

Minute by Minute

The Role of Intelligence in the Cuban Missile Crisis



Second Edition



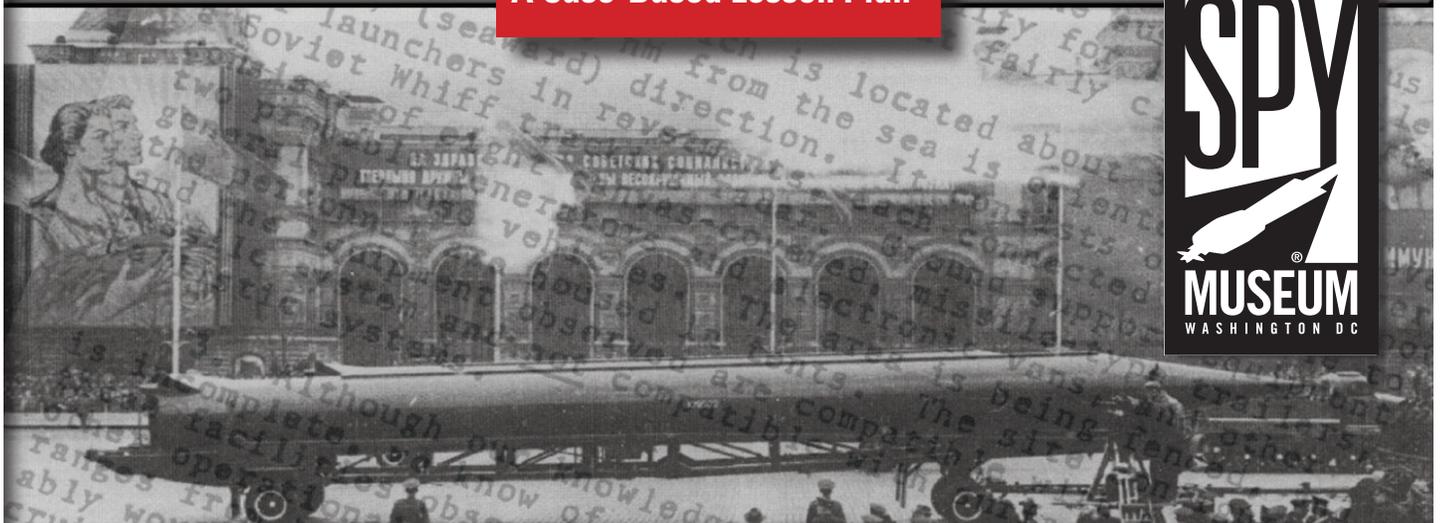
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
13 September 1962

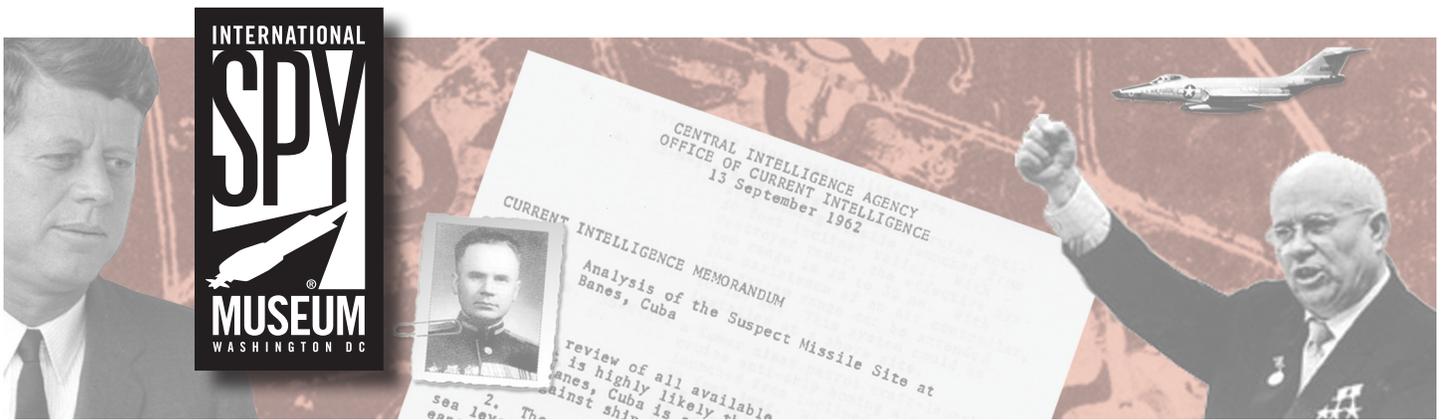
CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM
SUBJECT: Analysis of Banes, Cuba

1. A review of all available
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A Case-Based Lesson Plan





A Message from Peter Earnest, Executive Director of the International Spy Museum and former Operations Officer, CIA

The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 was a flashpoint in the Cold War, a moment in time when the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, stood on the brink of nuclear war. The Soviets' daring and covert introduction of medium range nuclear missiles onto the island of Cuba was an immediate threat, one the U.S. could not ignore. The frantic efforts by U.S. intelligence to clarify the threat for President Kennedy and his administration was one of the intelligence community's finest hours. Re-enacting how events unfolded gives students fascinating insights into how intelligence really works and how it proved critical to our country's leaders in deciding what to do.

In this intensive hands-on exercise, students assume the role of CIA intelligence analysts and process the "take" from various modes of intelligence gathering including human assets and overhead reconnaissance. Drawing on their insights, they then provide the President and his advisors with a clear picture of the threat, and with analysis, the Soviet Union's weaknesses. In re-enacting this historical crisis students experience its tensions and the critical role of intelligence firsthand.

Far more than simply learning history, students will experience working on difficult issues as a team, reflecting on their own performance as intelligence analysts, and witnessing the importance of oral and written communication in coping with this threat to our nation's security. Further, teachers find that the "after action" debriefing of students about the problem and their individual performances is often invaluable in helping students reflect about possible careers in the intelligence field.

Conducting this reality-based experience also provides teachers with a multi-faceted model against which to measure some of the real intelligence challenges occurring in students' lifetimes: the 9/11 tragedy, whether there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the growing cyber attacks on our country, and the threat of terrorist cells operating around the world.

It is challenging to provide students with the kind of real world experiences that truly enhance their learning and depth of understanding of historic events. This simulation attempts to engage the student both emotionally and intellectually. The heart-pounding drama unfolding before them requires them to think strategically, weigh all options, and form recommendations that can impact the course of history. It is my hope that this glimpse into the Cuban Missile Crisis will instill a sense of the importance of intelligence in our world, both past, present, and future.

Peter Earnest
Executive Director

Minute by Minute

Overview

The Role of Intelligence in the Cuban Missile Crisis

My Dear Sir!

I request that you pass the following to the appropriate authorities of the United States of America. It is your good friend who is turning to you, a friend who has already become your soldier-warrior for the cause of Truth, for the ideals of a truly free world and of Democracy for Mankind, to which ideals your (and now my) President, government and people are sacrificing so much effort...

It was with this opening paragraph that Soviet Colonel Oleg Penkovsky made initial written contact with the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in August of 1960. In the two years following this letter, Penkovsky supplied the CIA and MI6 (the British Secret Intelligence Service) with highly classified Soviet war plans, nuclear missile diagrams, and more than 10,000 pages of military information. His stolen secret documents, along with intelligence gained from sources on the ground in Cuba and U-2 spy plane overflight photos, played a pivotal role in informing the course of action taken by President Kennedy in what we now call the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Goal

The purpose of this activity is to increase student understanding of the role intelligence collection and analysis plays in affecting government policy and action. In this lesson, students will analyze primary documents gained from HUMINT (human intelligence) and IMINT (imagery intelligence) sources in the form of CIA memos and U-2 photographs.* Students will make a determination of Soviet nuclear capabilities at different stages of the crisis.

Grade Level

Middle and high school students.

Suggested Time:

1-2 hours

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Analyze declassified CIA documents and make decisions based upon their content.
2. Explain the pros and cons of different types of intelligence sources (human intelligence versus imagery intelligence sources).
3. Describe the role intelligence collection and analysis efforts played in affecting President Kennedy's decision-making process.

*Note: The U-2 photographs used in this lesson were downloaded from the National Security Archive website (see appendix for web address) and altered to mimic their appearance before analysis. The accompanying CD contains all U-2 photographs to ensure clarity of reproduction.



Credits:

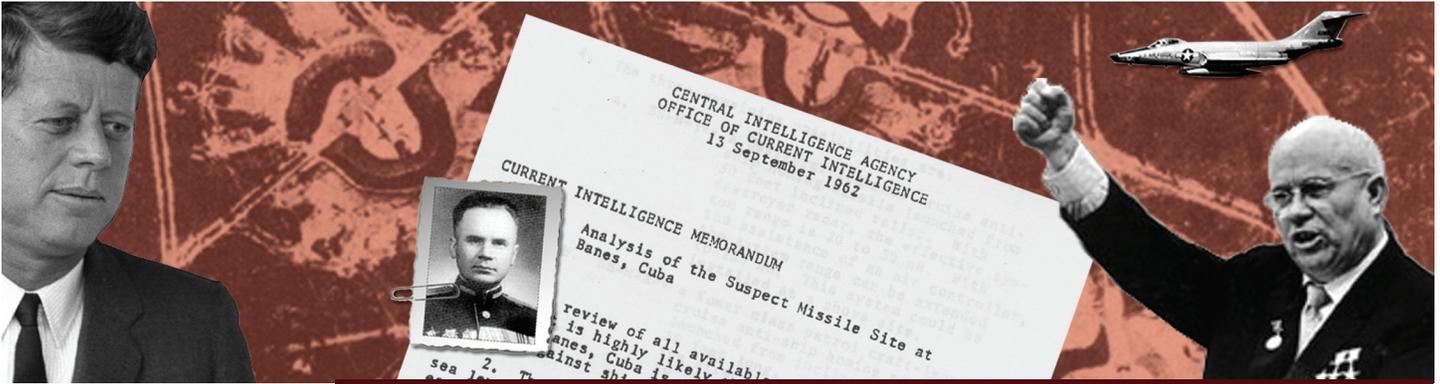
Minute by Minute: The Role of Intelligence in the Cuban Missile Crisis was developed and written by Jacqueline V. Eyl, Youth Education Director with invaluable contributions from Peter Earnest, Executive Director; Anna Slafer, Director of Exhibitions and Programs; Mark Stout, Museum Historian; David Bridges, Independent Researcher; and David Major, member of the Spy Museum Board of Directors and President, CI Centre. This publication would not be possible without the feedback from numerous teachers participating in seminars and workshops at the Museum. Designed by Kevin Cahill.

Minute by Minute

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Minute by Minute

The Role of Intelligence in the Cuban Missile Crisis

The Lesson in Summary

The lesson is divided into three parts.

This case-based simulation places the teacher in the role of the **task force chief** and students in the role of **all source analysts** at the CIA. The questions posed during the lesson are based on intelligence challenges and require the analysis of primary declassified intelligence documents and photos.

This simulation can be done in one class period or over multiple days, depending on the amount of background research you would like students to conduct. The accompanying DVD is supplementary and can be viewed after the simulation.

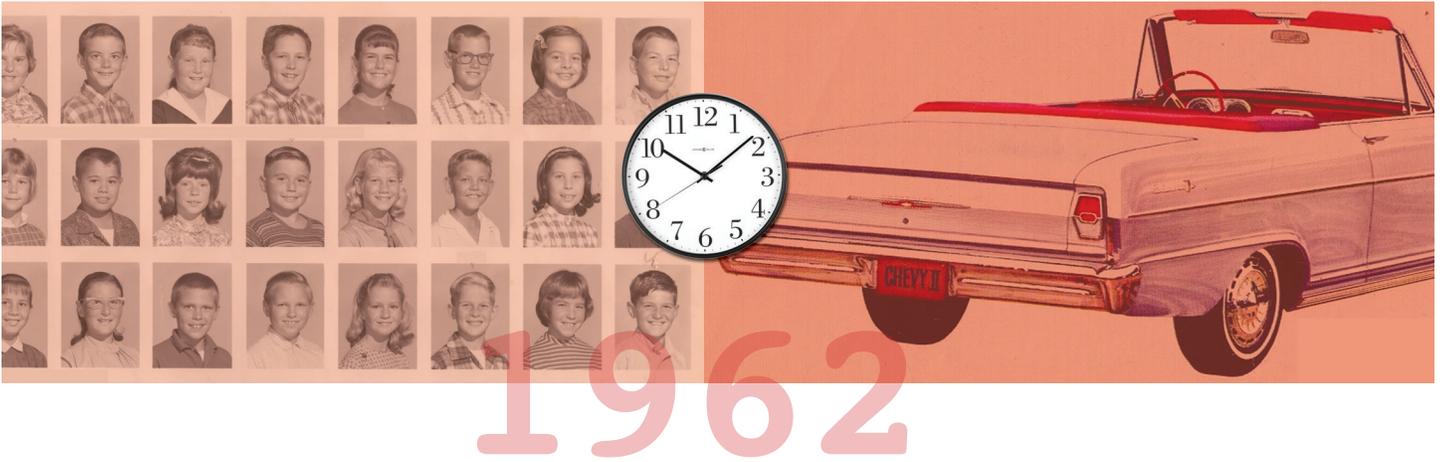
Part I: Introduces the first intelligence question: ***Should the U.S. send another U-2 overflight over Cuba to ascertain if there are Soviet Medium range Ballistic Missile (MRBM) installations?*** Although there are many reports from Cuban nationals that indicate that there is a buildup of Soviet military installations and personnel, some officials argue that the risk of the U-2 being shot down and causing diplomatic embarrassment is too high. Students, AKA all source analysts, must review all the HUMINT (human intelligence) sources and determine the answer to this question. It is determined that the U-2 overflight is necessary.

Part II: Introduces the second intelligence question: ***Are there MRBM installations on the island of Cuba?*** Students, AKA all source analysts, must review the IMINT (imagery intelligence) obtained by U-2 overflight. Students are divided into three teams to analyze three different packets of intelligence. It is determined that there are indeed extensive MRBM installations and Soviet personnel.

Part III: Introduces the third intelligence question: ***Are the MRBM sites operable and if so, how much time is there between command and fire of the weapons?*** All students, AKA all source analysts, receive intelligence Packet III, which introduces a spy inside the Soviet military, Oleg Penkovsky. His material (code-named IRONBARK) is analyzed and it is determined that the sites are becoming operable and that there is between 8 and 20 hours from command to the firing of the weapons.

To augment the lesson and provide information about the crisis in hindsight, show the DVD of the 1992 CIA Symposium conducted with key CIA staff who were instrumental during the Crisis.

Articles, documents, photos, maps, and interviews are provided in the Appendix.



Historical Background Briefing

It is said that the Cuban Missile Crisis was perhaps intelligence's finest hour. In retrospect, it was the combined intelligence from the U-2 overflights (IMINT or imagery intelligence) with the reports from Cuban nationals (HUMINT or human intelligence), as well as critical human intelligence from a Soviet informant that enabled President Kennedy to formulate a strategy involving a blockade rather than a full-out military attack. It is only in recent years that declassified intelligence has allowed scholars and lay-people to fully understand how very critical the various sources of intelligence were in enabling the U.S. to fully understand the situation. The U-2 overflight photos proved that there were MRBM, or medium range ballistic missile, installations; the reports from Cuban nationals confirmed that large missiles were being shipped into the country as well as an influx of Soviet personnel. And finally, the IRONBARK material from Oleg Penkovsky (the source inside the Soviet military) provided the U.S. with critical intelligence enabling analysts to determine not only the type of missiles at the installation sites but how much time it would take before the missiles were operable.

It wasn't until after the Crisis that it was discovered how very close the United States came to nuclear war with the Soviets. When the MRBM sites were dismantled it was revealed that not only were there medium range offensive nuclear-tipped missiles, but also short range defensive nuclear-tipped missiles (or FROGS). Think for a moment what would have happened if President Kennedy had given the order to invade Cuba. As U.S. troops approached the island, the order would have most likely been given to fire the short range missiles. If American troops were under nuclear attack President Kennedy would have likely retaliated by ordering nuclear weapons launched into the Soviet Union and then we would have been at nuclear war. If it weren't for that critical piece of intelligence from Penkovsky adding to the already gathered U-2 overflight photos we might well have had WWII. This is why Penkovsky is referred to as "the spy who saved the world."

Now it's time to put your students in the shoes of CIA all source analysts during this important time in history. See if they make the decisions that were made historically and determine what the various outcomes could have been. Good luck and enjoy your travel back in time.



What is happening in Cuba?

Summary

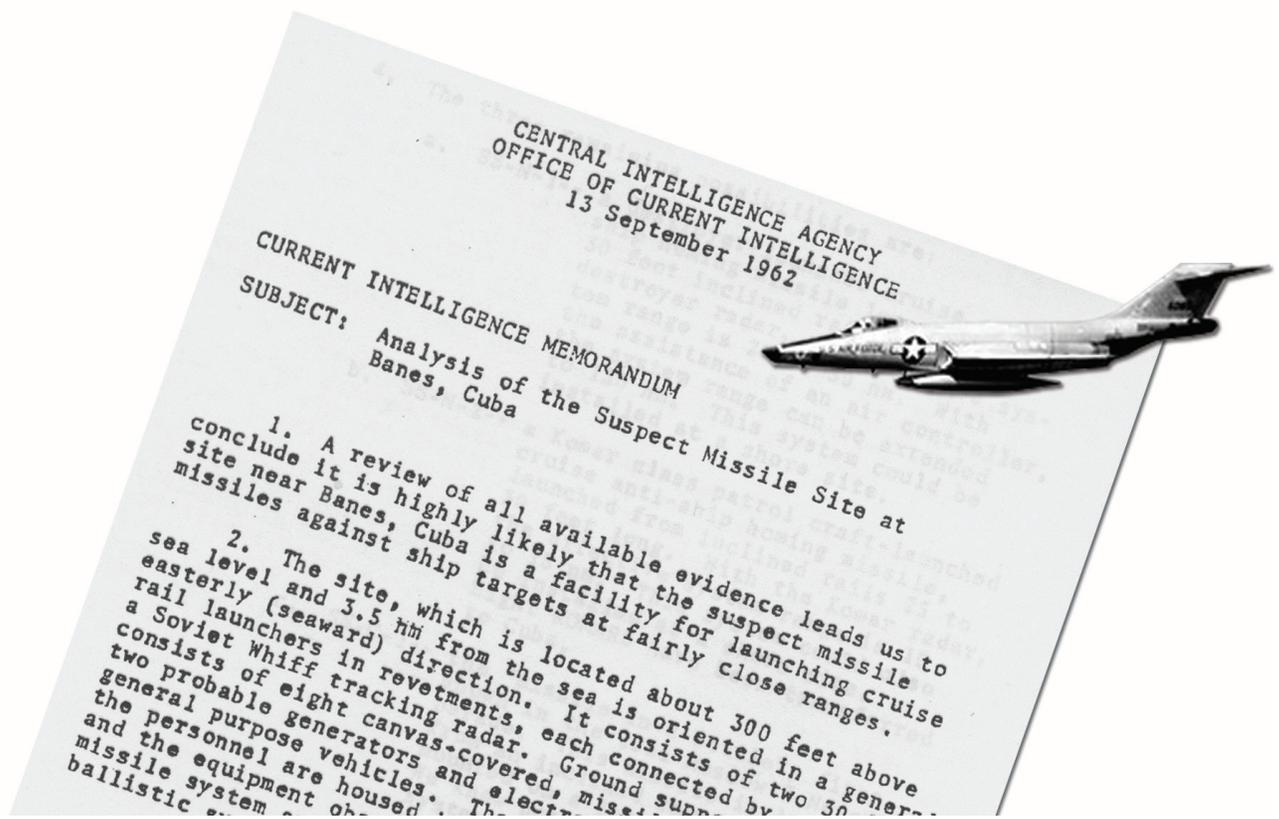
In this introductory section the teacher assumes the role of task force chief and students become all source analysts at the CIA. The teacher sets the stage by using an introductory script giving the students historical context and introducing the intelligence question: ***Should the U.S. send another U-2 plane over Cuba to ascertain if there are MRBM (Medium Range Ballistic Missile) installation sites?***

Procedure:

- 1) Read the script to the students to introduce the lesson
- 2) Distribute Intelligence Packet I to all students
- 3) Conduct a debriefing
- 4) Have the students make a recommendation and then introduce Part II

Materials for Part I

- Teacher Script for Part I
- Intelligence Packet I for each student
- Teacher Discussion Questions for Part I



Part I

This is a suggestion for how you can kick off the lesson plan in your classroom – feel free to add your own language – or you can do this in written format as well.

Teacher Introduction Script



Today, you are members of the intelligence community. It is October 10th, 1962 and I am the **task force chief** on a highly classified project for the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy. You are **all source analysts** at the CIA. Your job is to assist me in a matter of utmost importance—a matter of national security.

We have reason to believe that there is activity on the island of Cuba related to the installation of offensive missiles. We know that in the past, the Soviets have provided Cuba with **short range defensive missiles**. However, their diplomats have repeatedly assured us that they would not install offensive missiles, the **medium range ballistic missiles**, known as **MRBMs**, capable of

striking the U.S. Keep in mind that Cuba is a mere 95 miles off the coast of Florida. The latest **National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)** produced by our own analysts also indicates that the Soviets would not install medium range missiles.

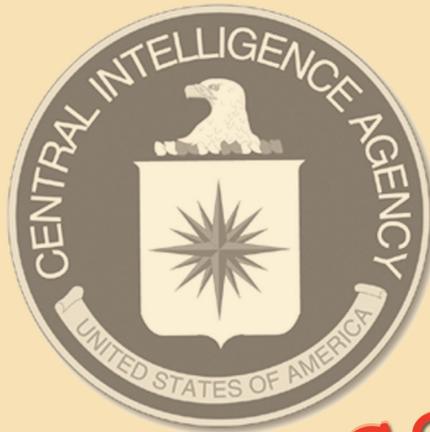
However, over the past several months we have been receiving conflicting intelligence coming from sources inside Cuba indicating that the Soviets are **indeed** installing offensive missiles. If this is true, this would be the first time the Soviets have installed offensive missiles outside the USSR.

The latest **reconnaissance** photos we have of Cuba were taken by our **U-2 spy plane** on 29 August of this year, and they show no suspicious activity. However, our boss, DCI (Director of Central Intelligence) McCone, is urging that another U-2 reconnaissance plane be sent over Cuba to obtain new photos.

As you may know, these overflights were halted a few months ago because one of our U-2 pilots was shot down over China, causing our government great embarrassment. We also lost another U-2 over the Soviet Union two years ago. The State Department has taken the position that we should not send additional U-2 flights because the risk of an international incident is too great. I need you to examine the intelligence reports we have been receiving. Keep in mind that we do not have our own CIA recruited and vetted sources on the island. As you analyze the reports, ask yourself who the source is and can they be trusted? **The question I need you to answer for the DCI is: should we send another flight to gather more photo intelligence – is it worth the risk?**

I will give you some time to review the intelligence, then you must report back to me. In making your assessment, pay attention to who the sources are for the HUMINT (human intelligence) and whether you think they are credible.

