonialism went into retreat, and the world map had essentially been redrawn. The United States initially enjoyed a nuclear monopoly, yet by 1949 the Soviet Union successfully tested their own atomic bomb. The growing stockpiles of weapons unleashed a new threat on the international community: nuclear war. In the tense years that followed, the possibility of an exchange sporadically dominated international politics. While infrequent, the moments that threatened a nuclear exchange left a profound impact on the belligerents and, more broadly speaking, the world as a whole. The Cuban Missile Crisis, which occurred in October 1962, perhaps had the greatest impact of them all.

The crisis was a harrowing ordeal that has had a lasting effect on the perception of nuclear arms. Kennedy's address to the nation on October 22, 1962, brought the realities of the Cold War into sharp focus by demonstrating the real consequences of open conflict in the nuclear age and the fear of war. The crisis began on October 16 when McGeorge Bundy presented John F. Kennedy

with photographs taken two days earlier over Cuba.¹ President Kennedy, standing “eyeball to eyeball” with Premier Khrushchev, engaged in a tense standoff that very nearly led to nuclear war. Kennedy and Khrushchev were both faced with making decisions that could affect, or effectively end, the lives of millions of people throughout the globe. The thirteen-day conflict ended peacefully on Sunday October 28, when Premier Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles from Cuba. The proximity to the brink of nuclear Armageddon would remain at the forefront of President Kennedy’s mind for the remainder of his life. The profound influence the crisis had was evident in his articulation of foreign policy during his last year in office. Kennedy recognized the inherent dangers of nuclear weapons and immediately attempted to initiate détente with the Soviet Union. Both President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev rejected the idea that they should have the ability to destroy civilization as a response to escalating tensions between only two nations. Although Khrushchev shared this view with the president, a number of internal crises would prevent his pursuit of improved diplomatic ties with the West. It would be the Kennedy’s determination in 1963 that led to key breakthroughs in U.S.-USSR relations which were directly influenced by the Cuban Missile Crisis. To fully comprehend how the missile crisis had such a deep impact on the president, it is crucial to briefly discuss the standoff.

The Crisis came at a tumultuous period in American history and was the culmination of a chain of events, beginning well before Kennedy took office. Historian John Lewis Gaddis suggests “the Cuban Missile Crisis was a culmination of barbs exchanged by either nation dating back to the Suez Crisis in 1957.”² Fear of communism was rampant in the United States and the label of “soft on communism” carried a significant political risk. Senator Joseph McCarthy, the infamous

¹ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 226-227.

² John Lewis Gaddis, *the Cold War* (New York: the Penguin Press, 2005), 77.

Wisconsin politician, became the public face of a far-reaching and widespread crusade against communists in the government that began a decade and a half before the Soviet missiles were discovered in Cuba and his legacy was still palpable.³ Washington's pursuit of communists spread from the government into nearly every facet of American life. Entertainers, intellectuals and regular individuals lost their careers for past communist sympathies. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb, lost his security clearance ostensibly for being a communist by association, despite his critical work in the Manhattan Project. Ellen Schreker argues in *Many are the Crimes*, "Washington's involvement in anti-communism gave the struggle legitimacy," contributing to the lasting legacy and influence it carried during the 1950s.⁴ These issues would be magnified when communism emerged 90 miles off the shores of the southern United States.

When Fidel Castro and the 26 July Movement captured Havana on 1 January 1959, the Caribbean island nation's future political landscape was ambiguous. Castro was originally courted by President Eisenhower, the latter inviting his revolutionary counterpart to Washington, and did not instantly embrace communism or the Soviet Union. Khrushchev later stated he "hadn't even heard of Castro until Havana was taken," eschewing any possible collusion against the Batista government.⁵ Raul Castro, brother of Fidel, made clandestine overtures to the Soviet Union, thereby initiating the gradual rise of communism in Cuba. The Soviets assisted Castro's efforts to consolidate his power in Havana and throughout the nation.⁶ Raul first met with Nikita Khrushchev in July 1960 in the USSR. By August, Cuba would become the first Soviet ally in the Western

³ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 29.

⁴ Ellen Schreker, *Many are the Crimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 86.

⁵ "Telegram from US Embassy in Moscow to Department of State," Document 53 in Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d53>

⁶ Aleksandr Fursenko, and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble; the Secret History of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 176.

Hemisphere.⁷ This bond would continue to deepen until it culminated in the placement of nuclear weapons in October 1962.

Fidel Castro began to turn his loyalties towards the Soviet Union, prompting his nationalisation of Cuban industry, which was a notable blow to American interests. Eisenhower, in response, removed all diplomatic and economic relations with the country while encouraging other nations to do likewise.⁸ As communism grew in Cuba, the resources of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were directed towards undermining the revolutionary government. Allen Dulles, Director of Central Intelligence, was given authorization from President Eisenhower to coordinate the arming and training of a small band of Cuban exiles for the eventual amphibious landing on the island.⁹ The purpose of the invasion was to initiate another revolution in Cuba to depose Castro and the communist government. Training continued throughout 1960 and, in April 1961, under the authorization of newly elected President Kennedy, the émigrés attacked the Bay of Pigs. With promises of air support from Washington, D.C., the invaders landed on April 17 and, in a poorly orchestrated plot with disastrous execution, were forced to surrender two days later. Over 1,500 guerillas were captured and the invasion, ironically, helped Castro consolidate his control of the country.

The fallout of the debacle embarrassed Kennedy and he immediately shuffled agency staff. CIA leadership was reviewed shortly after the invasion, which led to the first major overhaul of agency leadership. Kennedy, incensed that he had been “mislead” by the CIA, forced Dulles into retirement, replacing him with John McCone. McCone’s grip on the agency, by his own admission

⁷ Fursenko, Aleksandr, and Naftali, Timothy, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 55.

⁸ Peter Lane, *the Postwar World; an Introduction* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1987), 272.

⁹ John W. Mason, *the Cold War: 1945-1991* (London: Routledge, 1996), 31.

during the Church Committee hearings, was suspect.¹⁰ The covert operations of the CIA under Dulles would continue with McCone at the helm, creating internal tensions between the CIA and the White House.¹¹ Kennedy would continue to be dubious of his military and intelligence advisors. The relationship between the president and the Joint Chiefs was strained and often exacerbated by overzealous generals. General Maxwell Taylor, who had become quite close to Robert Kennedy, assumed the position of military representative for the president. McCone and Taylor represent the personnel shift that followed the Bay of Pigs, however the fiasco also prompted further reliance on Robert Kennedy. Arthur Schlesinger later noted Kennedy “immediately regretted not giving RFK any responsibility regarding the Bay of Pigs,” indicating that the president would need someone present on covert operations who had his confidence.¹¹ Kennedy’s closest advisors had been reorganized, but they failed to see the folly in Operation Mongoose.

Operation Mongoose was a series of attempts to undermine communism and to discredit Castro. There were numerous plots on Castro’s life, many of which were dubious at best, yet the operation was a costly failure. The program had no tangible results and Kennedy had simply “lost faith in Ed Lansdale, its chief architect.”¹² Castro’s resilience prompted the CIA to turn to organized crime – known in the parlance of the times as the mafia – in an ill-fated partnership dedicated to his removal. Mongoose was a well-funded operation which was staffed by key members of the Administration, eight of whom would later serve on ExComm, the president’s team of advisors during the crisis.¹³ Regardless, as Robert Kennedy would later be forced to acknowledge, Operation Mongoose had some “obvious misfires.” Poor intelligence lead to

¹⁰ David Talbot, *Brothers: the Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 112. ¹¹ Talbot, *Brothers*, 100.

¹¹ Arthur Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978), 417.

¹² Thomas Evan, *Robert Kennedy* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 2000), 235.

¹³ Thomas Reeves, *a Question of Character; a Life of John F. Kennedy* (New York: the Free Press, 1991), 370.

untenable expectations and communism showed no signs of abating. Kennedy, according to David Talbot, would continue with the program “until the October missile crisis highlighted its utter failure.”¹⁴ Historians Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali identify that despite the obvious and numerous flaws of Mongoose, Soviet intelligence was unable to determine whether the threat to their newest satellite was credible. This ambiguity led to the placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba, ostensibly for the purpose of self defense.¹⁵

The threat of Mongoose was one of the most important factors which contributed to the Cuban Missile Crisis, yet the presence of American Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy, mediumrange ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads, was a constant source of frustration for Khrushchev.¹⁶ Coupled with Washington’s aggression in Cuba, Castro would seemingly benefit from nuclear missiles to deter Kennedy’s anti-communist ambitions. The seeming fragility of Castro’s regime in the shadow of the United States would suggest a need for nuclear weapons for self defense and deterrence. Castro, aware of the added security benefit deepening ties with the Soviets would enable, did not wish to receive the weapons. Khrushchev insisted Castro to receive the missiles, ostensibly to give the Soviets the upper hand at the UN.¹⁷ The placement of Soviet missiles had been suggested in August of 1962 by John McCone; however these allegations were readily dismissed by the Administration.¹⁸ Soviet missiles in Cuba would immediately be interpreted as a threat to the United States and the Administration had publically declared their intent to prevent their deployment. Khrushchev would later remark that the missiles were deployed

¹⁴ Talbot, *Brothers*, 98.

¹⁵ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 182.

¹⁶ G. Calvin MacKenzie and Robert Weisbrot, *the Liberal Hour and the Politics of Change* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 269.

¹⁷ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 178-179.

¹⁸ Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 225.

because “in addition to protecting Cuba, our missiles would have equalized what the West likes to call ‘balance of power’.”¹⁹ Earlier conversations with Soviet officials had produced promises not to place “offensive weapons” in Cuba, which was not lost on Kennedy.²⁰ Due to weeks without U.S. surveillance, the Soviets were able to smuggle the missiles into Cuba days before the sites were discovered.²¹ When the missiles were discovered and thoroughly reviewed by Central Intelligence, it immediately initiated the crisis.

President Kennedy was immediately briefed on the photographs the morning of October 16. Kennedy quickly informed and assembled his cabinet and the CIA presented their intelligence on Cuba. As Robert Kennedy later noted, “the dominant feeling at the meeting was stunned surprise,” reinforcing the American belief in Soviet compliance regarding Cuba.²² Those who attended the October 16 meeting would later become known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, or ExComm, with a few changes in personnel as the crisis progressed. ExComm included Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, John McCone and a number of other senior administration staff.²³ ExComm would meet continuously throughout the crisis and were the key advisors to President Kennedy. Personal clashes would erupt, yet the ExComm discussions would ultimately give the Administration important information and guidance. Unlike the Bay of Pigs, in which “group think” crippled serious efforts to amend or cancel the invasion,

¹⁹ Translated and Edited by Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 494.

²⁰ Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days; a Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1968), 21.

²¹ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 220.

²² Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 20.

²³ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 24-25.

Kennedy effectively used his time to weigh his options.²⁴ The audio recordings of their deliberations is of immeasurable value to understanding the gravity of the crisis.²⁵

The initial suggestions of each ExComm member varied, yet the general argument was between a blockade and a pre-emptive air strike. One of the key concerns of an air strike was it would be unable to entirely neutralize the Soviet positions.²⁷ It was unclear how soon the missiles would be ready to fire and the discovery of even more missiles further added to the strain on ExComm. President Kennedy would continue to favour air strikes, but the option became “less and less attractive” because of the inherent “costs.”²⁶ Yet one of the most convincing arguments was a moral concern and consideration of national identity. The proposed surprise air strikes were thought to be reminiscent of Pearl Harbor, a comparison unacceptable to the American consciousness. This comparison would change Robert Kennedy’s position from one of advocating air strikes to a supporter of a blockade. The Attorney General would later write to the president “I now know how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor,” an argument that would shake Kennedy’s conviction.²⁷ On October 20, ExComm would vote in favour of a blockade, for the purposes of avoiding the violation of international law it was called a “quarantine,” setting the course of the crisis. The blockade would only prevent new installations, as Bundy suggested, however the option would achieve an important goal to “not corner Khrushchev; the whole point

²⁴ Vito N. Silvestri, *Becoming JFK: A Profile in Communication* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 199.

²⁵ Recordings of the Cuban Missile Crisis can be found here:

<http://millercenter.org/expressionengine.php/presidentialrecordings/kennedy> ²⁷

Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 226.

²⁶ Fursenko and Naftalo, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 233.

²⁷ Dr. Mark White, “Robert Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis, last updated 2007,

http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2007/0709/whit/white_rfk.html

was to give him room to maneuver, to back down.”²⁸ The president moved to inform congress and to prepare his address to the nation, both of which would occur on Monday October 22.

October 22 was an important day in the history of the crisis. Kennedy’s address to Congress, in which he “made it clear that he was not seeking advice or consent,” confirmed the fears that were slowly leaking out of Washington.²⁹ The president clearly addressed the many complications of the crisis, notably Berlin. Kennedy advised Congress “whatever we do in Cuba, it gives him the chance to do the same with regard to Berlin,” likely as a dual effort to explain his rationale and to defend his decision against the hawks.³⁰ The televised address to the nation confirmed the fears of the Cold War to the public. In the address, Kennedy spoke on how the United States had been misled by the Soviet government. The president referenced his recent meeting with Andrei Gromyko in which he confirmed that the USSR had no intention to place nuclear weapons in Cuba, dismissing Gromyko’s “false” promises.³¹ Perhaps one of the more telling remarks Kennedy made on October 22 was his reassurance to the people that the course of action the United States had decided was correct. He would remark during his broadcast “the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing,” an allusion to the failure at Munich.³² On October 24, the quarantine would take effect.

The quarantine represented the increasing strain and how little time was available to both Kennedy and Khrushchev. The morning meeting on October 24, which occurred as the quarantine took effect, began with John McCone delivering an intelligence briefing. He identified that

²⁸ Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy; Profiles in Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 388.

²⁹ Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 392.

³⁰ Ted Widmer, *Listening In: the Secret White House Recordings of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Hyperion, 2012), 163.

³¹ Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba, October 22nd, 1963, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/sUVmCh-sB0moLfrBcaHaSg.aspx>

³² *Ibid.*

“surveillance of Cuba indicates continued rapid progress in completion of IRBM and MRBM missile sites,” contributing to the already potent threat and further complicating the crisis.³³ However, the first test of American resolve was the greater threat identified by McCone. The quarantine was not recognized by the Soviet Union, who had claimed they “would defend their rights,” and the ships bound for Cuba made no intention of altering course.³⁴ Further adding to the danger was the presence of a nuclear submarine escorting the Soviet ships. Robert Kennedy describes this moment in the crisis as “the time of gravest concern for the president” and “the time of final decision.”³⁵ Fortunately, the Soviet ships would stop “dead in the water” prior to any exchange and temporarily reduced the rapidly mounting tension. This moment has lived on in popular memory due to Dean Rusk’s interpretation of the standoff as the moment in which the two superpowers stood “eyeball to eyeball.” Nuclear war had been temporarily avoided, however the crisis had yet to conclude.

As the Soviet ships sailed away from Cuba, ExComm turned their attention towards removing the missiles already on the island. Khrushchev, sensitive to the potential dangers of escalation, sent a personal letter to Kennedy calling for restraint. The letter, described by numerous historians as “rambling,” lubricated the diplomatic efforts.³⁶ The premier took further steps to get a message to President Kennedy and reached out to John Scali, a reporter with the American Broadcasting Corporation, to arrange a meeting between him and Aleksandr Feklisov on October 26. Scali would carry a crucial message to the Department of State. The purpose of this meeting was the introduction of the proposal which would later end the crisis.³⁷ Khrushchev’s letter

³³ Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 401.

³⁴ Giglio, James N., *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (Kansas: Kansas University Press, 1991), 206.

³⁵ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 53-54.

³⁶ Giglio, *the Presidency of JFK*, 208.

³⁷ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 269.

proposed trading the removal of Cuban missiles for a non-invasion pledge, thereby guaranteeing the continued security of Castro's government. However, on October 27, Khrushchev sent yet another letter demanding the removal of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey.³⁸ The second letter carried an entirely different tone, which Bundy described as "his own hard-nosed people overruling him," and was made public.⁴¹ Kennedy correctly identified the deal as "a very good proposal" in which "everybody's going to think is reasonable," complicating the American position. However, the gravest news was to follow the second proposal: an American U2 pilot had been shot down over Cuba.

Major Rudolph Anderson, the pilot who had taken the original photos that sparked the crisis on the 14, was killed October 27.³⁹ Maj. Anderson's death was a critical moment that could easily have led to a nuclear exchange. It is to the credit of both President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev that they acted with the utmost restraint immediately following the downing of the U2. Pressure from the Joint Chiefs and the hawks of ExComm mounted on Kennedy and soon he would be forced to act. Khrushchev faced a similar burden from some of the Presidium and available time and flexibility contracted. Both would be faced with no alternative but to initiate a nuclear strike, a thought Kennedy personally despised, stating "it is insane that two men, sitting on opposite sides of the world, should be able to decide to bring an end to civilization."⁴⁰ The ramifications of a nuclear confrontation was not exaggerated. During an ExComm meeting on the 27, Bundy, Adlai Stevenson, Llewyn Thompson and Robert Kennedy had all advised the president

³⁸ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2003), 566-567. ⁴¹ Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 414-415.

³⁹ Jim Wilson, *Britain on the Brink: the Cold War's Most Dangerous Weekend 27-28 October, 1962* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2012), 96-97.

⁴⁰ Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 411.

to “answer the first letter, the private letter. Say ‘thank you’ and ignore the second letter.”⁴¹

Kennedy had to carefully consider his next steps. Sensing that time was of the essence, he selected his brother for a critical diplomatic mission.

Robert Kennedy discretely met with the Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to pursue a back channel diplomatic solution to the crisis, the latter struck by the “anxiety” of the former.⁴² Dobrynin and Kennedy clearly recognized the looming threat and the possibility of imminent invasion. Under such duress, the two negotiated a settlement to the crisis. Kennedy agreed that the U.S. government would remove the missiles from Turkey. However, any public assertion to the contrary would nullify the agreement. The United States would publically pledge not to invade Cuba, provided all offensive weapons were removed. Kennedy insisted on on-site inspections to verify the missiles had been removed and that Soviet personnel returned to the USSR. Dobrynin rapidly transmitted this message to Moscow as the crisis teetered on a precipice and the possibility of military intervention glaring. While awaiting the Soviet response, the leadership in Washington braced for the potential eruption of the crisis into a full scale war. Fortunately Nikita Khrushchev publically announced on October 28 that he would accept the U.S. proposal to trade the missiles in Cuba, with on-site inspection verifying their removal, for a non-invasion pledge.

Khrushchev’s acceptance of Kennedy’s backchannel agreement ended the most threatening moment, however some diplomatic challenges remained after the crisis ended. Regardless, the initial relief in Washington and Moscow was profound although not shared by all. Members of the JCS, notably Curtis LeMay, objected to the agreement and continued to relentlessly push for an

⁴¹ Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 417.

⁴² Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy: His Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 228. ⁴⁶ Talbot, *Brothers*, 172.

invasion, suggesting, “it’s the greatest defeat in our history” and “we should invade today!”⁴⁶ Castro objected to Khrushchev’s agreement to on-site inspections without his consultation, and the removal of IL-28 bombers would require some further discussions.⁴³ Despite this hurdle, the crisis ended peacefully and the missiles were removed from Cuba without further incident. The conclusion ended the danger, however the legacy and the burden of nuclear weapons made an inescapable impression on the Presidium and ExComm. The proximity of ExComm and the Presidium to their respective leaders lent some solidarity during the struggle, however the awesome responsibility could only truly be appreciated by Khrushchev and Kennedy. The immense pressure of determining the fate of mankind dominated the moral considerations of both leaders and the burden squarely rested on their decisions. Robert Dallek in *An Unfinished Life* suggests that Kennedy’s guidance through the crisis could be compared to “Europe’s heads of government before World War I- a disaster that cost millions of lives.”⁴⁴ Dallek clearly does not exaggerate the potential cost of a war, and Kennedy’s leadership was instrumental, although not exclusively, in the peaceful resolution.

The pressure on Kennedy and Khrushchev was transformative. Both were “deeply shaken by the missile crisis” and immediately “did a turnabout.”⁴⁵ The pressure during the thirteen days was immense and multi-faceted. The hawks in their respective governments relentlessly pushed for a strike and the potential that events outside of the White House or the Kremlin escalated beyond control was a concern throughout the crisis. The resolution reached by Kennedy and Dobrynin was fueled largely by that concern.⁴⁶ Additionally, the lack of direct communication

⁴³ Giglio, *the Presidency of JFK*, 214.

⁴⁴ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 574.

⁴⁵ James Blight, *the Shattered Crystal Ball: Fear and Learning in the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992), 144-145.

⁴⁶ Talbot, *Brothers*, 171.

between Washington and Moscow made interpreting the other governments' actions much more difficult. The two leaders had, by the crisis, "virtually no meaningful dialogue between them," and thus simple miscalculations, such as the U2 flight that inadvertently flew over the Soviet Union, proved a key demonstration of how an ostensibly innocent mission could be interpreted with dire results.⁴⁷ Finally, both men dreaded their responsibility in "the final failure." Robert McNamara, writing a number of years later, described nuclear missiles as useful for little more than deterrence. McNamara stated "no meaningful victory is even considerable... for no nation can possibly win a full-scale thermonuclear exchange," a sobering reflection on the risks of pursuing a war.⁴⁸ Kennedy and Khrushchev, while aware of the dangers of nuclear exchange, were forced to confront their own mortality and that of their nations. Unique among their advisors was the inescapable and crushing loneliness of standing on the precipice. Sorenson would later write, upheld by Gromyko, "the president was never lonelier than... his first nuclear confrontation."⁴⁹ Their realizations on the brink would end the first epoch of the Cold War and cross the threshold into the possibility of détente. Proximity to war did not end the arms race or destroy the Berlin Wall, however it did clear the way for positive and constructive changes in the political landscape of the Cold War.

