An International History of the Cuban Missile Crisis
A 50-year retrospective

Edited by David Gioe, Len Scott and Christopher Andrew
This edited volume addresses the main lessons and legacies of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis from a global perspective.

Despite the discoveries of recent research, there is still much more to be revealed about the handling of nuclear weapons before and during the Cuban missile crisis. Featuring contributions from a number of eminent international scholars of nuclear history, intelligence, espionage, political science and Cold War studies, An International History of the Cuban Missile Crisis reviews and reflects on one of the critical moments of the Cold War, focusing on three key areas.

First, the volume highlights the importance of memory as an essential foundation of historical understanding and demonstrates how events that rely only on historical records can provide misleading accounts. This focus on memory extends the scope of the existing literature by exploring hitherto neglected aspects of the Cuban missile crisis, including an analysis of the operational aspects of Bomber Command activity, explored through recollections of the aircrews that challenge accounts based on official records. The editors then go on to explore aspects of intelligence whose achievements and failings have increasingly been recognized to be of central importance to the origins, dynamics and outcomes of the missile crisis. Studies of hitherto neglected organizations such as the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) both extend our understanding of British and American intelligence machinery in this period and enrich our understanding of key episodes and assessments in the missile crisis. Finally, the book explores the risk of nuclear war and looks at how close we came to nuclear conflict. The risk of inadvertent use of nuclear weapons is evaluated and a new proposed framework for the analysis of nuclear risk put forward.

This volume will be of much interest to students of intelligence studies, international history, foreign policy, security studies and IR in general.

David Gioe is a PhD candidate at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and previously spent a decade working in the US intelligence community.

Len Scott is Professor of International History and Intelligence Studies at Aberystwyth University.

Christopher Andrew is Professor Emeritus of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Cambridge and a former visiting Professor of National Strategy at Harvard University.
Studies in Intelligence Series
General Editors: Richard J. Aldrich and Christopher Andrew

British Military Intelligence in the
Palestine Campaign, 1914–1918
Yigal Sheffy

Intelligence Analysis and
Assessment
Edited by David A. Charters, Stuart
Farson and Glenn P. Hastedt

British Military Intelligence in the
Crimean War, 1854–1856
Stephen M. Harris

TET 1968
Understanding the surprise
Ronnie E. Ford

Allied and Axis Signals Intelligence
in World War II
Edited by David Alvarez

Intelligence and Imperial Defence
British intelligence and the defence
of the Indian Empire 1904–1924
Richard J. Popplewell

Knowing Your Friends
Intelligence inside alliances and
coalitions from 1914 to the Cold
War
Edited by Martin S. Alexander

Espionage
Past, present, future?
Edited by Wesley K. Wark

Eternal Vigilance
50 years of the CIA
Edited by Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and
Christopher Andrew

The Australian Security Intelligence
Organization
An unofficial history
Frank Cain

Nothing Sacred
Nazi espionage against the Vatican,
1939–1945
David Alvarez and Revd. Robert A.
Graham

Policing Politics
Security intelligence and the liberal
democratic state
Peter Gill

Intelligence Investigations
How Ultra changed history
Ralph Bennett

From Information to Intrigue
Studies in secret service based on
the Swedish experience, 1939–1945
C.G. McKay
Dieppe Revisited
A documentary investigation
John P. Campbell

More Instructions from the Centre
Christopher M. Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky

Controlling Intelligence
Edited by Glenn P. Hastedt

Spy Fiction, Spy Films, and Real Intelligence
Edited by Wesley K. Wark

Security and Intelligence in a Changing World
New perspectives for the 1990s
Edited by A. Stuart Farson, David Stafford and Wesley K. Wark

A Don at War
Sir David Hunt K.C.M.G., O.B.E.
(reprint)

Intelligence and Military Operations
Edited by Michael I. Handel

Leaders and Intelligence
Edited by Michael I. Handel

War, Strategy and Intelligence
Michael I. Handel

Strategic and Operational Deception in the Second World War
Edited by Michael I. Handel

Codebreaker in the Far East
Alan Stripp

Intelligence for Peace
Edited by Hesi Carmel

Intelligence Services in the Information Age
Michael Herman

Espionage and the Roots of the Cold War
The conspiratorial heritage
David McKnight

Swedish Signal Intelligence 1900–1945
C.G. McKay and Bengt Beckman

The Norwegian Intelligence Service 1945–1970
Olav Riste

Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century
Edited by Heike Bungert, Jan G. Heitmann and Michael Wala