(Distribute TOP SECRET INTELLIGENCE PACKET#1)



CLASSIFIED

Top Secret Intelligence Packet #1

Contents:

1. All Source Analyst Position Description
2. U-2 Overhead Photograph, 29 August, 1962, San Cristobel Island, Cuba
3. CIA Memorandum on Cuba, 20 August, 1962
4. CIA Current Intelligence Memorandum: Analysis of the Suspect Missile Site at Banes, Cuba
5. CIA Information Report Telegram, 9 September, 1962, Subject: Comments of Cuban Pilot Concerning Presence of Guided Missiles in Cuba
6. CIA Information Report, 12 September, 1962, Subject: Possible Missile Sites in Havana
7. CIA Information Report, 17 September, 1962, Subject: Soviet and Rebel Army Convoy

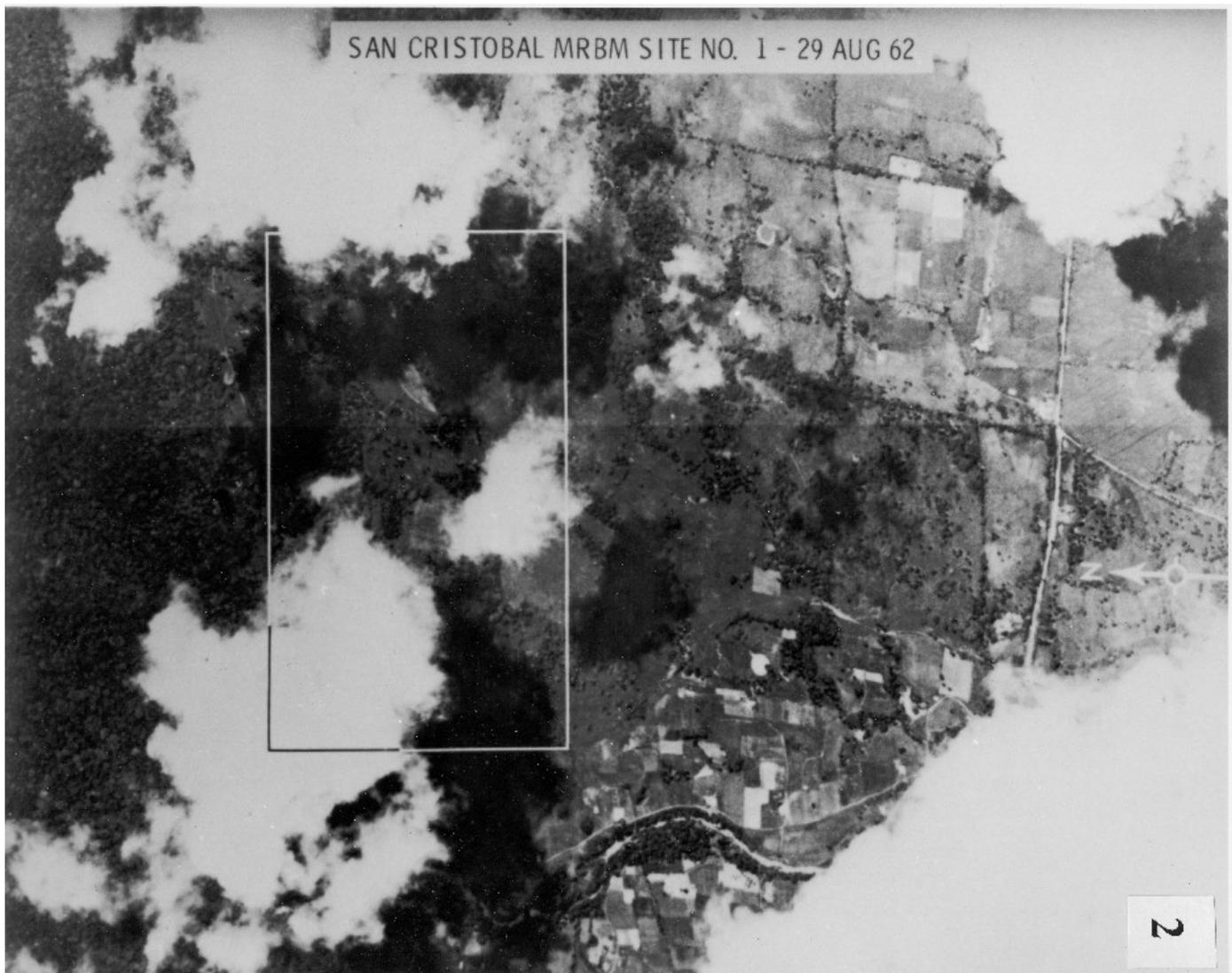


CIA POSITION DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: ALL SOURCE ANALYST
REPORTS TO: TASK FORCE CHIEF
GS 11

The all source analyst is responsible for using many different types of intelligence to analyze current and future issues. You apply your knowledge in the areas of HUMINT (human intelligence), IMINT (imagery intelligence), SIGINT (signals intelligence) and OSINT (open source intelligence). You work with team members to research, evaluate, analyze, and interpret multiple sources of intelligence to produce reports, estimates, and recommendations. You prepare intelligence assessments and conduct briefings on findings. You advise key leadership of issues and challenges as appropriate. You may support targeting, information collection, and crisis action planning in 24/7 operations.

U-2 Overflight Photo 29 August, 1962



CIA Memorandum on Cuba, 20 August, 1962

84 r

~~SECRET~~

August 20, 1962

MEMORANDUM ON CUBA

The Soviet -- and probably bloc -- support of Cuba was stepped up in July and August. 21 ships docked in July and 17 have docked, or are en route, in August, 5 of which are passenger ships.

CIA has received approximately 60 reports on this increased activity; 40 out of Opa Locka, and the balance from controlled sources considered dependable.

It appears that between 4000 and 6000 Soviet/Bloc personnel have arrived in Cuba since 1 July. Many are known to be technicians, some are suspected to be military personnel; there is no evidence of organized Soviet military units, as such, being included. A great many of the arriving Soviet/Bloc personnel are isolated from the Cuban population.

The unloading of most ships takes place under maximum security, with the Cuban population excluded from the port areas. Large equipment is noticeable; large crates have been observed which could contain airplane fuselages or missile components.

JAM/br/1

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**CIA Current Intelligence Memorandum:
Analysis of the Suspect Missile Site at Banes, Cuba**

~~TOP SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
13 September 1962

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Analysis of the Suspect Missile Site at
Banes, Cuba

1. A review of all available evidence leads us to conclude it is highly likely that the suspect missile site near Banes, Cuba is a facility for launching cruise missiles against ship targets at fairly close ranges.
2. The site, which is located about 300 feet above sea level and 3.5 nm from the sea is oriented in a general easterly (seaward) direction. It consists of two 30 foot rail launchers in revetments, each connected by cable to a Soviet Whiff tracking radar. Ground support equipment consists of eight canvas-covered, missile-type trailers, two probable generators and electronic vans, and other general purpose vehicles. The area is being fenced, and the personnel are housed in tents. The site configuration and the equipment observed are compatible with a cruise missile system and not compatible with surface-to-air or ballistic systems.
3. Although our knowledge of Soviet cruise missiles is incomplete, we know of three systems which could fit those facilities observed at Banes. We have eliminated other operational Soviet cruise missile systems, with ranges from 1000 to 4000 nm, because their missiles probably would be too large for the Banes facility. A 600 nm cruise missile has had a test range firing in the USSR, but it too would be too large for the Banes site.

HANDLED VIA COMINT
SECURITY CONTROL

~~TOP SECRET~~

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

6. There are several items of circumstantial evidence which tend to support the conclusion that the Banes site is for relatively short range coastal defense cruise missiles. The fact that the site is near the coast suggests that the range of its missile is short; otherwise it could be located inland in a less vulnerable area. It is located where short-range missiles could defend against seaborne assault on deep water ports in Nipe Bay south of Banes.* Thus far, the Soviets apparently have not given Cuba any weapons which provide them a long range striking capability, suggesting that their policy is to provide for Cuba's defense only. Because neither the SS-N-1 nor the SS-C-1 has sufficient range to hit any target in the United States, such missiles would fit this policy pattern.

7. If the analysis that the Banes missile site is a coastal defense installation is correct, it would follow that similar facilities may be set up at a number of other locations favorable for protecting beaches against amphibious attack.

8. We doubt that Cubans have been given sufficient training in the use of such missiles to allow them to have operational control over the sites. It seems likely that Soviet technical training personnel would be needed for some time to come and would be available for operating the installation in time of crisis.

* Cuba's two nickel plants are in this general area. Their output is being sent to the Soviet Bloc and is equivalent to 20 percent of Soviet production. The more important of these two plants is on the bay protected by the Banes site.

CIA Information Report Telegram, 9 September, 1962, Subject: Comments of Cuban Pilot Concerning Presence of Guided Missiles in Cuba

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Sects 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS
~~SECRET~~

COUNTRY	CUBA	REPORT NO. TDCS -3/522,948
SUBJECT	COMMENTS OF CUBAN PILOT CONCERNING PRESENCE OF GUIDED MISSILES IN CUBA	DATE DISTR. 20 SEPTEMBER 1962
		PRECEDENCE ROUTINE
DATE OF INFO.	9 SEPTEMBER 1962	REFERENCES RD-ACQ-01258 IN 25363
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	CUBA (15 SEPTEMBER 1962)	
APPRAISAL	SEE BELOW	FIELD REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE [REDACTED]

1. IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN CLAUDIO MORINAS, PERSONAL PILOT OF FIDEL CASTRO, AND [REDACTED] WHO HAD INQUIRED IF THERE WERE ROCKETS IN CUBA, MORINAS REPLIED: "WE HAVE 40-MILE RANGE GUIDED MISSILES, BOTH SURFACE-TO-SURFACE AND SURFACE-TO-AIR, AND WE HAVE A RADAR SYSTEM WHICH COVERS, SECTOR BY SECTOR, ALL OF THE CUBAN AIR SPACE AND (BEYOND) AS FAR AS FLORIDA. THERE ARE ALSO MANY MOBILE RAMPS FOR INTERMEDIATE RANGE ROCKETS. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT IS AWAITING THEM."

2. FIELD DISSEM: CINCLANT, CINCARIB.

END OF MESSAGE

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS
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downgrading and
declassification

TATE/INR	DIA	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SEC	NSA	DEF	CIA	OCI	ONE	OCR	ORR	OBI	OO	NPIC
										REPCINCLANT	INS	FBI	EYA			

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

IRM 12 1Kb OBSOLETE PREVIOUS EDITIONS.

(15-20)

**CIA Information Report, 12 September, 1962,
Subject: Possible Missile Sites in Havana**

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

COUNTRY Cuba REPORT NO. [REDACTED]
 SUBJECT Possible Missile Site in Havana DATE DISTR. 27 Sep 62
 NO. PAGES 2
 REFERENCES [REDACTED]
 DATE OF INFO. To 12 Sep 62
 PLACE & DATE ACQ. Havana/12 Sep 62

HEO
 9/27/62
 PM

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE: Cuban national, [REDACTED]

1. After dark on 12 Sep 62, I was driving east on Avenida 23, Marianao, Havana, when I observed and counted 20 Soviet trucks towing 20 long trailers going west on Avenida 23. The truck convoy was preceded by a jeep containing militiamen. The trucks were driven by Soviets in civilian clothes -- short-sleeved shirts in various colors.
2. As the truck convoy neared its destination at Campo Libertad, the militia jeep was waved off, and the Soviet trucks and trailers proceeded into Campo Libertad.
3. The trucks appeared to be the 6x6, ZIL-157, canvas-covered. Source described these and later identified them from photographs [REDACTED]. In the backs of the trucks could be seen sealed black boxes or cases of various sizes. I do not know what these boxes contained.
4. The trailers, the longest I have ever seen in Cuba, were two-axle, four-wheeled. They were about 65 to 70 feet in length and about eight feet in width.
5. I believe the transport trailers were carrying large missiles, so long that the tail end extended over the end of the trailer. I would guess that the missiles were a few feet longer than the trailers. The missiles were covered with wood and canvas. From the tail end of the missile it looked as if the bottom and two sides of the missile had a wooden frame, and the entire missile was canvas-covered. It looked as if the tail end of the canvas silhouetted the two top fins of the four fins of the missile. The top of the canvas-covered missile was taller than the top of the truck towing it. I am not positive that the trailer was carrying

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~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

GROUP 1
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 downgrading and
 declassification

STATE ARMY NAVY AIR FBI AEC

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

a missile, but it surely looked that way. [Source described, then drew rough sketches of, the missile silhouette and tail fin silhouette; later, from photographs, he identified Guided Missile, Surface-to-Surface, SS-4 "Soyuzer,"

6; I do not know where the truck convoy originated

[redacted] told me that Soviet cargo ships, names unknown, had docked at the Flota Blanca piers around 10 or 11 Sep 62. He told me that all Cuban dock-workers and other Cubans who worked in that area were forbidden to be in the area during the unloading of the ships and that the unloading was handled only by Sovbloc personnel. He said the cargo unloaded at the Flota Blanca docks consisted of missiles. I do not know where he got his information, but he is usually pretty reliable.

- end -

CIA Information Report, 17 September, 1962, Subject: Soviet and Rebel Army Convoy

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

COUNTRY Cuba REPORT NO. [REDACTED]
SUBJECT Soviet and Rebel Army Convoy DATE DISTR. 1 Oct 62
NO. PAGES 1
REFERENCES [REDACTED]
DATE OF INFO. 17 Sep 62
PLACE & DATE ACQ. [REDACTED] *gmb (BB) M50*
THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE: Cuban national, A L2 853 974, 47 years old.

Source [REDACTED] traveled on business throughout the island a great deal. Four years of schooling, average intelligence.

1. On 17 Sep 62, about 2100 hours, while traveling by automobile from Havana toward my home in [REDACTED] Pinar del Rio, I observed a convoy of 10 motorcycles, 16 trucks, and eight trailers proceeding southwest on the Central Highway toward Pinar del Rio. Since I was traveling in the same direction as the convoy, I passed what were the last units of the convoy at the entrance to Guanajay, Havana [Grid coord 270360, Sheet 3684 I, Series E723], and then passed the leading element of the convoy immediately after Artemisa, Pinar del Rio [Grid coord 190235, Sheet 3684 III, Series E723]. Although the vehicles were scattered over a distance, in my opinion they were all part of the same convoy.
2. The leading element of the convoy was five motorcycles driven by unarmed Rebel Army soldiers whose function appeared to be clearing the civilian traffic ahead. The motorcycles were followed by six MAZ-502 trucks, each carrying about 30 Rebel Army soldiers armed with 9 mm submachine guns M-25 and rifles. Since it was dark, I could not see who the drivers of the trucks were.
3. The trucks were followed by eight Soviet-built flatbed-type trailers approximately 32 feet long, seven of which were carrying what looked like huge tubes extending over the entire length of the flatbed and completely covered with canvas. I could not distinguish what the eighth trailer was carrying since it was completely covered with canvas. However, I did notice what looked like large metal prongs sticking out from under the canvas at the rear of the trailer. Although I don't know too much about it, it looked like a piece of radar equipment.
4. The trailers were followed by six MAZ-502 trucks, each carrying about 30 Rebel Army soldiers, also armed with rifles and 9 mm submachine guns M-25. The trucks were in turn followed by five motorcycles driven by unarmed Rebel Army soldiers. Because of darkness and rain I could not distinguish who the drivers of any of the vehicles in the convoy were.

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/Collector's Note: [REDACTED] -end-

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

STATE	ARMY	NAVY	AIR	FBI	AEC				
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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

Guide to Analysis of Intelligence Packet #1:

From the CIA Memorandum on Cuba, 20 August, 1962:

- Approximately 60 reports of increased missile activity have been received by the CIA. The sources of many of these reports are considered to be dependable.
- These reports reveal that there is an influx of Soviet military equipment and personnel on the island. However, there is no evidence of organized Soviet military units.
- Large crates are being unloaded from cargo ships.
- Electronic and radar gear has been identified as coming off these ships.
- There are possible SAM (surface-to-air missile) sites.
- There is possible Soviet targeting of U.S. installations.

From the CIA Office of Current Intelligence Memorandum 13 September, 1962:

- There is a suspect missile site near Banes, Cuba.
- It is suspected that the site can launch short range cruise missiles against ship targets.
- There is no indication of surface-to-air or ballistic missile systems.
- There is doubt that the Cubans have the training to use the suspected short range missiles at the site so that Soviet personnel would be needed for operation.

From the CIA Information Report Telegram, 20 September, 1962:

- A personal pilot to Fidel Castro reportedly had a conversation with an informant and disclosed that Cuba had 40-mile range guided missiles, surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, and a radar system that covers all Cuban air space as far as Florida.
- He also reports that there are ramps for the IRBMs (intermediate range ballistic missiles).
- He states that "they [the Americans] don't know what is awaiting them."

**From the CIA Information Report, 12 September, 1962.
Subject: Possible Missile Sites in Havana:**

The source of this information is a Cuban national:

- He reports observations of numerous Soviet trucks with very long (65-70 ft.) trailers and military personnel.
- The trailers were covered with canvas and contained black boxes or cases of various size.
- He speculates that the trailers contained very large missiles—so long that they stuck out the back of the trailer.
- He states that another source, who is usually pretty reliable, says that Soviets were unloading missiles from the cargo ships.

**From the CIA Information Report, 17 September, 1962.
Subject: Soviet and Rebel Army Convoy:**

The source is a Cuban national:

- The report is of an observation of a Soviet military convoy with eight Soviet flatbed-type trailers approximately 32-feet long.
- Seven of the trailers contained huge tubes spanning the length of the trailer.

TEACHER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Post Analysis of Intelligence Packet #1

THE QUESTION: DO WE SEND ANOTHER U-2 SPY PLANE OVER CUBA?

Discuss with students what was found in the intelligence reports and the pros and cons of sending another flight—is it worth the risk?

In providing their answer they should explain WHY they made this choice: Who is the source of the information? Do they think the sources are credible? What evidence in the reports underlies the students' decision?

If they chose not to send the U-2:

Explore why this decision was made. This is not the choice that was made historically. The intelligence community determined that it was imperative to gain more intelligence about the situation in Cuba. The DCI (Director of Central Intelligence) had the U-2 flights reinstated, and on 14 October sent a plane for additional reconnaissance photos.

If they chose to send the U-2:

This is the choice that was made historically—the HUMINT reports were numerous, and additional IMINT (imagery intelligence) was needed to provide possible confirmation. The U-2 flight was sent out on 14 October, 1962 followed by a U.S. Naval reconnaissance plane to capture low-level photographs on the coast of Cuba.



After the U-2 Overflight

Summary:

Students analyze the U-2 overflight photos and the Naval low-level photos and determine if there are MRBM installations in Cuba.

Procedure:

- 1) Use Teacher Talking Points to introduce Part II.
- 2) Divide the class into three teams: Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie.
- 3) Distribute an Intelligence Packet to each team.
- 4) Debrief each team and have them answer the question posed to them in their packet.

Materials for Part II

- Teacher Talking Points for Part II
- Alpha Intelligence Packet (pages 25 to 31)
- Bravo Intelligence Packet (pages 32 to 38)
- Charlie Intelligence Packet (pages 39 to 45)
- Teacher Debriefing Talking Points for Part III (page 46)



Teacher Debriefing Talking Points and Set-Up for Part II



AFTER THE U-2 OCTOBER 14 OVERFLIGHT

As you've determined from analyzing the intelligence in Part I, it was necessary to send another U-2 overflight to Cuba. Directly following the U-2 flight we also sent in a U.S. Naval reconnaissance aircraft to capture low-level photographs. Both flights were successful and without incident.

This new IMINT (imagery intelligence) needs to be analyzed.

I will divide you (the all source analysts) into three teams—ALPHA, BRAVO, and CHARLIE—to analyze three different sets of photos.

Remember to review your TOP SECRET memorandum and the questions posed.

You must analyze the reconnaissance photos, complete the Briefing Report, then prepare to report back to me, task force chief, in 20 minutes.

TOP SECRET



TEAM ALPHA

EYES ONLY

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

TOP SECRET

TO: TEAM ALPHA
FROM: RECONNAISSANCE INTEL Div
RE: 14 October U-2 Overflight Photos
DATE: 15 October, 1962

Yesterday we sent another U-2 reconnaissance plane as well as a Navy aircraft over Cuba and received the enclosed photos. We are looking for any evidence that the Soviets are installing MRBMs (medium range ballistic missiles) with nuclear capability on the island. These MRBM's are capable of striking the U.S.—as far as Washington D.C.—within minutes. Please review yesterday's imagery intelligence and complete the attached Briefing Report. A key is provided to assist you in analyzing the photographs.

Be prepared to report back on your findings in ten minutes. Appoint a spokesperson on your team who will present your team's findings to the rest of the all source analysts as well as the task force chief, who will then report to the DCI (Director of Central Intelligence), White House, and President.

EYES ONLY

TEAM ALPHA

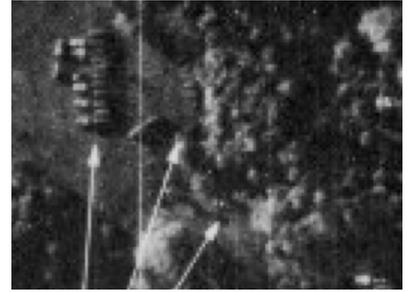
KEY TO OVERHEAD PHOTOGRAPHS



tent areas for
personnel and
equipment



MRBM-SS4
trailers



MRBM-SS4
nuclear equipment



construction of
MRBM-SS4 launchers

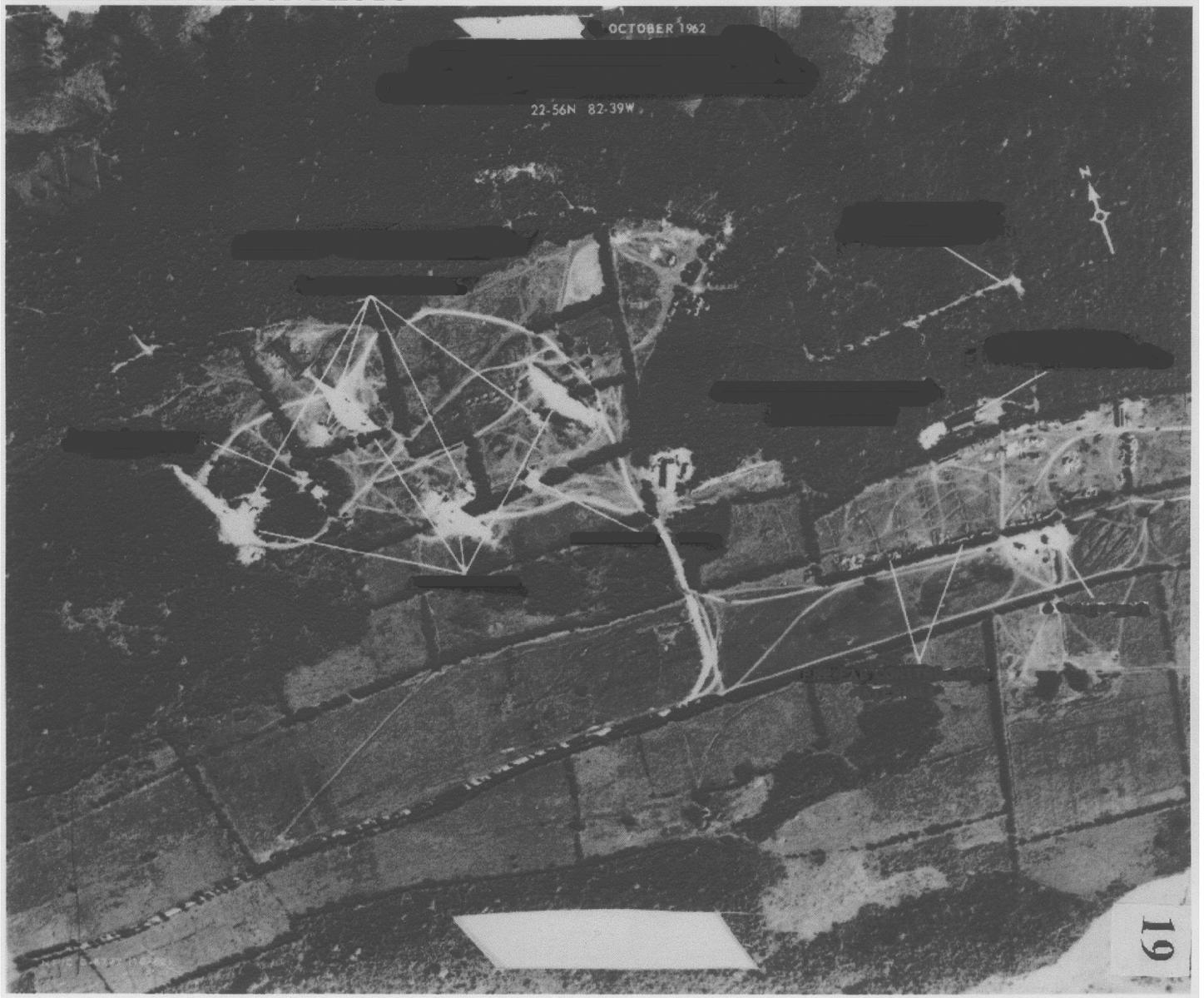


MRBM-SS4
shelter
tent



MRBM-SS4
erector

TEAM ALPHA U-2 RECON PHOTO
U-2 Overflight Photograph



TEAM ALPHA U-2 RECON PHOTO
U-2 Overflight Photograph



**TEAM ALPHA RECON PHOTO
U.S. Navy Low-Level
Reconnaissance Aircraft Photograph**



TOP SECRET

BRIEFING REPORT

EYES ONLY

TO: Task Force Chief
FROM: TEAM ALPHA
RE: Overflight Reconnaissance Intelligence Analysis
DATE: 15 October, 1962

U-2 overflight and Naval low-level reconnaissance photo comparison and analysis

FINDINGS

List quantities found in each photograph	Photo 15	Photo 19	Photo 21
Number of tent areas?			
Number of missile trailers?			
Areas of nuclear equipment?			
Missile launchers or construction sites?			
Missile erectors?			

