

# CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

# Introductions

## A. James Richter

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Research Interests
4. Other Interests

## B. Course Objectives

### 1. Cuban Missile Crisis

- Why did it occur?
- How were decisions made?
- What was legacy?

### 2. Writing

- How to construct an argument
- How to support your argument
- How to find your voice

## C. Course Requirements

1. Attendance
2. Four Response Papers of less than 200 words
3. 1000 word paper (3-4 pages)
  1. Rough Draft: Due November 3
  2. Final Draft, Due November 24

Introductions: Who are you?

Where are you from?

Do you have any questions about what's going on in the United States?

# Why the Cuban Missile Crisis?

- Historic Significance: A Moment Close to Nuclear Destruction
  - A Turning Point in Cold War History
- A Case Study in Crisis Bargaining
  - How do we get into crises?
  - International and Domestic Reasons
  - Decision-Making Procedures. How do governments make decisions for foreign policy?
  - Crisis Bargaining:
    - How do governments manipulate risk to get what they want?
    - How are crises resolved?
    - How do governments learn?
- Comparison with nuclear politics today



# Three Elements in Each Class

## A. Theoretical discussion:

1. International politics and the causes of war
2. Domestic politics and foreign policy, decision-making
3. Crisis Bargaining
4. How governments “learn”

## B. The History of the Cuban Missile Crisis

1. Background: The International Situation in 1962
2. Moving towards the crisis: Why Khrushchev put missiles in Cuba and why Kennedy responded
3. The Crisis Itself
4. The Impact
5. The effect years afterward

# C. Writing

- Introduction to what writing does, constructing an argument
- Constructing an argument
- The importance of the paragraph
- Editing
- Putting it all together.

# PART 1: Background to the Crisis

1. Some Basic Assumptions
2. The Cold War
3. Nuclear Politics
4. Decolonization
5. The United States and Cuba
6. Cuba, Castro and the United States
7. The Soviet Union in the Early 1960s
8. The Military Balance in the Early 1960s

# Background to the Cold War: Realist Theory

The BIG Question, if we assume that:

Most states prefer not to fight wars

Most people would prefer not to spend money on arms

WHY ARE THEIR WARS?

The Anarchy of the Sovereign State System:

No legal means to ensure another will behave

The need to ensure one's own interest



# Background to the Cold War: The Security Dilemma

Assume two states, neither want war, neither want to increase spending, but both share a particular interest, and neither has any particular reason to trust the other:

If one starts to build an army, what is the other one to do?

Then what does the first one do?

Now assume that weapon technologies are more efficient for defense than offense. What happens then? What happens if weapons technologies favor offense?

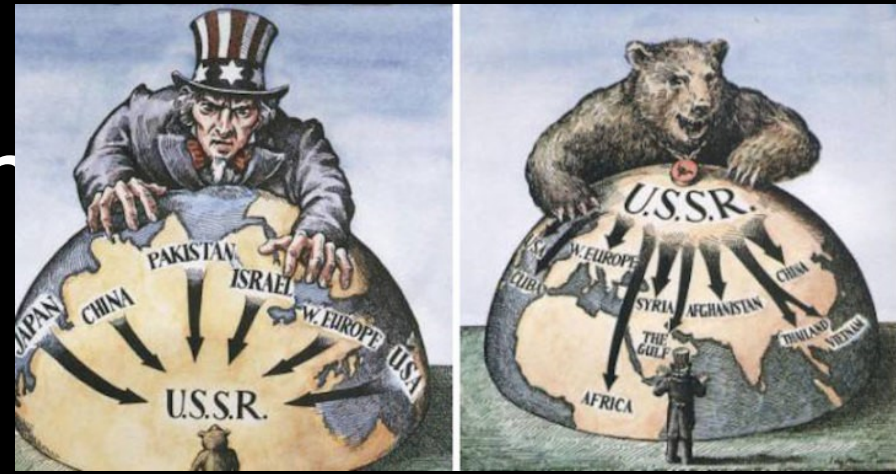
# When are wars more likely?

