The Cuban Missile Crisis
The Soviets were lagging behind the U.S. in the arms race, and began to look for ways to counter the U.S. lead.

Castro feared another U.S. invasion of Cuba and in order to protect himself he agreed to the placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba.

Tensions rose as the United States U–2 plane reconnaissance missions reveal what appeared to surface–to–air missiles located in Cuba.
GUANAJAY IRBM LAUNCH SITE NO. 1

22-56N 82-39W

PROB NUCLEAR STORAGE BUNKER

BATCH PLANTS

PRE-FAB CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

LAUNCH PAD

CONTROL BUILDING

PROTECTED VEHICLE POSITION

LAUNCH PAD

AIRCRAFT
October 15, 1962

- Kennedy was informed in the morning that the thought to be surface-to-air missile were actually nuclear missiles.
- He assembled a group of trusted advisors which would come to be known as EXCOMM.
- The group created 3 possible courses of action.
  - A blockade
  - An air strike
  - An invasion
Key Players

- Dean Rusk – Secretary of State
- Robert McNamara – Secretary of Defense
- Robert Kennedy – Attorney General
Kennedy’s advisors had created two speeches, one for the decision of a blockade, the other for an air strike.

Finally Kennedy made his decision. He chose to use a naval quarantine of Cuba.

Kennedy knew he could use the threat of an air strike to his benefit.
At 7pm Eastern time the President made his television and radio announcement to the U.S., Khrushchev and the world.

He announced the U.S. plan of a naval quarantine.

Khrushchev was furious.
October 24–27, 1962

- The military alert was raised to DEFCON 2, the U.S. and the world stood at the brink of a nuclear war.
- Kennedy received a letter from Khrushchev pledging to remove the missiles of the U.S. removed the blockade and would not invade Cuba.
- The next day a second letter was received asking the U.S. to remove their missiles from Turkey.
- Kennedy only publically responded to the first letter.
The Result

- The world had come closer to a nuclear war than it would before or after the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- Kennedy emerged as a hero, and showed that the U.S. would not be pushed around.
- A “hot line” would be established between the United States and Soviet Union.
- Nuclear Test Ban Treaty