Summary of Findings

1. Does Cuba have MRBM installations?
2. Is there evidence of nuclear capability?
3. Do they appear to be operational?

TOP SECRET



TEAM BRAVO

EYES ONLY

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

TOP SECRET

TO: TEAM BRAVO
FROM: RECONNAISSANCE INTEL Div
RE: Naval Low-Level Reconnaissance Photos
DATE: 15 October, 1962

EYES ONLY

Following the U-2 overflight, we sent a Naval aircraft to capture some low-level reconnaissance photos of the coast of Cuba. We are looking for evidence that the Soviets are installing MRBMs (medium range ballistic missiles) with nuclear capability in Cuba. These are capable of striking the U.S.—as far as Washington D.C.—within minutes of launch. Please review yesterday's photos and provide an analysis and any evidence of nuclear missile related equipment. We will need you to use "crateology" (measurements and comparison of crates) to make a determination as to what is being shipped into the port of Cuba. We have provided you with a key to help you analyze the photographs.

Both photos are of two different Soviet ships inbound to a port in Cuba. Based on initial analysis, it seems that some large crates are aboard. The size and shape indicates that they could contain either the MRBM SS4, Komar guided missile patrol boats (or missile launchers), Soviet nuclear warhead vans, or IL-28 Fuselages.

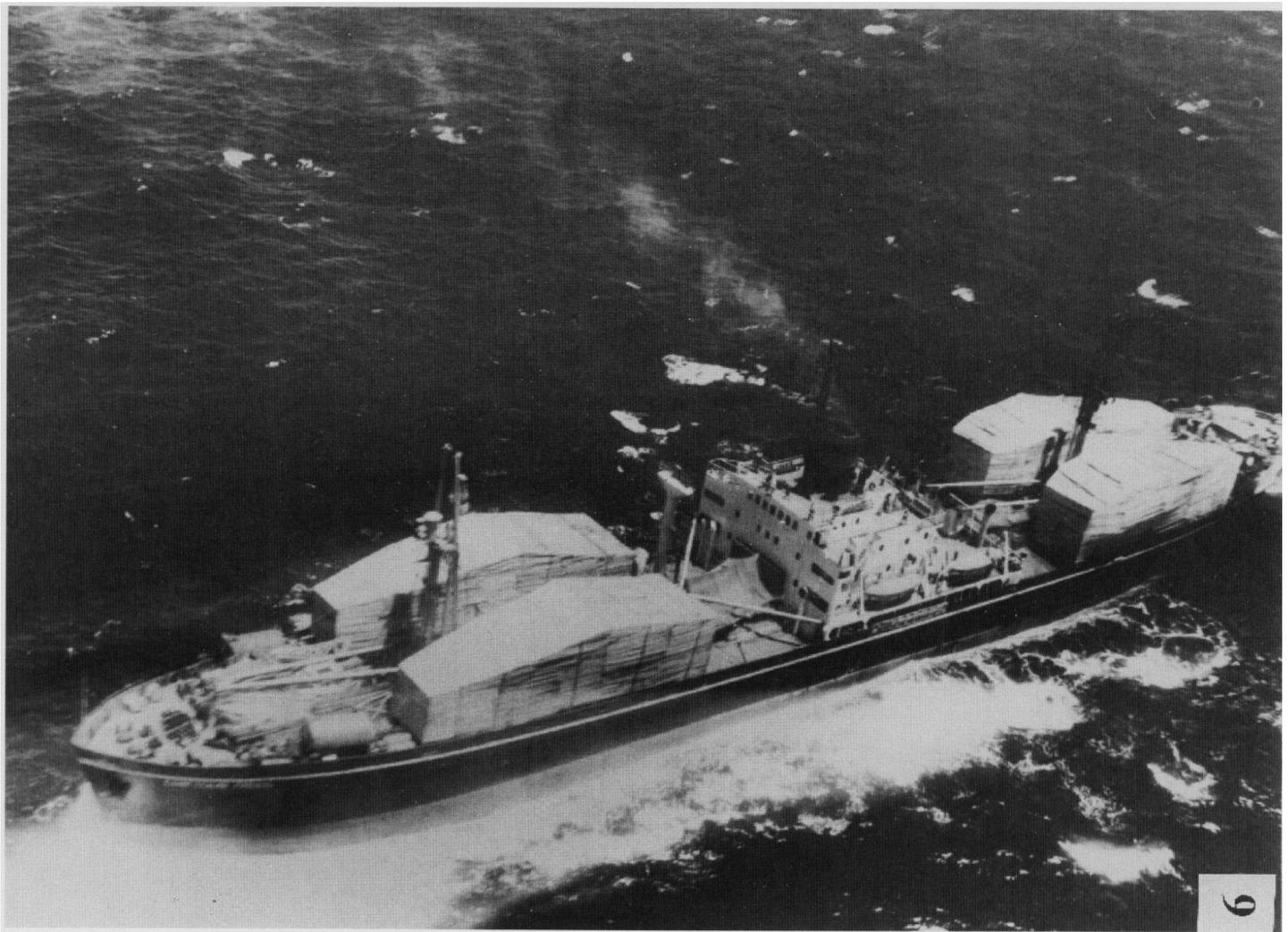
We have provided roughly scaled photos of these items for you to issue your best estimate (according to size and shape) of what is contained in these crates.

Fill out the Briefing Report and be prepared to report back on your findings in ten minutes. Appoint a spokesperson who will present your team's findings to the rest of the all source analysts as well as the task force chief, who will then report to the DCI, White House, and President.

**TEAM BRAVO U.S. NAVY LOW-LEVEL RECONNAISSANCE
AIRCRAFT PHOTO #1**

Ship arrival: Port of Cuba

What might be contained in the crates in the front section of the ship?



Approximate length of ship: 233 ft.
Approximate width of ship: 32 ft.

**TEAM BRAVO U.S. NAVY LOW-LEVEL RECONNAISSANCE
AIRCRAFT PHOTO #2**

Kasimov Soviet Ship arriving in port, Cuba

What might be contained in the rectangular crates in the mid-section of the ship?



Approximate length of ship: 233 ft.
Approximate width of ship: 32 ft.

TEAM BRAVO

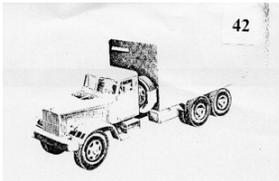
KEY TO POSSIBLE CONTENTS IN CRATES



scaled photo of the
Komar guided missile boat
approximately 88 ft. length x 20 ft. width and 6 ft. high



scaled photo of the
MRBM-SS4 as seen
in Red Square, Moscow
73.5 ft. length



scaled photo of a
Soviet nuclear warhead van
approximately 31 ft. length x 12.9 ft. width and 9 ft. high



scaled photo of
a IL-28 fuselage
approximately 57 ft. length x 22 ft. high

TOP SECRET

BRIEFING REPORT

EYES ONLY

TO: Task Force Chief
FROM: TEAM BRAVO
RE: Naval Low-Level Reconnaissance Photos
DATE: 15 October, 1962
PAGES: Page 1 of 2

FINDINGS—

PHOTO #1:

Is it likely that the MRBM missiles are inside the crates?
Why or why not?

Is it likely that Komar Guided Missile boats are inside the crates?
Why or why not?

Is it likely that the Soviet nuclear warhead vans are inside the crates? Why or why not?

Is it likely that the IL-28 fuselages are inside the crates?
Why or why not?

Summary of Findings

Photo #1

We have determined that the following item(s) might be contained in the crates:

TOP SECRET

BRIEFING REPORT

TO: Task Force Chief
FROM: TEAM BRAVO
RE: Naval Low-Level Reconnaissance Photos
DATE: 15 October, 1962
PAGES: Page 2 of 2

EYES ONLY

FINDINGS—

PHOTO #2

Is it likely that the MRBM missiles are inside the crates?
Why or why not?

Is it likely that Komar Guided Missile boats are inside the
crates? Why or why not?

Is it likely that the Soviet nuclear warhead vans are inside
the crates? Why or why not?

Is it likely that the IL-28 fuselages are inside the crates?
Why or why not?

Summary of Findings

Photo #2

We have determined that the following item(s) might be contained
in the crates:

TOP SECRET



TEAM CHARLIE

EYES ONLY

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

TOP SECRET

TO: TEAM CHARLIE
FROM: RECONNAISSANCE INTEL Div
RE: 14 October U-2 Overflight Photos
DATE: 15 October, 1962

Yesterday we sent another U-2 reconnaissance plane out and received the enclosed photo. We are looking for any evidence that the Soviets are installing MRBMs (medium range ballistic missiles) with nuclear capability in Cuba. These missiles are capable of striking the U.S.—as far as Washington D.C.—within minutes of launch. Please review the photos and see if you can determine if there is evidence of missiles or related nuclear equipment. We have provided you with a key to help you analyze the photographs.

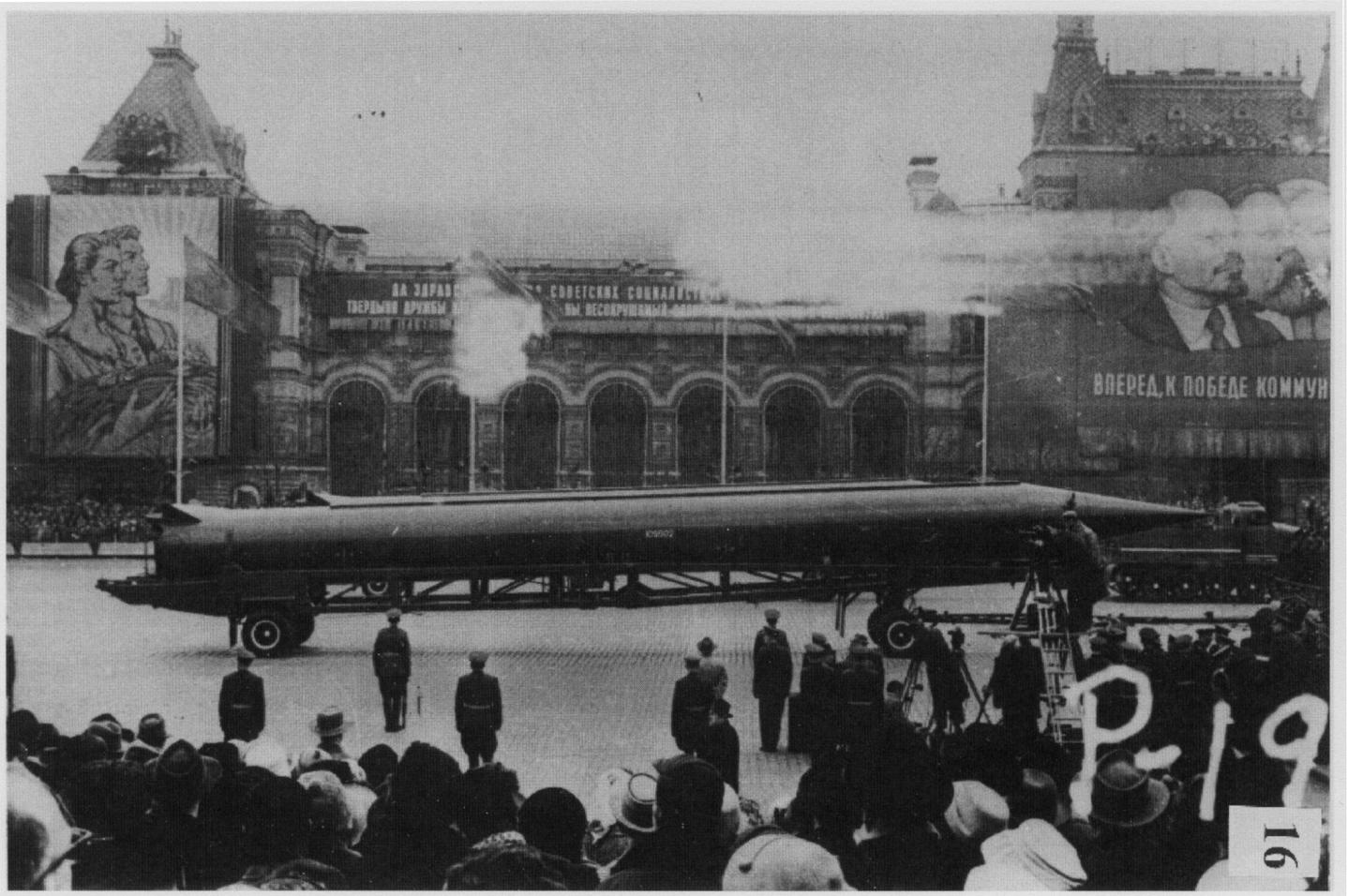
We have enclosed three U-2 overflight photos and a file reference photo of the MRBMs taken in Moscow. Here are the general characteristics of the MRBM-SS4:

- Length: 22.4m (73.5ft)
- Diameter: 1.65m (5.5ft)
- Launch Weight: 27,000kg (59,536lb)
- Guidance: Inertial
- Propulsion: single-stage liquid
- Warhead: HE or 1MT nuclear
- Range: 2000km (1250 miles)

Fill out the Briefing Report and be prepared to report back on your findings in ten minutes. Appoint a spokesperson who will present your team's findings to the rest of the all source analysts, as well as the task force chief, who will then report to the DCI (Director of Central Intelligence), White House, and President.

EYES ONLY

TEAM CHARLIE PHOTO #1
CIA reference photo of Soviet MRBM-SS4 in Red Square, Moscow



The MRBM-SS4 missile is approximately 73.5 feet long

TEAM CHARLIE PHOTO #2
U.S. Navy Low-Level
Reconnaissance Aircraft Photograph

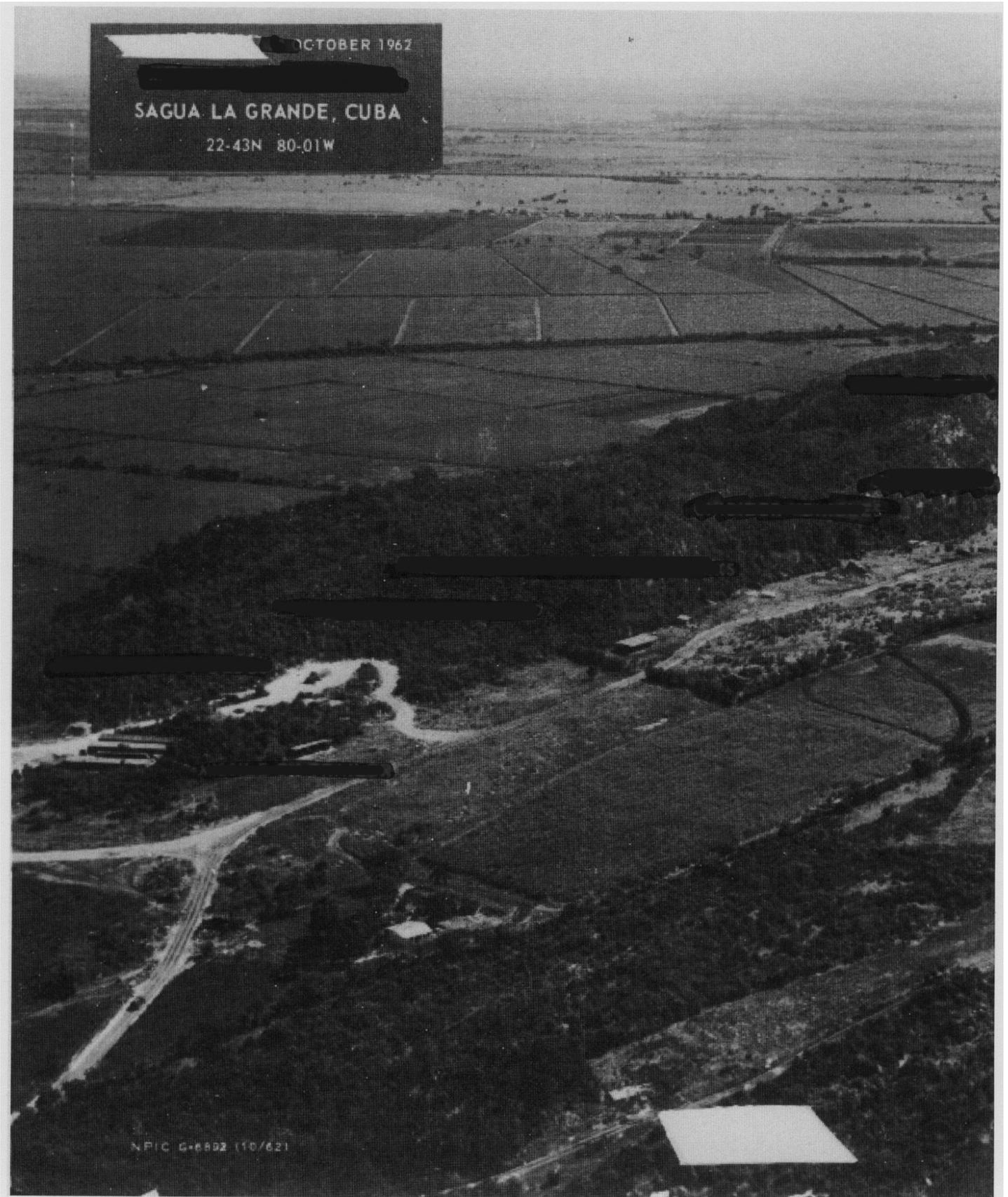
Do you see anything that could contain something as long as the MRBM?



TEAM CHARLIE PHOTO #3

U-2 overflight low-level photograph

Can you see anything that might resemble MRBM-SS4s?



TEAM CHARLIE PHOTO #4
Ships in Port of Cuba

Can you see any MRBMs or crates?



TOP SECRET

BRIEFING REPORT

TO: Task Force Chief
FROM: TEAM CHARLIE
RE: 14 October Overflight Reconnaissance Photos
DATE: 15 October, 1962
PAGES: Page 1 of 2

FINDINGS—

Can you find evidence of either the MRBM-SS4 or structures large enough to contain them in any of the photos listed below?

List any evidence in photo 1:

List any evidence in photo 2:

List any evidence in photo 3:

Summary of findings:

We determined there **is / is not** sufficient evidence that the Soviets have placed MRBMs in Cuba.

EYES ONLY

Teacher Debriefing Talking Points and Set-Up for Part III

1. Debrief each team in order: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie. Each team will present the following for the entire group of all source analysts:
 - a. the intelligence they were provided to analyze
 - b. an explanation of what they were looking for/their challenge
 - c. an explanation of their findings
2. The final analysis of each team should be written on the board in the front of the room.

THE ANALYSIS SHOULD ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- a. Are there nuclear missile sites in Cuba? (yes as seen by Team Alpha)
 - b. Is there nuclear missile supporting equipment? (yes, Komar Guided Missile Boats as seen by Team Bravo)
 - c. What type of missiles are present? (MRBM-SS4 as seen by Team Charlie)
3. It appears from the intelligence analysis reports that Cuba DOES have MRBM-SS4 missile installations.

Does this intelligence provide us with answers to the two key questions that the President will need to know:

Are the missiles in deployment mode (ready to be operational)?

If so, how much time would there be from command to fire?

Oleg Penkovsky and the IRONBARK Material



Summary

In this section students are presented with two key questions:

Are the MRBM operational?

If so, how much time would there be between command to launch?

These questions cannot be answered by analyzing the U-2 overflight photos. We do not know the technical specifications of the Soviet-issue military weaponry and supporting equipment and therefore we cannot know what to look for in the U-2 photographs. We don't know what deployment mode looks like. It is revealed that the U.S. has had a source inside the Soviet Union who has been passing key military manuals to the CIA. Oleg Penkovsky (the CIA source inside the Soviet military) had been passing this material (code-named IRONBARK) to the CIA since 1960. The technical information regarding the Soviet missiles reveals the answers to the key questions. By analyzing this material, it is determined that the sites are becoming operable and there is between 8 to 20 hours from command to launch.

Procedure

- 1) Use the teacher introduction script to introduce the new intelligence questions
- 2) Distribute Part III Intelligence Packet to each student for their review
- 3) Allow students 20 minutes to review the material and prepare to report back to you on the following questions:

Are the missile sites in Cuba fully operational?

What material specifically in the packet leads you to this conclusion?

If they are operational, how long does it take to prepare a missile for firing from command to launch?

Materials

- Teacher introduction script
- CIA briefing report (facsimile)
- CIA translation of Soviet manual page (facsimile)
- Diagram of MRBM Site in Military Thought Article #22.4 (facsimile)
- Overflight Photo of a MRBM site in Soviet Union (facsimile)
- Overflight Photo #5 of MRBM site in Cuba, 14 October, 1962
- Overflight Photo #4 of MRBM site in Cuba, 14 October, 1962
- CIA Memorandum on IRONBARK

Teacher Script to Introduce Part III



Analysts, you have now determined that there are indeed MRBM sites on the island of Cuba. Now the question we need to answer is: Are they operational and if so, how much time do we have from command to launch? These questions cannot be answered by analyzing the U-2 photographs. These are Soviet issue weapons and we have no correlation in the United States.

