

# John F. Kennedy Addresses the Nation Regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis

(\*This document has been edited to fit the purpose of this task)

The White House  
October 22, 1962

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military buildup on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.

Upon receiving the first preliminary hard information of this nature last Tuesday morning at 9 a.m., I directed that our surveillance be stepped up. And having now confirmed and completed our evaluation of the evidence and our decision on a course of action, this Government feels obliged to report this new crisis to you in fullest detail.

The characteristics of these new missile sites indicate two distinct types of installations. Several of them include medium range ballistic missiles, capable of carrying a nuclear warhead for a distance of more than 1000 nautical miles. Each of these missiles, in short, is capable of striking Washington, D.C., the Panama Canal, Cape Canaveral, Mexico City, or any other city in the southeastern part of the United States, in Central America, or in the Caribbean area.

Additional sites not yet completed appear to be designed for intermediate range ballistic missiles capable of traveling more than twice as far-and thus capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson Bay, Canada, and as far south as Lima, Peru. In addition, jet bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, are now being uncrated and assembled in Cuba, while the necessary air bases are being prepared.

This urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base-by the presence of these large, long-range, and clearly offensive weapons of sudden mass destruction constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas...

Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and of the entire Western Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution as endorsed by the resolution of the Congress, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

First: To halt this offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated.

Second: I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup.

Third: It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

Fourth: As a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo, evacuated today the dependents of our personnel there, and ordered additional military units to be on a standby alert basis.

Fifth: We are calling tonight for an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the Organization of American States, to consider this threat to hemispheric

Sixth: Under the Charter of the United Nations, we are asking tonight that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace.

Seventh and finally: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations. I call upon him further to abandon this course of world domination, and to join in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and to transform the history of man.

My fellow citizens: let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. No one can foresee precisely what course it will take or what costs or casualties will be incurred.

Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right-not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved.

1.) In correct CRQ format, identify the purpose of this speech.

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2.) In your own words, explain the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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3.) Imagine you were alive during the 13 days that this crisis occurred. Write 3 adjectives that you would be feeling as an American living during this time.

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## **On April 17, 1961, 1400 Cuban exiles launched what became a botched invasion at the Bay of Pigs on the south coast of Cuba.**

In 1959, Fidel Castro came to power in an armed revolt that overthrew Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. The US government distrusted Castro and was wary of his relationship with Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union.

Before his inauguration, John F. Kennedy was briefed on a plan by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) developed during the Eisenhower administration to train Cuban exiles (*exiles are people who came to the United States to escape Cuba*) for an invasion of their homeland. The plan anticipated that the Cuban people and elements of the Cuban military would support the invasion. The ultimate goal was the overthrow of Castro and the establishment of a non-communist government friendly to the United States.

Shortly after his inauguration, in February 1961, President Kennedy authorized the invasion plan. But he was determined to disguise U.S. support. The landing point at the Bay of Pigs was part of the deception. The site was a remote swampy area on the southern coast of Cuba, where a night landing might bring a force ashore against little resistance and help to hide any U.S. involvement. Unfortunately, the landing site also left the invading force more than 80 miles from refuge in Cuba's Escambray Mountains, if anything went wrong.

On April 17, the Cuban-exile invasion force, known as Brigade 2506, landed at beaches along the Bay of Pigs and immediately came under heavy fire. Cuban planes strafed the invaders, sank two escort ships, and destroyed half of the exile's air support. Bad weather hampered the ground force, which had to work with soggy equipment and insufficient ammunition.

Over the next 24 hours, Castro ordered roughly 20,000 troops to advance toward the beach, and the Cuban air force continued to control the skies. As the situation grew increasingly grim, President Kennedy authorized an "air-umbrella" at dawn on April 19—six unmarked American fighter planes took off to help defend the brigade's B-26 aircraft flying. But the B-26s arrived an hour late, most likely confused by the change in time zones between Nicaragua and Cuba. They were shot down by the Cubans, and the invasion was crushed later that day.

Some exiles escaped to the sea, while the rest were killed or rounded up and imprisoned by Castro's forces. Almost 1,200 members of Brigade 2056 surrendered, and more than 100 were killed.

The disaster at the Bay of Pigs had a lasting impact on the Kennedy administration. Determined to make up for the failed invasion, the administration initiated Operation Mongoose—a plan to sabotage and destabilize the Cuban government and economy. The plan included the possibility of assassinating Castro. More than 50 years later, relations between Castro's Cuba and the United States remain strained and tenuous.

1.) Create a flow chart showing the development, execution and failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion in the space below.

2.) Write TWO newspaper headlines regarding the incident. Write ONE that would appear in a Cuban newspaper and ONE that would appear in an American newspaper.

## American Policy in Vietnam

President Lyndon B. Johnson  
April 7, 1965

Over this war and all Asia is another reality: the deepening shadow of communist China. The rulers in Hanoi are urged on by Peking. This is a regime which has destroyed freedom in Tibet, which has attacked India and has been condemned by the United Nations for aggression in Korea. It is a nation which is helping the forces of violence in almost every continent. The contest in Vietnam is part of a wider pattern of aggressive purposes.

Why are these realities our concern? Why are we in South Vietnam?