The importance of a brief glimpse at the crisis lies in its provision of context for the world in November 1962. The confrontation forced Kennedy and Khrushchev to communicate more openly and ostensibly opened the door for progress between the superpowers. Previous overtures had been made to pursue mutually beneficial diplomatic accomplishments, such as a Test Ban Treaty, but the constantly shifting currents of world affairs stalled any constructive growth. The

⁴⁷ James Blight and David Welch, *On the Brink* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1989), 314.

⁴⁸ Robert McNamara, *the Essence of Security* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 159-160.

⁴⁹ Anatolii A. Gromyko, *Through Russian Eyes: President Kennedy's 1036 Days* (Washington D.C.: International Library, Inc., 1978), 177.

tumult of the crisis lends credibility to the portrayal of Kennedy as a statesman, an image later reinforced by Khrushchev himself.⁵⁰ The subsequent thesis will look closely at the events that followed the crisis, often referencing the days of deliberations themselves.

The thirteen days of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the impact on U.S. foreign policy and its chief architect, the president of the United States, will be the focal point of this paper. The crisis was viewed as an exchange between the Soviet Union and the U.S. Although the missiles were located in Cuba, the revolutionary government received limited consultation and was not a key factor in the deliberations of the crisis. The main discussion was generally relegated to Washington and Moscow, although some overtures had been made to the British government and Prime Minister Macmillan. Regardless, U.S. aggression in Cuba directly led to the crisis and it is critical to consider if the Administration adjusted course after October 1962. Contrary to the vast body of literature, which largely albeit not exclusively explores the impact of the crisis on the United States, I will examine how the Kennedy Administration foreign policy developed in regard to the Soviet Union and Cuba. Available literature on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the following year often reference the standoff as initiating the conversation on détente. The missile crisis is frequently invoked when discussing key events in 1963, including the American University speech and the signing of the test ban, yet few authors have written a sustained examination on the impact on the president's articulation of policy. Although the importance of the crisis itself is not debated, some authors suggest it did not change the "basic condition of the nuclear stalemate,"⁵¹ and only served to prolong the Cold War. Furthermore, critics of the president suggest the crisis was needless

⁵⁰ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 504-505.

⁵¹ Louise FitzSimmons, *the Kennedy Doctrine* (New York: Random House, 1972), 173.

humiliation of Khrushchev. Such criticisms are in the minority, but do reflect some alternate considerations of Kennedy's administration.

The remaining year of the Kennedy presidency saw notable diplomatic achievements and yet the legacy of the crisis has been largely focused on the proximity to nuclear war and averting a similar standoff. Examining the crisis through the prism of how it influenced the participants raises a number of important questions: Did the crisis usher in a period of relative peace? Did the crisis thaw relations between the US and the USSR? Was the thaw apparent in US-Cuba relations? Did Kennedy initiate any reforms that would contribute to a more safe and tolerant world? Did Kennedy have the opportunity to pursue a rapprochement, or was the post-crisis atmosphere one of less flexibility? Did the crisis usher in a new epoch in the Cold War and did it help to develop Kennedy into the statesman Khrushchev has suggested? Utilizing primary sources taken from the office of foreign relations, I will reconstruct the political atmosphere of the post-crisis world. Additionally, examining some of President Kennedy's personal correspondence, writings, and speeches will be used to evaluate his examination of current events and in an attempt to contextualise his actions. A number of secondary sources, including writings by former members of ExComm and the Kennedy cabinet, will also be consulted to broaden the depth of the historical record and to provide any important context. While it may be impossible to truly reconstruct the thoughts of a man long since deceased, the pursuit of understanding "the enigma of John F. Kennedy" will continue undaunted while the crisis retains its relevance in world affairs.⁵²

⁵² Abram Chayes, *International Crises and the Role of Law; the Cuban Missile Crisis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 100.

Chapter II: Historiography

The secrecy of the Cuban Missile Crisis has been an impediment to thorough academic research and writing on the topic since Charles Bartlett and Stewart Alsop wrote *In Time of Crisis*. Their article, appearing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, was the beginning of literature on the crisis. Since *In Time of Crisis*, a wealth of new information has illuminated the otherwise classified portions, and the understanding of October 1962 has changed dramatically. The revelation of the removal of Turkish missiles tarnished Alsop and Bartlett's assertion that the crisis was "a great moment in American history," and should be remembered as a triumph for diplomacy and indeed humanity.⁵³ The mutual dismantling of rockets provides a key illustration of how the writing of the crisis and the following year has changed. The availability of a greater volume of Soviet sources has added immeasurably to our understanding of the crisis and the effects thereafter. The role of Nikita Khrushchev and the Soviet Presidium, a substantial component in their own right, will generally be outside the scope of this chapter. The Soviet contribution is immensely valuable to a comprehensive view of the crisis, however the primary focus will be to discuss the evolution of Western thinking. This chapter will discuss the historiography of the Cuban Missile Crisis to highlight the importance of the standoff on President Kennedy's last year in office. It is important to consider how authors have interpreted American policy after October because it demonstrates the gaps in the evaluation of the missile crisis. Sustained writing on how the missile crisis impacted any key participant is rare. Discussing how the risk of nuclear war impacted individual people so

⁵³ Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett, "In the Time of Crisis," *the Saturday Evening Post*, 18 December, 1962, <http://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/wp-content/uploads/satevepost/1962-12-08-missile-crisis.pdf>

profoundly should serve as an example as to the folly of using nuclear weapons as an instrument of policy.

The scholarship on the Cuban Missile Crisis has evolved considerably. Understandably, the crisis is a popular topic amongst historians. To effectively track the growth of the study, three distinct periods will be examined chronologically; early, revisionist and contemporary. The early period extends from Alsop and Bartlett's article to 1975, following the revelations of the Church Committee, an extensive investigation into covert action, which including CIA operations in Cuba during the Kennedy Administration. The early period authors to be discussed include David Larson's *the Cuban Crisis of 1962* (1963), Arthur Schlesinger's *1000 Days* (1965), Abel Elie's *the Missile Crisis* (1966), Robert Kennedy's *Thirteen Days* (1968), Robert Divine's *the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1971) and Abram Chayes' *International Crises and the Role of Laws: the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1974).

The revisionist period examines the writing on the crisis in the wake of the Watergate Scandal. Prompted by revelations about the CIA while investigating President Nixon, a committee was formed to examine the extent of covert operations. The Church Committee highlighted CIA activity during the Kennedy Administration, underscoring the considerable effort and resources devoted to ousting Fidel Castro, effectively shattering the image of American innocence in evoking the standoff. It is within this period, from 1975-1992, that a much greater understanding of the crisis emerges. To demonstrate these changes, the second category will be supplemented by Arthur Schlesinger's second memoir on Camelot, *Robert Kennedy and his Times* (1978), Kenneth Thompson's *the Kennedy Presidency* (1985), Raymond L. Garthoff's *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1989), James Giglio's *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (1991) and Robert Smith

Thompson's *the Missiles of October* (1992). Each text assists in illuminating the role of the CIA in precipitating the crisis, in addition expanding on the participation of various ExComm members.

The contemporary period extends from the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and 1992 to modern scholarship. Kennedy's role in bringing about the end of the crisis is impossible to detach and has remained, to differing degrees, of central significance. Regardless, the importance of Khrushchev's restraint and determination to avoid nuclear war justifiably receives considerable attention. The modern period also further delves into a facet of the crisis largely ignored in early periods of scholarship: Cuba. This period includes a number of seminal and thorough texts that elaborate on the Cuban role in the crisis, chief among them Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali's *One Hell of a Gamble* (1997). To supplement Fursenko and Naftali, Noam Chomsky's *Rethinking Camelot* (1993), Seymour Hersh's *Dark Side of Camelot* (1997), John Lewis Gaddis' *We Know Now* (1997), while not exclusively about the crisis his text provides key insight, Len Scott's *Macmillan, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1999), Robert Dallek's *An Unfinished Life* (2003), Sheldon Stern's *The Week the Earth Stood Still* (2005), and Len Scott's *Cuban Missile Crisis and the Threat of Nuclear War* (2007) will be examined.

By engaging each text, this chapter will attempt to deepen the comprehension of the intricacies of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the development of scholarship since 1962. Despite the peaceful resolution to the crisis, it is crucial to thoroughly analyze an event which brought the world to the precipice of nuclear war, a reality which cannot be overstated. Examining the historiography assists in illustrating how transformative the thirteen days have been to their participants. Furthermore, this examination of crisis literature reinforces the dramatic impact it would have on President Kennedy. The crisis has remained divisive yet a recurring theme throughout the literature is the determination of Kennedy and Khrushchev to avoid nuclear war.

The early writing on the Cuban Missile Crisis generally demonstrate an admiration for President Kennedy and his handling of the Soviet provocation. Many scholars argued the president effectively defused the crisis. While Kennedy handled the crisis with great care, writings during this period are still very incomplete. The secrecy of the ExComm meetings, the Kennedy tapes and Robert Kennedy's negotiations about removing the Turkish missiles with the Soviets in Washington were not known by the general public until well after the conclusion of the crisis.⁵⁴ The early period was written without the benefit of hindsight and many arguments have since collapsed in the wake of the Church Committee. The secrecy of the deal prevented the complete details of Kennedy's agreement, but by 1975 it was evident he had agreed to dismantle the Turkish missile sites, contrary to the early knowledge of the resolution. The best illustration of the incomplete nature of the crisis is to examine Alsop and Bartlett's *In the Time of Crisis*.

Stewart Alsop, a prominent contemporary political analyst and Charles Bartlett, a journalist with ties to President Kennedy, epitomize the early period of writing on the crisis. Their glowing portrait of President Kennedy set the standard throughout the majority of the early period. Alsop and Bartlett survey the crisis and suggest the importance of JFK's leadership and the unanimous support from ExComm. The article *In the Time of Crisis* refers specifically to the critical moment of the entire thirteen day ordeal: Saturday October 27. The meeting of Robert Kennedy and Dobrynin, unknowingly described as "other means, which are still secret, were used to make it abundantly plain to Khrushchev the nature of the choice he faced," reinforces the ambiguity and secrecy of the standoff shortly after its conclusion.⁵⁵ Khrushchev certainly faced a critical decision,

⁵⁴ Raymond L. Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington D.C.; the Brookings Institution, 1989), 281.

⁵⁵ Alsop and Bartlett, "In the Time of Crisis"

yet Kennedy's position during the discussion with Dobrynin was not one of strength. The fear of losing control of the military understandably fueled Robert Kennedy's position, and yet the near certainty of war further impressed upon Dobrynin the need for a swift resolution.⁵⁶ Perhaps one of the most interesting points Alsop and Bartlett dictate is their cynical characterization of communism. Arguing that the resolution to the crisis could not possibly lead to "a lasting peaceful world settlement, for that will not happen so long as communists are communists," is an apt portrayal of American society in 1962.⁵⁷ The comment is indicative of early writing as it seemingly blames exclusively the Soviet Union for disrupting the pursuit of international peace, contrary to the American aggression that aided in Khrushchev's decision to place missiles in Cuba.

David Larson's 1963 book, *The Cuban Missile Crisis*, provides a sweeping view of the key events in the crisis and many critical documents. By examining the documents in the text, it is clear Larson views the peaceful conclusion to the crisis as a result of Kennedy's strength and leadership. Larson states that on October 27, "President Kennedy sent another letter to Premier Khrushchev indicated that the bases swap deal (in which missiles in Turkey would be removed in exchange for the rockets in Cuba) is unacceptable."⁵⁸ Larson infers that the crisis was ended by Kennedy's obstinacy rather than his overriding moral concerns of a nuclear inferno. Larson's view was not a unique conclusion of the crisis, yet it contributed to the president's international prestige.

Arthur Schlesinger's 1965 volume *A Thousand Days* is an intimate portrayal of President Kennedy and his brief term in the White House in which he highlights the meaningful accomplishments of the administration. Schlesinger, Kennedy's Special Assistant, worked very

⁵⁶ Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 228.

⁵⁷ Alsop and Bartlett, "In the Time of Crisis"

⁵⁸ David Larson, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin Company, 1963), 318-319.

closely with the president before he was elected to the Oval Office. Despite Schlesinger's training as a historian, his closeness with his subject matter undoubtedly bled into his writing and some statements omit crucial details, including the removal of missiles in Turkey. It is important to note that omission would be rectified in his later writings, which shall be discussed later in this chapter. Regardless, *A Thousand Days* is representative of early writing on the crisis, however Schlesinger uses his experience and discusses Cuba at a considerable length, stating "geography gave the Cuba problem a certain intimacy... it remained a side issue."⁵⁹ It can certainly be argued that Cuba would, at times, be more than a "side issue," yet the Cuban Missile Crisis is still described as an standoff between the Soviets and the United States.

The emphasis on Kennedy's strength in the face of Khrushchev's alleged aggression is furthered by Elie Abel in *the Missile Crisis*. Abel states that "the president's crucial achievements... was to make Khrushchev understand that *he must* withdraw... by showing him the nuclear abyss to which he blundered and pointing a way back without disgrace."⁶⁰ Abel's description of Kennedy suggests that the president not only ended the crisis by sheer determination, but also through political grace. Numerous authors have supported this view, including Gaddis and Dallek, yet Abel's assertion that Kennedy never placed Khrushchev into a "position of risking discredit at home" is false.⁶⁵ Khrushchev would later claim the non-invasion pledge was "a great victory for us," however the hardliners in the Presidium saw the failure in the Caribbean as the culmination of a long period of foreign policy misfires.⁶¹ Khrushchev's constant threats to impose his will on Berlin and the arbitrary deadlines he failed to meet had been slowly deflating his

⁵⁹ Arthur Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), 298.

⁶⁰ Elie Abel, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1966), 215. (Emphasis added)

⁶⁵ Abel, *The Missile Crisis*, 215.

⁶¹ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 500.

credibility. By backing down in Cuba, his position within the Soviet leadership collapsed, culminating in his removal from office in October 1964.⁶² Contemporary reports from the CIA indicate that it was known immediately following the crisis that Khrushchev's leadership was suspect, however access to these sources was unavailable to Abel when writing *the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Abel remains exceptionally supportive of President Kennedy, even describing the quarantine as not "denying the necessities of life, as the Soviets attempted to do in their Berlin blockade of 1948," an unfair comparison given the change of leadership in Moscow.⁶³ Abel's attitude towards the Soviet Union is evidently vitriolic, despite the stabilisation of the resolution of the crisis prompted in Moscow.

Robert Kennedy's book *Thirteen Days* has emerged as among the most influential books on the crisis. The book was released shortly after the tragic June 6, 1968 assassination of the author and it provides a blow-by-blow account of the crisis from one of the leading participants. When *Thirteen Days* was released in 1968, the trade of Jupiter missiles in Turkey for Soviet weapons in Cuba had yet to be revealed, but speculation abounded that that arrangement had led to the resolution of the crisis. Kennedy omitted the trade in his published account despite numerous rumours suggesting such a trade had occurred at the time.⁶⁴ Ironically, he discusses his meeting with Dobrynin where he emphatically stated "there would be not only dead Americans but dead Russians as well," underlining the fear of intervention yet he offers no concessions to the ambassador.⁶⁵ While *Thirteen Days* is essential reading for the crisis, it offers yet another distorted

⁶² "Telegram from US Embassy in Moscow to Department of State," Document 260 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v05/d260>

⁶³ Abel, *The Missile Crisis*, 122.

⁶⁴ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 321.

⁶⁵ Robert Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 82-83.

portrayal of the events. It is no exaggeration to state Robert Kennedy played a critical role in ending the crisis and his perspective does not suggest otherwise. Like Schlesinger, however, Kennedy's description of the crisis presents a similar bias. The Attorney General also omits key details of the crisis, and states a number of points which are factually incorrect. Kennedy describes the initial reaction to the crisis by stating "no official within the government had ever suggested to President Kennedy that the Russian buildup in Cuba would include missiles," despite John McCone's warnings in August of 1962.⁶⁶ *Thirteen Days* is a crucial source for studying the crisis, however it must be reviewed with some caution and background knowledge in addition to later writings on the crisis that underscore the changes in the study.

Robert Divine's appraisal in *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (1971) coincides with a growing body of Kennedy criticism. Divine, plainly critical, writes "for many Americans, his actions in 1962 set an example... of how *not* to behave in a world where one small misstep can lead to total disaster."⁶⁷ Divine's statements helps to initiate a trend of some historians to view Kennedy's actions as "reckless" and aggressive, a mantle later taken by Noam Chomsky and Seymour Hersh.⁶⁸ Abram Chayes further addresses Kennedy's flaws in *International Crises and the Rule of Law* by suggesting that the understanding of the crisis was incomplete. Chayes, unlike previous scholars, states "Khrushchev's agreement to withdraw the missiles was not simply a capitulation to superior American force," and one should instead consider the importance of the "conversation between Robert Kennedy and Soviet ambassador Dobrynin on Saturday night as evidence of a deal."⁶⁹ Divine and Chayes both raise some key questions that challenge the conventional thought

⁶⁶ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 23.

⁶⁷ Robert A. Divine, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 6.

⁶⁸ Michael O'Brien, *Rethinking Kennedy; An Interpretive Biography* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009), 175.

⁶⁹ Chayes, *International Crises and the Rule of Law; the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 98.

during the early phase of writing on the crisis. While neither author fully portrays the president in an entirely negative light, their statements about the handling of the crisis are blows to Kennedy's prestige and legacy. Regardless, by questioning the standard literature, both Divine and Chayes help to fracture the discussion and further explore the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Chayes' book additionally reinforces the importance of Robert Kennedy. As can be surmised by Chayes' earlier statement in the above paragraph, the Attorney General's meeting with Dobrynin was believed to be a critical development in the historiography of the crisis.

Kennedy's meeting with the Soviet ambassador raises an important question: why would the Attorney General be involved in such a high level diplomatic negotiation, well outside the purview of his job within the Justice Department? Addressing the role of Robert Kennedy was an important consideration if not particularly ground breaking; one need only consider *Thirteen Days* to understand his actions during the crisis despite the limitations of the text. Kennedy has been an influential person in President Kennedy's personal and political life, and the intrinsic trust between the two resulted in "nonsharables" with each other that excluded other members of the cabinet.⁷⁰ Regardless, Robert Kennedy's actions are important to the comprehension of the crisis and underscore Chayes' assertion that the president was not the only architect of the ultimate resolution.

Each book written during the early phase of writing on the Cuban Missile Crisis shared a crucial flaw: they lacked high level information. These omissions are not surprising simply because of their proximity to October 1962. They distort the crisis, which results in the overwhelming appreciation for the leadership of John F. Kennedy. Regardless, support for the president was not

⁷⁰ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 224.

uniform. R.J. Walton would argue a decade after the crisis that Kennedy was “irresponsible and reckless to a supreme degree,” however such arguments were generally the exception.⁷¹ Kennedy’s guidance certainly contributed to the resolution of the crisis, yet it was not entirely by his own efforts. Kennedy proved to be an effective leader through the crisis and his reluctance to use air strikes of nuclear weapons, despite the substantial pressure from the Joint Chiefs who described military intervention as “the only ones the Soviet Union would understand,” is a credit to his restraint and his resolve.⁷² The peaceful resolution is of great importance, yet the Cold War itself would endure for nearly thirty more years. It is, therefore, a stretch to describe the end of the crisis as a “success for the United States by almost any measure.”⁷³

The second period of study on the Cuban Missile Crisis had significant advantages over its forerunners. This generation of scholarly work on the crisis began following the Church Committee investigation and the revelations of CIA activities during the early Cold War. Raymond Garthoff, writing on the development of the study in 1989, stated “this past decade has seen the declassification and release of numerous documents related to the crisis” which served to advance the knowledge of the standoff.⁷⁴ Garthoff further contends that the knowledge available during this period was previously known “principally on the memoirs and reminiscences of a number of key participants,” allowing for greater validation and confirmation of claims made by former members of ExComm. This period did more than simply expand the study, it subjected key players of the crisis to a reevaluation based on the new evidence. At the forefront of this reevaluation was President Kennedy. As has been discussed, early writing on Kennedy had been overwhelmingly, albeit not

⁷¹ R.J. Walton, *Cold War and Counterrevolution* (New York: the Viking Press, 1972), 103.

⁷² Abram, *International Crises and the Rule of Law*, 90.

⁷³ Abram, *International Crises and the Rule of Law*, 1.

⁷⁴ Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 1.

exclusively, positive. It is in this period that his sterling reputation is questioned to a greater extent and the totality of his success re-examined. Furthermore, writers in this period are able to provide more information as to how the crisis improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which shall be discussed at greater length later.

The revisionist period is perhaps best demonstrated by Arthur Schlesinger's *Robert Kennedy and his Times*, a biography dedicated to the late Attorney General and U.S. Senator. Unlike *A Thousand Days*, Schlesinger is able to communicate, with much greater freedom, his insightful position within the Kennedy Administration. In *Robert Kennedy and his Times*, Schlesinger deconstructs the previous assertion he has made regarding the trade of Jupiter Missiles in Turkey. The book also delves into the ExComm discussion and the debate over the option of air strikes or a quarantine. Schlesinger, quoting Robert McNamara, states "Robert Kennedy's arguments 'did much to sway the president to the quarantine' a key decision during the crisis."⁷⁵ Another dimension of the crisis Schlesinger discusses are the compassion and moral concerns that plagued Robert Kennedy. The author notes that "the moral issue was paramount in his mind" implying that the Attorney General was, although not the first to suggest bombing Cuba was akin to Pearl Harbor, the ethical centre of ExComm and his restraint influenced the decision making of the president.⁸¹ Schlesinger's comments diversify the writing in *Robert Kennedy* from *A Thousand Days*. It is clear the author is a "Kennedy loyalist", however the gulf between the publishing of his two key books on Camelot demonstrates the transition between the early and revisionist periods. *Robert Kennedy* is a more complete picture of the crisis because it depicts the president as less decisive and more pensive, reflecting the great deal of stress that was pressed upon him.