The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War
Calling the tune?
Hugh Wilford

Our Man in Yugoslavia
The story of a Secret Service operative
Sebastian Ritchie

Understanding Intelligence in the Twenty-First Century
Journeys in shadows
Len Scott and Peter Jackson

MI6 and the Machinery of Spying
Philip H. J. Davies

Twenty-First Century Intelligence
Edited by Wesley K. Wark

Intelligence and Strategy
Selected essays
John Robert Ferris
The US Government, Citizen Groups and the Cold War
The state–private network
Edited by Helen Laville and Hugh Wilford

Peacekeeping Intelligence
New players, extended boundaries
Edited by David Carment and Martin Rudner

Special Operations Executive
A new instrument of war
Edited by Mark Seaman

Mussolini’s Propaganda Abroad
Subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935–1940
Manuela A. Williams

The Politics and Strategy of Clandestine War
Special Operations Executive, 1940–1946
Edited by Neville Wylie

Britain’s Secret War against Japan, 1937–1945
Douglas Ford

US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy
Truman, secret warfare and the CIA, 1945–53
Sarah-Jane Corke

Stasi
Shield and sword of the party
John C. Schmeidel

Mussolini’s Propaganda Abroad
Subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935–1940
Manuela A. Williams

The Politics and Strategy of Clandestine War
Special Operations Executive, 1940–1946
Edited by Neville Wylie

Britain’s Secret War against Japan, 1937–1945
Douglas Ford

US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy
Truman, secret warfare and the CIA, 1945–53
Sarah-Jane Corke

Stasi
Shield and sword of the party
John C. Schmeidel

Military Intelligence and the Arab Revolt
The first modern intelligence war
Polly A. Mohs

Exploring Intelligence Archives
Enquiries into the secret state
Edited by R. Gerald Hughes, Peter Jackson and Len Scott

US National Security, Intelligence and Democracy
The Church Committee and the War on Terror
Edited by Russell A. Miller

Intelligence Theory
Key questions and debates
Edited by Peter Gill, Stephen Marrin and Mark Phythian

East German Foreign Intelligence
Myth, reality and controversy
Edited by Thomas Wegener Friis, Kristie Macrakis and Helmut Müller-Enbergs

Intelligence Cooperation and the War on Terror
Anglo-American security relations after 9/11
Adam D.M. Svendsen

A History of the Egyptian Intelligence Service
A history of the mukhabarat, 1910–2009
Owen L. Sirrs

The South African Intelligence Services
From apartheid to democracy, 1948–2005
Kevin A. O’Brien

International Intelligence Cooperation and Accountability
Edited by Hans Born, Ian Leigh and Aidan Wills
Improving Intelligence Analysis
Bridging the gap between scholarship and practice
*Stephen Marrin*

Russia and the Cult of State Security
The Chekist tradition, from Lenin to Putin
*Julie Fedor*

Understanding the Intelligence Cycle
*Edited by Mark Phythian*

Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War
The NATO information service
*Linda Risso*

The Future of Intelligence
Challenges in the 21st century
*Isabelle Duyvesteyn, Ben de Jong and Joop van Reijn*

The Ethics of Intelligence
A new framework
*Ross W. Bellaby*

An International History of the Cuban Missile Crisis
A 50-year retrospective
*Edited by David Gioe, Len Scott and Christopher Andrew*

Interrogation in War and Conflict
A comparative and interdisciplinary analysis
*Edited by Christopher Andrew and Simona Tobia*
An International History of the Cuban Missile Crisis
A 50-year retrospective

Edited by David Gioe, Len Scott and Christopher Andrew
Dedicated to the survivors of the Cuban missile crisis – participants, onlookers and unborn generations
‘How can I save my little boy from Oppenheimer’s deadly toy?’