- Miscalculation—Lack of Information
  - Capabilities
  - Intentions, Resolve
- Shift in Relations in Power
  - Revisionism: A country growing in power wants to change the rules to reflect new power relations
  - \*Prevention\*: A country fears it is losing in the balance of power, and will strike when it can still win
- When leaders believe the first strike will be decisive
  - Pre-emptive war

# Complicating Realism

- Security and Power Remain Important
- But how do you define what interests are?
  - How do you define what constitutes a threat
- Constructivism
  - The Role of National Identity
  - The concept of "ontological security"

# The Cold War: Realism



Realism: Contest Between Two Great Powers in a Bipolar World

Security dilemma in Europe

Knowledge that very difficult to defeat the other one

USSR had clear conventional superiority in Europe

US had clear naval and air superiority, and nuclear weapons

# Cold War: Ideology

Ideology: Superpowers legitimated selves by universal, mutually exclusive ideologies; both regarded selves as exceptional and the existence of the other as a threat, and this vision institutionalized in domestic politics

United States: Liberal Democracy

Individual Political Rights

Individual Property Rights

US Exceptionalism: "City on a Hill"

Truman Doctrine

USSR: Marxism-Leninism

Inevitable successor to capitalism

The Leading Role of the Party

Society, Economy subordinated to Party's mission

Surrounded by enemies

RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Both societies to large extent organized by this competition,

Especially Soviet Union

But United States as well

Powerful institutions had stake in seeing other as enemy



# Nuclear Politics

Nuclear weapons: cannot easily defend, so must dissuade

Deterrence: persuading a potential opponent that there is nothing to gain from an attack

- The ability to retaliate: survivability

- The credibility to retaliate

When is instability in a crisis most likely:

- When either side (or both sides) believe they can win with a first strike

- When there is a rapid shift in the balance of power

# Volatile Balance of Power During the Cuban Missile Crisis

## Rapid Shifts in Perception of Nuclear Balance

1945-1957: US had nuclear weapons and could deliver them

USSR could destroy Europe, but not the United States

1957: Sputnik and Soviet ICBMs, Khrushchev's boasting

1961: Kennedy increases US arsenal

October, 1962: US had over 300 intercontinental nuclear missiles

USSR may have had 75

After 1966, both sides had essential equivalence





# US-CUBA: Now will you be good?



Caption: "See what I do for a good little boy?"

# US-CUBA RELATIONS BEFORE THE COLD WAR

CUBA was part of US Sphere of Influence, but Cuba's symbolic role for the US went much deeper

John Quincy Adams (1823): “if an apple severed by the tempest from its native tree cannot choose but fall to the ground, Cuba... can gravitate only towards the North American Union which by the same law of nature cannot cast her off from its bosom.”

Efforts to annex Cuba to expand slavery in the United States in 1850s

The Spanish-American War, the Platt Amendment, and the Second Occupation

Fulgencio Batista—1952-1959

US Financial Interests controlled much of Cuban economy: Mining(90%), utilities (80%), sugar(40%)

# US and Castro

- Communism and Cuba
  - Castro's Revolution. Against Batista
  - Eisenhower: Tepid support, tolerance at first
    - Cuba receives oil from Khrushchev, Eisenhower reduces sugar quotas, Cuba appropriates property, Eisenhower declares boycott
    - Plans Bay of Pigs
  - Kennedy: Agrees to Bay of Pigs, which fails
    - Clear plans for removing Cuba

# Soviet Interests in Cuba

- Seeking to gain national liberation movements
- Cuba in the US sphere of influence
- Castro was an authentic revolutionary
  - Reinvigorates Soviet ideas
  - Strengthens against China

# BREAK

- DOCUMENTARY: COLD WAR

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOxeZt217uw&list=PL3H6z037pboGWTxs3xGP7HRGrQ5dOQdGc&index=10>

- QUESTION FOR BRIEF WRITING

- To what extent could the cold war be characterized as simply a contest between two great powers? To what extent did the two superpowers' ideology make the conflict worse?

# Emphasis on Voice, Argument and Audience

- VOICE:**           What is your question?  
                      Have something to say
- ARGUMENT:**   Communicating what you think  
                      Communicating why you think that:  
                                  Organization  
                                  Logic  
                                  Evidence
- AUDIENCE:**    What groups do you want to hear  
                      What are the norms for that kind of group  
                      Academic audiences
- EDIT:**           Discard words and sentences you don't need  
                      Add precision when necessary

# WRITING WORKSHOP

Why writing?

Entering a conversation

Important to have something to say

What am I going to emphasize in this week?

What do I hope to accomplish?

# Reading Efficiently

- Why are you reading?
  - To get facts
  - To get ideas
- What is the question?
- What is the argument?
- What are the main concepts?
- What are the relations between these concepts?
  - Is it causation?



# Efficient Reading

- Look at the title
- Read the introduction and conclusion carefully
  - Should have the question, the relevant audience and
  - If there's a roadmap, pay attention
- Examine the section headings
- Actively think about what you are reading