Fortunately, we have a top secret source inside the Soviet Union, a member of the Soviet military, who, since 1960, has been passing the U.S. and British MI6 top secret manuals allowing us to understand more fully the Soviet nuclear capability in Cuba.

This material (codenamed IRONBARK) could prove to be very useful in our analysis of the MRBM sites identified by the U-2 photographs. This source has not provided us any new intelligence since 5 September, 1962. I will distribute the IRONBARK material for you to analyze. Report back to me on the two questions:

Are the MRBM sites operational?

If they are, how much time is there between command and launch?

The President is awaiting our findings.



Intelligence Packet
Part III

IRONBARK MATERIAL

Distribute to
each analyst

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

TOP SECRET

BRIEFING REPORT

TO: All source analysts
FROM: HQ
RE: IRONBARK Material
DATE: 16 October, 1962

IRONBARK Material

- CIA memorandum RE: IRONBARK
- Translated excerpts from Soviet Field Service Regulations and Top Secret Soviet Military Thought Articles.
- Diagram of MRBM site taken from Soviet military manual
- U-2 reference photo of MRBM site in the Soviet Union taken July, 1962
- 2 U-2 photos, Cuba, 14 October, 1962

Based on this information can you answer these questions?

***Are the missile sites in Cuba fully operational?
Why or why not?***

***If they are operational, how long does it take to prepare a
missile for firing from command to launch?***

EYES ONLY

(199)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

1.3(a)(4)

IRONBARK

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (TOP SECRET): "Problems of the Strategic Deployment of Armed Forces in Modern Warfare", by Major-General Kh. Dzhelaukhov

1. Enclosed is a verbatim translation of an article which appeared in the TOP SECRET Special Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought" ("Voyennaya Mysl") published by the Ministry of Defense, USSR, and distributed down to the level of Army Commander.

2. For convenience of reference by USIB agencies, the codeword IRONBARK has been assigned to this series of TOP SECRET CSDB reports containing documentary Soviet material. The word IRONBARK is classified CONFIDENTIAL and is to be used only among persons authorized to read and handle this material.

3. In the interests of protecting our source, IRONBARK material should be handled on a need-to-know basis within your office. Requests for extra copies of this report or for utilization of any part of this document in any other form should be addressed to the originating office.

[Redacted]

Richard Helms

1.3(a)(4)

Richard Helms
Deputy Director (Plans)

Enclosure

[Redacted]

1.3(a)(4)

[Redacted]

1.3(a)(4)

[Redacted]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE 30 JUN 1992

1.3(a)(4)

**TRANSLATION FROM RUSSIAN
EXCERPTS FROM SOVIET FIELD SERVICE
REGULATIONS AND TOP SECRET SOVIET
MILITARY THOUGHT ARTICLES**

SOURCE: IRONBARK

IRONBARK

TOP SECRET

MRBM-SS4 SPECIFICATIONS

RANGE:

1020 nautical miles

ACCURACY/CEP (circular error of probability): 1-1.5 miles

WARHEAD SPECIFICATIONS

3000 pounds

Yield: 25 kilotons - 2 megatons

FUEL

Liquid

Instable (once in alert mode if missile held for over 5 hours would need to be removed and replaced)

FIRING TIME

Can fire a second and third salvo

Refire time is 5 hours

From command to launch 8-20 hours

In alert mode missiles can be held indefinitely about 2 ½ to to 5 hours from firing

CONFIGURATION

2 missiles per launching pad

6 pointed star configuration when missile in deployment

EYES ONLY

**DIAGRAM OF MRBM SITE IN SOVIET MILITARY THOUGHT
ARTICLE #22.4**

IRONBARK

TOP SECRET



EYES ONLY

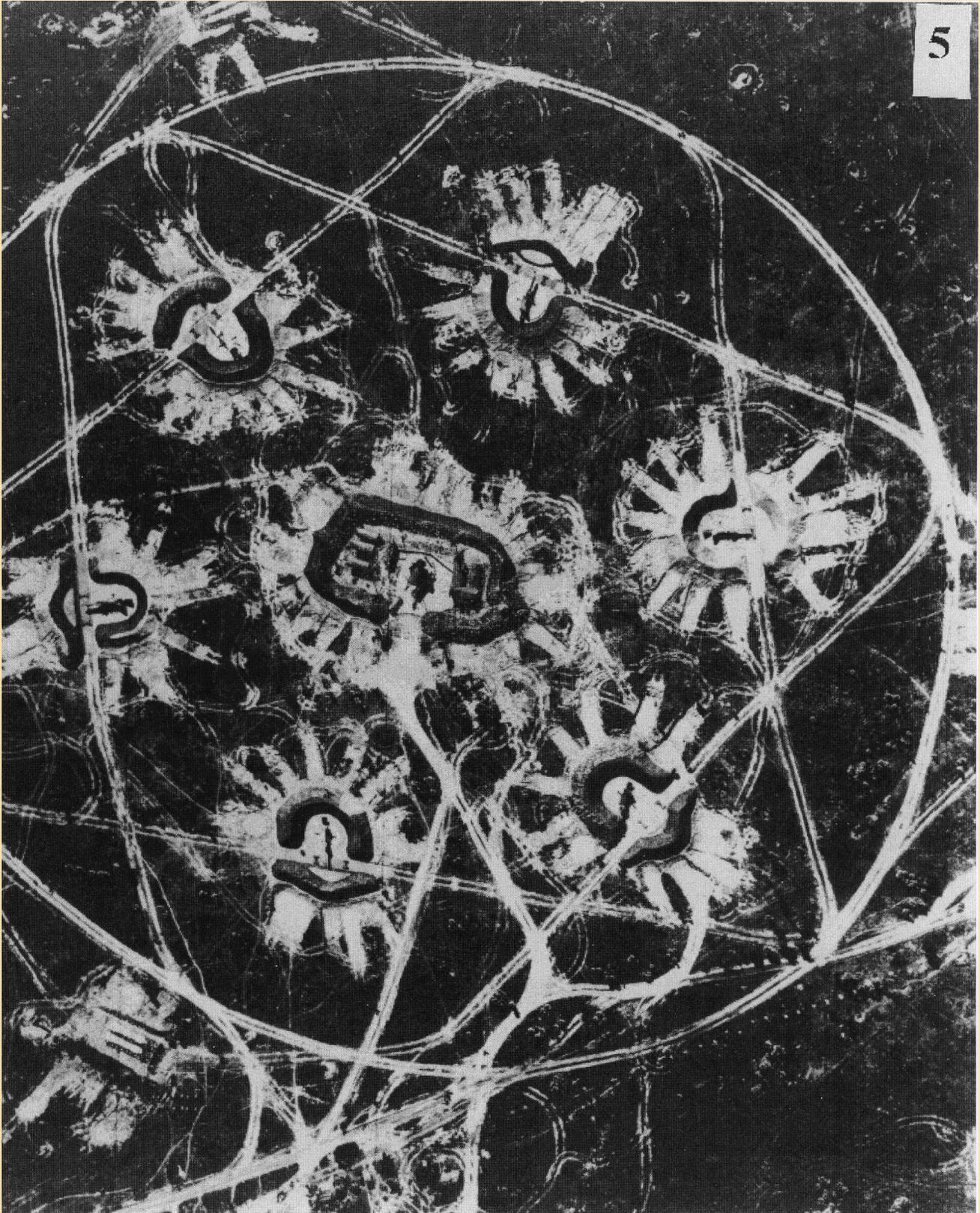
PHOTO OF A MRBM SITE IN SOVIET UNION JULY, 1962
SOURCE: IRONBARK

IRONBARK



IRONBARK

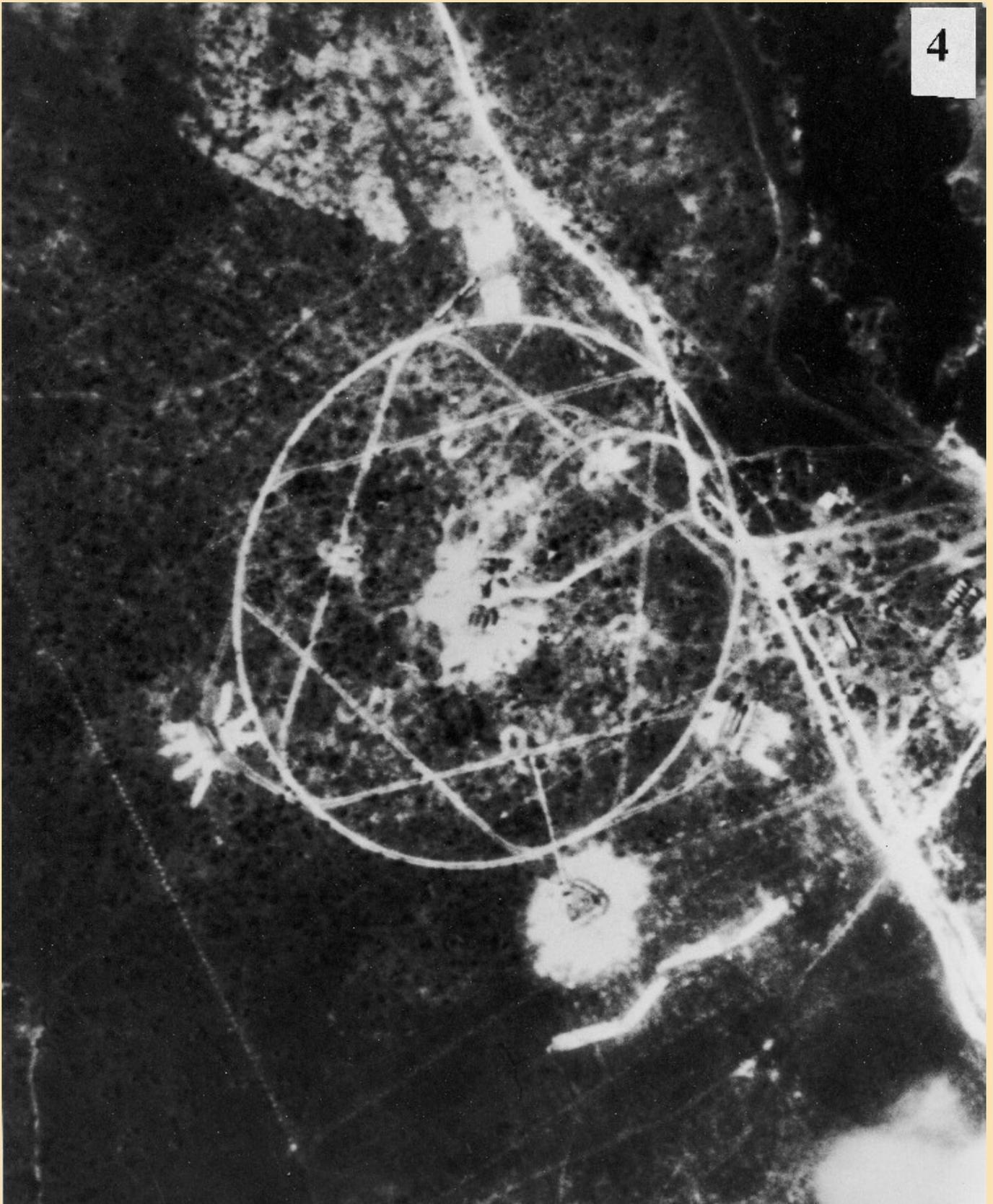
5



U-2 OVERFLIGHT PHOTO — CUBA 14 OCTOBER, 1962

IRONBARK

4



Conclusion and Summary

The final discussion should reveal the Soviets not only have MRBM-SS4 sites in Cuba that are operational, but that they can be ready to fire very quickly.

The Star of David configuration as seen in the U-2 overflight photos is formed by the fuel trucks driving from launch pad to launch pad. Keep in mind that because liquid fuel was used, there is a distinct manner in which each launching pad would need to receive the fuel, forming the distinct pattern on the ground. This indicates that the MRBM sites are operable as per the IRONBARK material.

The time between command to launch is 8 to 20 hours as indicated in the IRONBARK material.

It was the analysis of the U-2 imagery intelligence and human intelligence (both from Cuban nationals and Oleg Penkovsky) that enabled the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) to inform President Kennedy of the evidence that should the Soviets choose to, they could fire the MRBMs and hit an American city.

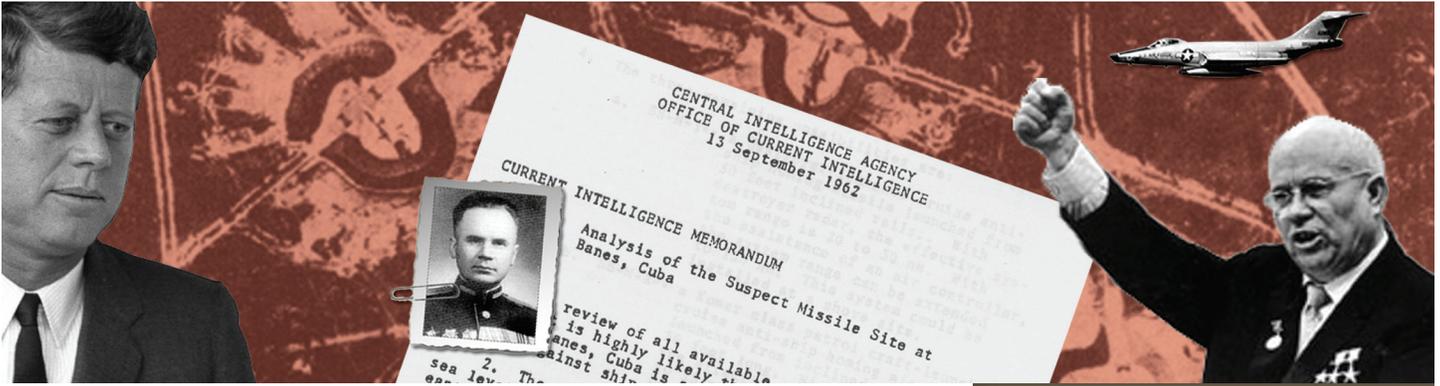
An analogy for the importance of different sources of intelligence is that the photographic or U-2 intelligence is the body; the human intelligence is the mind. In other words, the U-2 overflight photography analysis gave proof that the Soviets had fairly extensive MRBM-SS4 installations in Cuba. The human intelligence supplied mainly by Colonel Oleg Penkovsky gave proof that the sites were operational and to prepare a missile to launch would only take 8 to 20 hours.

The resulting policy decision based on this intelligence is widely known. President Kennedy had just enough time to form a measured response—a naval blockade of Cuba and diplomacy—rather than a military invasion.

You can discuss the choices that Kennedy had and the possible results of these decisions after the exercise is completed. Ask your students to think for a moment about the decision Kennedy might have made without the intelligence. What could have happened if the intelligence was misinterpreted or wrong?

These are all questions that bring us into a discussion of more recent events. Possible questions to explore with students are:

- How does intelligence inform policy?
- What are the United States intelligence capabilities today?
- How did intelligence play a role in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan?
- Identify intelligence failures and explore the resulting impact on policy.
- In addition to imagery and human intelligence sources, what is available to us today that was not available to President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis?



Glossary of Key Terms

All Source Analysts: analysts who consider all forms and sources of raw intelligence in producing an assessment.

Ballistic Missile: A missile that is initially guided but then follows a ballistic (free-falling) trajectory.

CEP: Circular error probable. A measure of the accuracy of ballistic missiles. Half of the missiles will fall within the CEP distance of the target point.

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

CJCS: Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff.

DCI: Director of Central Intelligence, who was also the Director of the CIA.

DEFCON: The defense readiness condition (DEFCON) is a measure of the activation and readiness level of the United States Armed Forces. It describes progressive postures for use between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and unified and specified combatant commands.

DIA: Defense Intelligence Agency.

FROG: "Free Rocket Over Ground," a short range Soviet nuclear missile.

HE: High explosive.

Human Intelligence (HUMINT): Intelligence collected by human sources.

ICBM: Intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of 5,500 kilometers or more.

Intelligence Analysis: Application of cognitive methods to weigh data (intelligence) and test hypothesis in order to derive a conclusion.

Imagery Intelligence (IMINT): Intelligence derived from images. Usually involving high-altitude reconnaissance using spy satellites or aircraft such as a U-2 spy plane.

Intelligence Problem: A problem that can be addressed and possibly solved through collection and analysis.

IRBM: Intermediate range ballistic missile. IRBMs have a range of between 3,000 and 5,500 kilometers.

IRONBARK: Code word associated with intelligence reporting from Oleg Penkovsky.

JCS: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Komar Guided Missile Boat: This is a special class (Komar) of a small craft armed with anti-ship missiles. Being a small craft, missile boats are popular with nations that are looking for an inexpensive navy. These boats were supplied by the Soviets to Cuba to assist in their defensive measures.

MAZ-502: A type of Soviet truck.

Medium range Ballistic Missile (MRBM): a type of ballistic missile with medium range. Within the U.S. Department of Defense, a medium range missile is defined by having a maximum range of between 1,000 and 3,000 km.

MiG: Mikoyan-Gurevich. A Soviet design bureau that produced fighter planes.

MI6: The British foreign intelligence service, the British equivalent of the CIA.

MRBM: See medium range ballistic missile.

MT: Megaton. A measure of the explosive power of a nuclear weapon. One megaton is equivalent to the blast produced by a million tons of TNT.

NIE: National Intelligence Estimate.

Nm: Nautical mile = 6076 feet.

NSC: U.S. National Security Council.

OAS: Organization of American States.

Opa Locka: American debriefing facility for Cubans.

OPLAN: U.S. military operations plan.

PHOTINT: Photographic intelligence, i.e. intelligence acquired from the examination of photographs.

POL: Petroleum, oil, and lubricants.

Reconnaissance: the active seeking to determine an enemy's intentions by collecting and gathering data and information related to size, activity, location, unit, time, equipment, and other conditions, via direct observation.

SA-2: A type of Soviet surface-to-air missile.

SAC: U.S. Strategic Air Command.

SAM: Surface-to-air missile.

SNIE: Special National Intelligence Estimate.

SS-4: A Soviet surface-to-surface missile.

Task Force Chief: The head of a specific project. Term used by the CIA.

U-2: A single-engine, high-altitude aircraft flown by the United States Air Force and previously flown by the Central Intelligence Agency. It provides day and night, high-altitude (70,000 ft, 21,000 m plus), all-weather surveillance. The aircraft is also used for electronic sensor research and development, satellite calibration, and satellite data validation.

ZIL-157: A type of Soviet truck.



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DVDS

13 Days [Hollywood movie produced by New Line Cinema]

The CNN Cold War series is also very worthwhile. However, it's only available on VHS

Related Articles and Documents

- CIA Document 20 October, 1962
Major Consequences of Certain U.S. Courses of Action
on Cuba
- Notes On 21 October, 1962 Meeting with the President
- Diagram: Soviet Missile Installations in Cuba/Map: The
Threat of Cuban Missiles, 1962
- Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the Joint Chiefs
of Staff. October-November 1962
- Article: The Spy who Loved Us – Oleg Penkovsky –
Washington Monthly Company
- 1960 letter from Oleg Penkovsky to top government officials
in Great Britain and the United States
- Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline
- Transcript of NOVA interview with Dino Brugioni, founder of
CIA's National Photographic Interpretation Center

CIA Document 20 October, 1962
Major Consequences of Certain U.S. Courses of
Action on Cuba

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

20 October 1962

SUBJECT: SNIE 11-19-62: MAJOR CONSEQUENCES OF CERTAIN US COURSES OF
ACTION ON CUBA

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the major consequences of certain US courses of action
with respect to Cuba

THE ESTIMATE

STATUS OF SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP IN CUBA

1. Firm evidence indicates the presence in Cuba of four IRBM and
two IREX launch sites in various stages of construction and organized
into at least three regiments. Of these, two regiments of eight
launchers each are mobile and designed to launch IRBMs with a range of
about 1,100 n.m., while one regiment of eight fixed launchers may be
designed for IREXs with a range of about 2,200 n.m.

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Approved for Release
Date 15 April 1975

2. The 16 launchers for 1,100 n.m. MRBMs must be considered operational now. Four of the fixed launchers for the 2,200 n.m. IRBMs could probably become operational within the next six weeks. The other four would become operational in 8 to 10 weeks.

the construction of at least one probable nuclear storage facility is a strong indication of the Soviet intent to provide nuclear warheads. In any case, it is prudent to assume that when the missiles are otherwise operational, nuclear warheads will be available. These could be brought in by air, submarine, or surface ship.

3. We estimate that operational MRBM missiles can be fired in eight hours or less after a decision to launch, depending on the condition of readiness. After the IRBM sites are completed and missiles are on launcher, a state of readiness of five hours may be maintained. Both systems are believed to be provided with two missiles per launcher, providing a refire capability from each launcher after about four to six additional hours for the MRBMs and six to eight hours for the IRBMs.

4. It is possible that further evidence will uncover additional launch sites which are presently undetected, but the extent of our coverage leads us to believe that such evidence would not drastically

increase the total now deployed. On the other hand, new deployments could be started at any time.

5. The inventory of other major Soviet weapons now identified in Cuba includes:

- a. 22 IL-28 jet light bombers, of which one is assembled and three others have been uncrated;
- b. 39 MIG-21 jet fighters, of which 35 are assembled and four are still crates, and 62 other jet fighters of less advanced types;
- c. 24 SA-2 sites, of which 16 are believed to be individually operational with some missiles on launcher;
- d. 3 cruise missile sites for coastal defense, of which 2 are now operational;
- e. 12 Soviet cruise missile patrol boats, all probably operational or nearly so.

6. Cuban-based MRBMs and IRBMs with nuclear warheads would augment the present limited Soviet ICBM capability by virtue of their ability to strike at similar types of targets with warheads of generally similar yields. In the near future, therefore, Soviet gross capabilities for initial attack on US military and civilian targets can be increased considerably by Cuban-based missiles. However, the deployment of these missiles in Cuba will probably not, in the Soviet judgment, insure destruction of the US second strike capability to a degree which would

eliminate an unacceptably heavy retaliatory attack on the USSR. If the missile buildup in Cuba continues, the Soviet capability to blunt a retaliatory attack will be progressively enhanced.

PURPOSE OF SOVIET BUILDUP

7. A major Soviet objective in their military buildup in Cuba is to demonstrate that the world balance of forces has shifted so far in their favor that the US can no longer prevent the advance of Soviet offensive power even into its own hemisphere. In this connection they assume, of course, that these deployments sooner or later will become publicly known. At the same time, they expect their missile forces in Cuba to make an important contribution to their total strategic capability vis-a-vis the US.

8. Consequently, it is unlikely that the USSR is installing these missiles primarily in order to use them in bargaining for US concessions elsewhere. Moreover, the public withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba would create serious problems in the USSR's relations with Castro; it would cast doubt on the firmness of the Soviet intention to protect the Castro regime and perhaps on their commitments elsewhere.

US ACQUESCENCE IN THE BUILDUP

9. If the US acquiesces to the presence of strategic missiles in Cuba, we believe that the Soviets will continue the buildup. We have no basis for estimating the force level which they would wish to reach, but it seems entirely clear now that they are going well beyond a token capability.