(Sting, *Russians*, 1984)
Contents

Notes on contributors  xiii
Foreword  xvi
Acknowledgements  xvii
List of abbreviations  xviii

1 Introduction: memories and anniversaries: challenges and opportunities  1
LEN SCOTT, DAVID GIOE AND CHRISTOPHER ANDREW

2 Remembering the Cuban missile crisis: memoirs, oral history and lieux de mémoire  9
CHRISTOPHER ANDREW

3 Intelligence and the risk of nuclear war  25
LEN SCOTT

4 The BBC and the Cuban missile crisis: private worlds and public service  43
JEAN SEATON AND ROSALEEN HUGHES

5 Modifying ‘a very dangerous message’: Britain, the non-aligned and the UN during the Cuban missile crisis  72
PETER CATTERALL

6 The Joint Intelligence Committee and the Cuban missile crisis  99
MICHAEL S. GOODMAN

7 A trial by fire: military intelligence reform and the Cuban missile crisis  106
MICHAEL B. PETERSEN
Contents

8 Handling HERO: joint Anglo-American tradecraft in the case of Oleg Penkovsky
   DAVID GIOE
   135

9 What really happened in RAF Bomber Command during the Cuban missile crisis?
   ROBIN WOOLVEN
   176

10 Leading from behind: Berlin, the Jupiters and third-party mediation during the Cuban missile crisis
    TOSHIHIKO AONO
    196

11 The Australian Government and the Cuban missile crisis: an antipodean perspective
    LAURA STANLEY
    217

12 Italian political reactions to the Cuban missile crisis
    LEONARDO CAMPUS
    236

13 The fourth question: why did John F. Kennedy offer up the Jupiters in Turkey?
    DON MUNTON
    258

14 Perception of the Cuban missile crisis in Russia today
    NEIL KENT AND YAN NAUMKIN
    279

Bibliography

Index
Contributors

David Gioe is a PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge and a member of Corpus Christi College. He is a former Central Intelligence Agency Operations Officer and Analyst. David was a Presidential Management Fellow at the FBI and is a Naval Reserve Intelligence Officer. David is adjunct faculty with National Intelligence University and co-convener, with Michael S. Goodman, of the International Security and Intelligence programme at Pembroke College, Cambridge.

Len Scott is Professor of International History and Intelligence Studies at Aberystwyth University. His publications include The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Threat of Nuclear War (London: Continuum Books, 2007) and (as editor) ‘Fifty Years beyond the Brink: Writing the Cuban Missile Crisis’, International Relations, 26/3 (2012).

Christopher Andrew is founder and co-Chairman of the Cambridge University Intelligence Seminar, Professor Emeritus of Modern and Contemporary History at Cambridge, Honorary Professor at Queen’s University Belfast, former Visiting Professor at Harvard, Toronto and the Australian National University, Honorary Air Commodore of 7006 Squadron (Intelligence) RAuxAF and former Official Historian of the British Security Service (MI5). His 18 books (some widely translated) include a number on the role and influence of intelligence services, especially in Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States.

Jean Seaton is Professor of Media History at the University of Westminster, Official BBC Historian and Director of the Orwell prize. Holding the Line: the BBC and the Nation, Vol. VI of the Official History of the BBC, will be published in 2014 by Profile Books.

Rosaleen Hughes is a visiting research fellow in the War Studies Department at Kings College, University of London and a former BBC television news and current affairs producer.

Dr Peter Catterall is Reader in History at the University of Westminster and editor of National Identities. He is the editor of Harold Macmillan’s
diaries (published in two volumes by Macmillan in 2003 and 2011) and is currently writing a book on religion and politics in inter-war Britain.

**Dr Michael S. Goodman** is a Reader in Intelligence and International Affairs in the Department of War Studies, King’s College London. He is the author of the forthcoming *Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee* (Routledge, 2014).

**Dr Michael B. Petersen** is Director of the Center for Strategic Intelligence Research at the National Intelligence University in the United States, where he writes on strategic weapons and intelligence history. He received his PhD from the University of Maryland, College Park.

**Squadron Leader Robin Woolven** was a Royal Air Force navigator 1956–78 on tactical and strategic bomber squadrons until 1967, then on maritime surveillance squadrons. He subsequently spent 17 years in the Security Service (MI5) before retiring to complete a PhD at King’s College, London where he is now a Research Associate.

**Toshihiko Aono** is associate professor of international history at Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo. He is the author of *Kiki no toshi no reisen to d¯omei: Berurin, Ky¯uba, detanto, 1961–63 nen* [The Cold War and the Western Alliance during the Crisis Years: Berlin, Cuba, and Détente, 1961–63] (Tokyo, 2012).

**Laura Stanley** is a doctoral candidate at Victoria University, Australia. She is writing her dissertation on Australia and the Cuban missile crisis. Her research on this subject has appeared in the *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, *The Conversation* and on Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio.