We are there because we have a promise to keep. Since 1954 every American president has offered support to the people of South Vietnam. We have helped to build, and we have helped to defend. Thus, over many years, we have made a national pledge to help South Vietnam defend its independence.

And I intend to keep that promise.

We are also there to strengthen world order. Around the globe from Berlin to Thailand are people whose well-being rests in part on the belief that they can count on us if they are attacked.

Our objective is the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves -- only that the people of South Vietnam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way.

We will do everything necessary to reach that objective and we will do only what is absolutely necessary.

## **Vietnam Veterans Against the War Statement**

by John Kerry, testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
April 23, 1971

I would like to talk on behalf of all those veterans and say that several months ago in Detroit we had an investigation at which over 150 honorably discharged, and many very highly decorated, veterans testified to war crimes committed in Southeast Asia. These were not isolated incidents but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command. It is impossible to describe to you exactly what did happen in Detroit -- the emotions in the room and the feelings of the men who were reliving their experiences in Vietnam. They relived the absolute horror of what this country, in a sense, made them do.

We who have come here to Washington have come here because we feel we have to be winter soldiers now. We could come back to this country, we could be quiet, we could hold our silence, we could not tell what went on in Vietnam, but we feel because of what threatens this country, not the reds, but the crimes which we are committing that threaten it, that we have to speak out....

In our opinion and from our experience, there is nothing in South Vietnam which could happen that realistically threatens the United States of America.

We found most people didn't even know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. They wanted everything to do with the war, particularly with this foreign presence of the United States of America, to leave them alone in peace, and they practiced the art of survival by siding with whichever military force was present at a particular time, be it Viet Cong, North Vietnamese or American.

Each day to facilitate the process by which the United States washes her hands of Vietnam someone has to give up his life so that the United States doesn't have to admit something that the entire world already knows, so that we can't say that we have made a mistake. Someone has to die so that President Nixon won't be, and these are his words, "the first President to lose a war."

We are asking Americans to think about that because how do you ask a man to be the last man to die in Vietnam? How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?

1.) Using the 2 documents above complete the T-Chart:

Reasons to support the War in Vietnam	Reasons to oppose the War in Vietnam
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2.) How do you believe the division over the war in Vietnam has impacted America's involvement in future conflicts?

## The Korean War



On June 25, 1950, the Korean War began when some 75,000 soldiers from the North Korean People's Army poured across the 38th parallel, the boundary between the Soviet-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the north and the pro-Western Republic of Korea to the south. This invasion was the first military action of the Cold War. By July, American troops had entered the war on South Korea's behalf. As far as American officials were concerned, it was a war against the forces of international communism itself (Domino Theory-if one nation in Asia should fall to communism, then all would). After some early back-and-forth across the 38th parallel, the fighting stalled and casualties mounted with nothing to show for them. Meanwhile, American officials worked anxiously to fashion some sort of armistice with the North Koreans. The alternative, they feared, would be a wider war with Russia and China-or even, as some warned, World War III. Finally, in July 1953, the Korean War came to an end. In all, some 5 million soldiers and civilians lost their lives during the war. The Korean peninsula is still divided today.



- 1.) Why did the United States enter the Korean War?
- 2.) How was the Korean War a victory for the United States?
- 3.) How was the Korean War a defeat for the United States?

## Cold War Events from Decades Timeline Activity

1950

- Americans enter the **Korean War** to support the democratic South Korean government against the communist North Korean invasion

1953

- Julius and Ethel **Rosenberg are convicted** of communist espionage and sentenced to death; fear of communism spreads
- The United States announces the development of the **Hydrogen Bomb**

1957

- The Soviet Union launches the first space satellite **Sputnik**

1958

- **NASA** (National Aeronautics Space Administration) created to build American space program

1961

- **Alan Shepherd** becomes the first American in space
- The United States joins in the **Vietnam War conflict** by sending advisors to South Vietnam

1962

- **John Glenn** becomes the first man to orbit the Earth
- **Cuban Missile Crisis** occurs-threats of Soviets putting Nuclear weapons on Cuba led to a tense standoff; closest the world has come to Nuclear War

1967

- **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** is signed by the U.S. recognizing the need to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons

1969

- **Neil Armstrong** becomes the first man to walk on the moon

1972

- **Nixon** becomes the first sitting president to **visit China**; this visit is seen as easing tensions between the democratic U.S. and the communist China

1975

- The **Fall of Saigon** marks the end of the Vietnam War, last American troops leave

1980

- The **U.S. boycotts the Summer Olympics** to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

1987

- President Ronald Reagan calls on Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev to **“tear down that wall”** (Berlin wall)
- **INF treaty** is signed pledging a reduction in nuclear armaments between the US and the USSR

1991

- The Soviet Union dissolves officially **ending the Cold War**

- 1.) For each decade of the Cold War use an adjective to describe the Cold War during that decade.

<b>1960s</b>	
<b>1970s</b>	
<b>1980s</b>	
<b>1990s</b>	

- 2.) Which decade do you feel was most important during the Cold War? Explain your choice.

- 3.) Choose 2 events and explain how they helped to end the Cold War (You may NOT choose the Soviet Union dissolving for this question).