⁷⁵ Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, 511.

⁸¹ Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, 508.

Kenneth Thompson's book *the Kennedy Presidency* is an astute account of various members of Kennedy's cabinet. Thompson argues that Kennedy's presidency was dominated by "civil rights, the economy and foreign policy" and he discusses these concepts with former cabinet members of the Administration.⁷⁶ Thompson adds to the discussion of the crisis by adding these voices and perspective, in addition to a number of other former ExComm and cabinet members, to the available historiography. It is Bundy's account that is most intriguing as he reveals the extent to which the president attempted to defuse the crisis and communicate to the Soviets through backchannels. Bundy states "John Scali, on Friday, passes a message that there are only two days left for a decision, and on Saturday Bobby Kennedy tells Dobrynin that we need a clear answer the next day."⁷⁷ The usage of backchannels serves to both buoy Kennedy's image as a statesman while also undercutting his image as a stoic leader who refused to back down to Soviet "aggression." Thompson's discussions with former members of ExComm enables insight into the actions of the president, as the void in the historiography of the crisis from his perspective can never be properly filled, from his closest advisors.

Raymond Garthoff's *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* continues to position Kennedy as a strong and central figure. Garthoff describes Kennedy in the crisis as a man with a firm resolve and with a singular vision: to ensure that "the Soviet missiles" were "removed."⁷⁸ The scope of Garthoff's writing extends beyond earlier accounts by addressing the Soviet outlook on the impending nuclear war. In addition to ensuring the removal of Soviet Missiles, "Kennedy... and by all indications Chairman Khrushchev... sensed... that no other objective can be of greater

⁷⁶ Kenneth Thompson, *the Kennedy Presidency* (New York: University Press of America, 1985), IX.

⁷⁷ Kenneth Thompson, *the Kennedy Presidency*, 212.

⁷⁸ Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 44.

importance than avoiding nuclear war.”⁷⁹ This statement indicates that the resolve to avoid a nuclear holocaust, previously attributed to Kennedy, was a mutual understanding by both leaders. Garthoff describes “a readiness to seek a compromise resolution of a crisis is, alone, no assurance agreement will be reached,” however, it is “probably a necessary condition.”⁸⁰ This statement implicitly states that Kennedy was not the only rational leader during the crisis. While no texts previously analysed have discussed Khrushchev as being a “mad-aggressor,” the other texts are overly enamoured by the heroic perception of President Kennedy. The importance of Garthoff’s work is that it highlights the Soviet leadership at the time of crisis, and the inherent dangers of nuclear war.

James Giglio offers a different appraisal of the crisis than Garthoff in his book *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (1991). Giglio provides a much more critical view of President Kennedy’s leadership and policy stating “the October crisis became Jack Kennedy’s greatest cold war victory, according to contemporary judgement.”⁸¹ Giglio can be identified as among the growing group of historians who had discovered Kennedy’s leadership during the crisis to be less formidable than previously described. Moreover, Giglio identifies that “fear, narrow-mindedness, and misunderstanding... affected both sides.”⁸² Giglio’s statements mark a dramatic departure from previous writing on the crisis. Not only does the author state his negative appraisal of Kennedy’s action, he is also critical. “Both groups (doves and hawks), however, supported the president in rejecting a diplomatic approach to the crisis... the administration could have presented its

⁷⁹ Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 156.

⁸⁰ Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 156.

⁸¹ Giglio, *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 189 (emphasis added).

⁸² Giglio, *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 196.

photographic evidence without a confrontation.”⁸³ Giglio’s remarks are significant. Previous authors had described Kennedy as reckless, yet the lack of available sources at the time prevented the argument from gaining traction. The new evidence following the release of declassified documents gave a great deal of credibility to this argument and cast doubts upon the legacy of President Kennedy.

James Blight and David Welch’s book *On the Brink* (1989) further discusses the impact of the crisis in the United States and Soviet Union but also on their respective leaders. *On the Brink* is an essential window into the Cuban Missile Crisis as it is composed of two conferences in which former members of ExComm attended, in addition to a number of Soviet representatives. The comments of men including Dean Rusk and McGeorge Bundy serve to deepen the comprehension of the crisis considerably because it assists historians in the effort to reconstruct the events of those thirteen days from an intimate perspective. This portrait allows the authors to provide greater insight into how the crisis affected Kennedy and Khrushchev. Blight and Welch state “he (Khrushchev) and Kennedy shared an awesome responsibility no two men had ever had to share before” which would have a considerable impression on both men. Furthermore, the authors suggest that Kennedy and Khrushchev provide the “textbook case” for “nuclear learning” by virtue of their commitment to limiting nuclear detonations after the crisis.⁸⁴ Blight and Welch further reconstructs the political fallout of pulling missiles from Turkey and Cuba. Despite the American and Soviet ownership of the missiles, their removal from Asia Minor and the Caribbean incensed the Turkish and Cuban governments who had “no intention of being treated as bargaining chips.”⁹¹ Despite their protests, the missiles were eventually removed which demonstrates an increased drive

⁸³ Giglio, *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 199.

⁸⁴ Blight and Welch, *On the Brink; Americans and Soviets Re-examine the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 313. ⁹¹ Blight and Welch, *On the Brink*, 309.

to pursue the greater good instead of political considerations which would arise in Europe and the Caribbean.

In Robert Smith Thompson's book *the Missiles of October* (1992), he resolves to discuss the true strength of Kennedy during the crisis. Thompson, like Giglio, addresses how the United States saw Kennedy at the time. He states "in newsrooms across the nation, the message rang clear: JFK was hanging tough."⁸⁵ This image of Kennedy was pervasive notwithstanding its inaccuracy. Thompson, however, is able to demonstrate that Kennedy's toughness was, to a degree, a façade. Thompson states that ExComm was able to pressure Kennedy, particularly after the downing of the U2 on October 27, to the point where he felt "boxed in."⁸⁶ Moreover, in his negotiations with the Soviets, "Kennedy... could only move sideways: he had to give the public impression he had won a great victory, but agree in the private to *Khrushchev's* demands."⁸⁷ Thompson's suggestion that Kennedy bowed to the demands of Khrushchev is essentially a reversal of the traditional view of the Cuban Missile Crisis. A submissive Kennedy places his legacy in at a significant disadvantage. Khrushchev exploited Kennedy's position by demanding the removal of the missiles in Turkey, while remaining malleable enough to acquiesce to the secrecy of the agreement. Thompson's argument suggests that Kennedy dispatching his brother acknowledged his poor position and the Attorney General's statements to Dobrynin that the president would "examine" the Turkish issue "favourably" indirectly gave Khrushchev the key to end the crisis.⁸⁸ Thompson's statements is a fundamental shift from early scholarship on the crisis. The text indicates that ending

⁸⁵ Robert Smith Thompson, *the Missiles of October* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 305.

⁸⁶ Thompson, *the Missiles of October*, 316.

⁸⁷ Thompson, *the Missiles of October*, 330 (emphasis added).

⁸⁸ Thompson, *the Missiles of October*, 329.⁹⁶
Thompson, *the Missiles of October*, 335.

of the Cuban Missile Crisis can be attributed to Khrushchev's willingness to trust the president with the removal of the Jupiter missiles, despite his inability to publically acknowledge the concession. Thompson succinctly describes the situation: "Khrushchev beat Kennedy in Vienna, and again in Cuba."⁹⁶ *The Missiles of October* is representative of a significant departure on the early writings of the crisis. While Kennedy had been criticized for his aggression, the resolution of the crisis was often seen as his victory. By re-examining the position of the United States, Thompson makes a strong case Khrushchev's victory in the standoff. Thompson, however, should recognize that Khrushchev would not only remove the missiles, but also the IL-28 bombers, while also damaging the prestige of the Chairman in the contemporary world. The effects on the crisis were much more damaging to the Soviet leader than the American, regardless of the nature of the deal, and it Khrushchev's claim of victory fell on deaf ears in the Soviet Union. While his actions during the crisis were indeed crucial towards ensuring a peaceful resolution, by very few metrics could he be considered the victor.

The writings of Schlesinger, Kenneth Thompson, Garthoff, Giglio and Robert Thompson effectively demonstrated the growth of the historiography of the Cuban Missile Crisis in particular and Kennedy's presidency in general. The release of declassified documents changed the study of the standoff as many authors sought to re-examine the president's role and his statesmanship. Furthermore, participants in the crisis, such as Rusk, Bundy or McNamara, were more freely able to discuss the standoff. Many authors have placed Kennedy in a position of weakness; while to a degree this is accurate, it should be noted that the Soviets were keenly aware of their poor strategic location and were fearful of a potential alternative to the democratic Kennedy: namely, Richard

Milhoux Nixon.⁸⁹ That suggests the Soviets knew a more progressive president, particularly one without the credentials of an ardent anti-Communist, was better for their fortunes. Perhaps Kennedy's leadership does not validate the strength and coolness early work on the crisis suggests, but the strength of the United States, both geographically and in terms of nuclear arsenal, was a grave concern to the Soviets. It can be argued that the resolution to the crisis was more a stalemate than a victory; however, it is noted that Kennedy certainly enjoyed the spoils of victory, particularly in the media where he was "allowing journalists to draw comparisons with Adlai Stevenson," who was described in the media as too eager to appease the Soviets.⁹⁰ The declassified documents added a considerable depth to the study of the crisis.

The contemporary period of scholarship on the Cuban Missile Crisis began the year following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992. The fall of the USSR gave academics unprecedented access to previously classified Soviet material, allowing for a thorough and complete examination of two of the main participants in the crisis. Additionally, scholars have continued to delve further into the role of Fidel Castro and the Cuban government during the standoff which added immeasurably to the comprehension of Soviet-Cuban relations immediately following the conclusion. Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali's landmark 1998 contribution *One Hell of a Gamble* effectively pulls together the Cuban, American and Soviet perspectives of the crisis to demonstrate the relationship that existed between all three parties. *One Hell of a Gamble* was revolutionary since it was published and its inclusion of the American, Soviet and Cuban position broke new ground in the literature of the missile crisis. Their book provides the

⁸⁹ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 340.

⁹⁰ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 577.

basis for an examination of divergent and similar arguments amongst the historians in the contemporary era of study.

One Hell of a Gamble is an exceptional survey of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Fursenko and Naftali deconstruct the crisis into tangible components that emphasise the importance of Kennedy, Khrushchev and Castro thereby eschewing the traditional Kennedy-Khrushchev narrative. The text is well supported by numerous key sources, including contemporary communiques between government officials, personal writings and documents, in addition to the ExComm recordings. The narrative of the book begins in 1958 and continues to Khrushchev's removal from office in 1964. *One Hell of a Gamble* seamlessly weaves together the lives of Castro, Kennedy and Khrushchev as their actions lead directly to the Cuban Missile Crisis. The authors also give a great deal more consideration to the month immediately following October 28th. Fursenko and Naftali reveal that while the resolution froze the immediate risk of nuclear war, numerous issues arose as the missiles were being removed. The authors highlight that Castro simply "did not want to lose these weapons," remarking that Khrushchev "blamed Castro for having forced him to make a deal."⁹¹ Sheldon Stern furthers Fursenko and Naftali by remarking on how Castro's stubbornness nearly reignited the crisis. Stern states that "the understanding between the Kremlin and the White House began to fray... largely because of resistance from Castro" which reinforces the continued importance of the Cuban government, largely ignored by earlier authors.⁹² The importance of *One Hell of a Gamble* with regard to Kennedy's policy following the missile crisis is that the book reinforces the fear and genuine desperation Kennedy felt in his attempt to avoid a nuclear war.

⁹¹ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 312-314.

⁹² Sheldon M. Stern, *the Week the World Stood Still: Inside the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 205.

Fursenko and Naftali communicate how deeply the crisis worried the president and Premier Khrushchev, prompting their efforts toward détente in 1963.

In *Rethinking Camelot*, the prolific linguist and scholar Noam Chomsky seeks to deconstruct the image of President Kennedy's foreign policy and reveal the truly sinister covert actions. Chomsky focuses predominantly on how Kennedy's decisions lead to increased US deployment in Vietnam, however he suggests that after the Bay of Pigs the president engaged in a "terrorist war."⁹³ His critique of Kennedy has been established in earlier writings in which he argues Kennedy's management of the crisis was a "needless humiliation of Khrushchev."⁹⁴ Chomsky rejects the resolution of the crisis and argues simply that it was a fabrication. The author states "there was no such commitment" to invade Cuba in "public or private," inferring that Kennedy saw no reason to discontinue the subversion of Castro's regime.⁹⁵ Chomsky asserts that covert operations continued until they were "terminated in April 1964 by LBJ," an indictment of Kennedy's character and honesty in international agreements.⁹⁶ Chomsky raises some crucial questions that must be asked of the president, however he is quick to charge Kennedy with "terrorism." The author seems to ignore the evidence, raised by Giglio two years prior to *Rethinking Camelot*, that points towards some consideration of "resuming relations with Cuba in 1963."⁹⁷ Kennedy was obviously needlessly aggressive in Cuba, however to suggest he did not consider any diplomatic overtures is a falsification. Mark White's book *the Cuban Missile Crisis* further identifies another diplomatic overture between the Kennedy Administration and Castro's

⁹³ Noam Chomsky, *Rethinking Camelot; JFK, the Vietnam War, and US Political Culture* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993), 145.

⁹⁴ Noam Chomsky, *the Chomsky Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 210.

⁹⁵ Chomsky, *Rethinking Camelot*, 145.

⁹⁶ Chomsky, *Rethinking Camelot*, 145.

⁹⁷ Giglio, *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 219.

regime. White highlights the meeting between Che Guevara and Richard Goodwin in Montevideo to demonstrate that the relations between the two countries was not entirely confrontational.⁹⁸

Seymour Hersh, like Chomsky, is skeptical of Kennedy's legacy. In his scathing exposé *The Dark Side of Camelot*, the veteran journalist challenges the pro-Kennedy narrative. Hersh's book criticizes Kennedy's governance and implies his foolish choice to "believe Khrushchev's assurances (not to place missile in Cuba) over his own intelligence services."⁹⁹ Hersh suggests that the president's actions prior to the crisis were irresponsible, which he furthers by his commenting at length on Kennedy's various indiscretions. Hersh further states that "at a moment of high risk, the president turned to Bobby Kennedy, his protector, to bail him out."¹⁰⁰ Hersh's criticism undermines the leadership qualities that scholarship on the crisis has generally upheld. The author also furthers the suggestion that the Cuban Missile Crisis was unnecessary, particularly the resolution. Arguing that JFK humiliated Khrushchev and determined, prior to his meeting with Gromyko on October 18th, two days after JFK was informed of the missiles in Cuba, that "there would be no diplomacy but instead a blockade and an ultimatum about what would happen if the Soviets defied it."¹⁰¹ These statements suggest that JFK was much more of a hawk than authors such as Schlesinger or Abel. Hersh's arguments challenge the actions of Kennedy during the crisis. The portrait that Hersh has constructed is a hawk, yet considering the president did not initiate any military action under immense pressure, particularly after a U2 pilot was shot down over Cuba, provides a stark contradiction to that image. The author does, however raise some valid concerns about Kennedy, notably his struggles with the military leadership. Hersh states "the Kennedy's...

⁹⁸ Mark J. White, *the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 52-53.

⁹⁹ Seymour Hersh, *the Dark Side of Camelot* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), 344.

¹⁰⁰ Hersh, *the Dark Side of Camelot*, 345.

¹⁰¹ Hersh, *the Dark Side of Camelot*, 353-354.

could not turn to the government they controlled to extricate themselves from disaster,” a concern reflected in Bobby Kennedy’s anxiety while he met with Dobrynin.¹⁰² David Talbot, in his book *Brothers; the Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (2008), further elaborates on Hersh’s argument. Talbot remarks “Nikita Khrushchev offered a startling account of RFK’s emotional conversations with Dobrynin, in which Kennedy stressed how fragile his brother’s rule was becoming as the crisis dragged on.”¹⁰³ Talbot’s comments serve to reinforce Hersh’s criticism of Kennedy’s lack of control on the military. While merit is lacking in some of Hersh’s arguments, his portrait of Kennedy humanizes the president by reconstructing his mistakes and moments of weakness.

John Lewis Gaddis, a leading Cold War historian, seeks to reinforce Kennedy’s legacy as a statesman in *We Now Know*. Gaddis’ discussion of the Cuban Missile Crisis surveys the Kennedy’s Administration’s Cuban policy and Soviet-Cuban relations precipitating the conflict. Gaddis fuses a wide range of sources, notably Soviet-Cuban communications supplemented by numerous American official documents and a wealth of secondary texts. The conclusion Gaddis draws is a measured appraisal of the crisis that demonstrates Kennedy’s willingness and intent to engage in diplomatic options throughout the thirteen day ordeal. Gaddis writes “we are only now coming to understand the role he (Kennedy) played in it. Far from neglecting the dangers of nuclear war, he had a keen sense of what they were. Far from opposing a compromise, he pushed for one more strongly than anyone else in the administration.”¹⁰⁴ Gaddis’ description of Kennedy is a very positive portrait of the president but the praise is hyperbolic. The president resisted the call for military action, however it is clear his immediate response was an air strike. The president’s stance would change, but that was largely because Robert Kennedy’s influence, a slight contradiction to

¹⁰² Hersh, *the Dark Side of Camelot*, 366.

¹⁰³ David Talbot, *Brothers*, 170-171.

¹⁰⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 272.

Gaddis' comments. The author's comments on Kennedy's awareness of nuclear war, however, is very easily substantiated by the president's own actions, particularly after the resolution to the crisis.

Gaddis also adds some considerable drama to the crisis by discussing the possibilities of an inadvertent nuclear exchange. The author describes the confusion experienced by the American nuclear technicians who "had to coordinate their procedures" which they managed "largely by improvisation; but in that highly charged atmosphere, there were numerous 'close calls' as unexpected results created... the impression that a Soviet attack was underway."¹⁰⁵ The implications of misreading a Soviet strike would have had dire consequences which demonstrates the hazards of large stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Gaddis' book provides new insight into the Cuban Missile Crisis by drawing attention away from Washington and Moscow and focusing not on those who ostensibly make the decision to initiate a nuclear war, but those who would carry out the orders. Khrushchev, contrary to Kennedy, anticipated the possibility of an accidental strike and ensured nuclear weapons were not to be fired without his explicit order. Khrushchev's decision to reign in a nuclear exchange reversed his earlier order that would allow the firing of nuclear weapons if war had begun and Moscow could not be reached.¹⁰⁶ Gaddis' inclusion of the proximity to accidental missile launches serves to reinforce the dangers of the confrontation from a unique perspective.

Robert Dallek's *An Unfinished Life* has become an authoritative biography of John Kennedy. The text provides a sweeping account of the president from his youth, including his bouts with sickness, to his untimely death in 1963. Dallek's discussion on the Cuban Missile Crisis

¹⁰⁵ Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 274.

¹⁰⁶ Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 276.

uses an exceptional base of primary and secondary sources to discuss the standoff and the ensuing political difficulties that few authors tend to engage with. Dallek states Kennedy remained sensitive to the danger and “could not assume that the crisis was concluded.”¹⁰⁷ Kennedy evidentially had a firm grasp on the difficult political situation the resolution created and knew that the deal was not immune to decay. Dallek, like Gaddis, highlights the immense pressure the president was under, a somewhat derivative conclusion to make but well substantiated by quotations from the President, remarking on the overzealous military leadership.¹⁰⁸ What Dallek does contribute to the study of the crisis is his measured appraisal of Kennedy’s role in bringing about the standoff. The author is conscientious that the president’s aggression in the Caribbean could not be indefinitely tolerated by the Soviet Union, but Khrushchev’s decision was not exclusively a response to these provocations. Noting Khrushchev likely acted “more from instinct than calculation” and had been described “in the view of two close aides, was a ‘reckless’ gambler or ‘hothead’ who made a big bet in hopes of getting a huge payoff.”¹⁰⁹ Dallek’s comments highlight the nuanced diplomatic issues that preceded the Cuban Missile Crisis and reinforces that such conflicts are seldom the result of one individual or government.

Furthering Gaddis’ inclusion of differing perspectives during the crisis, L.V. Scott’s *Macmillan, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis* adds another dimension: the British. Scott broadens the Kennedy-Khrushchev-Castro narrative to include the inclusion of the British government in the ExComm deliberations. Scott is careful to note that while no member of the British government officially sat in on any meetings, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan

¹⁰⁷ Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 571.

¹⁰⁸ Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 572-573.

¹⁰⁹ Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 573.

and Ambassador to the United States David Ormsby-Gore communicated with the president as he weighed his options while the crisis developed. The author contends that “Macmillan and Ormsby-Gore became de facto members of Kennedy’s Executive Committee,” which indicates a considerable amount of deference vested in the British government.¹¹⁰ There is some merit to Scott’s argument, particularly when one considers Macmillan’s partnership with Kennedy after the crisis, which culminated in the Test Ban. Scott embellishes the importance of the British government’s official influence on the matter as the president’s actions made it clear he would not defer to any other power. Fursenko and Naftali state he only offered the British government “a partial explanation for why he chose the blockade,” considerably less information than the members of ExComm who did participate in the deliberations.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Kennedy’s unilateral pursuit of a solution to the crisis undermined the American commitment to NATO in the eyes of French President Charles de Gaulle and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer demonstrating the political fallout of his actions during the crisis.¹¹²

Scott’s argument for unofficial influence on Kennedy is much more readily substantiated. The Ormsby-Gore’s and Kennedy’s had had close relations since Joseph P. Kennedy was ambassador to the United Kingdom prior to the Second World War and had continued unperturbed. The relationship was cemented when Kathleen Kennedy became Godmother to Ormsby-Gore’s eldest child and the friendship would permit Jack Kennedy to “let down his hair” on his political troubles.¹¹³ Kennedy’s relationship with Ormsby-Gore would suggest that he valued the ambassador’s opinions on world affairs and may have helped influence his thinking during the

¹¹⁰ L.V. Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 1999), 184.