**Dr Leonardo Campus** has a PhD from the University of Rome, La Sapienza. In addition to research articles in contemporary history, he has authored two books: *I sei giorni che sconvolsero il mondo. La crisi dei missili di Cuba e le sue percezioni internazionali* (Le Monnier, forthcoming, 2014); *Non solo canzonette. L’Italia della Ricostruzione e del Miraco­lo attraverso il Festival di Sanremo* (Le Monnier Università-Mondadori Education, forthcoming, 2014).

**Don Munton** is co-author of *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Concise History*, and writes frequently on security and intelligence issues. He has also edited or co-edited: *Canadian Foreign Policy: Selected Cases*, *Rethinking National Security: The Public Dimension* and *Hazardous Waste Siting and Democratic Choice*. A former NATO and Fulbright Fellow, he taught at various universities in Canada and has been an academic visitor in the United States, United Kingdom and Japan.

**Professor Neil Kent** (Pembroke Initiative for Intelligence Studies, University of Cambridge) is an Associate of the Scott Polar Research Institute,
University of Cambridge, and was Professor of European History and Culture at the St Petersburg State Academic Institute of Art, Sculpture and Architecture (The Russian Academy of Art). Fluent in most European languages, he is the author, amongst others, of the Cambridge University Concise History of Sweden (English, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Serbian editions). He is currently completing books on the histories of Denmark and St Petersburg, respectively.

Yan Naumkin is a graduate student at the School of International Studies, St Petersburg State University, Russia, with a BA in International Relations, awarded with a Diploma of Distinction. He has participated in numerous international conferences in Russia, as well as the Junior 8 Summit in Japan in 2008, attended by Presidents Bush, Medvedev and Prime Minister Fukuda, in which he was one of the authors of the Final Declaration. His foreign languages include English, French and German.
In her fascinating study of time and recall, *Ammonites and Leaping Fish*, the novelist Dame Penelope Lively writes of ‘the compelling matter of memory – the vapour trail without which we are undone’. For anyone alive, with a pulse to feel and eyes to see, during the days of the Cuban missile crisis, it has left one of the most vivid vapour trails of memory in our lives. And we are many, spread right across the globe.

For professional historians and scholars of war, near-war, and strategic studies, the missiles of October 1962 rank with the Guns of August 1914 in their compelling fascination. They are both subjects and debates that will never wither as long as human curiosity continues to embrace a sense of the past.

*An International History of the Cuban Missile Crisis* is especially timely. Survivors and witnesses are still alive. The archives continue to yield up their once-secret treasures. And we have within these pages a superb range of scholars to make new sense of that extraordinary crisis for a wider readership.

It was a far, far closer thing than we realized even at our moments of highest anxiety in the autumn of 1962. That we can recall the crisis and write about it in tranquility – and that the Cold War ended as it did without general war or nuclear exchange – is perhaps the greatest single shared boon for humanity in modern times.

Read on. Be fascinated – and breathe as many signs of retrospective relief as you wish.

Peter Hennessy, FBA
Attlee Professor of Contemporary British History
Queen Mary, University of London
Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure as well as a duty to record our collective editorial thanks to the numerous people who have helped in the completion of this book. First and foremost, we wish to thank the sponsors of, as well as the participants in, the Cuban Missile Crisis conference held at Gregynog Hall, Newtown, Wales, between 25 and 27 October 2012. This international conference, held to mark the 50th anniversary of the crisis, provided the academic impetus and scholarship that is the backbone of this volume. We further wish to thank the conference co-sponsors, namely, the University of Cambridge Intelligence Seminar and the Centre for Intelligence and International Security Studies in the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University.

We thank Gerry Hughes for his tireless fundraising efforts and contribution to the organization of the conference, and acknowledge financial assistance from Yale University Press, Bloomsbury Publishers and Routledge. The authors are grateful to Trish Hayes and the staff of the BBC Written Archives for kind assistance with copyright permissions. Our special thanks are also due to Chikara Hashimoto for his exceptional organization of the Gregynog Conference in October 2012. Finally, we would like to thank each individual conference attendee, whose questions, comments, and even personal anecdotes sharpened our scholarship and brought the crisis back to life for a short weekend in rural Wales. They are: Peter Martland, Gerry Hughes, Campbell Craig, Robert and Nancy Holmes, Harry Gelber, Damien Van Puyvelde, Benoît Pelopidas, Kris Stoddart, Paul Stewart, Dorothea Gioe, Guto Thomas, Masato Kimura, Christian Bak, Dan Larsen, Tom J. Maguire, Christian Schlaepfer, Frank Boulton, Kyle Cunliffe, Kristi Cooper, Jonathan Colman, Kevin Fleckner, Petr Labrentsev, Steven Wagner, Mohamed Majothi, Nicolas Giacometti, Jessica Gibbs, Alexandros Koutsoukis, Andrew Linklater, Leonardo Campus, Don Munton, Michael Petersen, Rosaleen Hughes, Jean Seaton, Michael S. Goodman, Peter Catterall, Robin Woolven, Laura Stanley and Chikara Hashimoto.