10. This course of US action would provide strong encouragement to Communists, pro-Communists, and the more anti-American sectors of opinion in Latin America. We believe that, especially over the long run, there would be loss of confidence in US power and determination and a serious decline of US influence, particularly in Latin America. Should any additional Latin American government fall to the Communists the Soviets would feel free to establish bases in the country in question if they chose. A major immediate consequence would be that the Soviets would probably estimate lower risks in pressing the US hard in other confrontations, such as Berlin.

EFFECT OF WARNING

11. If the US confronts Khrushchev with its knowledge of the VREM deployment and presses for a withdrawal, we do not believe the Soviets would halt the deployment. Instead, they would propose negotiations on the general question of foreign bases, claiming equal right to establish Soviet bases and assuring the US of tight control over the missiles.

They would probably link Cuba with the Berlin situation and emphasize their patience and preference for negotiations, implying that Berlin was held hostage to US actions in Cuba.

12. There is some slight chance that a warning to Castro might make a difference, since the Soviets could regard this as a chance to stand aside, but it also would give time for offers to negotiate, continued buildup, and counterpressures, and we think the result in the end would be the same.

13. Any warning would of course degrade the element of surprise in a subsequent US attack.

A US BLOCKADE

14. Two basic modes of blockade could be considered: total and selective. We believe that even under a total blockade individual aircraft and submarines might get through to deliver vital military stores, e.g., nuclear warheads. Even the most severe blockade would not deprive the Soviets of the use of missiles already in Cuba for a nuclear strike on the US.

15. Under any form of blockade, the Soviets would concentrate on political exploitation, especially in the UN. They might risk violent encounters in attempts to penetrate the blockade, but they would not resort to major force in the area of Cuba or forceful retaliation elsewhere,

at least initially. If US enforcement of the blockade involved use of force by the US, the Soviets might respond on an equivalent level, but would seek to avoid escalation.

16. Thus any blockade situation would place the Soviets under no immediate pressure to choose a response with force. They could rely on political means to compel the US to desist, and reserve a resort to force until the US had actually used force. They would estimate that the inherent difficulties of enforcing the blockade and the generally adverse reactions, including those of US allies to it, would result in enormous pressures on the US to desist. They could heighten those pressures by threatening retaliation in Berlin or actually undertaking major harassments on the access routes, which could become tantamount to a blockade, and would probably do so at some stage.

17. We do not believe that even a severe blockade, of itself, would bring down the Cuban regime. Castro would tighten internal security and, unless action against the regime subsequently developed on Cuban soil, the Cuban population would be increasingly reluctant to oppose the regime. Direct action would still be required to bring down the Castro regime.

SOVIET REACTION TO USE OF MILITARY FORCE

18. In the case of US use of force against Cuban territory, the likelihood of a Soviet response by force, either locally or for retaliation elsewhere, would be greater than in the case of blockade. The

Soviets would be placed automatically under great pressure to respond in ways which, if they could not save Cuba, would inflict an offsetting injury to US interests. This would be true whether the action was limited to an effort to neutralize the strategic missiles, or these missiles plus airfields, surface-to-air missile sites, or cruise missile sites, or in fact an outright invasion designed to destroy the Castro regime.

19. In reaction to any of the various forms of US action, the Soviets would be surprised and probably alarmed, since they appear to have estimated that the US would probably not take military action in the face of Soviet warnings of the danger of nuclear war. They would recognize that US military action posed a major challenge to the prestige of the USSR. We must of course recognize the possibility that the Soviets, under pressure to respond, would again miscalculate and respond in a way which, through a series of actions and reactions, could escalate to general war.

20. On the other hand, the Soviets have no public treaty with Cuba and have not acknowledged that Soviet bases are on the island. This situation provides them with a pretext for treating US military action against Cuba as an affair which does not directly involve them, and thereby avoiding the risks of a strong response. We do not believe that the USSR would attack the US, either from Soviet bases or with its missiles in Cuba, even if the latter were operational and not put out of action before they could be readied for firing.

21. Since the USSR would almost certainly not resort to general war and could not hope to prevail locally, we believe that the Soviets would consider retaliatory actions outside Cuba. The timing and selection of such moves would depend heavily upon the immediate context of events and the USSR's appreciation of US attitudes. The most likely location for broad retaliation outside Cuba appears to be Berlin. They would probably react here with major harassments, interruptions of access to the city or even a blockade, with or without the signing of a separate peace treaty. Retaliation against some US installation overseas is possible but in our view unlikely.

22. We believe that there would probably be a difference between Soviet reaction to all-out invasion and Soviet reaction to more limited US use of force against selected objectives in Cuba. We believe that the Soviets would be somewhat less likely to retaliate with military force in areas outside Cuba in response to speedy, effective invasion than in response to more limited forms of military action against Cuba. We recognize that such an estimate cannot be made with very great assurance and do not rule out the possibility of Soviet retaliation outside Cuba in case of invasion. But we believe that a rapid occupation of Cuba would be more likely to make the Soviets pause in opening new theaters of conflict than limited action or action which drags out.

23. Finally, we believe that, whatever course of retaliation the USSR elected, the Soviet leaders would not deliberately initiate general



var or take military measures, which in their calculation, would run
grave risks of general war.

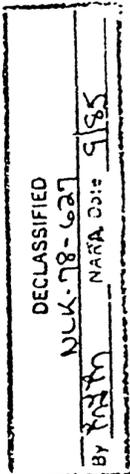
Notes On October 21, 1962 Meeting with the President

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NOTES ON OCTOBER 21, 1962 MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT

1. The meeting was held in the Oval Room at the White House and lasted from 11:30 a.m. to approximately 12:30 p.m. In attendance were the Attorney General, General Taylor, General Sweeney and the Secretary of Defense.
2. The Secretary of Defense stated that following the start of an air attack, the initial units of the landing force could invade Cuba within 7 days. The movement of troops in preparation for such an invasion will start at the time of the President's speech. No mobilization of Reserve forces is required for such an invasion until the start of the air strike. General LeMay had stated that the transport aircraft, from Reserve and Guard units, which would be required for participation in such an invasion, can be fully operational within 24 to 48 hours after the call to active duty.
3. The Secretary of Defense reported that, based on information which became available during the night, it now appears that there is equipment in Cuba for approximately 40 MRBM or IRBM launchers. (Mr. McCone, who joined the group 15 or 20 minutes after the start of the discussion, confirmed this report.) The location of the sites for 36 of these launchers is known. 32 of the 36 known sites appear to have sufficient equipment on them to be included in any air strike directed against Cuba's missile capability.
4. We believe that 40 launchers would normally be equipped with 80 missiles. John McCone reported yesterday that a Soviet ship believed to be the vessel in which the Soviets have been sending missiles to Cuba has made a sufficient number of trips to that island, within recent weeks, to offload approximately 48 missiles. Therefore, we assume there are approximately that number on the Island today, although we have only located approximately 30 of these.
5. General Sweeney outlined the following plan of air attack, the object of which would be the destruction of the known Cuban missile capability.
 - a. The 5 surface-to-air missile installations, in the vicinity of the known missile sites, would each be attacked by approximately 8 aircraft; the 3 MIG airfields defending the missile sites would be covered by 12 U.S. aircraft per field. In total, the defense suppression operations, including the necessary replacement aircraft, would require approximately 100 sorties.
 - b. Each of the launchers at the 8 or 9 known sites (a total of approximately 32 to 36 launchers) would be attacked by 6 aircraft. For the purpose, a total of approximately 250 sorties would be flown.
 - c. The U.S. aircraft covering the 3 MIG airfields would attack the MIG's if they became airborne. General Sweeney strongly recommended attacks on each of the airfields to destroy the MIG aircraft.



Notes On October 21, 1962
Meeting with the President, continued

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6. General Sweeney stated that he was certain the air strike would be "successful"; however, even under optimum conditions, it was not likely that all of the known missiles would be destroyed. (As noted in 4 above, the known missiles are probably no more than 50% of the total missiles on the Island.) General Taylor stated, "The best we can offer you is to destroy 90% of the known missiles." General Taylor, General Sweeney and the Secretary of Defense all strongly emphasized that in their opinion the initial air strike must be followed by strikes on subsequent days and that these in turn would lead inevitably to an invasion.

7. CIA representatives, who joined the discussion at this point, stated that it is probable the missiles which are operational (it is estimated there are now between 8 and 12 operational missiles on the Island) can hold indefinitely a capability for firing with from 2-1/2 to 4 hours notice. Included in the notice period is a countdown requiring 20 to 40 minutes. In relation to the countdown period, the first wave of our attacking aircraft would give 10 minutes of warning; the second wave, 40 minutes of warning; and the third wave a proportionately greater warning.

8. As noted above, General Sweeney strongly recommended that any air strike include attacks on the MIG aircraft and, in addition, the IL28s. To accomplish the destruction of these aircraft, the total number of sorties of such an air strike should be increased to 500. The President agreed that if an air strike is ordered, it should probably include in its objective the destruction of the MIG aircraft and the IL28s.

9. The President directed that we be prepared to carry out the air strike Monday morning or any time thereafter during the remainder of the week. The President recognized that the Secretary of Defense was opposed to the air strike Monday morning, and that General Sweeney favored it. He asked the Attorney General and Mr. McCone for their opinions:

- a. The Attorney General stated he was opposed to such a strike because:
 - (1) "It would be a Pearl Harbor type of attack."
 - (2) It would lead to unpredictable military responses by the Soviet Union which could be so serious as to lead to general nuclear war.

He stated we should start with the initiation of the blockade and thereafter "play for the breaks."

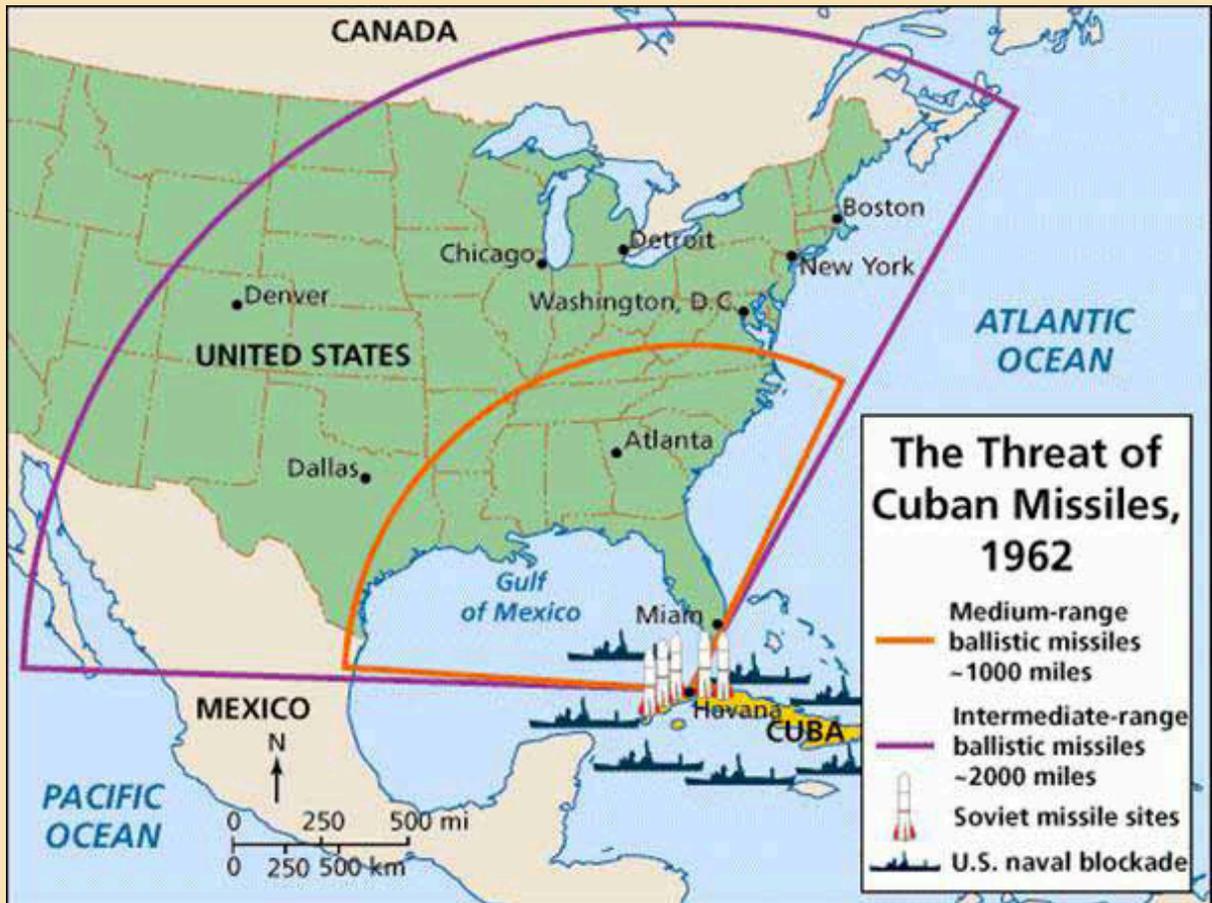
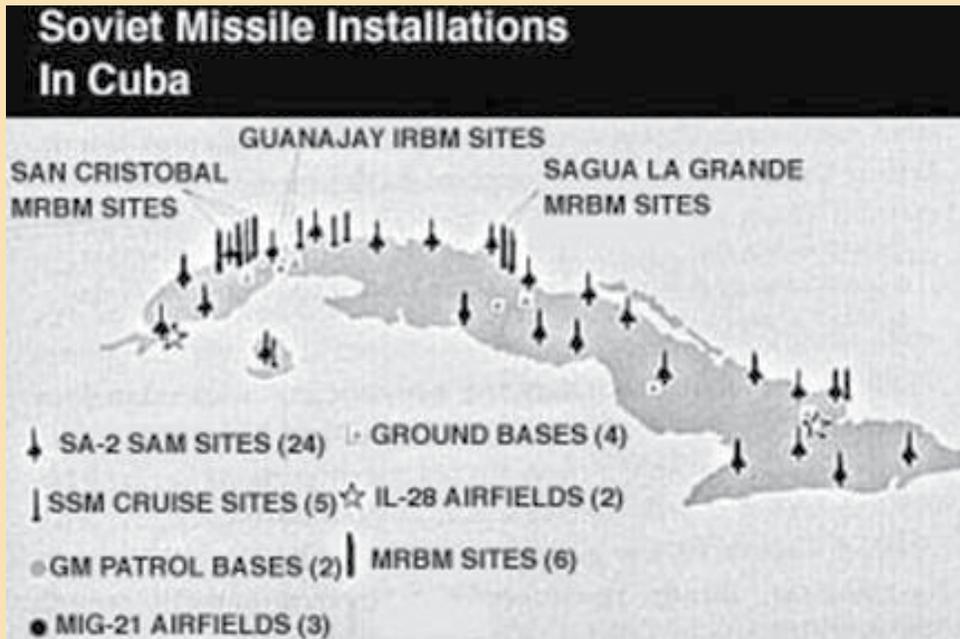
- b. Mr. McCone agreed with the Attorney General, but emphasized he believed we should be prepared for an air strike and thereafter an invasion.

Robert S. McNamara
Robert S. McNamara

10/21/62

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Diagram: Soviet Missile Installations in Cuba
Map: The Threat of Cuban Missiles, 1962



Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. October–November 1962

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NOTES TAKEN FROM TRANSCRIPTS
OF MEETINGS OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF,
OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1962,
DEALING WITH THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS
(Handwritten notes were made in 1976 and
typed in 1993)

CJCS: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Maxwell D. Taylor, USA.

CSA: Chief of Staff, Army. General Earle G. Wheeler.

CSAF: Chief of Staff, Air Force. General Curtis E. LeMay.

CNO: Chief of Naval Operations. Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr.

CMC: Commandant, Marine Corps. General David M. Shoup.

CONAD: Continental Air Defense

DIA: Defense Intelligence Agency

JCS: Director, Joint Staff

LANANT: Atlantic

NORAD: North American Air Defense

OAS: Organization of American States

RCT: Regimental Combat Team

SAM: Surface-to-Air Missile

TAC: Tactical Air Command

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962
continued

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Monday, 15 October

JCS met at 1400; SecDef and DepSecDef joined them at 1430:

Discussion of JCS 2304/68, contingency planning for Cuba:

JCS: If OPLAN 316's requirement for an airborne assault after five days' preparation is to be met, the Marine RCT must move from Camp Pendleton to the East Coast.

SecDef: President wants no military action within the next three months, but he can't be sure as he does not control events. For instance, aerial photos made available this morning show 68 boxes on ships that are not believed to be B-28s and cannot be identified. However, the probabilities are strongly against military action in the next 30 days.

Discussion of JCS 2304/69, which deals with preparations necessary to execute plans:

SecDef: I suggest we use [

] We can't do what the British and French did over Suez-- say we will take action, then do nothing while a long buildup is completed. We can't do nothing during the 18-day preparatory period for OPLAN 314 while the enemy prepares and world pressure mounts. So I suggest that [

] CNO: A Marine RLT would have to be moved from the West Coast; that requires 20 days' notice and an 18-day voyage.

SecDef: We would not mobilize reserve air squadrons until air strikes begin. All present agreed.

CSA: The thing about OPLAN 314 that bothers me is that we

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962
continued

SecDef: [

CNO: [

SecDef: [We should bring this problem to the President's
attention as soon as possible. [

] JCS agreed with him that a briefing should be
prepared for the President outlining these two alternatives.

Tuesday, 16 October

JCS meeting at 1000:

CJCS says he will see the President at 1145.

Briefing by Mr. McLaughlin of DIA: 3 SS-3 sites located; MRBMs
could have ranges of either 700 or 1100 miles; all-out effort
could make them operational within 24 hours.

VCSAF (Gen. Seth McKee): Once the missile sites become
operational, Castro can threaten retaliation for any offensive
move by the US. Delaying action until the missiles are set up
could touch off nuclear war.

CMC: Soviets might be attempting to pose a nuclear threat to
the US without running a risk of nuclear retaliation against
the Soviet Union.

JCS agree the threat is so serious as to require the US to take
out the missiles by military effort.

CSA favored air attack without warning, to be followed by
invasion.

CNO recommended air attack followed by invasion as the only way
to eliminate the Communist regime from Cuba. Once the missiles

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962
continued

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were removed, however, he did not see a Communist Cuba as a military threat.

VCSAF foresaw a possibility of avoiding the need for invasion by efficient application of air strikes and naval blockade.

CJCS: I am not convinced that air strikes need be followed by an invasion. What threat is Cuba once missiles and aircraft are knocked out?

CMC favored an ultimatum to remove the missiles or the US would destroy them.

JCS agreed that the recommended sequence would be: get additional intelligence; make surprise attacks on missiles, airfields, PT boats, SAMs and tanks; concurrently, reinforce Guantanamo; prepare to initiate an invasion.

JCS meeting at 1630 attended by Adm. Dennison (CINCLANT), Gen. Power (CINCSAC), Gen. Sweeney (CG, TAC) and LTG Hamilton Howze (CG, XVIII Abn Corps):

CJCS gives a debrief of the 1145 White House meeting:

President gave unlimited authority to use U-2 reconnaissance. Rusk said he was not certain that the MRBMs were in Cuba. SecDef, after being briefed on JCS recommendation, was with us except on one point: We should strike before any of the missiles show their head, before they become completely operational. CJCS then had presented the JCS view favoring. [

] Conferees felt that our deterrent would keep Khrushchev from firing nuclear missiles. The President speculated why Khrushchev would put missiles in Cuba. Rusk said: To supplement his MRBM capabilities and further his

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962

continued

Berlin objectives. After President left the meeting, SecDef set forth his view that the known missiles would have to be taken out.

CJCS concluded his debrief by saying that the question was whether to go for the missiles or go for missiles as well as blockade, to be followed by possible invasion.

JCS and commanders' discussion followed:

CJCS: In an invasion, we would be playing Khrushchev's game by getting 250,000 troops tied up ashore.

Discussion followed of what targets should be attacked: Must be not only MRBMs but also MiGs, SAMs, patrol boats, tank parks, and all significant military targets, together with a blockade.

JCS discarded the 18-day buildup period.

SecDef then joined the meeting: I said this morning that after missiles are operational I was against attacking Cuba because they probably could launch missiles before we destroyed them. SecDef asks JCS whether they would favor attacking under those circumstances; they say yes. SecDef gives the following guidance: Heavy reconnaissance effort is authorized as well as augmentation of air defenses in the Southeastern U.S. I think that three courses of action were open: (1) political moves--useless; (2) open surveillance and weapons blockade, and if they use missiles we attack--costly but might be worth the cost; (3) all military action--might trigger a Soviet response. JCS agreed that the following general war preparatory steps were necessary: SAC on 1/8th airborne alert; disperse those SAC and NORAD aircraft carrying nuclear weapons; move Polaris subs

Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962

continued

from Holy Loch: augment air defenses in the Southeast: []

After SecDef left, CJCS asked whether JCS favored going to low-level reconnaissance flights, which might tip our hand. All said no.

JCS agreed that if the decision was to go for MRBMs only, they would recommend that we not do anything.

Wednesday, 17 October

JCS meeting at 1000; CJCS joined meeting at 1120:

DJS (VADM Riley): SecDef debriefed me on White House meeting at 1900 last night. Five courses of action were proposed. I: Attack MRBMs plus nuclear storage sites. II: Add to those MiG-21s and II-28s. III: Add to those other air capabilities, SAMs, surface-to-surface missiles, and missile-carrying boats. IV: attack all significant military targets but exclude tanks, since IV was not prelude to invasion. V: Add tanks to IV. They talked exclusively about carrying out I, after political preparations. The SecDef asked JCS about requirements to carry out these five options. The J-3 worked through the night and came up with this estimate for sorties: I: 52; II: 104; III: 194; IV: 474; V: 2002. (Several days later, because these totals did not explicitly include requirements for escort, suppression of air defenses, and post-strike reconnaissance, these figures had to be substantially revised upward. At that point, Gen. Taylor reacted as follows: "What! These figures were reported to the White House. You are defeating yourselves with your own cleverness, gentlemen.")

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962

continued

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The JCS felt they should go on record as opposing strikes on MRBMs alone. Otherwise, if things went wrong, they might get the blame (see JCSM-794-62).

DJS: CJCS says that whatever is decided it will be a long time before they go to any invasion.

CJCS gives debrief of White House meeting that morning. This was the first small meeting (CJCS, McNamara, Rusk, Ball, Nitze, R. Kennedy, L. Thompson). We all agreed we had no hard positions. State preferred, first, a series of political measures that would minimize damage to the alliance and give Khrushchev an indication of what we planned to do. State also proposed a Kennedy-Khrushchev summit meeting. CJCS thinks they will say there must be some political action before a showdown. It was agreed that if we want to go to a blockade, we must declare war. CJCS adds that blockade is only in the minds of people who feel that striking missile sites alone is not enough.

Thursday, 18 October

JCS meeting at 0930 (Gen. LeMay, previously represented by Gen. McKee, now joined discussions):

DIA officers give results of U-2 mission of 15 October. Photos were shown of four bases: Guanajay; San Julian; San Cristobal; and Santa Cruz. Mr. McLaughlin said it will take six months to make the sites completely operational.

CJCS: Now permanent missile sites show up. This is really significant. I now feel air strikes are not enough, and occupation is the only answer.