¹¹¹ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 236.

¹¹² Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 610-611.

¹¹³ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 235-236.

standoff. While it is perhaps possible to suggest Ormsby-Gore was a de facto member of ExComm, Macmillan's relationship with the president was not as cordial as his ambassadors'.

Sheldon Stern in his book *The Week the Earth Stood Still* seeks to reinforce the Kennedy legacy. Stern constructs the image of the president as a wise statesman who handled the crisis exceptionally well.¹¹⁴ Stern establishes that Kennedy was committed to avoiding war and it is crucial to view the president in this light. It is well known that there was a considerable nuclear imbalance which largely favoured the United States over the Soviet Union, yet despite feeling 'boxed in' as one author noted earlier, Kennedy avoided using these weapons.¹¹⁵ Stern states "the ExComm tapes prove conclusively that John Kennedy played a decisive role in preventing the world from slipping into the nuclear abyss," reflecting the importance of his coolness and leadership.¹¹⁶ Stern suggests it is even more noteworthy that the president was able to avoid using his arsenal while still successfully constructing a façade of a clear, one-sided victory. The author effectively portrays Kennedy as a skilled statesman because he was able to find a solution to the crisis that was in keeping with American interests but his discussion of the president extends beyond his political abilities. Stern's comments show considerable admiration for Kennedy, in particular his commitment to avoiding nuclear war.

Len Scott's *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Threat of Nuclear War* reinforces some critical points in Blight's *On the Brink*. Discussing the obvious inherent dangers of nuclear war furthers the authors' resolve of the need to dispose of nuclear weapons. Scott, referencing President Kennedy, writes "we must somehow find a means to get rid of nuclear weapons" to underscore his

¹¹⁴ Stern, *the Week the Earth Stood Still: Inside the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 216-217.

¹¹⁵ Don Munton and David A. Welch, *the Cuban Missile Crisis: a Concise History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33.

¹¹⁶ Stern, *the Week the Earth Stood Still*, 5.

critique of maintaining weapons of such potency.¹¹⁷ Yet Scott remains unconvinced that the Cuban Missile Crisis had an important or enduring impact. Scott recognizes that the president did not actively pursue arms reduction, despite his prior assertions of the need to do so. Scott does however note that the Test Ban was an “important arms control measure” that contributes to a more secure world. Regardless, the author states “the lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis were about avoiding crises... some lessons were not learned very well” serving as a critique of both the resolution to the crisis but the political aftermath of the dramatic thirteen days.¹¹⁸ Scott’s suggestion that crisis avoidance was not learned from the standoff ignores the complete lack of similar occurrences since October 1962. Both Khrushchev and Kennedy immediately sought to improve relations and prevent the potential miscommunication that would have resulted in a nuclear exchange. Within a year, a hot line had been installed that would allow communication between Washington and Moscow instantaneously, thus greatly reducing the potential for missed queues and provocations to result in nuclear war.¹¹⁹ The resolution to the crisis did not immediately resolve all instances on international trouble, but as it has remained a fixture on the discussion of avoiding nuclear war reinforces its enduring importance.

The contemporary period of writing on the crisis is the largest in scope but by no means complete. The complexities of the Cuban Missile Crisis continue to prevent scholarship from reaching firm conclusions on the actions of Kennedy, Khrushchev, Castro or ExComm, but the greater availability of research material broadens the understanding of the standoff. The contemporary period produced numerous books that diverge from the traditional U.S.-USSR

¹¹⁷ Len Scott, *the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Threat of Nuclear War* (London: Bloomsbury Academics, 2007), 145.

¹¹⁸ Len Scott, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Threat of Nuclear War*, 147.

¹¹⁹ Jim Wilson, *Britain on the Brink*, 178.

interpretation and demonstrates the importance of Cuba, and to a lesser degree Britain, during the crisis. Involving the governments of Havana and London ensures the Cuban Missile Crisis is viewed in its proper context; as a significant moment internationally in the annals of the nuclear age and the possibility of complete annihilation. The contemporary period has benefitted from the conclusion of the Cold War and the amount of time that has passed since the Crisis erupted. The availability of Soviet material and the increasing contribution from surviving ExComm members was of continuous benefit. Each author writing in the contemporary period has had much greater access to these materials and have naturally offered a more enhanced portrait of October 1962. To continue broadening the study and its aftermath, scholars could study how the average American citizen interpreted the crisis or U.S.-Soviet relations in the following year. Further study of Khrushchev could unearth to what extent the resolution to the crisis contributed to the Sino-Soviet split and the internal pressure that would expand rapidly in early 1963. The potential yields are vast as there are numerous questions that could be asked, including: did the crisis change the public perception of nuclear weapons? What did the average person think of Khrushchev and Castro? Did the public suggest the Test Ban was dangerous or wise governance? These considerations can reconstruct the panic and worries that has resonated more than fifty years after the crisis ended.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was a watershed moment in the Cold War. The ending of the crisis was of particular significance to the Kennedy Administration because it gave the president greater license to pursue his foreign policy agenda. As the world has not since been closer to the nuclear threshold than in October 1962, it marks the easing of tensions and allowed for some diplomatic overtures between the capitalist and communist worlds. The crisis was a sobering reminder of the dangers of nuclear war and weaponry, but it has also been a study of the restraint exercised by two of the most powerful men in the world. The ability of both leaders to pursue a

diplomatic solution to the crisis was a demonstration that the two governments could peacefully coexist and work together when necessary; a stark contrast to the earlier period of the Cold War. As contemporary scholars have noted, albeit in limited terms, this understanding paved the way for improved diplomatic ties. Furthermore, the crisis served to be the climactic centre of the Cold War. Tensions between the Soviets and Americans would continue to fluctuate, however nuclear war would never loom as it did in October 1962. Each generation of study has contributed greatly to the modern comprehension of the crisis by focusing on differing and new evidence supporting a wide range of conclusions. Despite the palpable fear, intense pressure and the real concern over nuclear war, President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev both ensured the world would not descend into a catastrophic nuclear war.

The study of the historiography is a valuable resource for determining the effects of the Cuban Missile Crisis on American policy in Cuba and the Soviet Union. Each author effectively conveys the image of supreme peril and pressure that demonstrably changed their participants. The writing on the crisis indicates that Kennedy and Khrushchev both experienced the trauma of nearing nuclear war despite their intentions to avoid such a confrontation. The year following the crisis resulted in considerable progress in East-West relations and the crisis led to budding détente between the two powers. Furthermore, the crisis also demanded a reappraisal of American operations in Cuba. The non-invasion pledge limited Kennedy's ability to intervene without a significant international backlash and the potential for nuclear war. While covert subversion remained an option, the actions of the Kennedy Administration seem to reflect a growing tolerance of communism in the Caribbean. The antagonism between Cuba and the United States would continue, but as I shall discuss in chapter III, the pursuit of Castro had passed its zenith.

Chapter III: US Policy in Cuba

The resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis relaxed international tensions in both the public and political spheres, yet the Kennedy Administration faced considerable challenges in the Caribbean. The immediate risk of nuclear war was temporarily shelved and for most people, life continued on. For President Kennedy however, life had been permanently altered. The brush with nuclear Armageddon was a sobering experience. While Kennedy would use his fear of nuclear war to fuel a diplomatic rapprochement with the Soviet Union, his initial policy towards Cuba showed an unimaginative and stale reappraisal. Kennedy viewed the crisis as largely a conflict between the Soviets and the United States; with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the role of Operation Mongoose was a key factor in precipitating the crisis.¹²⁰ The public promise not to invade the island limited some of the president's military options, yet plotting subversive activities in Cuba continued largely unabated. The president was keenly aware that overt action in Cuba could result in a nuclear war, which necessitated the continuation of clandestine sabotage operations. Overflights and exile raids would continue to plague relations between the two nations and distrust was deeply rooted between both governments.

As the covert operations continued however, the culmination of numerous reports from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Intelligence and the Department of State demonstrated the flaws of the program. The failure of subversion coalesced and forced the president to become more flexible towards his choices in Cuba. While Kennedy would never overtly terminate action against the Castro regime, he developed a more nuanced policy that began to make tepid moves towards a possible rapprochement with communist Cuba. Kennedy, considering the dangers of the crisis and

¹²⁰ Alice L. George, *Awaiting Armageddon; How American's Faced the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 165.

the failed destabilisation in Cuba, had the flexibility to pursue other options that reflected his maturity as a president and statesman. Some notable accomplishments in U.S.-Cuba relations occurred during Kennedy's remaining year in office that demonstrate a gradual shift in his Cuban agenda and the ability to seriously consider diplomatic improvements with Castro. Kennedy's willingness to pursue peace with Cuba marked a dramatic shift on previously hostile policy in Cuba, a relic of the Eisenhower Administration. This chapter will investigate United States policy in Cuba following the crisis, and demonstrate the president's tepid overtures to Havana. Gradually, Kennedy's decisions and statements reduced his flexibility on the Cuban issue. Initiated by the non-invasion pledge, U.S. action in Cuba grew increasingly restrained until the president was forced to cultivate other options. Kennedy's fear of nuclear war, nearly realized in October 1962, genuinely influenced his actions, however they were not the only factor that prompted the change in U.S.-Cuba relations. This chapter will chronologically identify these factors and indicate their impact on U.S. policy.

The Cuban Missile Crisis had a profound impact on President Kennedy. Kennedy's genuine concern over the power of nuclear weapons and the dangers of an accidental nuclear war eventually resulted in the alteration of thinking on U.S. policy in Cuba. Thomas Reeves describes the president's character after the missile crisis, praising his growth, maturity and dedication to peace. Reeves states Kennedy began to use his role for more than "the pursuit of power of pleasure that had shaped his career. Jack's political and behavioural instincts were contained by a larger moral purpose."¹²¹ Reeves' comments infer that the stresses and realities of the nuclear age were fueling the president's desire to make the world a safer place. Regardless, Kennedy, despite the

¹²¹ Thomas Reeves, *A Question of Character*, 392.

trauma of the standoff, was slow to change his Cuban policy. Theodore Sorenson wrote later that “the fate of Cuba, however, was the least of the consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis,” a statement that was easily reflected in American policy immediate after the standoff.¹²² The October 28 agreement completely ignored Cuban sovereignty, creating another significant impediment to ending the confrontation. The crisis, as Schlesinger stated, “finished Mongoose,” perhaps the only significant early change in U.S.-Cuban policy until the release of the Bay of Pigs prisoners.¹²³ Despite the president’s relative inaction towards the captives, the Attorney General would fight relentlessly to make an exchange with Castro. Robert Kennedy’s tireless devotion and dogged determination effectively demonstrated the ability to work with the communist government of Cuba. The importance of this lesson would take some time to fully develop in Washington, however Robert Kennedy’s work would lead to some rehabilitation in the otherwise toxic relationship between both nations, albeit doing little to alleviate Kennedy’s “hatred” of Castro.¹²⁴ Ironically, Robert Kennedy would continue to pursue the overthrow of Castro despite his ability to work with the Cuban government. The example set by the Attorney General would later serve to reinforce the president’s nuanced policy in Cuba, however the immediate relations between the communists and the U.S. was increasingly strained following the conclusion of the crisis by Fidel Castro.

Although the October 28 resolution relaxed international tensions in the Caribbean, the agreement was not universally hailed as a success. Castro was deeply infuriated by the resolution

¹²² Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), 724.

¹²³ Arthur Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and his Times*, 533.

¹²⁴ Thomas Reeves, *A Question of Character*, 393.

to the crisis and his frustration had an immediate negative impact on a peaceful conclusion. This was most evident in the Cuban leader's unravelling relationship with the Soviet Union. Nikita Khrushchev later remarked in his memoirs "our relations with Cuba, on the other hand, took a turn for the worse. Castro even stopped receiving our ambassador. It seemed that by removing our missiles we had suffered a moral defeat in the eyes of the Cubans."¹²⁵ Adlai Stevenson, U.S. Ambassador at the UN, confirmed Castro's rage to Dean Rusk based on information he obtained in New York. Castro was "in [an] impossible and intractable mood. He was extremely bitter at the Soviets, particularly because Khrushchev had not consulted him before despatching his letter to [the] president Sunday morning," complicating the matter of verifying the removal of the missiles in Cuba.¹²⁶ Stevenson further reported that Castro "made it clear he would not permit even inspection after of what is left behind even after the sites dismantled and evacuated," reinforcing Cuban anger and betrayal at Khrushchev's actions and bitterness towards the deal. Further reports from the CIA indicated the tensions were simply simmering beneath the surface, a sobering reminder that the danger had not concluded so easily. The CIA acknowledged, "Soviet leaders are showing concern that Castro's attempts to block an agreement could revive the danger of U.S. military action and thwart Soviet efforts to salvage the USSR's position in Cuba," confirming Stevenson's report from the UN.¹²⁷ The intensifying frustrations of Castro nearly forced the U.S.

¹²⁵ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 500.

¹²⁶ "Summary of U Thant's Preliminary Report on his Visit to Cuba," Document 475 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d475.pdf>

¹²⁷ "Memorandum Prepared for the NSC Executive Committee," Document 476 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus196163v10-12mSupp/pdf/d476.pdf>

and Soviets back into the fray, however Khrushchev's acknowledgement of the issue forced him to dispatch his ambassador to reassure the Cuban satellite.¹²⁸

The Cuban refusal to allow UN confirmation was an irritation for President Kennedy. Despite his best efforts during the crisis to ensure a peaceful resolution, Fidel Castro continued to frustrate him. Although Kennedy had pledged not to invade Cuba, his direction to General Earle Wheeler indicate that the president wanted "forces of such size that an operation against Cuba can be executed swiftly" and this issue was "a matter of prestige" suggest an invasion was not entirely out of consideration.¹²⁹ The following day, President Kennedy's list of objectionable weapons the USSR could supply Cuba was sent by Stevenson to the Soviets and surprisingly included the IL28 bomber. The president tightened his requirements for a successful conclusion to the crisis to now include the removal of the bombers. Offensive aircraft had not been identified in the initial agreement, however the president had previously asserted that the IL-28 bomber was "unacceptable military assistance to Cuba."¹³⁰ The inclusion of the IL-28 irritated Khrushchev, who indicated it had complicated the situation. Kennedy, keen to ensure the deal remained in place, reinforced his consistency by personally stating "at the time I stated the United States would act 'if Cuba should possess a capacity to carry out offensive action against the United States'."¹³¹ This addition to the deal reflected Kennedy's distrust of the Cubans and his determination to completely

¹²⁸ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 289.

¹²⁹ "Notes from Transcripts of JCS Meetings," Document 477 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d477.pdf>

¹³⁰ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 298.

¹³¹ "Draft Letter from Kennedy to Khrushchev," Document 495 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d495.pdf>

remove the nuclear threat on the island and it served to further impede the true resolution to the crisis.

Kennedy maintained pressure on the Soviets to remove the bombers and eventually Khrushchev relented. The chairman, contrary to his November 5 promise to Castro to keep the bombers in Cuba, announced on November 20 that the IL-28 bombers would be removed, prompting Kennedy's order to end the quarantine.¹³² The removal of the bombers in addition to the missiles ended the hostilities that had nearly been forced back into the open. Castro's difficulty would fortunately not derail the resolution to the missile crisis. To ensure proper verification, the Soviet ships removed the "tarpaulins covering the weapons on the ships returning to the Soviet Union, thereby making it a simple matter for American U-2 planes to photograph the missiles."¹³³ Although Castro's objections had been circumvented the humiliation of the deal would permanently sour his opinion of the Soviet Union and he grew embittered with Soviet leadership.¹³⁴ Khrushchev would attempt to rehabilitate relations in 1963, yet the mercurial Castro would soon be considering rapprochement with his revolutions greatest threat. Such considerations would take time to bear fruit, yet relations with the Soviets would continue regardless of Khrushchev's failure to initiate nuclear war.

As the removal of the bombers was being debated and Castro's frustrations mitigated, the Kennedy Administration was re-evaluating Cuban policy. During the negotiations, American surveillance of Cuba continued without reservation, much to the chagrin of Castro.¹³⁵ John McCone, remarking on the developments in his personal memoirs, crystallized the main concern

¹³² Mark J. White, *the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 232.

¹³³ White, *the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 232.

¹³⁴ Lucia De Toledo, *the Story of Che Guevera* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2010), 279.

¹³⁵ Sheldon M. Stern, *Averting the Final Failure; JFK and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2003), 408.

in American opinion of a communist satellite in the Caribbean. McCone worried that “Cuba would evolve as a strong Castro-Soviet base for the conduct of clandestine insurgent operations against all of Central America,” leading to the establishment of more communist governments within the Western Hemisphere.¹³⁶ Although fear of communism had permeated American culture, communism was reviled in parts of Latin America. McCone further states that Latin countries were “deeply concerned” about the spread of communism in a memo to McGeorge Bundy, however guerilla activity continued in many Latin American countries- Bolivia, where Che Guevera would be murdered, provides one notable example.¹³⁷ The Cuban governments desire to enforce their sovereignty was confirmed by Castro’s declaration that all U.S. espionage planes would be shot down. Given Castro’s reluctance to allow appropriate surveillance to ensure the missiles had been removed, the Cuban government’s position ostensibly forced the United States into a defensive posture looking to deter the re-ignition of the conflict. In a U.S. memo regarding Cuban contingencies if the IL-28s were not removed drafted on November 20, 1962, official policy dictated that “since the United States must continue surveillance, there is serious possibility of an incident against which the United States is forced to take retaliatory measures.”¹³⁸ The tensions between the two nations remained high and the American intention to contain the spread of communism in the Western hemisphere remained a focal point of the administration.

¹³⁶ “Memorandum for the Record,” Document 513 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d513.pdf>

¹³⁷ “Memorandum from Harlan Cleveland to Dean Rusk and George Ball,” Document 522 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d552.pdf>

¹³⁸ “Cuba Contingency Plan,” Document 544 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d544.pdf>

Critics of President Kennedy, such as Seymour Hersh or Tim Weiner, have argued that his insistence the IL-28 bombers must be removed demonstrates his aggression and lack of gratitude towards Khrushchev. The chairman's willingness to resolve the missile crisis in a deal that considerably damaged his prestige and prospects in the Caribbean surely would have warranted some flexibility from his American counterpart. However, the president's actions were not dictated by his desire to humiliate his Soviet counterpart. On the contrary, the president recognized on-site inspection in Cuba had been blocked by Castro and he would need greater assurance the nuclear threat had been mitigated. Kennedy was simply attempting to placate the hawks in his administration that "would have speedily invaded Cuba."¹³⁹ The pressure from the Pentagon that had so concerned the president had not simply abated on October 28. The JCS, dismayed by the resolution, continued to advocate a forced change of leadership in Cuba while the opportunity remained available.¹⁴⁰ The president effectively managed the demands of his generals and continued to push for an effective resolution.

The removal of the bombers allowed Kennedy to turn more attention to Cuba. As the crisis had concluded, an important overture to the Castro government continued under the control of the Attorney General. Robert Kennedy worked to find a way to ensure the release of the prisoners captured at the Bay of Pigs. In a matter of "a few weeks," Kennedy had "staged a magnificent and improbable rescue" of the guerillas "still held in Castro's prisons."¹⁴¹ The Attorney General once again engaged in backchannel methods to accomplish the monumental task. To make a deal with

¹³⁹ Reeves, *A Question of Character*, 392.

¹⁴⁰ Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 91.

¹⁴¹ Evan White, *Robert Kennedy*, 233.

Castro, Robert Kennedy was encouraged to contact the lawyer James Donovan. Donovan earned his renown from his successful negotiation with the Soviet Union that assured the release of Francis Gary Powers, a U-2 pilot shot down over the USSR during Eisenhower's presidency.¹⁴² Donovan earned Kennedy's trust, and he immediately departed for Havana to engage in negotiations with Castro, which occurred just prior to the missile crisis. Castro had demanded drugs and medicine in recompense for the prisoners, a challenge Kennedy met head on and vowed to solve "by Christmas" of 1962. Schlesinger describes such an onerous task as "a classic Robert Kennedy operation," to which he was able to achieve despite significant odds.¹⁴³ The exchange would be the first cordial agreement between the two nations since Batista's dictatorship.

The release of prisoners was spearheaded by the Attorney General, however the personal transition was more notable in the president. Despite Jack Kennedy's promise upon meeting the prisoners at the Orange Bowl in Florida that their flag would "fly in a free Havana," a comment that required a clarification mere days later, his hostility towards Cuba gradually became lukewarm.¹⁴⁴ Fursenko and Naftali identify that Kennedy made such inflammatory statements simply for the double purpose of "blowing off steam" and to appease the Joint Chiefs, all while avoiding being seen as going "soft on Castro."¹⁴⁵ Kennedy's layered approach has inflamed considerable debate regarding the president's Cuban policy amongst historians since his administration was tragically cut short and left few firm answers. His sudden death dramatically limited input from the president and his goals never came to fruition. Regardless, the documentation available point to a change in thinking on Cuba. The release of prisoners was but

¹⁴² Evan White, *Robert Kennedy*, 236.

¹⁴³ Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and his Times*, 534-535.

¹⁴⁴ Gus Russo and Stephen Molton, *Brothers in Arms: The Kennedys, the Castros, and the Politics of Murder* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), 231.