David Gioe, Len Scott and Christopher Andrew
Cambridge and Aberystwyth
2013
Abbreviations

AEST  Australian Eastern Standard Time
AHB  Air Historical Branch
ASW  anti-submarine warfare
BBC  British Broadcasting Corporation
CAS  Chief of the Air Staff
CI  counter-intelligence
CIA  Central Intelligence Agency
C-in-C  Commander-in-Chief
CINCLANT  Commander-in-Chief Atlantic
CND  Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
COMOR  Committee on Overheard Reconnaissance
COS  Chief of Station
DC  Democrazia Cristiana (Italian Christian Democrat Party)
DCI  Director of Central Intelligence
DCOS  Deputy Chief of Station
DDP  Deputy Director for Plans (CIA)
DEA  Department of External Affairs
DEFCON  Defense Condition
DGSE  Direction Générale de la Securité Extérieure (French Foreign Intelligence Service)
DIA  Defense Intelligence Agency
DMI  Directorate of Military Intelligence
DoD  Department of Defense
DPM  Department of Prime Minister
DSB  Defence Signals Branch
DST  Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (French Security Service)
ECM  electronic counter measures
EEI  essential elements of information
ENDC  Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee
EST  Eastern Standard Time
ExComm  Executive Committee of the National Security Council
FBI  Federal Bureau of Investigation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FBIS</td>
<td>Foreign Broadcast Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROG</td>
<td>free rocket over ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCHQ</td>
<td>Government Communications Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLCM</td>
<td>ground launched cruise missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMT</td>
<td>Greenwich Mean Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRU</td>
<td>Glavnoye Razvedyatelnoye Upravlenie (Soviet Military Intelligence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQBC</td>
<td>Headquarters Bomber Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMINT</td>
<td>human intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I&amp;W</td>
<td>indications and warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICBM</td>
<td>intercontinental ballistic missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRBM</td>
<td>intermediate-range ballistic missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIC</td>
<td>Joint Intelligence Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSG</td>
<td>Joint Study Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGB</td>
<td>Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (Soviet Committee for State Security)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAD</td>
<td>Mutual Assured Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRBM</td>
<td>medium-range ballistic missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>North Atlantic Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIE</td>
<td>National Intelligence Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NME</td>
<td>National Military Establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPIC</td>
<td>National Photographic Interpretation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSA</td>
<td>National Security Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACSI</td>
<td>Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organisation of American States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONI</td>
<td>Office of Naval Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPSEC</td>
<td>operational security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORB</td>
<td>Operational Record Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSD</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWVL</td>
<td>one-way voice link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>permissive action links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI</td>
<td>Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>patrol boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWE</td>
<td>Political Warfare Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QRA</td>
<td>Quick Reaction Alert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAFHS</td>
<td>Royal Air Force Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Strategic Air Command</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAM</td>
<td>surface-to-air missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGINT</td>
<td>signals intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNIE</td>
<td>Special National Intelligence Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Soviet Russia (Division)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAR</td>
<td>United Arab Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAF</td>
<td>United States Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIB</td>
<td>United States Intelligence Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRCI</td>
<td>‘Weekly Review of Current Intelligence’ (‘Grey Book’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSI</td>
<td>‘Weekly Survey of Intelligence’ (‘Red Book’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

Memories and anniversaries: challenges and opportunities

*Len Scott, David Gioe and Christopher Andrew*

Though the world of 1962 is becoming increasingly remote, some of its lessons seem timeless.

James Blight, Joseph Nye and David Welch

The actions of the Soviet Union, Cuba and the United States in October 1962 brought those nations to the verge of military conflict. What was not known then, and what is not fully recognized today, was how close the world came to the brink of nuclear disaster.

Robert McNamara

This collection is based on a conference at the University of Wales Conference Centre at Gregynog Hall in mid-Wales in October 2012 on the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis. Anniversaries of, and conferences on, the Cuban missile crisis have been of great value to historians, as well as indeed to the general public. They have generated new sources of understanding and new interpretations. Although the release of documents has played an important part in this process much has relied on memory, and in particular the memories of those who lived through the events of October 1962 with varying degrees of responsibility for what did happen, and might have happened.