CJCS gives debriefing on last night's meeting. Five courses of

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962

continued

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Wednesday, 17 October

JCS meeting at 1000; CJCS joined meeting at 1120:

DJS (VADM Riley): SecDef debriefed me on White House meeting at 1900 last night. Five courses of action were proposed. I: Attack MRBMs plus nuclear storage sites. II: Add to those MiG-21s and II-28s. III: Add to those other air capabilities, SAMs, surface-to-surface missiles, and missile-carrying boats. IV: attack all significant military targets but exclude tanks, since IV was not prelude to invasion. V: Add tanks to IV. They talked exclusively about carrying out I, after political preparations. The SecDef asked JCS about requirements to carry out these five options. The J-3 worked through the night and came up with this estimate for sorties: I: 52; II: 104; III: 194; IV: 474; V: 2002. (Several days later, because these totals did not explicitly include requirements for escort, suppression of air defenses, and post-strike reconnaissance, these figures had to be substantially revised upward. At that point, Gen. Taylor reacted as follows: "What! These figures were reported to the White House. You are defeating yourselves with your own cleverness, gentlemen.")

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yesterday. But Rusk still thought Khrushchev should be informed in advance. SecDef said that new intelligence called for invasion. In the car, SecDef told CJCS that if he knew there was an operational missile in Cuba, it would change his outlook since we would have to go nuclear. Three plans were being considered: (1) maximum political effort; (2) a combination with military effort being built around blockade then reconnaissance; (3) no political discussion-- air strike followed by invasion. Plan (1) is out. CJCS said he asked the President if we could discard the partial air strike. We agreed to do Category III, IV, or V (see 17 Oct, 1000 meeting). Next State proposed a five-day preliminary, talking to Khrushchev, UN and OAS; then clamp on blockade and state of war. The President seemed to feel we should hold back until we get a feel for the Russian reaction.

CSAF: Are we really going to do anything except talk?

CJCS: Definitely. Probably there will be a political approach, followed by warning, a blockade, hitting the missiles, and invasion-- in that order. We will probably start in the early part of next week.

Friday, 19 October

JCS meeting at 0900:

CJCS gives a debrief of White House meeting on the previous evening: The tendency is more and more toward political actions plus a blockade; the President shows a preference for this. State will provide the details of political approaches. The JCS will consider total blockade, selective blockade, and

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the necessity for a declaration of war. State's idea is that there should be a selective blockade for offensive weapons only. CSAF: "It would be pure disaster to try that."

CJCS: The President wants to see us this morning. It boils down to a choice between Course E (above) and the new alternative of political action plus blockade. We should recommend to him (1) surprise attack on comprehensive targets, (2) reconnaissance surveillance, and (3) complete blockade. A briefing was given by DIA: There are 35-39 MiG 21s and 21 T1-28s (17 still in crates). There are 7 MRBM sites (4 are for SS-4s with 1100 n.m. range; 3 are for SS-5s with 2200 n.m. range); there are 16 launchers for SS-4s and 12 for SS-5s, with two missiles each. There are 22 SAM sites, 9 believed operational. In just a few weeks, they can have a couple of air defense nets with real capability.

The JCS position decided upon for the meeting with the President was:

1. Notify Macmillan and possibly Adenauer two hours in advance.
2. Carry out a surprise attack on comprehensive targets.
3. Reconnaissance surveillance.
4. Complete blockade.
5. Invade Cuba? CSA, CSAF and CNO say yes; CJCS says only be prepared to do so.
6. Realize there will be a strain upon and NATO and problems about Berlin.

JCS meeting at 1400:

CJCS gives a debrief on a meeting at the State Dept. that morning: R. Kennedy thought we should say nothing but simply

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go ahead and make that attack and then go to the OAS. State said that we could never get two-thirds approval from the OAS unless we went to it first. CJCS says that conferees split into two teams to prepare their cases: Red team favoring blockade, Blue team favoring attack. The Blue Team consisted of R. Kennedy, Douglas Dillon, McGeorge Bundy, Dean Acheson, and John McCone.

CJCS related that R. Kennedy said that from here on out, if we make a surprise attack, we will be accused of another Pearl Harbor. So would you be willing to accept a 24-hour delay in order to inform the allies? CSAF and CNO said yes; CJCS agreed with them.

Saturday, 20 October

JCS meeting at 1000:

CJCS said that the President might want to hit them as early as tomorrow morning. He proposes sending a memo strongly recommending against a hasty attack on offensive weapons; it should be launched on 23 Oct and include all offensive weapons and supporting defenses. JCS agreed.

Briefing by Gen. Quinn of DIA: One regiment on 1020 n.m. missiles is near San Cristobal and is operational now. Each site has eight missiles and four launchers. There is another regiment with two sites in the Sagua la Grande area; these will be operational within one week. The 2000 mile RBMs could be operational within six weeks; there are four launchers at two fixed sites. Operational SAM sites have risen to 16. There is no evidence of nuclear warheads in Cuba.

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CNO: We are dividing the Pentagon into two teams. Blue with McNamara, Taylor and Gilpatric will review surprise attack scenarios. Blue with Anderson, Yarmolinsky, Griffin, Shoup and McNaughton will consider blockade. In taking leadership of the Blue Team, CNO said he protested to the SecDef that this would locking the barn door after the horse had been stolen. Blockade would not accomplish the objective, was not in the US interest, would be imposed after the missiles had been emplaced, and would bring a confrontation with the Soviet Union rather than Cuba. It would incur the danger of attacks on Guantanamo and US shipping in the Florida Strait, and left the possibility of missiles being launched from Cuba.

BG Lucius Clay (Dep Director, J-3): I have just come from a meeting at State attended by Cabinet members and some others. They are considering two courses: (1) limited blockade followed by an air strike three days later; (2) limited blockade followed by negotiations. Consensus is that we will have to go through political shenanigans, followed by blockade and then air strike. UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson is strong for blockade less POL.

CJCS rejoins the meeting at 1230: President will preside at a White House meeting this afternoon. The SecDef wants an in-between plan: a five-day blockade and then strike. CJCS says he will tell the President that we have every reasonable chance of hitting all those missiles. If we wait, they'll have time to hide them.

JCS meeting at 1815:

CJCS debrief on White House meeting that afternoon: "This was

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not one of our better days." After a two-hour discussion, the decisive votes were cast by Rusk, McNamara and Adlai Stevenson. Decision is to draw up plans for a blockade, to take effect 24 hours after the President's TV speech on the evening of the 21st or 22nd. OAS approval should be obtained during the 24-hour interval. The blockade will concern offensive weapons; POL probably will be added during the week. We should be prepared to execute an air strike against missiles only (1) without warning on Monday or Tuesday or (2) after 24 hours' notice. The rationale is that we don't want a Pearl Harbor on the American record, and we want to protect unprepared allies against retaliation. We also talked about possible negotiations with the Soviets about giving up missiles in Italy and Turkey, and using Polaris subs in the Mediterranean as a substitute. The President said to me, "I know that you and your colleagues are unhappy with the decision, but I trust that you will support me in this decision." I assured him that we were against the decision but would back him completely.

CSA: "I never thought I'd live to see the day when I would want to go to war."

Sunday, 21 October

JCS meeting at 1300:

JCS: Gen. Sweeney and I saw the President this morning. Sweeney said he needed an additional 150 planes to get the missiles and 500 planes for the whole job. The President said if we make the strike we will do the whole job. What are the

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chances of getting the known targets?

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CSAF: 90 percent.

CNO: The President's speech is solid for Monday night.

CJCS: How soon after that will the blockade begin?

CNO: State wants to make it indefinite, so as to get OAS reaction first. I said if they wanted 24 hours, all right.

CAPT Houser brought a memo from the DepSecDef into the JCS meeting: The President wants to be sure that Jupiters in Turkey and Italy are not fired without his authorization, even in the event of a Soviet nuclear or non-nuclear attack on those units.

JCS reply is JCSM-800-62, opposing any further steps.

JCS meeting at 1715:

Debrief of a White House meeting that began at 1430:

CJCS: CNO and I attended.

CNO: It was agreed that the President's speech was too precise on the numbers of missiles and launchers (5-6 MRBM sites, 32 missiles; 2 IRBM sites, 16 missiles). Also, we will call this a quarantine rather than a blockade; then we could escalate to a blockade. References in the draft to horrors of war will be toned down, and direct references to West Berlin eliminated. All Services and the Joint Staff were instructed to shorten from 7 to 5 days the period for execution of OPLAN 316.

CJCS: "The Pearl Harbor complex has affected the good people at the White House.... There will be no air strike, but it is in the offing."

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Monday, 22 October

JCS meeting at 0900:

Briefing by Gen. Carroll (Director, DIA): Of the six mobile MRBM sites, four are operational and the other two will be so within 3 to 5 days. Of the two fixed IRBM sites, one will be available for emergencies by 15 November and fully operational by 1 December. The other two will be in emergency operation by 1 December, with a full capability by 15 December.

JCS meeting with SecDef at 1330:

CJCS: Some decisions were made at lunch (1/8th airborne alert for SAC, dispersal of B-47s and CONAD interceptors). [

] the-time of the President's speech.

SecDef: The President wants a message sent to USCINCEUR saying in effect, make sure the Jupiter warheads in Turkey and Italy are not released if missiles come under attack, and if they are in danger of being taken by our angry allies, destroy them.

SecDef: The President asked for our views on how we should respond if the Cubans launched a missile, authorized or not.

DepSecDef: We won't know if it came from Cuba.

SecDef: Right; it could come from a submarine. I think we should tell the Soviets we will hold them responsible and fire missiles in retaliation. What we want is for the Soviets to send out a message like the one we just sent out to USCINCEUR. (See Msg, JCS 5866 to USCINCEUR)

CNO disagreed; a public warning to the Soviets would bring strongly adverse allied reactions. JCS agree we should not say exactly what our retaliation would be.

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JCS meeting at 1620:

VADM Sharp (Deputy CNO, Plans and Policy): The President doesn't want us to take overt steps indicating that we are getting ready for invasion. Thus requisitioning ships is out. We wanted 111 ships: 30 in one day; 50 more in 10; 31 in 12 days.

Gen. McKee (Vice CSAF): DepSecDef said there would be no callup of C-119s and interceptors in view of what the President said.

CJCS: If we can't lick the Cubans with what we already have, we are in terrible shape.

Tuesday, 23 October

JCS meeting at 0900 (GJCS and SecDef were attending a meeting of the NSC Executive Committee at the White House):

JCS decided that low-level reconnaissance was necessary. Then the SecDef called from the White House to ask how many flights were wanted. They replied that six were needed to cover the MRBM sites. The CJCS telephoned approval from the White house at 1057.

The JCS also discussed how to react to a U-2 shutdown. They agreed that, if a U-2 was downed, 1-2 flights daily should continue until another U-2 loss occurred. Then, determine whether the projected attrition rate was acceptable. If so, continue the flights. If not, attack all SAM sites and then resume U-2 flights. But, at 1125, CJCS brought back somewhat different guidance from the White House. This was sent via Msg, JCS 6958 to CINCLANT, 241922Z Oct 62.

CJCS debrief of ExComm meeting: President approved extension of

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tours of duty for Army and Marine Corps personnel. SecDef told the President that authority to requisition shipping was not needed today; he also said that S-Day (beginning of air strikes) would be the right time for the C-119 callup.

JCS meeting at 1400:

CNO: SecDef says that the quarantine will be imposed effective 241400Z. Message directing the generation of SAC forces will not be dispatched until the Quarantine Proclamation is made public (see Msg, JCS 6917 to CINCSAC, 232306Z Oct 62).

Wednesday, 24 October

JCS meeting at 0900:

CJCS debriefs on ExComm meeting at 1800 last night: President was concerned about the problem of stopping a ship that did not want to be boarded. Will the Navy fight its way on board? The President always wants to be ready to send a battalion-size probe up the Berlin autobahn within two hours. The SecDef doesn't think we know enough about ship movements: where they are, what each is doing, and the pattern. He wants a recommendation on this.

CJCS says SecDef has photos of crowded Florida airfields.

Should the planes disperse?

CSAF: Let's stay on concrete and not go to the dirt. There are 450 planes, 150 per field.

JCS agreed to send the SecDef a memo saying that the tactical advantages of having units positioned forward far offset the risks of loss in a surprise attack.

CJCS: Are you going to announce a quarantine line and pick up

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ships as they cross it?

CNO: We will pick them all up, and not announce a line.

CNO: President and SecDef believe we are generating forces to be ready for invasion seven days from yesterday, but we have never sent the message out. JCS agree that the message should now be sent.

Around 1030, a report came in that three Soviet ships were turning back from the intercept line.

Thursday, 25 October

JCS meeting at 0900, attended by SecDef:

SecDef: I talked to the President and evidently things are going fine; the Soviets apparently have accepted our quarantine. All except one passenger, five tanker and five cargo ships have turned around; the tanker Bucharest identified herself when asked. What to do next? I suggest we establish the boarding precedent by boarding, say, a British ship and, immediately thereafter, board a Soviet ship, preferably one carrying offensive weapons. The only ship let through thus far is a Greek tanker.

SecDef: Do the JCS favor boarding two ships today (one non-Soviet Bloc, one Bloc) and beginning low-level surveillance today?

Gen. Burchinal (Dep CSAF, Plans & Programs): A Cubana airliner passed through Goose Bay, Labrador with aircraft spares aboard and has now reached Havana.

SecDef: I say no air blockade today. (He and CJCS then left for a White House meeting)

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CNO, some time later: We have just been authorized to board a non-Bloc ship. When we report back they will authorize boarding a Bloc ship.

CSAF, at about 1040: CJCS just called me to say they had authorized eight flights for today, including low-level reconnaissance. Also, the criteria of targets have been changed: B-28s, MiGs, KOMARs, targets of opportunity, SAMs, surface-to-surface missiles.

CNO: New instructions have been telephoned by DepSecDef: (1) do not stop or harass the Bucharest, just trail it; (2) stop a non-Bloc ship today; (3) stop and board the Grozny.

CJCS returned from the ExComm meeting at 1200 and debriefed: Last week they were talking like the blockade would bring down Castro. Now Rusk is saying that that the blockade is only to keep out offensive weapons and if we do that we have accomplished the mission.

JCS meeting at 1400:

CJCS: I lunched with the SecDef, and he is not for pushing an air blockade. SecDef said it is OK for the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade to sail from the West Coast, using cover story about "going on maneuvers."

LGEN Wm. Blanchard (Inspector General, USAF) reported on the status of air defenses and airfields seen on his visit to Florida: Air defense is formidable and good; it wasn't so two days ago. There are 250 fighters in Florida; HAWKs are unloading in Key West and Homestead AFB. In Cuba there are 100 MiGs and 11 B-26s. As of last night, SAC aircraft are all out of Florida bases. (See MFR, "Summary of Presentation by LTG

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Blanchard to JCS on 25 October Concerning Air Force Posture in Florida")

Friday, 26 October

JCS meeting at 0900:

CJCS debriefs on White House meeting the previous evening:

There is enthusiasm for round-the-clock reconnaissance to find out if work on the sites is going on at night.

CNO: We are getting ready for the Grozny tomorrow. Right now she is lying dead in the water; the ship is supposed to have missile fuel.

CJCS: The SecDef is anxious to act on grabbing a Russian ship; State would be happy not to.

JCS instruct CINCLANT to abandon OPLAN 314 and concentrate on OPLAN 316.

JCS meeting at 1400:

CJCS debriefs on White House meeting: No air reconnaissance tonight. It was decided not to add POL to the quarantine list. They feel we are off to a very good start. The White House's present concept is to carry out a limited attack upon six missile sites and the II-28s, the objective being the lowest level of force at the lowest possible price.

CM-55-62 lists four concepts for JCS consideration and calculation about sorties required:

- I: Limited attack above, favored by SecDef.
- II: Destroy or neutralize all MRBMs, favored by SecTreasury.
- III: Render all SAM sites inoperable, suggested by CJCS.
- IV: Attack all offensive weapons, the JCS recommendation.

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Saturday, 27 October

JCS meeting at 0900 (CJCS left to attend White House meeting):
Briefing at 1000 by Gen. Carroll and Mr. Hughes of DIA: There
is evidence of possible Soviet ground forces with modern
equipment, of continued construction at MRBM sites, and of
surface-to-surface missiles among the Soviet equipment.

Gen. Carroll: AsstSecDef Nitze called me yesterday. The SecDef
was in Rusk's office. Rusk was requesting advice from experts
who were to go to New York today to advise Amb. Stevenson on
how to get and present evidence, particularly how to certify
that devices have been rendered inoperable and how to inspect
to see that this is the case. The inference was that
inspection should be by photo interpretation.

CJCS called from White House: Eight flights authorized this
morning, eight more this afternoon.

CSAF: We should write a simple paper taking the latest
intelligence into account, and again recommending execution of
full-scale OPLAN 312 followed by OPLAN 316.

Drafting of a paper begins.

JCS meeting, 1330–2000 (SecDef attended from 1330–1420):

DJS tables a paper recommending early and timely execution of
OPLAN 312 with readiness to execute OPLAN 316.

SecDef: I want the Joint Staff to prepare two plans. First,
move one Polaris off the Turkish coast before we hit Cuba,
telling the Russians before they have a chance to hit Turkey.
Second, assume we hit the missiles in Cuba and Soviets then
attack the Jupiters and knock them out; I think this is a very

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real possibility.

Turning to the paper tabled by the DJS, SecDef asked exactly what was meant by "early and timely execution of OPLAN 312"?

CSAF: Attacking Sunday or Monday.

SecDef: Do JCS agree upon attack at first light?

CMC: No.

CJCS: Would you agree that, if there is no stoppage in missile work, Chiefs recommend a strike after a reasonable period of time?

SecDef: I would accept that statement. You don't have to say how long. But I would not have accepted a recommendation for attack "now."

SecDef: CSAF has just learned that a U-2 is lost off Alaska; I must tell Rusk at once. SecDef leaves at 1341, returns five minutes later.

Col. Steakley (Joint Reconnaissance Group, J-3) enters at 1403 to say that a U-2 overflying Cuba is 30-40 minutes overdue. At 1416, SecDef and CJCS left for a White House conference. JCS then turned to the DJS draft. CSAF and Adm. Ricketts (VCNO) favor executing OPLAN 312 on Sunday morning or Monday morning at the latest, unless there is positive proof of dismantling. CSA and CMC agree. They also want to add a passage about executing OPLAN 316. For agreed-upon wording, see JCSM-844-62. This recommendation was transmitted to the White House, where CJCS read it to the ExComm.

Col. Steakley reports on pilot debriefings at 1800: All but two planes were fired at. Intercept says the Cubans have recovered body and wreckage of the U-2.

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At 1830, CJCS gives debrief of White House meeting: He reads President's reply to Khrushchev. CJCS says President has been seized with the idea of trading Turkish for Cuban missiles; he seems to be the only one in favor of it. "The President has a feeling that time is running out." I read the Chiefs' memo to the meeting, saying that we should attack no later than 29 October. Then we got word of the U-2 loss. No air reconnaissance tonight, but everyone feels we should undertake reconnaissance tomorrow, so as to get a better background for attack on Cuba.

CJCS: Should we take out a SAM site?

CSAF: No, we would open ourselves to retaliation. We have little to gain and a lot to lose.

CSA: I feel the same way. Khrushchev may loose one of his missiles on us.

CJCS: Gentlemen, you all recommended retaliation if a U-2 was downed. If this was wise on the 23rd, it should be just as wise on the 27th. (Note: This is not an accurate recollection of the JCS position on 23 Oct)

CSA: Intelligence this morning showed concrete pads; I'm afraid they have nuclear weapons there.

JCS agreed: There should be no U-2 flights tomorrow, but there has to be some kind of reconnaissance tomorrow. If an attack is to be made on Monday, there is no need for further reconnaissance.

Briefing at 1940 by Mr. Hughes of DIA: Photoygraphy from today's missions show that the canvas is off the launchers, that the missiles are on the launchers, and that a reload

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capability is ready.

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Reconnaissance decision was made later that night: A C-97 with fighter escort would do peripheral photography without getting in range of SAMs.

Sunday, 28 October

JCS meeting at 0900:

CSAF: I want to see the President later today, and I hope all of you will come with me. Monday will be the last time to attack the missiles before they become fully operational.

CJCS: If you want a meeting, I will put in your request.

CSA: My people tell me that all MRBM sites are now operational. If the warheads are with the missiles, they can be made ready to fire in 2 1/2 to 5 hours.

JCS discuss the low-level reconnaissance plan for today: six planes going over sites not defended by antiaircraft artillery, so they will not cover MRBM sites.

At about 0930, a tickertape of Moscow Radio's broadcast was passed around: "[I] appreciate your assurance that the United States will not invade Cuba. Hence we have ordered our officers to stop building bases, dismantle the equipment, and bring it back home. This can be done under UN supervision."

SecDef, DepSecDef and AsstSecDef Nitze joined the meeting.

CSAF: The Soviets may make a charade of withdrawal and keep some weapons in Cuba.

CNO: The no-invasion pledge leaves Castro free to make trouble in Latin America.

SecDef, DepSecDef and AsstSecDef reply that withdrawal of

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missiles leaves the US in a much stronger position than the USSR.

SecDef: Before Khrushchev's message came in, I was considering additional actions to pressure the Soviets: extend tours of Army and Air Force personnel; set up a submarine intercept zone; add POL to the contraband list; and requisition shipping. CSAF still wants to go to the White House, but other JCS members decide to wait and see whether reconnaissance flights meet opposition and what their pictures show.

Monday, 29 October

JCS meeting at 1400, attended in part by SecDef:

SecDef: There is no Cuba–Turkey deal at present, but problem of removing Jupiters from Turkey and probably Italy on grounds of obsolescence soon will require attention.

CJCS gives guidance resulting from latest ExComm meeting: President wants a paper describing the effects of advanced Soviet ground equipment upon an invasion, with casualty estimates. (Response is CM–85–62, 2 Nov) US representatives at the UN do not expect the UN to take over inspection and surveillance as quickly as Washington hopes. One solution suggested is reconnaissance flights by C–130s manned by Indonesian crews. The White House believes Khrushchev is going to stand behind his offer, but sober recognition of problems to be worked out has replaced the initial exhilaration.

SecDef guidance: The US should do nothing that would suggest to the Soviets that our readiness posture is being reduced.

SecDef favors continued US air reconnaissance but doubts

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flights will be authorized after today, so he favors quick institution of UN reconnaissance.

Tuesday, 30 October

JCS meeting at 1400:

Briefing by DIA: Yesterday's photography covered 14 of the 24 launch pad areas. 13 of 14 erectors have been moved out of position. This is not positive evidence of dismantling. Moving erectors out does not mean firing capability is degraded.

Wednesday, 31 October

JCS meeting at 0900:

DIA briefing on photo readout: Construction continues in at least two launching sites, and extreme effort is being extended on extensive camouflage.

CJCS tables State Dept's draft instructions to the UN delegation about verifying missiles' withdrawal, then leaves for White House meeting.

JCS were particularly disturbed that State's draft had no provision for follow-on guarantees against the reintroduction of offensive weapons. JCS telephoned this to CJCS at the White House. When CJCS returned, he said additions probably would be made. (Note: Msg, SecState 1147 to USUN, 31 Oct, was amended by Msg, SecState 1153 to USUN, 31 Oct)

CJCS also said the President had agreed to resume

reconnaissance flights on 1 November. (Note: Flights had been suspended during UN Secretary General U Thant's visit to Cuba October)

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Thursday, 1 November

JCS meeting at 1400:

CJCS debrief on ExComm meeting that morning: Authorization for reconnaissance flights today as obtained only with difficulty. Amb. Stevenson in NY was objecting, but the SecDef made a strong and successful presentation.