¹⁴⁵ Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 319-320.

one notable example of successful diplomacy with Cuba amidst attempts to destabilise the communist regime, yet it also marked an important contrast between past relations with Castro. Subversion of communism and the pursuit of Castro continued into 1963, but Kennedy's attitude towards the program lost much of its earlier vigour. Although the CIA kept a watchful eye on Cuba since the resolution of the missile crisis, their information began to reinforce the growing strength of Castro's position and the limitations the U.S. government now faced. Although John Lewis Gaddis has argued there was no serious threat of U.S. invasion after the missile crisis, sabotage operations committed by Cuban exile raids further agitated the situation.¹⁴⁶

As Castro consolidated his power in Havana, exiles groups continued their operations to subvert his communist regime. On March 17, two exile groups launched an attack on a Soviet ship docked in Northern Cuba. On April 3, 1963, McGeorge Bundy gave Kennedy a memo describing the raid and identified the culprits as Cuban exiles in part of two notable groups: the Alpha BB and the Second Front of the Escambray. Bundy reported that the raid had a "hazy sense of target" and generally the insurgents "shoot at whatever is the biggest object within reach," an obvious indication of their lack of organization and effectiveness.¹⁴⁷ Regardless, their actions increased the pressure on tensions in the Caribbean. Bundy further remarks the two guerilla organizations "held a joint press conference announcing the attack and issuing a war communique" in Washington, essentially confirming internationally that the United States was harbouring groups hostile to Castro's regime.¹⁴⁸ The exiles inflamed tensions as their actions were immediately noted by the Soviet Union, although a memo sent to Robert Kennedy on April 1 explained that the U.S. was

¹⁴⁶ Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 279.

¹⁴⁷ "Memorandum from McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy," Document 645 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d645.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

attempting to reduce the exile raids.¹⁴⁹ The Soviets would understandably be suspicious of the culpability of the Kennedy Administration. Ambassador-at-Large Llewellyn Thompson described the danger by highlighting Khrushchev's concerns. Like Kennedy, Chairman Khrushchev was "under pressure from his military" to "weaken our actions against Castro," which could have potentially grave consequences.¹⁵⁰ The president's awareness of such raids is essentially concrete, given that the order to cease actions came from the Oval office. Regardless, Kennedy took a bold move to end the raids as it allowed the Cuban government to "proclaim... a victory for Fidel," thereby buttressing Castro's prestige in Havana.¹⁵¹ Kennedy's actions demonstrate his growth as a statesman because he shelved his desire to win and instead helped to prevent a reescalation of the crisis that had so profoundly terrified him. Kennedy, regardless of his decision to continue aggressive actions against Castro and the maintenance of efforts to destabilise Cuba's economy, proactively disengaged the inflammatory raids. Despite Castro's ability to claim it as a personal victory, thereby weakening the position of the president, Kennedy recognized the dangers of escalation and proactively attempted to prevent such an occurrence.

The CIA would continue to report that the communist regime was effectively consolidating its power and a change in leadership was unlikely, despite economic degradation and aggravation by exile groups. The flaws of the program were evident and the results were lacking any considerable results. In a memo dated January 9, McCone described "the situation in Cuba as

¹⁴⁹ "Memorandum from William Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy," Document 642 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d642.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ "Memo from Llewellyn Thompson to Dean Rusk," Document 647, in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus196163v10-12mSupp/pdf/d647.pdf>

¹⁵¹ "Memorandum from Desmond FitzGerald to John McCone," Document 664, in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d664.pdf>

follows: Castro remains in control, his attitude seems unchanged,” reflecting the failure of Mongoose to destabilize the regime and Castro’s continued frustration.¹⁵² A memo drafted merely days later by Gordon Chase described the situation as “under study,” seemingly recognizing the need to reorient policy in Cuba.¹⁵³ The CIA reports continued to demonstrate options in Cuba were increasingly constricted. Although the economic sanctions against Castro had damaged the Cuban economy, CIA reports in January predicted it “probably will not decline further in total output and may show some improvements in comparison with 1962.”¹⁵⁴ This information reached the president before the end of January, highlighting the dismal outlook in Cuba which began to grow darker amid Castro’s constant protests of aerial surveillance.

Surveillance of Cuba had been an issue since before the missile crisis and continued after October 1962 without abatement. The missile crisis had subsided, however the situation in the Caribbean remained tense as U-2 spy planes continued to photograph Cuba. Despite Castro’s earlier warnings, offensive action was not taken against continued U.S. surveillance due to “their almost certain belief that armed action against a U.S. plane would invite prompt and serious reprisals.”¹⁵⁵ The knowledge that retaliation seemed unlikely was of little comfort to many and the pressure to reject U-2 overflights grew “elsewhere in government.” There was growing concern

¹⁵² “Memorandum for the Record,” Document 592, in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d592.pdf>

¹⁵³ “Memorandum from Gordon Chase to McGeorge Bundy,” Document 597, in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d597.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ “CIA Current Support Brief,” Document 599, in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d599.pdf>

¹⁵⁵ “Special National Intelligence Agency,” Document 622 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d622.pdf>

amongst the CIA that escalation “might result from overflights,” in addition to some remarking on the “illegal or immoral” nature of continued spying.¹⁵⁶

Despite the inherent risks of the spying program, U.S. operations on Cuba were largely dependent on these flights. Spying had proven its worth with the discovery of the missile sites in October, and the continued need for “hard intelligence” determined the extent to which Soviet forces had departed the island.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, surveillance of Cuba continued to reassure the Kennedy Administration offensive weapons were not being reintroduced. The continuation of overflights was believed to have a deterrent effect on potential redeployment, a move that would be cause for grave concern in among both governments.¹⁵⁷¹⁵⁸ Finally, the overflights allowed the United States to verify Soviet personnel were removed from Cuba. Regardless of Castro’s irritation that the United States continued to violate Cuban sovereignty, his restraint suggests the Cuban leader’s outrage had finally subsided and he grasped the precarious position both nations were in.

Castro’s insistence that UN observers be barred from entering the island resulted in the need for U2 surveillance to verify the missiles departed. The ongoing surveillance demonstrated continued U.S. mistrust of the Cuban and Soviet governments, but it also demonstrated the president’s commitment to preventing proliferation of nuclear arms. Acting against Cuba was certainly self-serving. However, Kennedy’s offer of Polaris missiles to Macmillan and French President Charles de Gaulle was an attempt to prevent further proliferation which reinforced his goal of limiting the nations with nuclear capabilities.¹⁵⁹ Although spying remained a contentious

¹⁵⁶ Document 623 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d623.pdf> ¹⁶⁵ *Ibid* at 164.

¹⁵⁷ “Memorandum from Sherman Kent to John McCone,” Document 665 in Foreign Relations of the United States

¹⁵⁸ -1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus196163v10-12mSupp/pdf/d665.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 609-610.

issue, the results of continued surveillance and intelligence indicated the demoralizing truth to Kennedy's Cuban campaign.

By April 1963, it was becoming abundantly clear Castro's power was effectively being consolidated, contrary to U.S. efforts. A CIA memo on prospects for the removal of Castro indicated that "time seems to favour Castro," and his grip on power "will likely be more secure" as his government gained more experience.¹⁶⁰ CIA intelligence continued to be grim. John McCone would later report that Cuba was "invulnerable" short of U.S. intervention, an option that would surely result in a nuclear war or a strike in Berlin.¹⁶¹ Kennedy's inability to invade Cuba prompted the reconsideration of using exile brigades to conduct sabotage operations, however their ineffectiveness against Castro was evident. Further reports from the Department of State estimated that active exile groups working against Castro were fractured and exceedingly numerous. In a memo sent to Dean Rusk, U.S. intelligence indicated that there were "estimated to be over 400 exile groups" working against the communist government.¹⁶² The dispersion of armed guerillas would limit their ability to coordinate their mission and the prospective longevity of the campaign was a likely deterrent to any sustained, united operations similar to Castro's coup against Batista.

The culmination of grim reports resulted in a growing reluctance in the president's operations in Cuba. The apparently futility of Mongoose and attempts since the crisis to undermine

¹⁶⁰ "Paper Prepared by the CIA," Document 655 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d655.pdf>

¹⁶¹ "Memorandum from Desmond FitzGerland to John McCone," Document 664 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/pdf/d664.pdf>

¹⁶² "Exile Problems: The Cuban Revolutionary Council," Document 661 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus196163v10-12mSupp/pdf/d661.pdf>

Castro “had become an impediment to more productive foreign policy initiatives.”¹⁶³ Seeing that his options were growing fewer, Kennedy’s dispassionate outlook became evident. He began to turn his attention away from the issue and push operations to the periphery of his concerns.¹⁶⁴ The Attorney General, who had since continued his relentless pursuit of Castro, found his older brother non-responsive to his plans for further sabotage operations.¹⁶⁵ Ignoring his brother’s suggestions, Kennedy’s reluctance to continue destabilising Havana became apparent. The president possessed a keen mind for foreign affairs and the lack of results would force him to consider options.

Cuba further added to Kennedy’s political challenges at home. Politics demanded the continuation of his public intolerance of Castro, despite his private misgivings toward that stance. The Cuban issue had been a foreign policy the GOP had exploited to the extent that Republicans vowed to make it a “dominant issue” in the 1962 Congressional elections.¹⁶⁶ Although the crisis had increased Kennedy’s standing with the public, Republicans, chief among them Barry Goldwater, were critical of the resolution. Even amidst his cabinet, the pressure was inescapable and contrary to the lack of success of the entire program, McCone proposed increasing U.S. involvement to subvert Castro. In a meeting April 25, 1963, the CIA director advocated to maintain “actions against Castro’s economy” which “should be continued and hardened.”¹⁶⁷ McCone’s report, far from reducing Kennedy’s desire to move away from Cuba, simply reinforced the redundancy of the operation. The CIA indicated “carefully planned and well executed sabotage will intensify Castro’s problems, but will not by itself bring him down” and could possibly lead to

¹⁶³ Robert Dallek, *Camelot’s Court*, 360.

¹⁶⁴ Dallek, *Camelot’s Court*, 361.

¹⁶⁵ Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 234.

¹⁶⁶ Giglio, *the Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 190-191.

¹⁶⁷ “Memorandum Prepared by John McCone,” Document 670 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1961-63v1012mSupp/pdf/d670.pdf>

“a second confrontation of a type encountered last October.”¹⁶⁸ Kennedy was aware of the political risks another confrontation could induce, but again the great concern of nuclear war struck the president. In their 1989 book *On the Brink*, James Blight and David Welch describe the impact the lessons of the missile crisis on the president, and Khrushchev, as “the textbook case” for “nuclear learning.”¹⁶⁹ It would be out of character for Kennedy to make serious commitments into a campaign that was far from achieving its objective. Furthermore, the lessons of the missile crisis has been consequential to the president and the constricted scope of available actions against Havana forced Kennedy to consider other policy objectives.

Fortunately, new considerations became available on May 1, 1963. Richard Helms, who would become Director of Central Intelligence under President Johnson, wrote a memo to John McCone informing him of a potential and unexpected development in Havana. Castro, despite the anti-American rhetoric espoused during his long speeches, was “looking for a way to reach a rapprochement with the US government.”¹⁷⁰¹⁷¹ Like Kennedy, Castro was attempting to manage more extreme factions and potential internal conflicts which could be disastrous for his consolidation of power. Within the ruling communist party, Castro’s influential brother Raul and the charismatic revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara, opposed rapprochement.¹⁷⁹ Conflicting ideologies regarding the United States, “Latin pride” and current policy in Cuba drove Castro to insist the first move come from Washington.¹⁷²¹⁷³ Initial reports of rapprochement were skeptical,

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid* at 175.

¹⁶⁹ James Blight and David Welch, *On the Brink*, 313.

¹⁷⁰ “Memorandum from Richard Helms to John McCone,” Document 671 in Foreign Relations of the United States

¹⁷¹ -1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d671> ¹⁷⁹
Ibid at 178.

¹⁷² “Memorandum from Richard Helms to John McCone,” Document 685 in Foreign Relations of the United States

¹⁷³ -1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d685> ¹⁸¹
Ibid at 180.

however evidence continued to suggest their validity. Helms again wrote to McCone just over a month after the memo first discussed Castro's overtures. Helms, in this memo dated June 5th 1963, states the intelligence was coming from "numerous sources reporting on Cuban desire for rapprochement," although they remained "unconfirmed."¹⁸¹

Amidst the reports of potential rapprochement, President Kennedy continued to receive further discouraging intelligence from numerous sources on the Cuban operations. General Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the JCS, reported that "a widespread effective revolt in Cuba is unlikely at this time," despite the continuation of CIA efforts.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, the Soviet relationship with Cuba was renewed by Castro's visit to the Soviet Union. Although the missile crisis had greatly disappointed Castro, CIA reports suggested that his "visit to the USSR helped smooth over the friction" resulting in a bond linking them "more closely together."^{175 176} Interestingly, McCone would further describe the relationship as narrowing "their respective freedom of actions," mirroring the U.S. position in Cuba. The situation in the Caribbean remained largely unchanged as the anti-Castro plots failed to achieve results. Unconfirmed reports of rapprochement did not immediately force Kennedy to react, and he was slow to do so. Part of Kennedy's concern was the presence of Cuban emigres in the United States.

Returning the Bay of Pigs prisoners to the United States amounted to a successful diplomatic resolution with Cuba. However, it created more domestic political trouble for the president. While some exiles had cheered Kennedy at the Orange Bowl, others abstained from

¹⁷⁴ "Memorandum from General Maxwell Taylor to Robert McNamara," Document 676 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d676>

¹⁷⁵ "Memorandum from Sherman Kent to John McCone," Document 684 in Foreign Relations of the United States

¹⁷⁶ -1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d684> ¹⁸⁴
Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 231.

attending in protest of the president's failure to deliver sufficient air strikes during the invasion.¹⁸⁴ Their continued presence in the United States added greater pressure on Kennedy to consider a more sustained offensive against Havana. Although intelligence had reported the covert operations in Cuba aimed at destabilizing Castro were progressing unsuccessfully, appealing the emigres had the political benefit of fending off attacks from the Right. Robert Kennedy identified that the emigres had "nothing to lose," and the continuation of offensive action, however would have adverse effects in international political spheres.¹⁷⁷ Exile raids planned and executed by emigres friendly with the United States further added to the tension as it could undermine the credibility of the U.S. non-invasion pledge. On July 16, 1963, the Standing Group (Augmented) indicated that the press was speculating the United States was "sponsoring raids in Cuba," further adding to the political challenges the president already faced and questioning the credibility of the non-invasion pledge.¹⁷⁸ The continued presence of the exiles prevented Kennedy from overtly pursuing Castro's overtures as it would be seen as a betrayal to their cause. The sensitivity of the issue required very careful diffusion as any dramatic shift could incite a political firestorm. Kennedy's caution, however, was evident. Under constant political pressure, the president did not reinitiate vigorous action against Havana.

The late spring and early summer of 1963 indicate continued growth of President Kennedy. His June 10 speech at the commencement of the American University, in which he advocated for world peace and co-existence, has remained a testament to Kennedy's commitments to a more secure world after the Cuban Missile Crisis. He referred to the Soviet Union and stated "no

¹⁷⁷ Arthur Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and his Times*, 476-477.

¹⁷⁸ "Notes from Transcripts of JCS Meetings," Document 356 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v10-12mSupp/d356>

government or social system is so evil that its people must be considered as lacking in virtue,” a remarkable contrast to the ardently anti-Communist rhetoric that marked the early Cold War.¹⁷⁹

The president’s statements clearly identify that Kennedy was willing to pursue a policy of coexistence. Harris Wofford reinforced this transition by stating “it is wrong to look on John & Robert Kennedy simply as cold warriors. In the peaceful resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis, they showed that another course was possible and preferable,” which underlines a growing commitment to diplomacy and compromise.¹⁸⁰¹⁸¹ Although the speech was directed towards the Soviets, the peaceful message reached Havana. Earlier attempts from Castro’s government at possible rapprochement did not lead to any substantial change in U.S. posture in the Caribbean, however Kennedy’s address reinforced his belief that “no social system can be entirely without virtue.”¹⁸² Despite the continued subversion and attempted assassinations of Castro, Havana reenergized attempts at rapprochement in October, 1963.

Havana’s prior efforts to open a dialogue with Washington had gone unanswered. Although there had been productive dialogue in Montevideo between Richard Goodwin and Che Guevara in 1962, which included Guevara presenting Goodwin with a box of cigars for the president, the missile crisis had frozen discussion between the two governments.¹⁸³ Throughout the summer of 1963, U.S. overflights had continued and subversive actions against Castro’s regime persisted although success remained elusive. During this time, however Kennedy refused pressure from the

¹⁷⁹ “Commencement Address at American University June 10, 1963,” last update not specified, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/BWC7I4C9QUmLG9J6I8oy8w.aspx>

¹⁸⁰ Harris Wofford, *Of Kennedy’s and Kings; Making Sense of the Sicties* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980),
¹⁸¹ .

¹⁸² *Ibid* at 187.

¹⁸³ De Toledo, *the Story of Che Guevara*, 263.

Joint Chiefs to allow United States Air Force (USAF) pilots to pursue “bandits” over Cuban territory, and his offensive actions towards Cuba generally targeted the economy.¹⁸⁴ Archival records also include interviews with Fidel Castro which gave some insight into the Cuban leaders thinking. Castro stated there had been a “mutual interest in getting the Soviets out of Cuba,” and inferred the possibility of further diplomatic growth between Havana and Washington and stoked the interests of rapprochement.¹⁸⁵ The Joint Chiefs of Staff continued to report a lack of development undermining the Cuban government. On October 21, the Joint Chiefs wrote a memo to Robert McNamara stating a coup was “unlikely at this time,” despite the continuation of efforts to degrade the regime.¹⁸⁶ Much like Castro’s first overture to the United States, his second offered Kennedy another option. In the final two months of the Kennedy Administration, it is clear the president began to more seriously consider the understanding with Castro.

Castro’s second push to engage Washington in negotiations came when his grip in Havana was less secure. In an October 1, 1963 meeting of the Standing Group (Augmented), reports began to suggest that the situation in Havana was beginning to show signs of a strain. Castro’s popularity remained, however maintaining peace in Cuba was becoming more tumultuous.¹⁸⁷ Soviet forces continued to leave the Caribbean in greater numbers, and by the fall of 1963 John McCone reported

¹⁸⁴ “Memorandum from General Curtis LeMay to Robert McNamara,” Document 704 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d704>

¹⁸⁵ “Memorandum from J. Larocque to Deputy Secretary of Defense,” Document 717 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d717>

¹⁸⁶ “Memorandum from Joint Chiefs of Staff to Robert McNamara,” Document 714, in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d714>

¹⁸⁷ “Summary Record of the Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council,” Document 368 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d368>

that no Soviet ground forces remained.¹⁸⁸ Castro's immediate security evidentially grew slightly more precarious amid continued U.S. attempts to destabilise the economy by limiting international trade to the island.¹⁸⁹ CIA intelligence noted a 20% decline in sugar production, Cuba's key export, undermining Castro's "socialist paradise" and damaged his popular support.¹⁹⁷ While these factors pre-empted Castro's attempted rapprochement, the most critical factor was the receptiveness of President Kennedy.

Kennedy initially seemed reluctant to consider finding an agreement with Cuba, but as 1963 progressed he grew more interested. His interest in rapprochement with Cuba coincided with continued growth of dissention against Castro. As part of the nuanced policy he developed, the president "continued to promote peaceful coexistence" with Cuba and the overtures from Havana ensured it became a possibility.¹⁹⁰ Reports continued to state that Castro was "personally interested" in reconciliation with the United States, but the "hard-liners" in Havana, again including Raul Castro and Che Guevara, had him "boxed in."¹⁹¹ Internal pressure in both Cuba and the United States forced potential discussions to be conducted covertly. Overtures were tepid, however the president broached the topic with numerous people. To ascertain whether Castro was pursuing rapprochement genuinely, ambassador and former journalist William Attwood, who had a rapport with Castro following an interview years earlier while writing for *Look* magazine, was

¹⁸⁸ "Memorandum from the Director of Defense Intelligence Agency to Secretary of Defense McNamara," Document 370 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d370>

¹⁸⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation," Document 369 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d369> ¹⁹⁷ *Ibid* at 195.

¹⁹⁰ Michael O'Brien, *Rethinking Kennedy*, 237-238.

¹⁹¹ "Memorandum from Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs," Document 372 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d372>

dispatched to make initial contact.¹⁹² Kennedy was also encouraged to meet with a French journalist, Jean Daniel “on his way to Havana”, to whom he discussed his Cuba issue. Stating that he sympathised with the terror afflicted on the island under Batista and recognized the United States had “created, built and manufactured the Castro movement out of whole cloth without realizing it,” the president’s comments underline his empathy and concern for the Cuba.²⁰¹ Kennedy later informed Bundy on November 5 the Cuban government was willing to negotiate peaceful co-existence.¹⁹³ Kennedy was clearly cultivating a plan to pursue rapprochement with Havana. When Castro agreed to a meeting with Attwood, Kennedy “gave to go ahead” to the meeting, ostensibly in early 1964.¹⁹⁴ It appeared as though the possibilities of peaceful coexistence with Cuba were blooming when President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas on November 22. Although the initiative was gaining traction, rapprochement with Cuba “died with Kennedy.” The enterprise would finally be fulfilled by President Barack Obama- after discussions with the same leadership in Havana his predecessor so famously quarrelled- with the opening of a Cuban embassy in Washington D.C., occurring merely weeks before this chapter was written.¹⁹⁵

President Kennedy’s actions following the Cuban Missile Crisis served to reinforce his growing maturity. Although Kennedy was slow to move towards detente with Cuba, his overtures could very possibly have facilitated peaceful co-existence in the Caribbean. However, the final year of the president’s life provide a substantial model of change. Despite initial concerns regarding Castro’s anger with Khrushchev and the conclusion of the crisis, in addition to continued aerial

¹⁹² “Memorandum for the Record,” Document 373 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d373> ²⁰¹ Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 662.