Recollection, reflection and revision

Twenty-five years after the crisis the first of a series of conferences organized by North American academics James Bight, David Welch and Bruce Allyn brought together former American officials to remember and debate their experiences. These ventures in ‘critical oral history’ initially involved members of President Kennedy’s Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExComm) but soon engaged Soviet and Cuban survivors, including diplomats and intelligence officers. Thirty years after the crisis, a conference in Havana brought together American, Soviet and Cuban officials.
Most dramatically, Fidel Castro attended the Havana conference, exchanging views with his former adversaries, and providing recollections of, and reflections on, his own actions. The conference was also notable for revelations from a former Soviet General, Anatoli Gribkov, that the Soviets had deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba. McNamara stated that he and his colleagues had not known there were such weapons in Cuba. Gribkov heightened the dramatic effect of his revelations by announcing that authority for their use had been delegated by Khrushchev to Soviet commanders in Cuba. The suggestion that an American invasion would have led to the almost inevitable use of nuclear weapons gained immediate currency.

Gribkov’s statements provoked robust exchanges among historians about the value and reliability of oral testimony, in particular that of former Soviet officials. Subsequently, Gribkov clarified his remarks and explained that he had felt constrained about what he could reveal at the Havana conference and did not explain, for example, that Khrushchev had changed his mind and insisted that no nuclear weapons of any kind could be used without his authorization.

Gribkov’s clarifications are reminders that some memories need to conform to official practices. Political agendas, moreover, are not the prerogative of states. Much of what we have learned of the crisis has illuminated and challenged the accuracy and at times the veracity of many accounts. One particularly fascinating source has been the recordings and transcripts of the conversations within the White House between President Kennedy’s senior advisors on ExComm which the President had secretly recorded, unbeknownst to any of the officials (save for his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy (RFK)). The ExComm Tapes offer unique insights into White House deliberations. They are, moreover, a means of verifying the accounts of those senior American officials whose recollections have helped shape our understanding.

An illustration is Robert Kennedy’s depiction of his own attitude to using military force against the missiles. In his memoir, *Thirteen Days*, he invoked the analogy of Pearl Harbor to argue against a surprise attack on the Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs). However, the secret tapes make clear that in the first discussions on 16 October on how to react, RFK clearly supported a military attack. So too did the President. The Director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, raised the Pearl Harbor analogy with the President on 17 October and George Ball, Under Secretary at the State Department, then spelt out in a memorandum that ‘we tried Japanese as war criminals because of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor’. In *Thirteen Days*, Robert Kennedy recounts how he had passed a note, via Ted Sorensen, to the President stating, ‘I now know how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor’. The account suggests the words were clearly intended to signal RFK’s opposition. The evidence from the ExComm tapes suggests they meant the exact opposite.
Introduction

*Thirteen Days* is based on Robert Kennedy’s diaries and was written as the former President’s brother was preparing himself for a presidential campaign. He was assassinated before it was published and the final editing was completed by Ted Sorensen, JFK’s speech writer and ExComm participant. *Thirteen Days* provides an account of Robert Kennedy’s meeting with the Soviet ambassador, Anatoli Dobrynin, on 27 October which has assumed a particular significance in debates about the resolution of the crisis. It is now clear that at that meeting RFK relayed a message to Dobrynin that indicated JFK’s willingness to withdraw Jupiter intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) from Turkey – a demand that Khrushchev had raised publicly earlier that day. Historians have debated whether Robert Kennedy’s offer to withdraw the missiles from Turkey represented a deal, an understanding or an arrangement. In this volume, Toshihiko Aono’s chapter sheds new light on this problem. As the United States itself could not take public initiatives for a Cuban–Turkish deal, Kennedy and Rusk secretly attempted to arrange mediation by third parties such as the UN Secretary-General. Aono also reexamines the so-called Cordier Ploy in this context. It has also been made clear that the secret undertaking to withdraw the missiles played little role in Khrushchev’s decision to retreat as he had already decided to withdraw the missiles from Cuba in return for a no-invasion pledge, before he learned of Kennedy’s offer. Indeed it is now clear that Khrushchev had made up his mind – and secured the unanimous agreement of the Presidium – to retreat by Thursday 25 October. How this could be done then assumed a crucial importance.