CSA relates guidance given by the President yesterday: He wants forces to be of such size that an operation against Cuba can be executed swiftly. It is a matter of prestige, and he feared there might be a tough fight. President feared that, if we bogged down in Cuba like the British in the Boer War, people would ask why we had forces in the US that were not being committed. If more troops are needed, President is willing to take a chance about degrading capability for a Berlin contingency. If trouble did develop, he would authorize the use of tactical weapons in Europe immediately.

CJCS: President knows I disagree with him, but he seems very uneasy about it. I will discuss this with him.

Wednesday, 7 November

JCS meeting at 0900:

CSA reports on his visit to Army units in the field: I have never seen more impressive and imaginative training.

Certainly, we could never be more ready.

Briefing by DIA: Thirty missile transporters have come into port areas. However, the assembly of H-28s is continuing; four bombers are now totally assembled. We also know that the

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Soviets took over the air defense of Cuba as of yesterday.
CJCS: At the ExComm meeting at 1700 yesterday, I said it was
"now or never" for intensive reconnaissance if we wanted to
know whether the missiles are actually loaded aboard the
ships. Rusk opposed increased reconnaissance for political
reasons. He won, and now verification is up to the Navy.
The JCS recommended five U-2 flights and 14 low-level flights
(an increase over the current level) to cover ports, the Isle
of Pines, and seven caves suspected of being weapon storage
sites.

CSA: I talked to the President about OPLAN 316, and he brought
up the same points that were in his memo of 5 November. He was
concerned lest there be mistaken optimism "that one Yankee
could always lick ten Gringos." (sic) The public would never
understand if we got a bloody nose in Cuba while there were
three divisions in the United States.

CSAF: Air attacks alone would cause Castro's popular support to
collapse and make the invasion a "walk-in."

Friday, 9 November

JCS meeting at 0900:

JCS concurred in a paper by AsstSecDef Nitze on "Long Term
Surveillance Requirements." There would be complete high-level
coverage every 30 days plus either low-level flights or on-site
inspections of suspicious locations. Concurrence was
telephoned to Nitze.

CJCS asks: Would you rather have the 11-28s out of Cuba and a
no-invasion guarantee given, or have the 11-28s remain and do

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not give any guarantee?

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JCS say they favor the latter.

CJCS: There is a feeling that the President owes something to Khrushchev for taking the missiles out. I think we will probably wind up keeping surveillance but lifting the quarantine and taking away the no-invasion guarantee.

Monday, 12 November

JCS meeting at 0900:

CJCS: The SecDef is talking about extending the blockade progressively to achieve withdrawal of the II-28s and other aims. But Ambassador at Large Thompson thinks such moves would be very tough on Khrushchev.

CSAF wants a meeting between the JCS and the President; other JCS members concur.

After CJCS left for a White House meeting, Service Chiefs continued the discussion. They laid out a course of disengaging the Soviets, making the II-28s a Cuba-US-OAS problem, then going to air attack and invasion.

Tuesday, 13 November

JCS meeting at 0900:

CJCS gives debriefing on the ExComm meeting of 12 November: At the morning meeting, Amb. Stevenson and Mr. McCloy said that the U.S. should present a negotiating package now, before the Soviet position solidifies. They recommended removing the quarantine and giving a no-invasion pledge in return for withdrawal of II-28s and warheads. Rusk opposes offering the

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962
continued

~~SECRET~~

package immediately. What if the Soviets reject this package? SecDef favors a blockade, including POL, and continued surveillance. The President opposed the SecDef, feeling that continued surveillance would be dangerous; President was alone in feeling this way. At the afternoon meeting, all agreed that the quarantine should be lifted if Khrushchev pledges withdrawal in, say, 30 days.

The JCS will meet with the President on 16 Nov.

JCS meeting at 1400:

CJCS gives a debrief of the ExComm meeting on the morning of 13 Nov: President was absent. The SecDef proposed:

1. If the Soviets agreed to remove the II-28s, the U.S. would lift the quarantine, continue unannounced air surveillance, and withhold a no-invasion pledge until suitable safeguards are agreed upon (e.g., some international presence in Cuba and a reciprocal feature of inspection of suspected refugee training areas in Central America.)

2. If the Soviets refuse to withdraw II-28s, continue a limited quarantine by boarding first Free World and finally Soviet ships, continue unannounced air surveillance, and treat the no-invasion promise as not being in effect.

Then ExComm members were shown a copy of Khrushchev's latest letter: The II-28s were obsolete and manned by Soviet not Cuban pilots. But, if the U.S. insists, you can take a gentleman's word that they will be removed after we solve our other problems, which are: (1) removal of the quarantine; (2) mutual pledges in the Security Council; (3) guarantee of the sovereignty of Cuban air space and a no-invasion pledge; and

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Notes Taken From Transcripts of Meetings of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff. October-November, 1962
continued

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(4) a post in the Caribbean for UN inspection, which would include denuclearization.

Thursday, 15 November

JCS meeting at 1300:

A J-5 Talking Paper for the meeting with the President is tabled. The CJCS criticizes it as being full of platitudes and condescending: "We're saying, 'Now see here, young man, here is what we want you to do'." The CJCS then read a Talking Paper of his own. The JCS agreed that it should be used as the framework for their discussion with the President.

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Article: "The Spy Who Loved Us—Oleg Penkovsky" 1992

Washington Monthly Company
Tim Weiner

KGB defector Oleg Penkovsky was dying to give America the Soviets' deepest secrets. So how did the CIA lose him? The Central Intelligence Agency knew little of value about the Soviet Union in the summer of 1960, when presidential candidate John F. Kennedy was terrifying voters with the fraudulent but powerful image of a missile gap. The fear of Soviet nuclear superiority was founded in ignorance. In 1960, there was no CIA station chief in Moscow and no station to speak of, no CIA officer who spoke Russian, no way to penetrate the steely Soviet shield—no one, in short, to listen when Oleg Penkovsky, a deeply disgruntled colonel in Soviet military intelligence who knew the truth about Soviet missilery, tried to deliver himself unto America.

In the first of Penkovsky's four attempts, he surreptitiously handed off a package to two wary American students. They took the goods to the embassy in Moscow and received a stern lecture from a security officer. The package made its way to Washington via a diplomatic pouch. Penkovsky waited. Nothing. He approached two British businessmen who delivered Penkovsky's business card and home telephone number to MI6. The British foreign intelligence service passed on the number to its American cousin. Penkovsky stared at his phone for months. Nothing. He gave a large envelope containing drawings of Soviet ballistic missiles to a Canadian diplomat and begged him to take it to the CIA. Nothing.

At CIA headquarters, the agency's best Soviet officers read through the contents of Penkovsky's first package with the ardor of Keats looking into Chapman's Homer—"like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken." It was like nothing they had ever seen: actual inside information from an active-duty Soviet intelligence officer. Unfortunately, the CIA sent an incompetent to Moscow to make contact with Penkovsky—an inexperienced, alcoholic officer code-named COMPASS. Drunk, the CIA man called the Soviet officer an hour past the appointed time and babbled senselessly to him in broken Russian.

In the meantime, Penkovsky had been assigned to to the (Soviet) State Committee on Science and Technology, limiting his freedom to travel abroad. Eight months after he first tried to contact the CIA, he met Greville Wynne, a British businessman in Moscow who worked for MI6, and turned over yet another packet of secrets. An assignment was set. On April 20, the day Fidel Castro declared victory at the Bay of Pigs, Penkovsky landed in London as the head of a trade delegation. That evening, he met with American and British intelligence officers in a smoke-filled hotel room and began his new life. An official record of the CIA written in 1976 deemed Penkovsky "the single most valuable agent in CIA history."

The Spy Who Saved The World has something of the air of an official history, which should come as no surprise given that one author is a journalist and former White House spokesman and the other a KGB defector who served as a consultant to the CIA for 30 years. But the authors go beyond even the agency's glowing appraisal to anoint Penkovsky savior of the world, the spy whose intelligence kept the Berlin crisis of 1961 and the Cuban missile crisis from exploding into nuclear war.

The transcripts of Penkovsky's debriefings were generously bequeathed to the authors by the CIA under the Freedom of Information Act. (They were published in 1965, albeit in sanitized, souped-up, and somewhat fictionalized form, with the CIAs editorial assistance, as a purported spy's diary, *The Penkovsky Papers*. The current book's co-author, Peter Deriabin, translated the edited transcripts of the original CIA bestseller.) Lengthy excerpts of the conversations between Penkovsky and the CIA over the months in which they

communed from the basic text of this book. They show—as The Penkovsky Papers did not—that this most valuable agent revealed that the Soviets were playing a game of liar's poker with their nuclear weapons.

U.S. strategic doctrine of the day called for the destruction of the Soviet Union and all its satellites with more than 5,000 nuclear weapons in the event of a Soviet invasion of Europe. Everything of strategic value from Poland to the Pacific would have been reduced, as a U.S. naval officer who saw the war plan of the late fifties observed, to “a smoking, radiating ruin” within two hours. The plan was developed after the U.S. Air Force invented the “missile gap” by creating and leaking estimates during the late fifties that the Soviets had hundreds of ICBMs and soon would have thousands.

Penkovsky divulged that the Soviets had a mere handful of ICBMs, whose electronics and fuel systems were dubious. Fans of Le Carre will see in Penkovsky the basis for Dante, the physicist in The Russia House who reveals Soviet rocketry to be as efficient as Soviet econometrics.

In their first meeting, Penkovsky told the CIA that “the Soviet Union is definitely not prepared at this time for war...Khrushchev is not going to fire any rockets.” There was no Soviet ICBM force worth the name, though the Soviets were struggling furiously to catch up with the U.S.—a goal they would not achieve for nearly 20 years.

Not only was Khrushchev lying when he claimed Moscow was squeezing out intercontinental ballistic missiles “like sausages,” but the Soviet Union’s sausages were horsemeat. The economy was crumbling because “everything is subordinated to the armaments race.” Penkovsky continued:

[In a land war in Europe] countless numbers of officers and soldiers would simply desert to the other side. This is because all of these ideals for which many of our fathers, brothers, and relatives died have turned out to be nothing but a bluff and a deceit. There is always the promise that things will be better, but actually nothing is better and things are only getting worse. I swear to you that only in Moscow and Leningrad can one even purchase decent food.... [Outside the cities] it is difficult to get bread. There are no roads, which results in unbelievable transportation delays and breakdowns; grain is rotting since it cannot be delivered.

The enemy was really nothing more than Upper Volta with rockets—and not many rockets at that.

In some 50 hours of meetings with CIA officers in London and Paris during the next three months, Penkovsky produced a torrent of data: the command structure of the KGB, Soviet military intelligence, and the Communist Party central committee; the names of more than 300 Soviet spooks; KGB tradecraft; Red Army doctrine; barstool gossip; and minutiae about life inside the Soviet state. He also delivered more than 10,000 pages of military manuals and documents. Penkovsky unnerved his auditors by offering to plant dozens of small nuclear mines at strategic sites throughout Moscow, and by urging a preemptive war against Moscow. The CIA had never had a source quite like him.

The authors credit Penkovsky with providing the first reliable human intelligence of Soviet nuclear strength and, in so doing, giving the White House the backbone to stand up to the Soviets in the confrontations over Berlin and Cuba. That may be oversimplifying a bit. In February 1961, two months before Penkovsky’s first debriefing, the newly appointed secretary of defense, Robert S. McNamara, reviewed the first set of spy-satellite

photographs ever taken of the Soviet Union and told the press that the missile gap did not exist—and if there was one, it was in Washington's favor. Penkovsky's revelations simply would not have been decisive without overhead reconnaissance, and without McNamara's reevaluation of the wisdom of a massive, spasmodic nuclear strike against the Soviets. While the take from Penkovsky was invaluable in the case of Cuba—his data on Soviet missiles gave the White House time to think—other factors were at least as important in helping Kennedy reach his decision. The U.S. knew it was far more powerful than the Soviets. The Soviets knew we knew. In crisis, both sides acted accordingly.

CIA

At about the time Kennedy confronted the Soviets in Cuba, Penkovsky was arrested by the KGB. He had been under surveillance for months, burned by the CIA's inability to provide experienced contacts or safe sites where he could deposit information in Moscow. He continued to spy regardless, driven by his own desires and the demands of his handlers. He begged the CIA to exfiltrate him; the agency could not. He was tried as a turncoat and shot.

The official recognition of Penkovsky as the most valuable agent ever to come to the CIA from inside Russia should be evaluated in light of the CIA's treatment of others. As is now well known, the CIA's ability to deal properly with Soviet defectors had been, by the time of Penkovsky's trial, poisoned by the byzantine conspiracy theories of the agency's halfmad counterintelligence chief, James J. Angleton. A KGB officer who defected in December 1961, Anatoly Golitsin, quickly convinced Angleton that any Soviet who followed him would be a plant, and that there was a Soviet mole somewhere in the CIA's chain of command. Angleton tore the agency apart looking for the mole, ruining the careers of scores of CIA officers. He vigorously attempted to debunk Penkovsky; imprisoned an important defector, Yuri Nosenko, who came over in June 1962; and in time paralyzed the Soviet division. As David Wise demonstrates in his book, *Molehunt*, Penkovsky's capture may have been facilitated by the fact that the first CIA station chief in Moscow, Paul Garbler, who took his post in December 1961, knew almost nothing of the Penkovsky operation. He was not told that a "dead drop" (a secret location for passing materials to and from Penkovsky) was under KGB surveillance, though CIA headquarters had been told of that fact. Why was Garbler cut out of the loop? He had fallen victim to Angleton's paranoia and was tagged as a "potential Soviet agent." Penkovsky's place as an unparalleled Soviet spy was ensured by Angleton's attempts to discredit all defectors who came after him.

The Spy Who Saved The World is an important antidote to previous histories of the CIA that have accepted uncritically the reams of nonsense published in the United States and Great Britain about the Penkovsky case. It both benefits and suffers from its extensive use of transcripts from the CIA's Penkovsky files. Like most transcriptions, it is full of facts and devoid of deep thought. But it convincingly demonstrates that 30 years ago the CIA possessed inside information from a unique source who strongly suggested that the Soviet state was foredoomed. Had the CIA not gone down a thousand blind alleys searching for moles, it could have developed a clearer understanding of the enemy long before Soviet policy defeated itself. And had presidents and policy-makers achieved that understanding, some of the treasure the United States devoted to our costly standoff with that doomed state might have been saved, and our present fortunes vastly improved.

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Oleg Penkovsky's Letter

In 1960 Oleg Penkovsky, a Soviet colonel in military intelligence, grew disillusioned with the Soviet system and began working with Western governments by sharing secret Soviet documents.

On page 112 is a letter from Penkovsky, translated from the original Russian, to top government officials in Great Britain and the United States — requesting military rank and citizenship in exchange for information he could provide.

In 1962 Penkovsky was arrested and later executed for his activities.



Penkovsky at his trial

Courtesy of H. Keith Melton

Queen of Great Britain Elizabeth II
Mr. Macmillan
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Rusk
Mr. MacNamara
Mr. Eisenhower
Mr. Nixon
Mr. Gerter
Mr. Gates
Mr. Braker
Mr. Dallas

Top Secret

My Dear Queen,
My Dear Mr. President,
My Dear Sirs,

In my first letter of 19th July 1960, I have already told you that I have reappraised my place in life and about my decision and readiness to devote myself to the cause of a struggle for a true, just and free world for humanity. For this Cause I will fight to the end.

I ask you to consider me as your soldier. Henceforth the ranks of your Armed Forces are increased by one man.

You can have no doubts about my devotion, steadfastness, selflessness and resolution in the battle for your Cause (which is also mine). You will always be satisfied with me, you will always remember me with a good word. Your acknowledgement - I will earn it. For this a great deal of time will not be necessary.

I have certain personal requests

(1) I request you to look into the question of granting me from this moment citizenship of the U.S.A. or of Great Britain. I also ask you to grant me at your discretion a military rank in the Army of the U.S.A. I have sufficient knowledge and experience and not only now, but also in the future I will be able to bring you most definite benefit working in the U.S.A. itself, a prospect of which I dream a lot.

(2) I ask that you should give instructions on the careful, deliberate, and conspiratorial work with me on the part of your workers.

(3) At the present moment I am handing over a series of materials which I have gathered during the last year. I ask you for your directions about assessment and about a decision on a fixed sum for this work since I have no special savings and money will be necessary in the future. I ask you to put the sum which is granted to me in an American bank. These are my personal requests.

Once again I assure you of my boundless love and respect for you, for the American people and for all those who find themselves under your Banner. I believe in your Cause. I am ready to fulfill any of your orders. I await them.

I remain,
Always Yours,

14th August 1960

Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline

Adapted from Nuclearfiles.org
Project of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

April 23, 1919

Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky is born in Vladikavkaz, USSR.

1953

Penkovsky graduates from the Military-diplomatic Academy. Career in intelligence begins.

January 1, 1959

President Fulgencio Batista flees Cuba, Fidel Castro takes power.

October 28, 1959

Turkey and the US agree to deploy fifteen Jupiter missiles in Turkey starting on June 1, 1961.

May 1, 1960

Francis Gary Powers shot down over USSR in his U-2.

May 7, 1960

The USSR and Cuba establish diplomatic relations.

July 19, 1960

Col. Oleg Penkovsky writes his initial letter indicating that he wants to help the U.S. This is his first contact with the CIA.

Aug 12, 1960

Penkovsky approaches Americans Elden Ray Cox and Henry Lee Cobb asking them to deliver his letter to the American Embassy and tells them how USSR shot down Francis Gary Powers.



December 19, 1960

Cuba publicly aligns itself with the policies of the Soviet Union.

January 3, 1961

The U.S. and Cuba sever diplomatic relations.

January 20, 1961

John F. Kennedy is inaugurated.

April 17-18, 1961

The CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fails.

April 1962

The Jupiter missiles in Turkey become operational.

**Penkovsky
using his
minox camera**

Courtesy of
H. Keith Melton

Late April 1962

Pondering the missiles in Turkey, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev has the idea to deploy nuclear weapons in Cuba.

May and June 1962

The Soviet military proposes the deployment of 24 medium range ballistic missile (MRBM) launchers and 16 intermediate-range (IRBM) launchers, each to be equipped with 2 missiles and a nuclear warhead. They also propose the deployment of 4 combat regiments, 24 SA-2 surface-to-air missile (SAM) batteries, 42 MiG-21 fighters, 42 Il-28 bombers, 12 Komar missile boats, and coastal defense cruise missiles.

Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline, continued

May 30, 1962

Castro tells Soviet officials that Cuba will accept the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Approximately July 15, 1962

Soviet cargo ships begin sailing for Cuba declaring false destinations and reporting tonnages below their capacities.

July 26, 1962

Castro announces that Cuba has new weapons to repel attacks by "mercenaries."

August 1962

U.S. intelligence receives reports of missiles in Cuba. All turn out to relate to SAMs or cruise missiles or are shown to be incorrect. In September, such reports begin to increase.

August 17, 1962

CIA Director John McCone states that circumstantial evidence suggests that the USSR is constructing offensive missile installations in Cuba.

August 23, 1962

The President calls a meeting of the NSC to discuss McCone's concerns. He orders consideration of a statement warning against the deployment of any nuclear weapons in Cuba; the psychological, political, and military effect of such a deployment; and America's military options to eliminate such a threat. He directs the Department of Defense (DOD) to consider the removal of the missiles from Turkey.

August 29, 1962

A U-2 flight provides firm evidence of SA-2 missile sites in Cuba.

September 4, 1962

Attorney General Robert Kennedy meets with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. Dobrynin says that no SAMs or offensive weapons would be placed in Cuba. President Kennedy releases a statement saying that SAMs are present in Cuba. The President also declares: "There is no evidence of...ground-to-ground missiles; or of other significant offensive capability...Were it otherwise the gravest issues would arise."

September 15, 1962

A Soviet cargo ship docks in Cuba, apparently carrying the first MRBMs. U.S. intelligence reports their unloading.

September 19, 1962

The United States Intelligence Board (USIB) assesses that "the establishment on Cuban soil of Soviet nuclear striking forces...would be incompatible with Soviet policy as we presently estimate it...[and the Soviets] would almost certainly estimate that this could not be done without provoking a dangerous U.S. reaction."

September 28, 1962

U.S. Navy reconnaissance aircraft photograph ten large crates on the ship Kasimov bound for Cuba. Photoanalysts assess that the crates hold Il-28s.

October 1, 1962

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara orders the commander-in-chief of the U.S. Atlantic Command (CINCLANT) to be prepared to blockade Cuba.

October 14, 1962

A U-2 flight overflies Cuba.

Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline, continued

October 15, 1962

The National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) analyzes the U-2 photos and identifies the main components of a Soviet MRBM at San Cristóbal. They also identify 23 SAM sites and the uncrating of Il-28s.

October 16, 1962

National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy informs President Kennedy of the MRBMs in Cuba. Kennedy dictates the names of the advisers he wants present at a meeting later that morning to discuss the matter. This group becomes known as the "ExComm." The ExComm convenes. The CIA informs it that the missiles are probably not ready to fire but could be ready within two weeks, although a single missile might become operational "much sooner." Kennedy orders further U-2 flights. McNamara outlines three policy options. The first entails communications with Castro and Khrushchev; the second is "part political, part military," entailing a blockade and open surveillance; the third is an attack on Cuba and the missile sites.

October 17, 1962

McNamara now supports the blockade option. Airstrike proponents worry that a blockade could lead to a dangerous confrontation with the USSR. McNamara says that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) believe that a "surgical" airstrike is militarily impractical and that any military action must include attacks on all military installations in Cuba followed by an invasion.

October 18, 1962

The JCS recommends that President Kennedy order an airstrike. The intelligence community assesses that the MRBMs could be launched within eighteen hours.

October 19, 1962

In the ExComm, airstrike proponents begin to shift their support to the blockade option. A Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) assesses that a direct approach to Khrushchev or Castro is unlikely to halt the missile deployment. However, a total blockade of Cuba would "almost certainly" lead to a Soviet response elsewhere. Direct military action against Cuba would run a significant risk of Soviet military retaliation. The Estimate warns of the possibility of "general war" through miscalculation.

October 20, 1962

President Kennedy directs that attention be focused on the blockade option. Kennedy's address to the nation is set for October 22, at 7:00 P.M. Adlai Stevenson proposes that the blockade be accompanied by a U.S. proposal for a settlement involving the withdrawal of the missiles from Turkey. Kennedy indicates willingness to remove the missiles there if the USSR raises the issue. A new SNIE estimates that sixteen MRBM launchers are operational and could fire on eight hours notice. A nuclear warhead storage bunker is identified at an MRBM sites for the first time, though it is unclear if it contains warheads.

October 21, 1962

Kennedy gives final approval to the blockade plan. The U.S. Air Forces tells the President that it can only guarantee that 90 percent of the Soviet missiles would be destroyed in an air strike.