¹⁹³ James W. Douglass, *JFK and the Unspeakable; Why he Died and why it Mattered* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008), 85.

¹⁹⁴ Robert Dallek, *Camelot’s Court*, 387.

¹⁹⁵ Douglass, *JFK and the Unspeakable*, 90.

surveillance, U.S. policy in Cuba became significantly more nuanced. Although planning for direct action continued, this grew more out the president's desire to maintain a political façade and cultivate multiple options and less out of his genuine interest in destabilising Cuba.¹⁹⁶ He chose not to pressure Havana when Castro's reign appeared suspect and instead pursued multiple avenues to ensure Castro understood his intentions. Furthermore, Kennedy always remained realistic. Reports continued to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of U.S. pressure in Cuba and exile raids, to which Kennedy expressed doubts about continuing by stating they served "no useful purpose," however he faced significant pressure internally.¹⁹⁷ The 1964 election loomed, and the president was already contemplating his campaign.¹⁹⁸ Fully aware that Cuba would be a dominant issue in the election, the president knew he needed some results in his dealings with Havana. The political backlash in Cuba would generate considerable rapprochement within the United States, yet he recognized the need for co-existence between the two nations.

The Cuban Missile Crisis had a significant impact on Kennedy's policies in Cuba. Any violation of the non-invasion pledge would create an immense domestic and international backlash, almost certainly igniting a nuclear war. Covert operations had failed to make any meaningful progress undermining the Castro regime, and public opinion of Fidel largely remained high. The stale Cuban policy of the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administration needed to be adjusted to reflect the important transformation the president had undergone since the trauma of the missile crisis. The new realities of international politics allowed for greater dialogue in the shadow of nuclear war; a fear that had permeated Kennedy since October 1962. Critics of Kennedy may suggest that

¹⁹⁶ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 657.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 661.

¹⁹⁸ "November 22nd, 1962; Death of the President," last updated unspecified, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-inHistory/November-22-1963-Death-of-the-President.aspx>

his actions following the crisis were self-serving, aggressive, or imperialistic, however that caricature fails to capture the president as a person. His abhorrence of nuclear war was evident and his peaceful overtures towards Havana required little else than the end of Cuban subversive activities throughout the Caribbean. His willingness to engage in a dialogue with Castro demonstrates that, despite his substantial past commitment to destabilising communism in Havana, Kennedy considered not that which was politically expedient, but of long term benefit to the United States and Cuba. Kennedy's pattern of eschewing political points in the pursuit of meaningful and controversial gains, including civil rights and the limited test ban treaty, marked his final year in the Oval Office.

Chapter IV: US Relations with the USSR

The relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis was often toxic. Friction between the leaders of the democratic and communist worlds had begun during the Truman Administration, and the precedent continued until October 1962. The missile crisis was the culmination of continued barbs and challenges between the United States and USSR that had been mounting since the conclusion of the Second World War. Accelerated by the nuclear arms race and fueled by the need to “contain” the spread of communism, relations between the two superpowers deteriorated and ushered in a cold war. The first years of the Cold War saw little direct military confrontation between the United States and USSR, however resentment and bitterness was evident. Attempts to form a better relationship seemed possible following the death of Josef Stalin and the rise of Nikita Khrushchev in the ensuing power struggle. When Khrushchev disavowed his predecessor and revealed the depths of his crimes, it appeared as though de-Stalinization could lead to a new age of co-existence between the communist and western-democratic worlds, yet détente was unable to blossom during Eisenhower’s presidency. When President Kennedy came to office in January 1961, he initially did little to adjust the status quo, and instead increased military spending.¹⁹⁹ The first meeting between Kennedy and his Soviet counterpart, Khrushchev, at the Vienna summit in 1961, produced no agreements nor any viable way to work towards one and only deepened the animosity between the two governments. Between Vienna and the missile crisis, the two governments were frequently criticizing the others’ performance on a wide range of foreign issues, including Laos, China, Cuba and Berlin. James Blight and David Welch characterized the first two years of the Kennedy presidency as a period

¹⁹⁹ Anatolii Gromyko, *Through Russian Eyes; President Kennedy’s 1036 Days*, 158.

with “virtually no meaningful dialogue” between the U.S. and the USSR.²⁰⁰ The working relationship between Kennedy and Khrushchev had an auspicious start, but the “in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy began in 1963 to move towards a peace-oriented foreign policy,” reinforcing the impact of October 1962 in his last year in office.²⁰¹

The Cuban Missile Crisis was a lonely experience for President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev. Unlike Castro, who was completely uninvolved in the ultimate resolution to the crisis and unable to initiate a nuclear strike, it was Khrushchev who stood “eyeball-to-eyeball” with Kennedy. Both men understood the calamitous outcome of nuclear war and were dedicated to avoiding a confrontation. James Blight suggests that the two were “deeply shaken by the missile crisis,” which prompted a complete “turnabout” in their nuclear policies.²¹¹ The crisis was an ordeal and an exercise in mental exhaustion for both and it was Khrushchev who sacrificed his prestige to accommodate Kennedy’s need for a secret agreement. Kennedy would later write to Khrushchev “perhaps only those who have the responsibility for controlling these weapons fully realize the awful devastation their use would bring,” referencing the mental burden of ordering a nuclear strike.²⁰² Despite the vast differences between the two men and their respective social systems, the experience at the brink forged a new understanding of their responsibilities to prevent a nuclear war. While much can be written on how the missile crisis influenced Khrushchev, this chapter will engage with how it affected Kennedy and his policy in the Soviet Union. Naturally, Khrushchev will be a fixture of this discussion, yet largely to contextualize or clarify the narrative. Although the crisis was described as a lonely experience for both Kennedy and Khrushchev, the

²⁰⁰ James Blight and David Welch, *On the Brink*, 314.

²⁰¹ W. Rorabaugh, *Kennedy and the Promise of the Sixties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59. ²¹¹ James Blight, *the Shattered Crystal Ball*, 144.

²⁰² “Memorandum of Conversation,” Document 87 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v06/d87>

resolution opened new possibilities with the USSR.²⁰³ The optimism in the aftermath of the missile crisis was described as “a real turning point in history,” an opportunity seized upon by the White House and the Kremlin.²⁰⁴

The possibility of diplomatic overtures between Washington and Moscow did not suddenly become a possibility when President Kennedy was sworn into office. During the Eisenhower Administration, both governments had attempted to negotiate with their counterparts, yet the Cold War tumult of the decade barred any meaningful progress. Preventing nuclear proliferation was discussed during the Eisenhower Administration, however any progress was abruptly halted in 1960 when Francis Gary Powers was shot down.²⁰⁵ The downing of a U-2 pilot over the Soviet Union essentially derailed “Khrushchev’s push for nuclear disarmament,” and permanently soured the relationship between the two heads of state.²⁰⁶ Khrushchev’s memoirs further demonstrate his frustration with Eisenhower and his appraisal of the president as a statesman. Khrushchev, remarking on the deterioration of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, stated “unlike Eisenhower, Kennedy had a precisely formed opinion on every subject... he was a reasonable man,” suggesting his predecessor was not.²⁰⁷ Contentious issues, including Berlin and Cuba, prevented Kennedy or Khrushchev from making any progress in their diplomatic endeavours which negated further bilateral discussion. The Cuban Missile Crisis would finally provide the leverage to encourage Kennedy to pursue important dialogue between Moscow and Washington.

²⁰³ Gromyko, *Through Russian Eyes*, 177.

²⁰⁴ Jean Stein *American Journey: The Times of Robert Kennedy* (New York: Harcourt, Bruce, Jovanovich, 1970), 136.

²⁰⁵ Thomas Reeves, *A Question of Character*, 396.

²⁰⁶ J. Weiner, *How we Forgot the Cold War*, 239.

²⁰⁷ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 458.

Unlike U.S. policy in Cuba, the president wanted to work towards better relations with Moscow immediately. The president saw that the crisis “defused anxiety about nuclear weapons” and wanted to ensure that he “provided reassurance that nuclear weapons and nuclear diplomacy could be managed.”²⁰⁸ The instant recognition of the horrors of nuclear war drove the president into a more active role towards this cause and he would work to establish an early détente between the two superpowers. Despite the immense motivation that would arise from narrowly avoiding a nuclear exchange, the accomplishments of the Kennedy Administration’s last year were not easily won. Difficulties with the Soviet government persisted, and U.S. foreign policy matters in other parts of the globe continued to draw the ire or criticism of the USSR. Soviet hardliners would discourage Khrushchev from making meaningful overtures, and those originating in Washington were often derailed by the inability of the two governments to come to an agreement on Berlin or the number of on-site inspections. Hawks in the United States limited the President’s flexibility yet he continued to push for a more secure world in late 1962 and 1963.

As the Soviet Union was attempting to placate Castro, Kennedy Administration staff were attempting to determine what further steps to take with regard to Soviet policy. Although the crisis prompted meaningful dialogue between Kennedy and Khrushchev, the extent to which diplomatic gains could be made was ambiguous. Memos from within the Kennedy White House demonstrate the motivation to support potential changes in US Soviet policy. On October 31, merely three days after Khrushchev agreed to remove the missile from Cuba, Deputy National Security Advisor Carl Kaysen wrote to McGeorge Bundy arguing, “the only way to test the assumption that the events of the last week have created the potential for a major change in US-Soviet relations... is to act on

²⁰⁸ L.V. Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 188.

it.”²⁰⁹ Kaysen’s remarked further that “minimum results worthwhile aiming at appear to be a comprehensive test ban,” indicating that the Administration was keen to pursue a limitation in nuclear testing. Arthur Schlesinger wrote in *A Thousand Days* that Kennedy was “earnest about détente,” and had even considered a mission to the moon with Soviet cosmonauts.²²⁰ As Washington considered how to approach détente with the Soviets, the leadership in Moscow was in turmoil.

Khrushchev’s willingness to sacrifice his own prestige to end the crisis initiated a tumultuous period in the Kremlin.²¹⁰ Reports from the U.S. embassy in Moscow dated November 7, 1962 noted that “the past ten days have really shaken Soviet leadership.”²¹¹ The optimism that productive agreements between the two nations could be made quickly evaporated in the midst of internal Soviet issues. Although Khrushchev would claim in his memoirs the non-invasion pledge was “a great victory,” other members of the Presidium diverged from their Chairman’s perspective.²²³ CIA intelligence reported that the conflict in Moscow would absorb a significant portion of Khrushchev’s attention and would deter any overtures towards the West. A memo to John McCone stated “the chances of an early move towards détente seem even lower,” undermining the flexibility of the USSR.²¹² Furthermore, the CIA continued to report that the

²⁰⁹ “Memorandum from Carl Kaysen of the National Security Council to McGeorge Bundy,” Document 259 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d259>

²²⁰ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 351 and 361.

²¹⁰ V. Silvestri, *Becoming JFK: A Profile in Communication*, 215.

²¹¹ “Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State,” Document 260 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d260> ²²³

Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 500.

²¹² “Memorandum from the Chairman of the Board of Estimates to John McCone,” Document 261 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d261>

USSR was in a position to “revive the Berlin issue,” suggesting Khrushchev’s sudden hardline stance grew out of pressure within the Kremlin. This issue was further raised by Dean Rusk, who doubted the plausibility of any acceptable solutions in Berlin.²¹³ Despite the tumult in the Kremlin, which would take months to fully bear fruit and degrade Khrushchev’s standing, Kennedy Administration staff continued to search for avenues to find pursue meaningful actions towards détente.

Administration staff continued to lobby the Soviet government for a change in the relationship between the two nations. Foy Kohler, U.S. ambassador to the USSR, reported on November 9 that he was attempting to stop the Soviets from “jamming American airwaves” to which he noted “many Soviet citizens resent” because its reminiscence of “the past in the Soviet Union.”²¹⁴ Kohler’s attempts to open the airwaves, a very small step towards a better mutual understanding with the Soviets, would have allowed a U.S. cultural influence within the USSR. Anastas Mikoyan, Chairman of the Presidium, reinforced the importance of a mutual understanding during a conversation with Kennedy. Mikoyan, describing his observations of postcrisis relations, stated it was “important for the two countries to understand each other better,” ostensibly to build towards diminishing hostilities between the two nations.²¹⁵ Administration staff also noted the Soviet desire to establish a non-aggression pact in Berlin.²¹⁶ Although a nonaggression pact could have potentially been a relief to the President, such a treaty would require

²¹³ “Memorandum of Conversation,” Document 262 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d262>

²¹⁴ “Airgram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State,” Document 264 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v05/d264>

²¹⁵ “Editorial Note,” Document 270 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d270>

²¹⁶ “Memorandum from William Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy,” Document 263 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d263>

official recognition of the East German state, an idea that had been categorically rejected since the German Democratic Party came to power and established the communist government. West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer regarded recognition of East Germany an “unfriendly act,” as it represented the diplomatic acceptance of the split.²¹⁷ However, among the most important early suggestions for better relations was the idea to continue negotiations for a test ban treaty.²¹⁸ Ultimately the government was responsible to determine which diplomatic overture to pursue, yet the proposals were to be reviewed by the President.²¹⁹ Through his articulation of policy, it is evident that a test ban was one of Kennedy’s primary concerns.

President Kennedy’s attempts to negotiate a test ban had been an ongoing fixture of his administration and he was only more motivated to continue after the crisis. Before October 1962, Ben Bradlee, a contemporary journalist, noted “Kennedy and (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom) Macmillan were actively working to end nuclear testing” in a bi-lateral effort to prevent further proliferation of atomic weapons.²²⁰ The consistency of Kennedy’s concern over nuclear testing grew out of his comprehension of nuclear fallout. The inherent dangers of a nuclear program fostered concerns about the future of his children. Kennedy, remarking on radiation in precipitation, stated “I am thinking not so much of our world, but of the world Caroline (the President’s daughter) will live in.”²²¹ His pledge to stop U.S. testing in 1962 demonstrates his commitment to limiting nuclear fallout in the atmosphere, an issue that he was clearly devoted to. Although the test ban had been discussed between Kennedy and Khrushchev, issues such as Berlin

²¹⁷ Peter Lane, *The Postwar World; an Introduction* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1987), 274.

²¹⁸ *Ibid* at 229.

²¹⁹ *Ibid* at 229.

²²⁰ Ben Bradlee, *Conversations with Kennedy*, 61-62.

²²¹ Harris Wofford, *Of Kennedy’s and Kings*, 382.

and the number of on-site inspections generally prevented the talks from gaining any serious traction. Khrushchev, although largely prompted by the missile crisis to precipitate the discussions that lead to the test ban treaty, had previously demonstrated interest in such an agreement.²²² Despite the litany of failures to make any progress in test ban negotiations, the Soviet government was reportedly “encouraged to follow up” on the “initial post-crisis feelers.”²²³ Records of a conversation between Ambassador-at-Large Chester Bowles and Soviet Diplomat Anatoly Dobrynin indicate that both leaders were aware they were moving towards a “crossroads of decisiveness,” that could potentially create “six years of peace,” presuming Kennedy was re-elected.²²⁴ The president had indicated he was eager to consider “any useful proposals” from the Soviet government, and seemingly the two governments were poised to enter a new epoch of coexistence.²³⁷ Shortly after the removal of the IL-28 bombers, both governments moved towards breaking ground on a recurring issue: Berlin.

Conflict over Berlin had been ongoing since the conclusion of the Second World War. During the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the allied leaders agreed Berlin would be divided into occupation zones, manned by soldiers from France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union.²²⁵ In 1946, the allied zone was amalgamated into one larger district, creating an East-West dichotomy in the city. Tensions were exacerbated by Stalin’s blockade in 1948, prompting President Truman to initiate the massive Berlin Airlift, and the city continued to irk

²²² Carl A. Linden, *Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 115.

²²³ “Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency,” Document 269 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d269>

²²⁴ “Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador-at-Large Chester Bowles and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin,” Document 265 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d265> ²³⁷ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 829.

²²⁵ John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1980), 41.

Moscow because it remained a Western enclave behind the iron curtain. During Kennedy's presidency, Khrushchev's policy in Berlin fluctuated. Khrushchev, on more than one occasion, threatened an impending removal of western powers from the city and was often combative and unflinching in his demands, yet each deadline passed without incident. The inability to initiate dialogue forced the continuation of the stalemate. Regardless, Khrushchev's gambit in Cuba "marked his last attempt to force the Berlin issue," and agreements over the city were pursued by both governments.²²⁶ The volatility of the issue required a measured approach by both governments, and fortunately U.S. intelligence indicated the ability to work towards a "gradual settlement of the Berlin problem."²²⁷

President Kennedy's willingness to pursue a dialogue with Khrushchev was obvious. Kennedy's foreign policy following the crisis was evidentially much more open to potential agreements with the USSR because the "limitations" of nuclear weapons "as an instrument of policy" became obvious.²⁴¹ Kennedy knew the dangers of a nuclear war and was committed to preventing such a conflagration. Additionally, he also sought a better, more trusting relationship between himself and Khrushchev, stating that "it is important to build the area of trust whenever possible."²²⁸ In addition to his ongoing efforts to impose a ban on nuclear testing, he continued to look for other meaningful ways to improve relations. Kennedy, in a letter to Khrushchev, remarked on the need "for eliminating war in this nuclear age," and suggested not only a test ban, but nuclear

²²⁶ L.V. Scott, Macmillan, *Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 180.

²²⁷ "Current Intelligence Weekly Review," Document 280 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d280> ²⁴¹ McNamara, *the Essence of Security*, 12.

²²⁸ "Letter from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev," Document 84 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume VI: Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v06/d84>

disarmament.²²⁹ Although Kennedy “unsuccessfully marshalled disarmament,” his advocacy for action against increasing stockpiles of nuclear weapons demonstrates a dramatic shift in the president, and represented a sharp contrast from the man who reached the Oval Office on the tails of a campaign heavily focused on the closure of a non-existent missile gap.²³⁰ His comprehension of the dangers of nuclear war ensured that his position reflected his desire to prevent a similar crisis from erupting. Kennedy, demonstrating his commitment to solving key issues, continued to engage Khrushchev with private communiques. In one such message to his Soviet counterpart, the president emphasized the “value” of “these confidential channels,” and that he shared Khrushchev’s view “that some trust is necessary for leading statesman of our two countries.”²⁴⁵ Kennedy’s messages are substantive because they reveal a great deal about the president. Not only had he grasped the real dangers and limitations of nuclear weapons, but he also developed a real understanding of how to ensure such crises were avoided by attempting to build co-existence. Despite Kennedy’s active role in attempting to cultivate détente, external factors coalesced to impede progress.

The burst of optimism that a significant change in the Cold War may occur in the shadow of the missile crisis was, however, again strained by external influences. Khrushchev’s position in the Kremlin was once more destabilized and criticisms from a former ally would further undermine his leadership. Khrushchev’s relationship with Communist China had slowly been deteriorating,

²²⁹ “Message from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev,” Document 87 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume VI: Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v06/d87>

²³⁰ Louise FitzSimons, *the Kennedy Doctrine*, 238.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid* at 243.

and by 1962-1963 the Sino-Soviet Split was obvious to the American intelligence community.²³¹ Mao Zedong and the Chinese government in Peking was highly critical of the resolution to the crisis, denouncing Khrushchev's leadership and "caution of the Soviets towards the United States" as the "*embourgeoisement*" of the USSR.²³² CIA intelligence reported "the Soviet back down on Cuba has increased Khrushchev's vulnerability to charges by China and his opponents... that his basic strategy of co-existence has failed," undermining his control over the politburo.²³³ The Chinese criticism struck a blow to Khrushchev's prestige within the communist world and the chairman needed a diplomatic victory to reinforce his stature. Chinese criticism of the Soviet government would continue to intensify, forcing the embattled Khrushchev to seek some policy success wherever possible. Foreign Policy advisor Chester Bowles noted during one exchange in Moscow that Khrushchev "seemed at times to be virtually pleading for some sign from us" that would help make his burdens lighter and his "task easier."²³⁴²³⁵ Bowles' comments underscored the considerable tension within the Kremlin that had only begun to mount following the missile crisis. Like internal dissent against Khrushchev, the criticisms from the Chinese government would exacerbate matters as the year wore on.

The Cuban Missile Crisis produced a glaring need between Washington and Moscow for instant communication. During the missile crisis, communication was slow between the two governments, and the potential of events spinning out of control in the Caribbean could have had

²³¹ "Memorandum on the Substance of Discussion at a Department of State-Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting," Document 298 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d289> .

²³² John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II*, 173-174.

²³³ "Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency," Document 269 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d289>

²³⁴ "Letter from Ambassador-at-Large Chester Bowles to Ambassador-at-Large Llewelyn Thompson," Document

²³⁵ in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d267>

dire consequences. The speed in which a nuclear strike could be ordered and delivered was a threat too great to ignore, and raised the potential for an escalation to the use of nuclear weapons without official government sanction.²³⁶ Foy Kohler, in a telegram from Moscow, recognized the importance of a hot line between the two governments, but he also identified the President's conviction in the matter. Kohler stated Kennedy believed "more than any man I have ever known, in the value of communications," evident since October.²³⁷ Recognizing the importance of rapid communications, the missile crisis led directly to the installation of the hot line. While not a perfect solution to avoiding unintentional escalation, particularly as rocketry and guidance technology advanced, the hot line would still increase security and limit the opportunities for accidental nuclear war. Its creation also demonstrated the president's layered approach to containing the threat of a devastating exchange.