In his chapter, Don Munton argues that analysts of the missile crisis should have come to the conclusion much earlier than most did that President Kennedy had offered the Soviets a deal on the Jupiter missiles. Munton also argues that the government of Turkey was, by late October 1962, willing to relinquish the Jupiters, and Kennedy may well have been advised of this through allied channels. If so, the Turkish switch in policy helps explain why Kennedy made the offer he did to Moscow.

In 1989 Sorensen admitted that he had altered *Thirteen Days* to preserve the myth that the President had refused to compromise and stood firm on the missiles in Turkey. Contrary to public statements by the Kennedy administration, the United States government had not ignored Khrushchev’s demand that withdrawal of the missiles from Cuba required reciprocal action in Turkey. Yet in 1963 Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara both testified to Congress that the Turkish missiles were in no way connected to the withdrawal of the missiles from Cuba. As McGeorge Bundy later wrote: ‘We misled our colleagues, our countrymen, our successors, and our allies.’

More recently Sheldon Stern provided a systematic scrutiny of the claims of, and about, the ExComm protagonists. His systematic indictments (and in some cases defences) of ExComm members are important
reminders of the limits and dangers of relying only on memory, especially where the politics of memory predominate.

More generally, the fragility and ambiguity of evidence (oral and written) often present challenges of interpretation for Cold War historians. As Sergei Radchenko argues compellingly, the evidence about Khrushchev’s motives for the deployment is at times fragmentary. The argument that a principal reason for the deployment of the missiles in Cuba was to defend Cuba rests considerably on the testimony of former Soviet officials, including at the ‘critical oral conferences’ of the 1980s and 1990s.

The conferences in Hawk’s Cay, Florida, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Moscow and Havana brought together senior officials, diplomats and intelligence officers. In the 1990s, the historiography of the crisis increasingly began to explore events and incidents at the operational level. Over the next twenty years the memories of submarine commanders, missile crews and aircraft pilots assumed a growing importance in assessments of the risk of nuclear war. The fortieth anniversary of the crisis in 2002 generated accounts of events at sea that first revealed to Western audiences the activities of Soviet submariners. Dramatic accounts suggested that commanders of Soviet submarines may have been close to firing nuclear weapons against American warships that were dropping explosive devices to force them to surface. These events are explored in Len Scott’s chapter.

Greater understanding of the operational level generated increased understanding of the risk of war. Many of these risks were unknown, or only partially known, to senior political and military officials. Michael Petersen’s essay in this volume offers an explanation for this by placing the crisis in the context of the sweeping military intelligence reform ordered by McNamara the previous year. Petersen argues that while those reforms helped hasten the discovery of the Soviets’ strategic missiles, their then-incomplete nature and the parochial culture of American intelligence combined to provide a flawed picture of Soviet deployments. David Gioe’s chapter, like Petersen’s, focuses on the role of intelligence, but at the operational and tactical level instead of the structural understanding. Specifically, Gioe reviews and critiques the human intelligence (HUMINT) tradecraft that was used by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) to run Soviet Military Intelligence (GRU) Colonel Oleg Penkovsky, whose vital information fed many of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and ExComm assessments that were provided to both the Kennedy administration and Whitehall.

In the view of Michael Dobbs, the author of an account of the crisis that illuminates many of these risks, the world was at ‘one minute to midnight’ on the Doomsday clock. Among the new evidence Dobbs provides of the risk of nuclear war are the testimonies of Soviet troops in Cuba, including the crews of the Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM) that were
forward-deployed within range of their designated target, the American naval base at Guantanamo Bay.

Global scope and focus

The historiography of the crisis has also developed beyond America and the Soviet Union. Most notably, the perspective and role of Cuba has enjoyed a growing salience.22 Understanding of the roles of America’s allies, in particular Britain, Canada and Brazil, in addition to third parties, has also developed. In this volume, Aono’s chapter reveals that Britain, as well as the US, tried to arrange mediation by third parties. Especially, London worked hard to establish the UN presence in Cuba in order to provide the US with diplomatic alternatives. This chapter also argues that Kennedy eventually began to see Britain as one of the possible mediators.

Highlighting the UK angle, Michael Goodman’s chapter on the role of Britain’s Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) during the missile crisis draws on the previously closed archives of America’s closest ally to reveal fraught decision-making and a feeling of peril in Whitehall alongside Washington. Laura Stanley’s chapter on Australia provides the perspective of another American ally and contributes to the growing literature on state viewpoints from across the globe. Leonardo Campus’ chapter explores the Italian political perspectives on the crisis, using new documents from Italian, US and British archives, as well as interviews. The divisive nature and the desire for peace that characterized such reactions are highlighted. The government, led by the Christian Democrat’s Fanfani, gave unenthusiastic support to the US moves, while Togliatti’s Communist Party supported the USSR. Moreover, as the presence of NATO nuclear missiles made Italy both a target at risk and a possible subject of negotiation, it will be shown how Fanfani secretly tried to use them to play a role as a peace mediator.

