

0. Cuban Missile Crisis - Story Preface

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Map depicting the range of Soviet SS-4 medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM) and SS-5 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM), if launched from Cuba. Based on a [C.I.A. article](#) by James H. Hansen in 2002. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

*We're probably going to have to
bomb them.*

President John F. Kennedy
to McGeorge Bundy
October 16, 1962

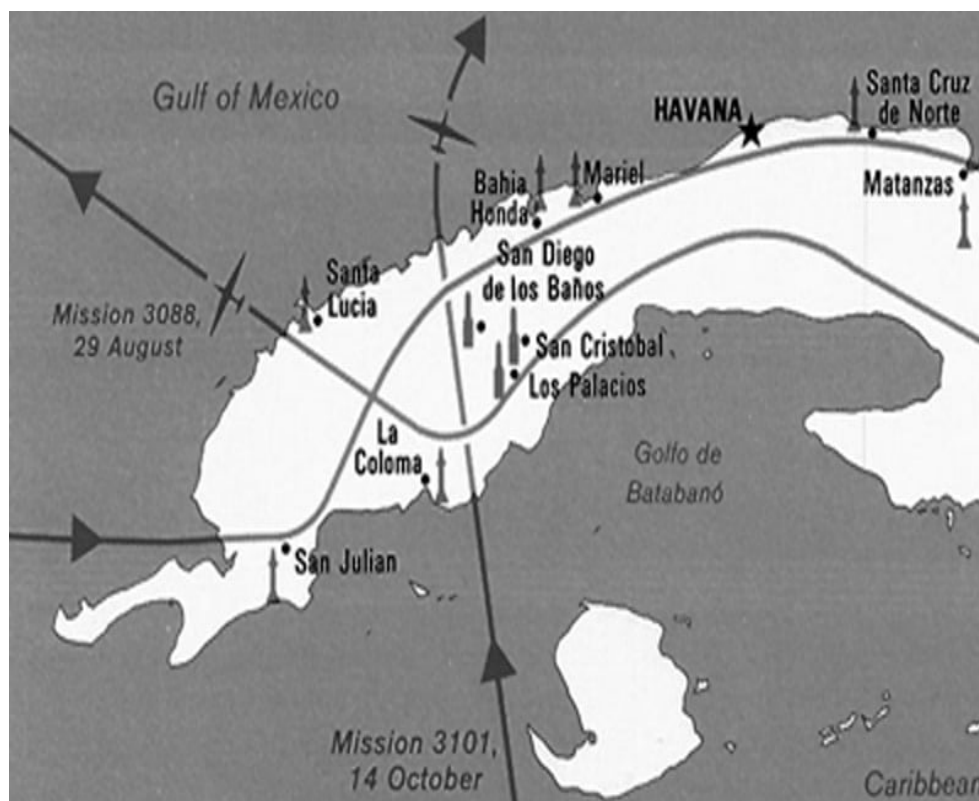
For the first time in weeks, clouds over Cuba gave way to clear skies. It was October 14, 1962.

Fifteen days before - under the gray skies of emotional turmoil - President Kennedy had ordered federal law enforcement personnel to the campus of Ole Miss. Their job was to make sure that James Meredith was allowed to enroll as the University's first African-American student. Meanwhile ... Mississippi state troopers had gathered on the same campus to prevent that very enrollment.

Riots ensued, killing two people and wounding scores more.

The showdown, in Mississippi, was just a foretaste of how a bad situation could worsen. What the President was about to learn - regarding events in Cuba - would trigger an international crisis.

Taking advantage of the clear skies - on that October day, in 1962 - Major Richard Heyser flew his U-2 on a flight ("Mission 3101") over the Caribbean island. This CIA map depicts his route of travel.



What he found brought the world as close as it's ever come to nuclear war.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Cuban-Missile-Crisis>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Cuban-Missile-Crisis>

Media Stream



1962 - Heyser Mission over Cuba

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Richard Heyser - Finds Missiles in Cuba

Photo online, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress.

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MRBM Field Launch Site in Cuba - Medium Range Ballistic Missile

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Cuban Missile Crisis

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Desegregation Riots at Ole Miss, 1962

Universal Newsreel footage, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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