

**Explain how and why the USA and USSR came close to Nuclear War over Cuba in 1962 and the consequences of the Crisis on relations between the two states.**

- Castro and his policies and attitude to the USA 1959 – Oct. 1962**
- Development of relations between Cuba and USSR, 1959 – Oct. 1962**
- Response of the USA and events of the 13 Days**
- Consequences of the crisis for USSR and USA**

The USA originally supported ex-leader of Cuba General Batista who has ruled the country for five years. However, his rule became more brutal and in 1957 the USA decided to cut-off supplies to the country. The US government encouraged a revolutionary group lead by Fidel Castro and in 1959 they overthrew the government and Castro became President. Relationships were not strong for long as Castro started to nationalise industries in Cuba, most of them were owned by Americans. Castro also started to take over American land in Cuba. As relationships grew more hostile the USA started to cut off aid, money and trade links to Cuba hoping to get rid of Castro. After two years in power Castro announced that he had turned Communist. The USA was angry over this as they had to take action per the Truman Doctrine. Cuba was only 90 miles of the Eastern Coast of America and they had to stop Communism from taking control of a country so close to them. In 1961 President Kennedy approved a CIA plan to invade Cuba involving anti-Castro exiles. The Bay of Pigs Invasion failed as it was not planned well and was not supported. The operation has bad Intel of the support America would receive and therefore Castro became a National Hero. Many attempts to Assassinate Castro failed and all relations between Castro and USA collapsed. Castro turned to the USSR for protection against the USA.

Between 1960 and 1962 relations between USSR and Cuba increased and grew stronger. Castro started to trade goods e.g. Tobacco and Sugar, with the USSR and by 1962 80% of Cuban trade was with the USSR and in turn the USSR traded machinery and oil with Cuba. After many assassination attempts on Castro, he turned to Khrushchev, leader of the USSR, for assistance. In 1962 40,000 Russian troops and weapons were sent to Cuba, these included 43 Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and 64 short range missiles. Missiles bases were also built on the Island which was an advantage to the USSR. They countered American missiles in Turkey, now both

countries had missiles close to each other with 80% of USA threatened by these missiles.

Kennedy responded to this by setting up EEXCOMM which included Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. Pressure was put on Kennedy to give the go ahead for an Airstrike of Cuba followed by an invasion 8 days later. However, the President listened to his Brother instead and opted for a Naval Blockade of Cuba. This meant that any ships on course for Cuba from the USSR would be stopped and turned back after being searched. This was an act of war so the USA decided to call it Quarantine of Cuba. This began the Cuban Missile Crisis. Both countries were put on high alert with  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the American B52 Fleet flying at all times ready to strike. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October a final message from an American Spy said, "Soviet Attack Imminent".

Plans for an American Invasion were drawn up and USAF planes started reconnaissance missions over Cuba. On the 26<sup>th</sup> a U2 Spyplane was shot down by Russians which may have lead to the out brake of war however the Americans ignored it. Soon after Khrushchev sent a telegram to Kennedy telling him that the USSR would remove missiles if the Blockade ended and they did not invade Cuba. The next day a second telegram was sent from Khrushchev asking Kennedy to remove the American missiles in Turkey. Kennedy again took the advice of his Brother and replied to the first telegram. Khrushchev agreed and orders for the ships to turn around were given along with the deconstruction of missile bases. Secretly, however, Kennedy agreed to remove the missiles in Turkey. This ended the 13 day long conflict and both sides were safe from Nuclear Attack for the moment.

Kennedy was deemed a Hero and gained prestige for facing down the Russians. He had defeated Khrushchev who has lost face and was eventually replaced. China broke off relations with the USSR and started testing their own Nuclear weapons. This conflict also lead to a thaw in relations between the two countries and both sides realised a quicker method of contact was need in case of another conflict. A direct telephone line was set up between the White House and the Kremlin during the Cold War. The Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed by both sides and agreed restrictions on the testing of Nuclear Weapons. However, Castro remained in place as leader of Cuba and no other attempts were made to remove him from power.