The immediate relationship after the missile crisis was much more positive, however little traction was gained, and external events continued to impede diplomatic progress. Khrushchev worried that the United States would adopt a harder line on the USSR, similar to Adenauer and De Gaulle, however the governments of West Germany and France were actually displeased with Kennedy.²³⁸ Arthur Schlesinger noted that De Gaulle's criticism of the "Grand Design" was likely a response to the missile crisis because "it showed that the United States in emergencies would act on its own, without NATO consultation."²⁵³ The French president began to openly criticize Washington's commitment to Europe, openly doubting any real response to any potential Soviet

²³⁶ "Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State," Document 283 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d267>

²³⁷ *Ibid* at 251.

²³⁸ "Current Intelligence Weekly Review," Document 284 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d284> ²⁵³ Schlesinger, *a Thousand Days*, 869.

aggression. De Gaulle publically stated “no one in the world... can say whether, when, how, or to what extent the American nuclear arms would be used to defend Europe,” which led to his insistence on continuing to build the French nuclear arsenal regardless of potential U.S. objection.²³⁹ De Gaulle’s position would impede progress towards a test ban treaty because French involvement was key to an agreement. Khrushchev stated in 1961 that a test ban required French participation, yet the general’s refusal to accept submarines with Polaris missiles and his insistence on maintaining a nuclear program imposed a new barrier to the test ban.²⁴⁰ De Gaulle’s nationalistic rhetoric was problematic for Kennedy, and yet he was only one of the President’s obstacles in Europe. The General’s concern over American defense of Europe was an ongoing problem for President Kennedy.

West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer posed another challenge for Kennedy. Adenauer’s close relationship with the French government worried the President and he grew concerned that “Germany might follow his [de Gaulle’s] lead,” and reject Kennedy’s “Grand Design.”²⁴¹ While this potential course of action complicated the goal of a united Europe, including one that would eschew further nuclear testing, another serious concern motivated the German Chancellor. Although the city was well behind the iron curtain, the German government could not waver from their commitment to protect Berlin. Adenauer had previously warned against summits with the USSR and instead commented on the need to “guard against Soviet attempts to gain control of West Berlin.”²⁴² His reluctance to engage in diplomatic overtures with the USSR would have contributed to the enduring stalemate in Europe. Furthermore, Adenauer antagonized the East

²³⁹ Schlesinger, *a Thousand Days*, 870.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid* at 253.

²⁴¹ Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy; Profile in Power*, 533-534.

²⁴² Peter Lane, *the Postwar World; an Introduction*, 271.

by stating only West Germany “had the right to represent ‘Germany’,” as the communist government was “not a sovereign state.”²⁴³ The German Chancellor’s objections to dialogue with the USSR obstructed progress on the Berlin issue. A review of US intelligence on January 25, 1963 identified the Soviets’ “desire to hold the door open for a resumption of the Berlin dialogue,” however Adenauer’s rejection of Soviet presence in East Germany would likely impede progress.²⁴⁴

President Kennedy was not alone in facing external and internal pressure. While Kennedy attempted to determine how to deal with the French and West German governments, Khrushchev’s position was deteriorating amid international criticism. After months of increasing scrutiny, internal and external pressure was beginning to force Khrushchev’s attention away from developing a relationship with the West. The Chinese government continued to attack Khrushchev, and he was noticeably “weighed down by burdens in public.”²⁴⁵ Foy Kohler reported the Sino-Soviet split was adversely affecting Khrushchev’s leadership and ability to pursue diplomatic overtures because it undermined his prestige in the communist world. Kohler, in a memo to the Department of State, noted “an unmistakable change in the Soviet posture during the past six weeks,” which he suggested was “likely a result of deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations.”²⁴⁶ Furthermore, the test ban treaty, the target of both governments’ interest, was seemingly at risk.

²⁴³ Lane, *the Postwar World*, 275.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid* at 253.

²⁴⁵ “Telegram from Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State,” Document 304 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v05/d304>

²⁴⁶ *Ibid* at 261.

The U.S. Department of State was unclear of “Soviet intentions with regard to [the] test ban,” as on-site inspections continued to be contentious.²⁴⁷ Additionally, criticism from China increased pressure on Khrushchev to adopt a harder line.²⁴⁸²⁴⁹ These factors forced Khrushchev to focus primarily on solving internal issues and deterred him from the West. Llewelyn Thompson reported to Dean Rusk the inability of the Soviet leader to focus on détente, disarmament or a test ban. Thompson, however, remarked that there was some cause for optimism by stating “I think that whenever Khrushchev’s internal situation is improved we can expect further Soviet moves, and possibly radical ones in the field of foreign affairs.”²⁵⁰

President Kennedy, despite the obstacles facing both the U.S. and Soviet governments, continued to push for improved diplomatic relations. In an effort to engage the Soviet leader directly, minutes from a Department of State meeting reveal that Rusk advised the president to seek a “closed meeting.”²⁵¹ The opportunity to achieve some kind of rapprochement with the USSR was seemingly best enshrined by a test ban treaty. A successful negotiation of a test ban “would help” in the search for “areas of agreement” between the two governments.²⁵² Kennedy, well aware of Khrushchev’s domestic situation, discussed the possibility of a test ban with British

²⁴⁷ “Telegram from the Department of State Delegation to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee at Geneva,” Document 296 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d296>

²⁴⁸ “Memorandum by the Central Intelligence Agency,” Document 305 in Foreign Relations of the United States

²⁴⁹ -1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d305>

²⁵⁰ “Memorandum from Ambassador-at-Large Llewelyn Thompson to Dean Rusk,” Document 306 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d306>

²⁵¹ “Highlights from the Secretary of State’s Policy Planning Meeting,” Document 309 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v05/d309>

²⁵² *Ibid* at 266.

Prime Minister Macmillan. Macmillan and Kennedy had previously attempted to make progress on a test ban with the USSR, and their working relationship continued. Kennedy stated that Khrushchev had “too many problems on his hands,” but that “does not mean we should drop all conversation with the Soviets on a test ban.”²⁵³ Kennedy’s determination to work towards a test ban would be tested amid the hardening of Soviet policy and contributed to the formation of a bilateral working relationship with the British government.

Confusion over Soviet policy continued into April 1963. At the beginning of the month, Dean Rusk discussed with President Kennedy the ambiguity of Soviet-U.S. relations. The SinoSoviet split demanded Khrushchev’s increasing inflexibility and Department of State reported the Soviet government was in “a period of reassessment and of having yet to decide what their attitude and policies towards the West should be.”²⁵⁴ Khrushchev himself was facing intensified criticism. Contemporary intelligence noted “that there is an opposition to Khrushchev seems undeniable,” as their attacks “are growing bolder.”²⁵⁵ The Premier was forced to continue hardening his line against the United States in an attempt to gain some concessions to enhance his standing. Although the Soviets had yet to officially determine their stance towards the United States, communications from Moscow created friction in Washington. The two governments had continued working towards a test ban, however the likelihood of an agreement appeared to be fading. Robert Kennedy’s meeting with Anatoly Dobrynin, demonstrated Soviet antagonism. Kennedy received a letter from Khrushchev to which he described as “very insulting” to the point

²⁵³ “Editorial Note,” Document 310 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d310>

²⁵⁴ “Memorandum from Dean Rusk to President Kennedy,” Document 312 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d312>

²⁵⁵ “Current Intelligence Weekly Review,” Document 317 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d317>

where he refused to share it with the president.²⁵⁶ Additionally, Soviet posture with regard to U.S. overflights of Cuba became more forceful. Prior to any Soviet statements on surveillance of Cuba, Llewelyn Thompson predicted the possibility of Soviet policy hardening, particularly on their Cuban installation.²⁵⁷ Merely three days after Thompson sent the memo to Rusk, he confirmed his prediction with regards to the situation in the Caribbean. Khrushchev voiced his increasing vexation by émigré raids (which were ongoing, however they were limited and ineffective) on Cuba and U.S. overflights, and reinforced his frustration at the need for more on-site inspections with regard to the test ban.²⁵⁸ As April progressed, Washington's expectations on the likelihood of a test ban had nearly evaporated. Foy Kohler informed both President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan that Khrushchev's attitude towards the treaty was "of disinterest," and that Berlin was the issue in which he sought movement.²⁵⁹ Although Khrushchev had consented to a high-level meeting, it appeared as though Soviet policy would remain similar to before the missile crisis.

Amid the growing cynicism in Washington about a test ban or progress on other key issues, disarmament or non-proliferation, Kennedy defied expectations and continued to work towards achieving his goal of a ban. Despite the "insulting" letter received by his brother, the President showed considerable determination to break the deadlock. Kennedy disregarded Khrushchev's tone in the letter, and instead moved to clear "away as much of this misunderstanding as possible,"

²⁵⁶ "Editorial Note," Document 314 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d314>

²⁵⁷ "Memorandum from Llewelyn Thompson to Dean Rusk," Document 313 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d313>

²⁵⁸ "Memorandum from Llewelyn Thompson to Dean Rusk," Document 315 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d315>

²⁵⁹ "Editorial Note," Document 316 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d316> ²⁷⁴ *Ibid* at 273.

rather than engage his counterpart's hostility.²⁷⁴ The Department of State successfully agreed to arrange private, high-level meetings between governments in an attempt to maintain a peaceful dialogue, and yet the USSR leadership remained disinterested. Kennedy attempted to downplay disagreement on on-site inspections again as a misunderstanding, and pushed for a meeting between Dean Rusk and a representative from the USSR in Moscow.²⁶⁰ Undaunted by the lack of progress with the Soviets, the President remained committed to resuming "the search for areas of common interest" to build trust with the USSR.²⁷⁶ Fortunately, in early May, Khrushchev appeared to have gained some ground against his detractors in Moscow. When the chairman successfully regained some traction, it gave him greater flexibility to produce an agreement with Washington and attempt to overturn the precedent of hostility.

In early May 1963, McGeorge Bundy and Anatoly Dobrynin were discussing U.S.-USSR relations. Dobrynin indicated that he regretted the lack of progress on the test ban, particularly amid further exacerbation of the Sino-Soviet split. Moscow was growing concerned over China's nuclear program, which he identified as "a matter of real common interest" between the United States and the Soviet Union.²⁶¹ Dobrynin's comments reflect a marked contrast between the Soviet position merely a month earlier and demonstrating that Khrushchev had "succeeded in regaining the initiative in leadership."²⁷⁸ Although Khrushchev's position improved, it did not guarantee

²⁶⁰ "Message from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev," Document 100 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume VI: Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v06/d100> ²⁷⁶ Arthur Schlesinger, *a Thousand Days*, 889.

²⁶¹ "Memorandum of Conversation between McGeorge Bundy and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin," Document 322 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d322> ²⁷⁸ Linden, *Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership* (1990), 174. ²⁷⁹ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 499.

immediate success or progress. The issue of on-site inspection remained, and Khrushchev was unwilling to give ground, remarking that the American insistence on such a measure was a sign of “arrogance.”²⁷⁹ Dobrynin later “reiterated” the “well established line... of Soviet disappointment,” a reaction familiar to Administration staff.²⁶²

The test ban had become a key issue, yet the USSR was also keen address numerous other issues, including a NATO-Warsaw Pact agreement.²⁶³ Furthermore, Cuba remained a contentious point between both governments and memories of the missile crisis remained fresh. The dialogue between the two nations clearly had improved, and yet the impasse had yet to be breached. Although “hostility seemed to drain out of the bilateral relationship,” political complications remained.²⁶⁴ The likelihood of conflict had decreased between the United States and the Soviets, but trust between the two nations was “too low to produce a test ban treaty” and had little rehabilitation since the missile crisis.²⁶⁵ Sensing the need for a greater outward sign of his peaceful intentions, the President opted to use his June 10, 1963 commencement address to the American University as a platform to articulate his vision for co-existence. The speech would have an important effect on the continuing development of U.S.-USSR relations.

The American University speech had some relevance for Castro and Cuba, however Kennedy’s address focused largely on achieving détente with the Soviet Union. During this speech,

²⁶² “Telegram from Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State,” Document 327 in in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v05/d327>

²⁶³ “Memorandum of Conversation between Dean Rusk and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin,” Document 323 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d323>

²⁶⁴ Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *Americas Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009), Kindle E-Book Version. Chapter 5: Nuclear Rubicon.

²⁶⁵ Rorabaugh, *Kennedy and the Promise of the Sixties*, 53.

the President remarked on the inherent dangers of nuclear war, stating “total war makes no sense in an age where great powers can maintain large and relatively invulnerable nuclear forces and refuse to surrender without resort to those forces.”²⁶⁶ Furthermore, the President identified the dangers of nuclear testing and advocated for action against a weapon that “deadly poisons produced” would spread throughout the globe and effect “generations yet unborn.”²⁶⁷ The dangers of a protracted struggle between the West and the East was the main concern of the President’s statements, yet perhaps the most notable comment of the speech was his evaluation of the possibilities to move towards peace. Kennedy described the dangers and costs of nuclear weapons, yet he identifies the antagonistic attitude towards the Soviet Union needed re-examination. “I also believe that we must re-examine our own attitude... for our attitude is as essential as theirs,” Kennedy intoned. “And every graduate of this school, every thoughtful citizen who despairs of war and wishes to bring peace, should begin by looking inward.”²⁶⁸ The significance of the speech was that it very clearly demonstrates the change in President Kennedy. Contrary to the narrative of the Cold War since the Truman Administration, Kennedy channelled his experience on the brink of nuclear war into proactive and positive diplomacy with the USSR. His statements reflected not an appreciation for communism, but a recognition of the accomplishments and sacrifices of the Soviet people.²⁶⁹ Towards the end of his address, the president announced that a test ban negotiation would take place in Moscow, in addition to placing a moratorium on U.S. testing and gave his assurance the United States would “not be the first to resume.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ “Commencement Address at American University, June 10th 1963,” last update not specified, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/BWC7I4C9QUmLG9J6I8oy8w.aspx>

²⁶⁷ *Ibid* at 285.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid* at 285.

²⁶⁹ Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profiles in Power*, 514.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid* at 285.

The American University speech initiated a rapid move towards negotiation and agreement between the U.S. and the Soviets which cultivated an “era of budding détente.”²⁷¹ U.S. Ambassador Foy Kohler noted there was no new thinking on disarmament, however Kennedy sensed the opportunity for some diplomatic achievements with the test ban and continued to press for progress.²⁷² Khrushchev’s reaction to the speech was positive, commenting it was “the best speech by an American president since Roosevelt,” and “for the first time since 1960,” he “appeared ready to agree to a nuclear test ban treaty.”²⁷³ Almost immediately afterwards, test ban negotiations were renewed in earnest. Kennedy demonstrated his desire to accomplish some agreement by sending Averell Harriman, an experience diplomat with whom Khrushchev had a good rapport.²⁷⁴ The treaty negotiations took considerable efforts by all participants, despite the mutual interest in accomplishing this goal, and success was not a foregone conclusion. The number of on-site inspections continued to vex negotiators and a ban on underground testing seemed unlikely. The U.S. representatives pushed for six or seven inspections per year, whereas their Soviet counterparts were unwilling to go above three, which he later rescinded.²⁷⁵ The issue of onsite inspections had persisted since the missile crisis, and it was a conflict Kennedy expected to be renewed. Undaunted in his desire to accomplish some agreement, Harriman was authorized to tentatively accept a limited test ban that excluded underground testing.²⁷⁶ The president’s concern over nuclear war

²⁷¹ Thomas G. Paterson, *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 52.

²⁷² “Telegram from Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State,” Document 330 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v05/d330>

²⁷³ Barbara Leaming, *Jack Kennedy; the Education of a Statesman* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 416.

²⁷⁴ Leaming, *Jack Kennedy*, 429.

²⁷⁵ “Editorial Note,” Document 338 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d338>

²⁷⁶ “Editorial Note,” Document 332 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d332> ²⁹⁵ *Ibid* at 295.

fueled his drive to limit testing, and he was keenly aware that signing the treaty could prevent a “more difficult arms race.”²⁹⁵

As test ban negotiations gained momentum, another change between the two governments was being implemented. Kennedy and Khrushchev, in addition to administration staff and the Presidium, recognized during the missile crisis the need for rapid communication, and finally one was to be put in place. Edited by McGeorge Bundy, NSAM No. 255 created a direct link between Moscow and Washington.²⁷⁷ NSAM No. 255 dictated that the hot line be placed within the Pentagon and under the direction of the Secretary of Defense. The hot line was to be permanently staffed and carefully regulated.²⁹⁷ While a small measure, the potential harm avoided was immense. Ensuring effective communication reduced the potential of accidental nuclear war and misunderstanding between the United States and the U.S.S.R. The hot line also demonstrated that Moscow and Washington could make some positive overtures in the interest of international security, despite their mutual history of distrust and antagonism.

The most significant movement towards achieving a test ban treaty began to coalesce in July 1963, and President Kennedy remained determined to reach an agreement. Khrushchev commented on the test ban treaty later that month, dismissing the possibility of underground inspections being included in the final document. Premier Khrushchev indicated Soviet “readiness to conclude an agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water,” shelving the issue of underground testing.²⁷⁸ Although the prospective treaty did not yet include a provision on underground testing, it precipitated a historic agreement. Despite the

²⁷⁷ “Editorial Note,” Document 333 in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d333> ²⁹⁷ *Ibid* at 297.

²⁷⁸ “Editorial Note,” Document 335 in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d335>

refusal of France and China, two key nuclear powers, to sign the treaty, countless other nations rapidly agreed to the ban. The speed in which the test ban was initialled is a testament to the prescience and symbolic power of the president's American University Speech and his continued dedication to an agreement. Edmund Ions, a former lecturer in politics, notes the treaty came after months of hard work, but was accelerated by Kennedy's speech. Ions states "a comprehensive test ban treaty [signed] by ninety-nine nations... within four months of this speech" to reinforce the speed that pre-empted the initialing of the treaty.²⁷⁹ Dean Rusk noted the test ban was the beginning of a more comprehensive agreement, and yet the likelihood of its success merely a year earlier had not been possible.²⁸⁰ Negotiations continued in Moscow and the Limited Test Ban Treaty was initialled on July 25, 1963.²⁸¹

The treaty was indeed limited, but its symbolic value was intangible and Kennedy's leadership was crucial. Author John Mason stated "the half-decade from 1957-1962 has been called the 'nuclear epoch,' a time when the danger of nuclear was greater than ever before or since" to illustrate the importance of the test ban.²⁸² Kennedy actively worked with Macmillan and Khrushchev towards this treaty for months, and remained open to negotiations despite Soviet disinterest and inner turmoil. Khrushchev's delicate position forced him into a harder stance, and yet Kennedy remained open to any diplomatic growth despite his counterparts' disinterest and occasional frustration towards the United States. The difficulty in negotiations demonstrates Kenneth Thompson's claim the treaty demonstrated "the need for presidential leadership if you

²⁷⁹ Edmund Ions, *the Politics of John F. Kennedy* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1967), 133.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid* at 299.

²⁸¹ "Editorial Note," Document 338 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d338>

²⁸² John W. Mason, *the Cold War 1945-1991*, 29.

want anything to happen,” in addition to the president’s commitment to a test ban.²⁸³ The credibility of each government was boosted by the agreement and the possibility for further developments was open. Establishing some possibility for diplomatic progress created a precedent and “reversed the trend of the previous years, and began to build much needed trust... both powers seemed to reconvene the Cold War.”³⁰⁴

Critics of the treaty are quick to note that the test ban was not guaranteed to prevent nuclear war or even proliferation, yet they tend to overlook its importance towards achieving those goals. Noam Chomsky disputed the value of a test ban by downplaying even its symbolic significance. Chomsky notes the test ban “did not impede the technological advance in nuclear weaponry, which is what was important to U.S. strategic planners.”³⁰⁵ It would be folly to refute the limitations of the test ban, but what Chomsky seems to ignore is the ban was not exclusively for the benefit of U.S. strategy, but also a matter of long term health and sustainability. The test ban demonstrated a diplomatic breakthrough between two hostile governments and was a substantive achievement. Kennedy’s statements during the American University address indicate his concerns the “poisons” from nuclear weapons and their long-term effects on the “unborn.”²⁸⁴ Furthermore, contemporary statements on the treaty do not demonstrate an attitude of complacency, but one dedicated to furthering this early agreement. The Kennedy Administration would soon reach its tragic conclusion, and the ability to negotiate further would be dramatically limited. The treaty ensured some diplomatic progress between the communist and democratic worlds, an important step in

²⁸³ Kenneth W. Thompson, *the Kennedy Presidency*, 214.

³⁰⁴ Craig and Logevall, *Americas Cold War*, XXX ³⁰⁵

Noam Chomsky, *Rethinking Camelot*, 143.

²⁸⁴ Rorabaugh, *Kennedy and the Promise of the Sixties*, 53.

averting a nuclear exchange. Despite the success between the two superpowers, the agreement was not universally hailed as a success.

The test ban was an important treaty in the history of the Cold War, however it created problems amongst key allies. Charles Bohlen, U.S. ambassador to France, noted how the agreement had impacted their relationship with De Gaulle. The rift with France was evident during Kennedy's recent trip to Europe in which the general refused to see the President. Kennedy met with Adenauer in West Berlin, where he made his infamous "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" remarks and virtually denounced communism, a rhetorical move that ran contrary to his American University speech.²⁸⁵ Adenauer's concern also rested on Khrushchev's continued attempts to force the recognition of East Germany.²⁸⁶ Regardless, the agreement undermined U.S. credibility in France and Germany, as De Gaulle and Adenauer continued to doubt Kennedy's commitment to European security.²⁸⁷ Both the Americans and the Soviets were committed to "prevent the diffusion of nuclear weapons," furthering De Gaulle's fear that Kennedy would not intervene against Soviet aggression and helped sustain the independent French nuclear program.²⁸⁸ Although Kennedy recognized the damage this agreement would cause with two major allies, the President pursued the agreement to establish some level of trust with the USSR and to make some progress towards eliminating nuclear fallout. His dedication was equally forceful in the United States.

