

During the Bay of Pigs operation, the U.S. was supposed to provide air cover for invading Cuban exiles. President Kennedy, however, was under intense international pressure and ordered the air support to end. Without that protection, the invaders were bound to fail. The attempted invasion was - to use JFK's word - a fiasco.

Castro, more convinced than ever that America would invade Cuba, appealed to Nikita Khrushchev. The Soviet leader had missiles which could never reach the United States - if deployed from Russia - but they could reach America if they were located in Cuba.

Years later, Castro tells us what he was thinking at the time, and former Soviet military leaders explain how they secretly transported heavily disguised nuclear missiles aboard 150 Cuba-bound ships. Accompanying those missiles, during July of 1962, were around 43,000 Soviet troops.

CIA agents, in Cuba, reported that Russian troops and missile trailers were seen on the streets of Havana. The federal government dismissed those reports as rumors.

Also detecting an increase in Soviet ships arriving at the island, the CIA requested stepped-up aerial reconnaissance. On the 14th of October, Major Richard Heyser flew a U-2 mission which produced evidence that something was going on in Cuba.

Experts, analyzing the photos which Major Heyser took on his mission, noticed "objects that are foreign to the environment." They determined the pictures showed a ballistic missile site. It had "never dawned on" the American government that the Soviets "would take that kind of risk" (by locating such weapons outside their own territory).

On October 16th, the CIA told President Kennedy there was no doubt: Soviets were installing nuclear missiles in Cuba. "The Russians were so close they could strike without warning." Only Seattle was out of their range.

The situation created "a clear and present danger" to American security.

See, also:

[Cold War: Cuban Missile Crisis, Part 1](#)

[Cold War: Cuban Missile Crisis, Part 3](#)

[Cold War: Cuban Missile Crisis, Part 4](#)

[Cold War: Cuban Missile Crisis, Part 5](#)

Credits:

From "Cold War," a 1998 TV series collaboratively created by the Turner Broadcasting System and the BBC, produced by Jeremy Isaacs. The series originally aired on CNN (in America) and on BBC Two (in the U.K.).

This clip, about the Cuban Missile Crisis, is from Episode 10, entitled "Cuba (1959-1962)."

Amazon.com [describes](#) "Cold War," as follows:

...This 8-volume, 24-episode series, narrated by Kenneth Branagh, is a comprehensive history that examines the key events of the arc of the Soviet Union, from its birth to its fall, and provides a thorough analysis of what was going on behind closed doors.

Informed by the stories of 500 eyewitnesses - from citizens and soldiers to historians and statesmen - and strengthened by painstaking reconstruction of archival historical film footage, CNN's Cold War is a heroic undertaking and a sweeping chronicle of the world's most fragile decades.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Cold-War-Cuban-Missile-Crisis-Part-2>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Cold-War-Cuban-Missile-Crisis-Part-2>