

## WE CHOOSE TO GO TO THE MOON

But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas?

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

But if I were to say, my fellow citizens, that we shall send to the moon, 240,000 miles away from the control station in Houston, a giant rocket more than 300 feet tall, the length of this football field, made of new metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented, capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced, fitted together with a precision better than the finest watch, carrying all the equipment needed for propulsion, guidance, control, communications, food and survival, on an untried mission, to an unknown celestial body, and then return it safely to earth, re-entering the atmosphere at speeds of over 25,000 miles per hour, causing heat about half that of the temperature of the sun—almost as hot as it is here today—and do all this, and do it right, and do it first before this decade is out—then we must be bold.

## THE BAY OF PIGS INVASION

The Bay of Pigs Invasion was an unsuccessful attempt by United States-backed Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of the Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. Increasing friction between the U.S. government and Castro's leftist regime led President Dwight D. Eisenhower to break off diplomatic relations with Cuba in January 1961. Even before that, however, the Central Intelligence Agency had been training anti-revolutionary Cuban exiles for a possible invasion of the island. The invasion plan was approved by Eisenhower's successor, John F. Kennedy.



On April 17, 1961 about 1300 exiles, armed with U.S. weapons, landed at the Bahía de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs) on the southern coast of Cuba. Hoping to find support from the local population, they intended to

cross the island to Havana. It was evident from the first hours of fighting, however, that the exiles were likely to lose. President Kennedy had the option of using the U.S. Air Force against the Cubans but decided against it. Consequently, the invasion was stopped by Castro's army. By the time the fighting ended on April 19, 90 exiles had been killed and the rest had been taken as prisoners.

The failure of the invasion seriously embarrassed the young Kennedy administration. Some critics blamed Kennedy for not giving it adequate support and others for allowing it to take place at all. The captured exiles were later ransomed by private groups in the U.S.



Additionally, the invasion made Castro wary of the U.S. He was convinced that the Americans would try to take over the island again. From the Bay of Pigs on, Castro had an increased fear of a U.S. incursion on Cuban soil.

## **FLEXIBLE RESPONSE**

The New Look policy, though initially useful, quickly became obsolete with the introduction of Intercontinental Delivery Systems that undermined the credibility of a deterrence threat. The cornerstone of U.S. and European defense strategy was then threatened as the U.S. could no longer rely on nuclear threats to provide security for it and its allies.

John F. Kennedy won the presidency by touting that the Republican Party had allowed the U.S. to fall behind the Soviets into a Missile Gap. Upon entering office Kennedy cited General Maxwell Taylor's book *The Uncertain Trumpet* to Congress for its conclusion that massive retaliation left the U.S. with only two choices: defeat on the ground or the resort to the use of nuclear weapons. Technology had improved since massive retaliation was adopted. Improvements in communication and transportation meant U.S. forces could be deployed more effectively, quickly, and flexibly than before. Advisers persuaded Kennedy that having multiple options would allow the president to apply the appropriate amount of force at the right place without risking escalation or losing alternatives. This would improve credibility for deterrence as the U.S. would now have low-intensity options and therefore would be more likely to use them, rather than massive retaliation's all-or-nothing options.

Flexible Response was implemented to develop several options across the spectrum of warfare, other than the nuclear option, for quickly dealing with enemy aggression. In addition, the survivability of the retaliatory capability was stressed, leading to the diversification of the strategic force, development of the strategic triad, and half the Strategic Air Command force being put on permanent alert status.

The Kennedy doctrine did not include the ability to fight nuclear wars because of the idea that it would undermine deterrence was technologically unworkable, would fuel the arms race, and was not politically feasible.

Importance was also placed on counterinsurgency and the development of unconventional military forces, unconventional tactics, and "civic action" programs like the Peace Corp.

## THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

"Nuclear catastrophe was hanging by a thread ... and we weren't counting days or hours, but minutes."

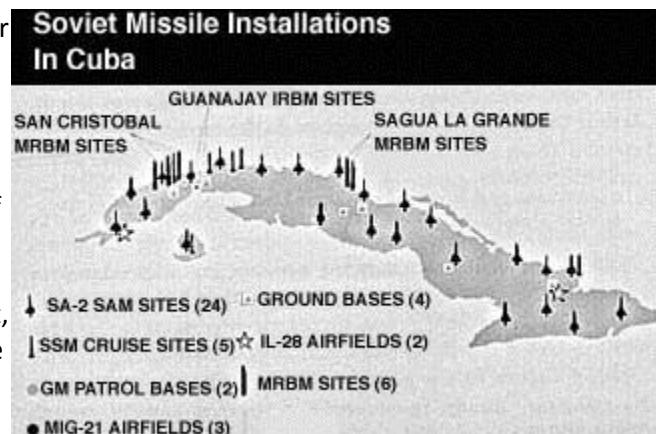
**-Soviet General and Army Chief of Operations, Anatoly Gribkov**

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest the world ever came to nuclear war. The United States armed forces were at their highest state of readiness ever and Soviet field commanders in Cuba were prepared to use battlefield nuclear weapons to defend the island if it was invaded. Luckily, thanks to the bravery of two men, President John F. Kennedy and Premier Nikita Khrushchev, war was averted.

In 1962, the Soviet Union was desperately behind the United States in the arms race. Soviet missiles were only powerful enough to be launched against Europe but U.S. missiles were capable of striking the entire Soviet Union. In late April 1962, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev conceived the idea of placing intermediate-range missiles in Cuba. A deployment in Cuba would double the Soviet strategic arsenal and provide a real deterrent to a potential U.S. attack against the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, Fidel Castro was looking for a way to defend his island nation from an attack by the U.S. Ever since the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, Castro felt a second attack was inevitable. Consequently, he approved of Khrushchev's plan to place missiles on the island. In the summer of 1962 the Soviet Union worked quickly and secretly to build its missile installations in Cuba.

For the United States, the crisis began on October 15, 1962 when reconnaissance photos revealed Soviet missiles under construction in Cuba. Early the next day, President John Kennedy was informed of the missile installations. Kennedy immediately organized the EX-COMM, a group of his twelve most important advisors to handle the crisis. After seven days of guarded and intense debate within the upper echelons of government, Kennedy concluded to impose a naval quarantine around Cuba. He wished to prevent the arrival of more Soviet offensive weapons on the island. On October 22, Kennedy announced the discovery of the missile installations to the public and his decision to quarantine the island. He also proclaimed that any nuclear missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as an attack on the United States by the Soviet Union and demanded that the Soviets remove all of their offensive weapons from Cuba.



During the public phase of the Crisis, tensions began to build on both sides. Kennedy eventually ordered low-level reconnaissance missions once every two hours. On the 25th Kennedy pulled the quarantine line back and raised military readiness to DEFCON 2. Then on the 26th EX-COMM heard from Khrushchev in an impassioned letter. He proposed removing Soviet missiles and personnel if the U.S. would guarantee not to invade Cuba. October 27 was the worst day of the crisis. A U-2 was shot down over Cuba and EX-COMM received a second letter from Khrushchev demanding the removal of U.S.

missiles in Turkey in exchange for Soviet missiles in Cuba. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy suggested ignoring the second letter and contacted Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to tell him of the U.S. agreement with the first.

Tensions finally began to ease on October 28 when Khrushchev announced that he would dismantle the installations and return the missiles to the Soviet Union, expressing his trust that the United States would not invade Cuba. Further negotiations were held to implement the October 28 agreement, including a United States demand that Soviet light bombers be removed from Cuba, and specifying the exact form and conditions of United States assurances not to invade Cuba.