Illustrative of the broadening focus on the global scale was the initiative of the Cold War International History Project in 2012 in publishing 800 pages of documentation on the ‘Global Cuban missile crisis’, including Bulgarian, Brazilian, Chinese, Chilean, Cuban, Czechoslovak, Danish, Dutch, East German, French, Hungarian, Japanese, Israeli, Italian, Mexican, Mongolian, North Korean, North Vietnamese, Polish, Romanian, Soviet, Swiss, Yugoslav and West German records.23

Such documents traverse diplomatic activity and in some places encompass diplomatic engagement and initiative. More broadly, the ‘world crisis’ as Harold Macmillan described it in his diary, threatened a nuclear war in which hundreds of millions might die. This prompted ‘the frightful desire to do something’ he went on to record in his diary,24 which included, as Peter Catterall points out in his chapter here, attempts to manage responses to the crisis in, and through, the United Nations. No other phenomenon in human history can have so engaged the attention and anxieties of so much of the global population. The personal experiences and
memories of people across the globe provide generally uncharted territory for academic exploration. A rare example of the social history of the crisis is provided by Alice George’s *Awaiting Armageddon*, which examines American attitudes. George begins with the observation that, ‘For a precarious week in 1962, all Americans got a taste of life on death row’. How far that was true for people all over the planet remains to be explored.

Despite the discoveries of recent research, there is still much more to be revealed about the handling of nuclear weapons before and during the Cuban missile crisis. It was not revealed until 2013 that the United States came remarkably close to the accidental detonation of a hydrogen bomb in North Carolina in January 1961, when three out of four safety mechanisms failed after a B-51 bomber broke up in mid-air.

In October 1962 it was not only Americans who felt that the end of the world might be at hand; in Britain the sense of danger was equally acute. As the chapter by Rosaleen Hughes and Jean Seaton on the BBC’s role shows, television brought the Cuban crisis into the living rooms of the nation, and the visual images carried on the emergency programme *Flashpoint Cuba* left an indelible mark on the consciousness of the viewing public and became an intrinsic part of individual memories of the crisis. While it was a programme put together in an enormous hurry it can only properly be understood as the product both of the BBC’s institutional position and the way in which it practised its journalism.

**Fallibility, bias and necessity**

Memories are fallible – and not just long-term memories. One of the seemingly more bizarre moments of the crisis occurred on 16 October when, as Kennedy pondered the deployment of the nuclear missiles in Cuba, he asked ‘Why does he put them in there though? . . . It’s just as if we suddenly began to put a major number of MRBMs in Turkey. Now that’d be goddamn dangerous, I would think.’ McGeorge Bundy, his Assistant for National Security Affairs, had to remind him that the United States had indeed deployed Jupiter IRBMs in Turkey, each capable of projecting a 1.44 megaton-yield warhead beyond Moscow. More understandably, memories of events many years past can also be fallible. At one point, Anatoli Dobrynin, the highly experienced Soviet ambassador to Washington, mistakenly recalled that his crucial meeting with Robert Kennedy took place on Friday 26th rather than Saturday 27th October, raising the prospect of an entire recasting of the denouement of the crisis.

Yet memories are as indispensable as archival sources despite their fragmentary, ambiguous or, more often, inaccessible character. What is often crucial may not be written down. Sometimes it may not be said. Historians, of course, seek to use all forms of evidence in devising their narratives and analyses. Historians of the missile crisis continue to debate ‘what?’, ‘why?’, ‘when?’ and ‘who?’, but also ‘what if?’ The circumstances in which
decision-makers considered the use of weapons of mass destruction – be they heads of state or captains of submarines – require enquiry beyond memory and experience. Seeking the recreation of the nuclear past and the moment of greatest global peril in October 1962 remains a necessity for those wishing to understand the past and to preserve the future. This collection aims to serve these goals.

Notes

11. Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 36.
28 Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow (eds), *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) p. 100. A possible alternative explanation was that the key word was ‘suddenly’ and that JFK recalled the deployment which as he remarked had been decided five years previously.