October 22, 1962

The ExComm meets and President Kennedy accepts a suggestion from the State Department that the limited nature of the blockade be stressed by calling it a "quarantine." Strategic Air Command (SAC) alerts its B-52 bomber force, guaranteeing that one-eighth of the force is airborne at all times. SAC also begins dispersing 183 B-47 nuclear bombers to civilian and military airfields. Air Defense



Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline, continued

Command disperses 161 interceptors armed with nuclear air-to-air weapons. The JCS notify the State Department that U.S. military forces worldwide would go to DEFCON 3 at 7:00 P.M. Secretary of State Rusk meets with Dobrynin. Rusk hands the Soviet ambassador an advance copy of the President's speech. At 7 P.M., President Kennedy addresses the nation. Saying that "unmistakable evidence" has established the presence of Soviet missile sites and nuclear capable bombers in Cuba, he announces as one of his "initial steps," a "strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment."

Soviet Colonel Oleg Penkovsky is arrested in the Soviet Union for spying for the United States and the United Kingdom.

October 23, 1962

TASS begins transmitting a statement from Khrushchev: "I hope that the United States Government will display wisdom and renounce the actions pursued by you, which may lead to catastrophic consequences for world peace." The ExComm debates how the United States should respond if a U-2 aircraft is shot down. It decides that the SAM site responsible for the downing will be destroyed. At a meeting of the U.N. Security Council, Soviet representative Valerian Zorin calls U.S. charges of missiles in Cuba "completely false." Castro places the Cuban armed forces on their highest alert. President Kennedy sends a message to Khrushchev through the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. He urges "prudence" and asks Khrushchev to direct his ships not to challenge the quarantine. The President signs a proclamation formally establishing the quarantine which is to become effective at 10 A.M. on the 24th. Low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba begin. Moscow places the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact countries on alert and defers the scheduled release of Soviet conscripts from the Strategic Rocket Forces, air defense units, and the submarine fleet.

October 24, 1962

The CIA reports continued rapid construction of IRBM and MRBM missile sites. The Soviets are rapidly assembling nuclear storage buildings in Cuba. Soviet ships en route to Cuba capable of carrying military cargoes appear to have slowed, altered or reversed their courses. Only a single tanker continues forward. At 10 A.M. the quarantine goes into effect. At the same time, the ExComm meets. At 10:25, McCone announces: "we have a preliminary report which seems to indicate that some of the Russian ships have stopped." President Kennedy directs that there be no ship interceptions for at least an hour while the situation is clarified. That evening, the State Department receives a letter from Khrushchev. He writes that he will not instruct Soviet ships to observe the quarantine. SAC increases its alert posture to DEFCON 2 for the first time ever.

October 25, 1962

At an ExComm meeting, McCone indicates that some of the missiles are operational. The President authorizes the loading of nuclear weapons on aircraft under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR). Cuban security forces thwart an attack on a copper mine by a CIA sabotage team.

October 26, 1962

ABC News correspondent John Scali lunches in Washington with KGB officer Aleksandr Fomin at Fomin's request. Fomin proposes that "[Soviet] bases...be dismantled...and [C]astro...pledge not to accept offensive weapons of any kind, ever, in return for [a U.S.] pledge not to invade Cuba." Scali reports the conversation to the State Department. The State Department receives a cable from U.S. Ambassador to Turkey warning that Turkish officials will "deeply resent" any Turkey-for-Cuba missile trade. The State Department begins receiving a long and emotional message from Khrushchev. It contains a proposal for a settlement: "We...will declare that our ships bound for Cuba are not carrying any armaments. You will declare that the United States will not invade Cuba...and will not support any other forces which might...invade Cuba. Then the necessity of the presence of our military specialists in Cuba will disappear." Meeting again with Fomin, John Scali tells him,

"I have reason to believe that the [U.S. Government] sees real possibilities... My impression is, however, that time is very urgent." The ExComm reconvenes to consider Khrushchev's letter. Robert Kennedy and Dobrynin meet at the Soviet embassy. Kennedy tells Dobrynin that "the President said that we are ready to consider the question of Turkey." Castro orders Cuban anti-aircraft forces to open fire on all U.S. aircraft flying over the island.



October 27, 1962

The CIA reports that five MRBM sites appear to be fully operational and that rapid mobilization of Cuban forces continues. Radio Moscow begins broadcasting a message from Khrushchev. In contrast to the private message of the day before, the new message calls for the dismantling of U.S. missile bases in Turkey in return for the removal of the Soviet missiles in Cuba. At 10 A.M., the ExComm meets. Khrushchev's new message begins to be received. The ExComm discusses it at length. President Kennedy says that it would be "insupportable" to go to war with the USSR instead of accepting a trade. That morning a U-2 flying from Alaska strays into Soviet airspace. The pilot radios for assistance and a U.S. fighter plane—probably carrying nuclear air-to-air missiles—scrambles to its assistance. At the same time, Soviet fighters take off from a base near Wrangel Island to intercept the U-2. In the end, no shots are fired. Around noon, another U-2 is shot down over Cuba and its pilot killed. Cuban forces also fire on and damage an American low-level reconnaissance plane. President Kennedy decides not to retaliate for the U-2 shootdown but agrees that if any more surveillance planes are fired on over Cuba, the SAM sites would be attacked. Most of the EXCOMM's meeting, however, focuses on formulating a response to Khrushchev's latest missive. The group decides to ignore Khrushchev's new proposal and respond only to the October 26 letter which did not mention the missiles in Turkey. The response is sent that evening. After the ExComm meeting breaks up, a sub group meets. It agrees that the second letter to Khrushchev should be reinforced with a message through Dobrynin that if the Soviet missiles are not withdrawn, there will be military action against Cuba. If they are removed, however, the United States would give a non-invasion pledge. Rusk suggests the addition of an assurance that the Jupiters (the missiles in Turkey) will be removed, albeit without publicity, once the crisis is resolved. The President approves these ideas. Later that evening Robert Kennedy conveys this oral message to Dobrynin. Robert Kennedy also said that the U.S. "needed an answer immediately," the very next day. At 8:05 P.M., President Kennedy's letter to Premier Khrushchev drafted earlier in the day is transmitted to Moscow. The letter is also released directly to the press to avoid any communications delays.

October 28, 1962

The CIA's daily update report says that all twenty-four MRBM sites are operational and that the construction of one nuclear bunker has been completed, but it is not operational. Later in the morning, Radio Moscow broadcasts a new message from Nikita Khrushchev. It effectively ends the crisis. Khrushchev declares: "the Soviet government, in addition to previously issued instructions on the cessation of further work at the building sites for the weapons, has issued a new order on the dismantling of the weapons...and their...return to the Soviet Union." President Kennedy issues a statement hailing Khrushchev's decision. In a separate letter to Khrushchev, Kennedy writes, "I consider my letter to you of October twenty-seventh and your reply of today as firm undertakings on the part of both our governments which should be promptly carried out." Dismantling of the sites begins at 5:00 P.M.

November 1962

The United States removes its nuclear missiles from Turkey.

May 16, 1963

Penkovsky is executed by the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs.

June 20, 1963

The United States and the USSR establish a "Hot Line."

Interview with Dino Brugioni

Interview conducted by Larry Klein, producer of "Spies That Fly," and edited by Peter Tyson, editor in chief of **NOVA** online.



Dino Brugioni probably knows more about analyzing spy photographs than perhaps anyone alive. One of the founding officers of the CIA's National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC), which got its start in 1955, Brugioni brought his skills to bear on numerous international crises during his three and a half decades with the CIA. The downing of Gary Powers' U-2 spyplane in 1960, the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the Yom Kippur War in 1973—Brugioni played a significant, behind-the-scenes role in each of these historic events. Here, listen in as he shares memories from his many decades of watching from on high.

NOVA: What was your role in the Cuban missile crisis?

Brugioni: Well, I was chief of the information branch [of the NPIC]. My job was to provide all the collateral support to the photo interpreters. It was my responsibility, for example, to create what we called a briefing board. It was 20 by 22 inches, and there were two copies made, one for the Director of the CIA and one for the Secretary of Defense. I also prepared what were called briefing notes. On a little card I would have pertinent details about the length of the mission, how much photography we got, and any pertinent information that related to the photography from other sources.

NOVA: Weren't you one of the people who reported to the high powers that the Soviets were setting up missile bases in Cuba?

Brugioni: We had a report from an agent in Cuba that there was a trapezoidal area in Cuba in which the Cubans were being moved out and the Russians moved in. Naturally, we wanted to look and see what was happening there, so a U-2 mission was flown over the area. This was on October 14, 1962. The film was processed on the 15th in Washington, and we got the photographs that afternoon (see the Cuba image in Spy Photos).

The scan team were people who were very familiar with the whole area. What drew their eye was that certain objects didn't belong. This is ranch country, and here they were seeing 100-foot tents and 65-foot objects. These weren't manure spreaders or other things you would associate with a ranch.

The photographs were passed to a backup team of missile people. They started looking at the photography, and preliminary measurements were coming up with 65 feet. The photo interpreter in charge called me. I had a looseleaf binder that had all kinds of information on Soviet missiles. It had photographs taken in the streets of Moscow, it had material from Penkovsky. [Editor's note: Colonel Oleg Penkovsky, a high-ranking Soviet intelligence officer, gave vital Russian military secrets to the West for 16 months in 1961 and 1962 before he was unmasked and executed.]

Now, 65 feet was just too long for the SS-3 [a medium range ballistic missile, or MRBM]; the SS-3 was about 52 feet [less the nose cone]. So when he told me he was coming up with 65 feet, I opened the book to a photograph of a missile in the streets of Moscow, and he said, "That's it. That's what I'm seeing." But we wanted to be sure, so we had the thing measured again on a machine, and it still came up 65 feet. [Editor's note: This is the length of the SS-4 MRBM minus the nose cone.]

All together there were two large tents, each 100 feet long, and eight objects each 65 feet long. Those were the missiles. Scattered about the area were erectors and launchers as well as a large tent area. This was all new since the last time we had seen the area, which was about a month before.

NOVA: So you were expert at seeing things that hadn't been there before.

Brugioni: When you're scanning the photography, you become very familiar with an area. For example, if I view photography of Virginia day in and day out, I become very familiar with Virginia. I know all the towns and cities, and I'm also watching the countryside for any new activity. When you find something that's new, the first thing you do is get the photography of that area from previous missions and compare it and confirm that there wasn't anything there the last time you saw that area.

"When Kennedy was shown the photographs of Cuban missile sites, he turned his head, looked at Lundahl, and said, 'Are you sure?'"

NOVA: On October 15, 1962, you and your colleagues reported to your chief that these were in fact missiles. Could you describe that?

Brugioni: When we were convinced that these were missiles, we called up our boss, Arthur Lundahl, the director of the NPIC. He looked at them and said, "Let's get all the measurements down pat." When I showed him the photograph of the SS-4 in the streets of Moscow, he said, "That sure looks like it, but let's be sure. Let's remeasure everything. Not only that, keep looking." And as we looked, we found a second missile site in Cuba. The next morning I prepared the briefing notes. I told him when we had last seen this area, the size and shape of these missiles, and the fact that they equated to what we had seen in Moscow. We also knew that Penkovsky had indicated that this missile could be deployed in the field.

NOVA: What was President Kennedy's reaction when he first saw the pictures?

Brugioni: Well, according to Mr. Lundahl, when Kennedy was shown the photographs, he turned his head, looked at Lundahl, and said, "Are you sure?" And Mr. Lundahl said, "I'm as sure of this, Mr. President, as we can be sure of anything in the photo interpretation field. And you must admit that we have not led you astray on anything that we have reported to you previously." And the President said "Okay."

Bobby Kennedy looked at some of these photographs, too, and he later described the scene, saying that it looked like somebody was digging a basement. But he didn't look at the totality of the photograph. All of the stuff that was going on was alien to this ranch country—the sizes, the shapes, the tone, everything was different and didn't belong in Cuba.

NOVA: Do you think that those are the most famous surveillance pictures ever taken? I remember as a kid being glued to the television set watching Kennedy and seeing those pictures.

Brugioni: As one fellow said, we knew it was going to hit the fan. I knew when I was creating the briefing board that it would be seen by the President, and the President would react to what we had presented to him.

NOVA: Is it true that surveillance photos also helped belie the missile gap—Kennedy's fear that the Soviets had many more intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, than we did?

Brugioni: Yes. That was the second most important thing we did, I think. In 1960, when President Kennedy was running for election, he had two points—there was the missile gap and the Cuba problem. Now, when we launched our first satellite in August of '60, the Air Force estimated that there were from 100 to 250 ICBM sites in the Soviet Union. After successive missions in 1960, we could say they were not there. The missile estimate that was made in 1961 indicated that there were only 15 to 25 missile sites in all of the Soviet Union. There were, in fact, only 12.

President Kennedy never admitted that he was wrong about the missile gap. He had Robert McNamara go out and say, "Because we have some new information, the missile gap doesn't exist." But the fact that this was a national issue that we had solved by our efforts—that made me quite proud, too.

Target practice

NOVA: Is it hard to do what you do? You make it seem easy.

Brugioni: It really is easy. I would draw a 25-mile circle around whatever we were looking at. Keep in mind that most of the areas that we were photographing—in the Soviet Union, China, the Middle East, and so forth—if you draw a 25-mile circle, in many cases man is born, raised, and dies within that circle. So we looked at that circle real carefully. Take the Shenandoah Valley, for example. Let's assume I've never been there. I can look at an aerial photograph, and the first thing I'd say is, "Those people are meat eaters." I can look in the fields and see cattle. I can probably see hog pens. Might even see some turkey farms.

If I want to find out where a person would be born, I look for a building with a parking lot, and in some cases it might even have a Red Cross symbol or something to indicate it's the hospital. I can distinguish a hospital from a school fairly easily. When I get to a grade school, there is playground equipment. I can take it further—high school, college, and so forth. I would also watch all the rail lines and the spurs that lead into the factories, and I'd see what's going into the factories and what's coming out.

I've never been in your house, but if you give me an aerial photograph, I'll draw you a diagram of that house. The first thing I would do is look for vents on your roof. One of the vents will be your bathroom, another vent will be your kitchen. Where your stack is, that's usually your living and dining room, and then I go negative. The rest of the house is bedrooms. That's because man builds to a pattern, and rules and regulations.

"Finding missile sites in the Soviet Union wasn't that hard."

NOVA: You were looking mainly for large installations in your work, of course.

Brugioni: Yes. When you're searching, your eye will be drawn to installations. Now, the Soviets had a penchant for what we call horizontal security. Their strategic installations would have as many as four or five fences, and that's very visible from above. So say we're searching in Central Asia with satellite photography, and you look down and see two big black blobs. Of course, your eyes are immediately drawn to these shapes because they don't conform with anything in the area. Not only that, there's a lot of activity there. There are power lines, there are roads leading into these installations. You would put that image under what we call a microstereoscope, and you would enlarge it. Say it was an MRBM site. It would have the five fences and, if you look closely, there are automatic weapon positions all around for protection of the site. While the Soviets might have done a good thing in keeping people from entering this thing by putting up that many fences, that just helped the photo interpreters. So finding missile sites in the Soviet Union wasn't that hard.

Now, for an ICBM, keep in mind you have a 100-foot missile. You can't just go up to a crossroads and turn it. It's a priceless piece of equipment, so the roads are first-class. And you notice wide radius turns, and then the road ends. So while you're searching you see these nice roads, and you just follow them and see where they lead you, and they lead you to a missile silo.

Using the U-2

NOVA: Did you ever see a U-2?

Brugioni: Yes. The cockpit was cramped, and to sit there for 10 or 12 hours was quite a feat. When they first started out, the pilots had a catheter to relieve themselves. There was no provision for defecating. The pilots were offered diapers, but they turned them down and came up with their own system—a high-protein, low-bulk meal. The day before a mission they would only eat steak and no vegetables of any kind. The day they flew, they would have breakfast—eggs, bacon, coffee. The whole mission would be backed up to when you got the pilot up, got him to go to the bathroom, eat, get suited up. The whole thing started early. With Cuba, for example, we wanted the airplane over the target at 7:30 in the morning, before the land heats up and clouds build up. The best time to get cloud-free photography in any tropic area is early in the morning.

NOVA: AU-2 mission could also be dangerous, of course.

Brugioni: Well, Powers showed us that the mission could be very dangerous. Any time you flew over enemy territory, two things could happen. The first thing is that you only had one engine that could flame out. Secondly, of course, you were flying into the defenses of your opposition. And in Gary Powers' case, he flew into the defenses of the Soviet Union—the SA-2 [surface-to-air missile]. The SA-2 exploded behind him, but it had enough shrapnel to down the airplane.

The U-2 is very fragile. Kelly Johnson [the Lockheed aerospace engineer who designed the U-2] compared it to an egg. In fact, when we were starting the U-2 program, the U-2 was taking off, and a Canadian F-86 pilot didn't know what the heck it was, so he flew in front of it, and the plane collapsed and we lost our first pilot. After that, when a U-2 was taking off, the whole area was cleared.

NOVA: After Powers was shot down, the Soviets released a photo of what they claimed was the wreckage of the U-2. But you knew it wasn't.

Brugioni: I was in Damage Control, so I was getting all of the photography and documents and so forth. I looked at it, and I said, "That's not the U-2." I knew it wasn't because I could see rivets, and the U-2 is flush-riveted. So I gave it to Lundahl. He got in touch with Kelly Johnson, and then Johnson went on the air and said, "This is not my aircraft." That put the Soviets in a bad position, so they had to show the wreckage. They displayed it in Moscow. There was a Life Magazine photographer there, and we instructed him on what to do. He took a picture of the plane's camera and recording equipment, and when those photographs came in, we said, "They've got the evidence, and they're going to charge him as a spy." So he was charged. Powers was given ten years but he got out with less than that because of the trade of a Russian spy for him.

"My attitude was, 'Man, if we can get peace in the Middle East and we can sacrifice one damn camera to do so, let's do it.'"

NOVA: Did you ever share U-2 photos with other countries?

Brugioni: Yes. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, for example, the Israelis and the Egyptians were shooting at each other, so the idea was to get a truce, to get some peace talks going. We proposed, "Why not have a truce and have the U-2 monitor the truce?" We wanted the Israelis and the Egyptians to back off so that they couldn't shoot at each other. We would fly down the Suez Canal, then turn around and come over the Israelis. When this was proposed, the Egyptians said, "We know you people. You guys will favor the Israelis." When the mission came back, I said, "Why don't we give them both the film? We will look at the film, we'll tell them if there are any violations, then we'll let them look at it." When I proposed it, an official said, "Oh God no, we can't give them that because they will know our camera capabilities." My attitude was, "Man, if we can get peace in the Middle East and we can sacrifice one damn camera to do so, let's do it."

Well, that started a program in which the Israelis had confidence in us, and the Egyptians had confidence in us. They both had trained photo interpreters, and they could see that we were telling the truth about what was happening there. That led to the Begin-Sadat agreements. So that shows you what photography can do.

Spying from space

NOVA: If we've got these spy planes like the U-2 back in the '60s taking great photographs, why do you need satellites?

Brugioni: Well, the very first satellite mission that we flew captured a million square miles of Soviet territory. That was as much as 24 U-2 missions had captured in the Soviet Union over four years. So in one day, we got more film than all of the U-2 missions put together. One day.

NOVA: That satellite was Corona?

Brugioni: Yes. The first Corona mission was launched in August of 1960 from Vandenberg Air Force Base [in California]. It was launched into a polar orbit, passed over the Soviet Union, and the capsule was recovered near Hawaii. The capsule, with one roll of film in it, was ejected and grabbed. In that one roll of film, we had one million square miles of the Soviet Union.

NOVA: What do you mean, it was grabbed?

Brugioni: Once the Corona satellite had finished photographing the Soviet Union and came over Alaska, it was given a command, and it ejected a capsule with the film in it. The film was contained in what we called a bucket, and it had a parachute. A transport plane would fly up and meet it. The plane was carrying a long trailing wire that would collapse the chute, and it had a large winch that would reel in the load.

NOVA: This thing actually worked?

Brugioni: It worked. I'll always remember when they were first talking about it, an engineer had a fishing rod and reel, and he had his wife's snood.

NOVA: Excuse me, what's a snood?

Brugioni: A snood? Years ago the women used to have their hair in a bun, and they had a net that would go over the bun when they went to bed, or sometimes they would even wear the snood at formal affairs.

And the man said, "This is the way we're going to do it. See, that snood is going to collapse the parachute, and then we're going to reel it in." [Richard] Bissell [head of covert operations for the CIA] looked at him and said, "What do you think our chance of success will be on the first go?" The engineer said, "About a thousand to one." Bissell said "Go." This was the kind of faith Bissell had in his engineers.

NOVA: Did you personally see any of the pictures from Corona?

Brugioni: Oh, sure, right from the beginning.

NOVA: How were these pictures?

Brugioni: Well, they weren't as good as the U-2. I mean, we were resolving about 30 feet, 30 to 50 feet. We could see installations, but we couldn't see objects. Also, clouds were a problem. We would turn the camera on each time it came over the Soviet Union, and then turn it off after each pass. We didn't know what the weather was like, so in the early missions about 50 percent of the film was useless because of cloud cover.

NOVA: It must have been a long time between the time the satellite took the picture and the time you got it on your desk, right?

Brugioni: Not long. They would capture it and take the film to Hawaii. They would then fly it from Hawaii to Eastman Kodak—that would take about two days. Eastman Kodak would process that one roll of film in a day, then it was jetted down to us. You're talking about maybe six, seven days.

"We took a great deal of interest in really sticking it to CIA operatives that our information was a lot better than theirs."

NOVA: It's different with today's satellites, of course.

Brugioni: Oh gosh yes. Today the satellite takes the picture and transmits it to another satellite, which transmits it down. It's near real-time.

Keep in mind, though, that in those days satellite photography was only a week old, and it was A-1 information. The covert service would bring in a report. The information was a year old, or six months old, or even a month old, and we'd say, "We've got something better. We have something that's only a week old, and ours is A-1 information. Ours is the truth. We don't know about this report you're giving us. How do you rate it?" And it was rated like B-3 or F-6. We'd say, "Heck, we don't know if that's true or not. Our information is the truth." See, a lot of the early people in the CIA were from wealthy families. They were all Easterners, and many had attended Harvard and Yale. They kind of looked down at us. Here was Dino Brugioni and Lou Franceschini and Paul Slovak and so forth. "Those guys, they're a bunch of technicians, they're not really spies." So we took a great deal of interest in really sticking it to them that our information was a lot better than theirs. It was competition between the overt and the covert men.

NOVA: Were you overt or covert?

Brugioni: We were overt.

NOVA: So we have satellites taking pictures, U-2's flying. What do you need an unmanned aerial vehicle [UAV] for?

Brugioni: Well, the UAV is good in a tactical situation; there is no doubt about it. You have a vehicle that can hover over a predesignated area, watching that area around the clock. You can use photography during the daytime, and you can use infrared and radar at night. Anybody who moves in that area is asking for trouble.

The enemy soon learns the capabilities of your system. I'm sure that the people in Afghanistan now, when they know that there is an operation underway, they're going to move and hide and so forth. We did the same thing: Whenever a Soviet satellite came over and we were dealing with the SR-71 [the successor surveillance aircraft to the U-2], we knew that the satellite would come over us at 1:00, so by 12:00 we made sure we pushed the SR-71's into the hangar, so the Soviets could never see the research and development work that was going on at the ranch.

NOVA: Hoverability is good because the nature of war has changed, is that right?

Brugioni: Oh, yes. That information we had was a week old, and some of the systems now it maybe takes two or three hours. With UAV's, it's current. You're seeing the battlefield situation, and in the case of the Predator [an unmanned reconnaissance plane currently used over Afghanistan and elsewhere], if you see some action you think is worthy of being fired at, you can fire at it.