²⁸⁵ Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy; Profiles in Power*, 536.

²⁸⁶ "Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency," Document 347 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d347>

²⁸⁷ "Telegram from Embassy in France to the Department of State," Document 340 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus196163v05/d340>

²⁸⁸ "Telegram from Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State," Document 301 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume VII: Arms Control and Disarmament, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v07/comp1> ³¹¹
Schlesinger, *a Thousand Days*, 910-911.

The importance of ratifying the treaty was not lost on Kennedy and the difficulty Congress might pose to the process concerned the President.³¹¹ Aware of the damages caused by Congress failing to agree on the Treaty of Versailles, Kennedy worked quickly to ensure the treaty's passage. Ted Sorenson remarked on his tenacity to ensure the treaty passed stating "Kennedy actively, preemptively and skillfully" to achieve this goal.²⁸⁹ When the treaty went to the Senate, it was debated for nearly three weeks. The Senate voted on September 24, 1963 to ratify the treaty in a vote of 80 to 19.²⁹⁰ The ratification of the Limited Test Ban Treaty was a significant international accomplishment Kennedy took great pride in. After spending a year attempting to establish some relationship with Khrushchev, the President finally succeeded in adjusting the course of the Cold War. Despite the limitations of the treaty, both sides agreed it "could lead to a real turning point."²⁹¹ The treaty did not mark the end of improving U.S.-USSR relations, but it was the final diplomatic triumph President Kennedy would achieve with Khrushchev. Dean Rusk commented on August 5, the day the agreement was signed, there was plenty of talk between the two nations regarding peace and possibility.²⁹² The Soviet government temporarily shelved discussion on the Berlin issue and instead focused on trade. Khrushchev was hoping to increase trade and companies within the United States were lobbying for relaxed trade regulations with the Soviet Union.²⁹³ The possibility of improved trade with the Soviets opened another avenue for potential discussion between the superpowers, and again Kennedy demonstrated his flexibility and willingness to seize such

²⁸⁹ Theodore C. Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), 737.

²⁹⁰ "Treaty Banning Nuclear Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Underwater," last updated not specified, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4797.htm>

²⁹¹ "Memorandum of Conversation," Document 363 in Foreign Relations of the United States Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d363>

²⁹² "Telegram from Dean Rusk to the Department of State," Document 344 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d344>

²⁹³ "Memorandum of Conversation," Document 346 in Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d346> ³¹⁷ Reeves, *Profile of Power*, 619.

opportunities. Shortly after the test ban's ratification, the President announced a U.S. company was selling 150 million bushels of American wheat to the Soviet Union.³¹⁷ Kennedy, obviously aware of the potential transaction, stated he had no intention to prevent the deal from being completed. Kennedy's willingness to allow the deal demonstrated greater movement in an area Khrushchev was interested in exploring. Kennedy, potentially interested in trade as a distraction from Berlin, continued to embrace overtures with the USSR.

President Kennedy's assassination prevented any further movement towards détente. Although his foreign policy in 1963 demonstrably revealed a much softer approach to the Soviet Union than his pre-crisis positions, one dedicated to diplomatic success, progress did not continue into his successor's administration. The trust that had been established between the two nations rested significantly on Kennedy and Khrushchev's lonely experience on the brink, and when President Johnson took office, that rapport had vanished because Khrushchev was no longer negotiating with his counterpart during the missile crisis. Although Johnson was a member of ExComm, his contribution to the crisis was minimal. Kennedy was a crucial negotiating partner for Khrushchev because their shared experience helped to generate trust. Andrei Gromyko commented on the relationship, stating "the tensions generated by the Caribbean Crisis forced world leaders to take a fresh look at international relations," and none more importantly than Kennedy and Khrushchev.²⁹⁴ The President's death created a confusion in which bilateral relations would be unable to recover. Khrushchev later remarked "when Kennedy was assassinated, I was worried... how our relations would develop after that. I had confidence in Kennedy," to underscore

²⁹⁴ Anatolii Gromyko, *Through Russian Eyes*, 168.

the disruption in détente the assassination had been.²⁹⁵ Furthermore, the President and Khrushchev also had developed their relationship to the point where some trust had been established.

Khrushchev reflected on the deceased President and stated Kennedy was “trustworthy,” providing a basis for advance in their relationship.

The Cuban Missile Crisis had a long-reaching effect on President Kennedy and he became much more active in his attempts to achieve diplomatic progress. Gromyko noted “there is every reason to believe Kennedy’s movement towards more judicious actions as influenced by the Caribbean crisis,” and by closely examining his determination through his final year in office, Gromyko’s observation is clearly correct.²⁹⁶ The president’s actions were consistently dedicated to creating the opportunity to make an agreement, and never moved to permanently end negotiations or close down potential avenues for discussion. Despite Khrushchev’s serious internal difficulties and relentless critiques from the Chinese, the President remained patient and continued to push for a deal, amid “insulting” letters from the Premier. Furthermore, Kennedy remained malleable in the eventual negotiations, willing to compromise to make any agreement and work towards a more wide-ranging treaty later. Although the President demonstrated “personal and historic satisfaction at the signing of the test ban,” his ideas for improving relations was insatiable and he refused to rest on prior achievements.²⁹⁷ He instead continuously worked towards greater accomplishments and initiatives with the Soviet Union, defying the Cold War precedent. Although the test ban became the central focus of his diplomacy, it is clear he had a number of other ideas to make the world a safer place. Disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons had been

²⁹⁵ Nikita Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, 353.

²⁹⁶ Gromyko, 212.

²⁹⁷ Kenneth P. O’Donnell and David F. Powers with Joe McCarthy, “*Johnny we Hardly Knew Ye;*” *Memoirs of John Fitzgerald Kennedy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 381.

recurring themes throughout his tenure, and the political atmosphere created by the conclusion of the missile crisis provided the fertile ground with which such a discussions could be advanced. Kennedy's work towards a more peaceful world is a testament to his learning during the missile crisis in which the Soviet Union and the United States both benefitted. During the last year of the President's life, his foreign policy towards the USSR became much more tolerant and patient because Kennedy and Khrushchev both actively sought to prevent a nuclear war.

Chapter V: Conclusion

In the canon of American History, the Cuban Missile Crisis has remained a flashpoint. The fear of an imminent nuclear holocaust was palpable in October 1962, and the world braced for war. As the pressure mounted, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev were aware of the possibility the conflict would escalate beyond their control and each grew concerned about what “little time” was left to avoid war.²⁹⁸ After exchanging a number of letters, a deal appeared possible. Finally, the two cautiously reached an agreement and prevented a nuclear conflagration and “fortunately, the resolution was peaceful, and restraint and wisdom seemed to be the order of the day.”²⁹⁹ The peaceful resolution to the crisis allowed for “a definite thaw” in Soviet-American relations, and it appeared as though diplomatic success was possible.³⁰⁰ Progress from the missile crisis to the signing of the test ban was not a linear process and numerous obstacles would remain that required consistent dedication from the president. In his final year in office, Kennedy oversaw the signing of a test ban treaty and the initiation of détente with the USSR, a stark contrast to his lack of success with the Soviets in his first two years. The lack of progress in Kennedy’s first two years is not exclusively an indictment of the president’s performance, but a reflection on the hostile tone in international relations as well as a reflection of the general state of the Cold War at the dawn of the 1960s. Kennedy inherited a poisoned relationship with the USSR from President Eisenhower (arguably a relationship he inherited from Truman), and he initially did little to overcome the stalemate. Yet in 1963, Kennedy became a much more dynamic president and his success is a tribute to his activism. The early Kennedy Administration faced challenges that,

²⁹⁸ J. Wilson, *Britain on the Brink*, 101.

²⁹⁹ Joan & Robert Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: the 60s Experience in the Words of Those who Lived it* (2001), XVIII.

³⁰⁰ Edmund Ions, *the Politics of John F. Kennedy*, 144.

arguably, the commander in chief was not prepared for, and his performance reflects his trial by fire.

Kennedy's final year in office demonstrated his growth as a statesman most effectively. 1963 was a year of change in the president that has contributed to his legacy. As president, he at times struggled. He made some poor decisions, particularly the Bay of Pigs invasion, however he continued to learn from his mistakes. The education of the president was a slow and painful process, but the lessons he learned made him a greater statesman. His experience ensured that he diffused the Cuban Missile Crisis with great care, and his contribution was key. The missile crisis also ignited his desire to create a more peaceful world for his children and for future generations. His relentless pursuit of a test ban was not an exception, but the rule. Kennedy continuously pushed for improvements in several arenas throughout the year, including his unprecedented support of civil rights, peace, disarmament and a of course, the end of nuclear testing. The experience on the brink seems to have stoked the passion of the president, and he became much more engaged. By all accounts, Kennedy enjoyed being president.³⁰¹ He enjoyed the challenges and the responsibility, a shift from his apathy during his meeting with Congress on October 22. After being questioned by Congressional leaders, the president remarked to Hubert Humphrey, "if I'd known the job was this tough, I wouldn't have beaten you in West Virginia," reinforcing the strain and the difficulties of the office.³²⁶ The Cuban Missile Crisis awakened the president to the possibilities of the Oval Office, and his actions the following year demonstrate his commitment to creating a better world.

³⁰¹ Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 631. ³²⁶ Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 393.

The missile crisis was much less influential for U.S. policy in Cuba than the Soviet Union. Although the president realised the policy he had adopted from Eisenhower was stale, it took the missile crisis to shake Kennedy from his reverie and engage in new opportunities for improving his government's relationship with Cuba. In the remaining year of Kennedy's life, Cuba experienced "no comparable thaw" in foreign policy, however declassified documents reveal the president was working towards rapprochement.³⁰² During the Church Committee hearings in 1975, formerly classified documentation confirmed the overtures made by the Kennedy Administration and 1963.³²⁸ Despite Kennedy's attempts to overthrow Castro, the considerable body of evidence pointing to a failure of U.S. operations would likely have changed his perspective on the Cuban issue. Moreover, exile raids represented an unnecessary challenge to Kennedy's agenda and upset the balance of international relations, something he was dedicated to avoiding. It is difficult to predict where potential rapprochement would have lead the U.S. and Cuban governments, yet the actions of President Kennedy in his last year inspire some confidence an agreement was possible.

The thaw with the USSR was much more pronounced. Despite a long precedent of hostility and disagreement, the missile crisis finally created a condition whereby both powers could agree. Antagonism and difficulty would remain in the bilateral relationship, yet there was a definite thaw between the two. Both realised the immense destruction that each could cause, and were frightened by what could potentially force a confrontation. President Kennedy immediately "recognized the desirability of a new beginning in East-West" relations and he strived to continue cultivating fertile

³⁰² Sheldon Stern, *Averting the Final Failure: JFK and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings*, 412. ³²⁸ Douglass, *JFK and the Unspeakable*, 70.

ground in which to commence discussion.³⁰³ Khrushchev, like Kennedy, also worked towards improving relations in the aftermath of the crisis. Khrushchev “was attempting to broaden the détente policy with the west,” demonstrating his willingness to create better policy.³⁰⁴ The signing of the test ban treaty in addition to the creation of a hotline and the wheat exchange represented the possibility of growth between two bitter rivals. The missile crisis had greatly affected both leaders, and forced each to recognize the need for better communication and greater understanding. Until Kennedy’s assassination, the potential for détente seemed to be blooming.

In 1960, James MacGregor Burns wrote of the then-Senator “what great ideas does Kennedy personify?”³⁰⁵ At the time Burns was writing, the evidence would suggest Kennedy did not yet personify any great ideas. President Kennedy was profoundly impacted by the Cuban Missile Crisis, and as 1963 continued, he found his great idea. The possibility of nuclear war under his order haunted him and his determination to avoid a war continued undaunted. Sorenson later wrote that Kennedy spent more time in office “detering war” than any other single task.³⁰⁶ His actions in 1963 demonstrate a shift from simply preventing war, to actively seeking to prevent it by proactively working towards limitations. Kennedy’s re-evaluation of the world after the crisis promoted a peaceful and sustainable planet. Kennedy’s advisors “sensed that the pragmatic façade covered passion that sometimes broke through the exterior... the ability to learn, to care, and to feel deeply,” revealing that the President was genuinely working to improve the lives of his citizens

³⁰³ Leaming, *Jack Kennedy*, 233.

³⁰⁴ Linden, *Khrushchev and Soviet Leadership*, 201.

³⁰⁵ James MacGregor Burns, *John Kennedy; a Political Profile* (New York: Harcourt, 1960), 277.

³⁰⁶ Sorenson, *Kennedy*, 2.

and the world.³⁰⁷ Kennedy was not a perfect man, nor was he a perfect president. His aggression in Asia, the Caribbean, and against the USSR raises merited concerns about his character. Critics further contend that he accomplished little of anything substantial in the White House and reduce his legacy to his failures and assassination. Such a caricature is as inaccurate as one which focuses on his success and his ideals. Kennedy was a layered man who has puzzled historians as well as delighted or frustrated them. Despite his flaws and his virtues, he came to personify a great idea: preventing nuclear war. John F. Kennedy's leadership, drive, passion and dedication, brought out by the Cuban Missile Crisis, not only influenced U.S. policy, but the entire East-West dichotomy.

³⁰⁷ Herbert S. Parmet, *Jack; the Struggles of John F. Kennedy* (New York: the Dial Press, 1980), 520.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Government Publications

Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume V: Soviet Union*. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1998.

Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume VI: KennedyKhrushchev Exchanges*. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996.

Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume VII: Arms Control and Disarmament*. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1995.

Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume X/XI/XII: American Republics; Cuba 1961-1962; Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1998.

Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996.

Newspaper Articles

Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett, "In the Time of Crisis," *The Saturday Evening Post*, 18 December, 1962, <http://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/wp-content/uploads/satevepost/1962-1208-missile-crisis.pdf>

Speeches

"Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba, October 22nd, 1963," <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/sUvMChsB0moLfrBcaHaSg.aspx>

"Commencement Address at American University, June 10th 1963," last update not specified, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/BWC7I4C9QUmLG9J6I8oy8w.aspx>

Secondary Sources

Books

Abel, Elie, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1966).

Alvarez de Toledo, Lucia, *the Story of Che Guevera* (London: Harper Perennial, 2010).

Bagnall, Joseph A., *President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's Grand and Global Alliance; World Order for the New Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992).

Blight, James G., *The Shattered Crystal Ball: Fear and Learning in the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992).

Blight, James G., and Welch, David, *On the Brink* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1989).

Blight, James G., and Kornbluh, Peter, *Politics of Illusion; the Bay of Pigs Invasion Reexamined* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

Bradlee, Benjamin C., *Conversations with Kennedy* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1975).

Brumberg, Abraham, *Russia Under Khrushchev; An Anthology from Problems of Communism* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962).

Bronson, Harold E., *The Prevention of World War III; A Survey of Twentieth Century Events and Theories Which Help to Explain the Causes of War and How it Can be Abolished* (Regina: Prairie Fire Books, 1971).

Burns, James MacGregor, *John Kennedy; A Political Profile* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961).

Chayes, Abram, *International Crises and the Role of Law; the Cuban Missile Crisis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Chomsky, Noam, *The Chomsky Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987).

Chomsky, Noam, *Rethinking Camelot; JFK, the Vietnam War, and US Political Culture* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993).

Craig, Campbell and Logevall, Fredrik, *Americas Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009), Kindle E-Book Edition.

Dallek, Robert, *Camelot's Court; Inside the Kennedy White House* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013).

- Dallek, Robert, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2003).
- Divine, Robert A., *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971).
- Douglass, James W., *JFK and the Unspeakable; Why he died and why it Mattered* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008).
- FitzSimons, Louise, *the Kennedy Doctrine* (New York: Random House, 1972).
- Fursenko, Aleksandr, and Naftali, Timothy, *“One Hell of a Gamble;” Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy 1958-1964* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997).
- Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Cold War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005).
- Gaddis, John Lewis, *We Now Know; Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
- George, Alice L., *Awaiting Armageddon; How Americans Faced the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
- Gibson, David R., *Talk at the Brink; Deliberation and Decision During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
- Giglio, James N., *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991).
- Gromyko, Anatolii Andreievich, *Through Russian Eyes: President Kennedy’s 1036 Days* (Washington D.C., International Library Inc., 1973).
- Heale, M. J., *the Sixties in America; History, Politics and Protest* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001).
- Hersh, Seymour M., *the Dark Side of Camelot* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1997).
- Higgins, Trumbull, *the Perfect Failure; Kennedy, Eisenhower, and the CIA at the Bay of Pigs* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1987).
- Ions, Edmund S., *the Politics of John F. Kennedy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967).
- Kennedy, Robert, *Thirteen Days; A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1968).
- Kim, Young Hum, *Twenty Years of Crises: The Cold War Era* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968).
- Khrushchev, Nikita, translated by Talbott, Strobe, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).
- Khrushchev, Nikita, translated by Shriver, George, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev, Volume III; Statesman [1953-1964]* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

- Larson, David, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin Company, 1963).
- Lane, Peter, *The Postwar World; an Introduction* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1987).
- Leaming, Barbara, *Jack Kennedy; the Education of a Statesman* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006).
- Linden, Carl A., *Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990).
- MacKenzie, G. Calvin and Weisbrot, Robert, *The Liberal Hour and the Politics of Change* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008).
- Mason, John W., *The Cold War 1945-1991* (London: Routledge, 1996).
- May, Ernest R. and Zelikow, Philip D., *the Kennedy Tapes; Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997).
- McCauley, Martin, *Khrushchev and Khrushchevism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987).
- McNamara, Robert, *the Essence of Security; Reflections in Office* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).
- Morrison, Joan and Morrison, Robert K., *From Camelot to Kent State; The Sixties in the Words of Those Who Lived It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Munton, Don and Welch, David A., *The Cuban Missile Crisis: a Concise History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Newcomb, Joan I., *John F. Kennedy; An Annotated Bibliography* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1977).
- O'Brien, Michael, *Rethinking Kennedy; an Interpretive Biography* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009).
- O'Donnell, Kenneth P., Powers, David F., and McCarthy, Joe, "*Johnny, we Hardly Knew Ye*"; *Memoirs of John Fitzgerald Kennedy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).
- Pachter, Henry M., *Collision Course; the Cuban Missile Crisis and Coexistence* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963).
- Parmet, Herbert S., *Jack; The Struggles of John F. Kennedy* (New York: The Dial Press, 1980).
- Paterson, Thomas G., *Kennedy's Quest for Victory; American Foreign Policy 1961-1963* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- Plimpton, George, *American Journey; The Times of Robert Kennedy* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1971).
- Pope, Ronald R., *Soviet Views on the Cuban Missile Crisis; Myth and Reality in Foreign Policy Analysis* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1982).

- Russo, Gus and Molton, Stephen, *Brothers in Arms; the Kennedys, the Castros, and the Politics of Murder* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008).
- Rorabaugh, W. J., *Kennedy and the Promise of the Sixties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Reeves, Richard, *President Kennedy; Profile of Power* (New York: Touchstone, 1993).
- Reeves, Thomas C., *A Question of Character; A Life of John F. Kennedy* (New York: the Free Press, 1991).
- Schlesinger, Arthur M., *A Thousand Days; John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965).
- Schlesinger, Arthur M., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978).
- Schreker, Ellen, *Many are the Crimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).
- Scott, Len, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Threat of Nuclear War* (London: Bloomsbury Academics, 2007).
- Scott, L.V., *Macmillan, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 1999).
- Silvestri, Vito N., *Becoming JFK; a Profile in Communication* (Westport: Praeger, 2000).
- Sloyan, Patrick J., *the Politics of Deception; JFK's Secret Decisions on Vietnam, Civil Rights and Cuba* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015).
- Sorensen, Theodore C., *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965).
- Spanier, John, *American Policy Since World War II 8th Edition* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1980).
- Stein, Jean, *American Journey: The Times of Robert Kennedy* (New York: Harcourt, Bruce, Jovanovich, 1970).
- Stern, Sheldon M., *The Week the World Stood Still: Inside the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
- Stern, Sheldon M., *Averting 'the Final Failure'; John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- Talbot, David, *Brothers; The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (New York: Free Press, 2007).
- Thomas, Evan; *Robert Kennedy; His Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

Thompson, Kenneth W., *Portraits of American Presidents Volume IV; the Kennedy Presidency; Seventeen Intimate Perspectives of John F. Kennedy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985).

Thompson, Robert Smith, *The Missiles of October* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

Walton, R.J., *Cold War and Counterrevolution* (New York: the Viking Press, 1972).

Widmer, Ted, *Listening In; The Secret White House Recordings of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Hyperion, 2012).

White, Mark J., *the Cuban Missile Crisis* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1996).

Whitfield, Stephen J., *the Culture of the Cold War, Second Edition* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

Wiener, Jon, *How we Forgot the Cold War; A Historical Journey Across America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Weiner, Tim, *Legacy of Ashes; The History of the CIA* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007).

Wilson, Jim, *Britain on the Brink; The Cold War's Most Dangerous Weekend, 27-28 October 1962* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2012).

Wofford, Harris, *Of Kennedy's and Kings; Making Sense of the Sixties* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980).

Online Sources

“Treaty Banning Nuclear Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Underwater,” last updated not specified, accessed June 12, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4797.htm>

“November 22nd, 1962; Death of the President,” last updated unspecified, accessed May 28, 2015, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/November-22-1963-Death-of-thePresident.aspx>

Dr. Mark White, “Robert Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis, last updated 2007, accessed May 28, 2015, http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2007/0709/whit/white_rfk.html