



## Teaching Guide

### SEGMENT 7, WEBISODE 14

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



#### Segment Overview

Fidel Castro's takeover of Cuba in 1959 installed a Soviet-backed communist regime ninety miles off the coast of Florida. Many Cubans fled, and exiles in Miami plotted with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to overthrow Castro. The disastrous invasion at the Bay of Pigs dealt a punishing blow to American prestige.

The Soviet Union perceived Kennedy as weak and acted quickly. Soviet leader Khrushchev decided to place intermediate-range missiles in Cuba, effectively doubling the Soviet arsenal and making possible a nuclear assault against the United States. In mid-October, United States reconnaissance photographs showed Soviet missiles under construction in Cuba.

Kennedy warned Khrushchev that the United States would regard any attack from Cuba as an attack from the Soviet Union; he demanded that the Soviets remove all their offensive weapons from Cuba. Khrushchev ordered that the United States remove missiles from Turkey. When Kennedy secretly agreed, Khrushchev announced he would remove the missiles from Cuba in exchange for United States promises not to invade the island nation.

#### Teacher Directions

1. Display the following quotation on the chalkboard.

“Nuclear catastrophe was hanging by a thread...and we weren't counting days or hours, but minutes.”

2. Ask the students the following questions

- What does the speaker mean by “nuclear catastrophe hanging by a thread”?
- How would you feel if you thought a nuclear war might begin in hours or minutes?
- If you were a world leader, would you want to avoid nuclear catastrophe at any cost? Why or why not?



#### Let's Discuss



### History Sleuth

#### Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheets: *Cuban Missile Crisis Simulation*. Each team should receive one of the three world leaders (Kennedy, Khrushchev, or Castro). Working with teammates, students read and discuss their world leader profile and decide how to respond to the current situation.
2. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Cuban Crisis: Choices and Consequences*. Teams brainstorm four possible options for their world leader to pursue and possible consequences of each choice.
3. If students have difficulty thinking of choices, you may want to suggest possibilities such as stopping trade, an invasion, appealing to the United Nations, or a blockade (keeping ships from reaching Cuba).
4. As students work in their teams, visit each group to help students read the profiles, discuss options, and record their choices.
5. Teams briefly report to the class the choices they considered best and the consequences of these options.

#### Teacher Directions

Students write a brief paragraph to the following prompt.

The three world leaders during the Cuban Missile Crisis were President Kennedy, Soviet Premier Khrushchev and President Castro. Which of these leaders gained power or prestige? Who lost power or prestige? Defend your opinion.

#### Teacher Directions

Students interview someone who remembers the Cuban Missile Crisis and write a summary of his or her experiences. How did he or she feel during this tense time? How did the crisis affect your interviewee's daily life, view of the future, opinion of President Kennedy, and sense of security? How did the outcome of the crisis move our nation toward or away from freedom?



### What do you Think?



### Moving Toward Freedom



## Connections

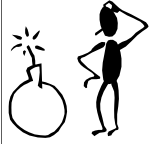
### Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Geography/Civics** — In exchange for Russia's removal of missiles from Cuba, Kennedy agreed to remove nuclear missiles from Turkey, which potentially threatened the U.S.S.R. Students measure the distance from Turkey to several important Russian cities.

**Technology/Library** — Students research the Cuban Missile Crisis on the Internet.

**Science** — How do missiles work? Students research different types of missiles and how they work.



# Cuban Crisis: Choices and Consequences



Choice 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Consequences

Choice 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Consequences

Choice 3 \_\_\_\_\_


Consequences

Choice 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Consequences

Choice 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Consequences



## Top Secret Profile: Fidel Castro

Born 8/13/26  
President of Cuba,  
revolutionary leader

Earned law degree at University of Havana. Led a revolution against former Cuban leader Batista and was imprisoned and later exiled. Returned to Cuba in 1956 with eighty men; gained support from peasant guerrillas; and overthrew the Batista government. Established himself as premier.

Before Castro's revolution, Americans controlled much of Cuba's cattle, sugar, mining, and oil wealth. Castro nationalized (took over) all American-owned property. He helped Cuba's poor by providing free health care and education, but the average salary remains around \$10/month. To keep his power, Castro jails or executes those who disagree with him. He leads the Communist Party, the only political party in Cuba, which controls all newspapers, television and radio stations.

Cuba depends on the U.S.S.R. for financial support. The Soviets buy large amounts of Cuban sugar and supply economic and military aid. Castro encourages communist revolutions in Third World nations and wants to position himself as a world leader. He is strongly critical of the United States. The CIA has tried unsuccessfully to assassinate and overthrow Castro.

**CURRENT SITUATION:** Since the Americans look weak after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, this is a good time to flex your political muscles and gain international power and prestige. Your allies, the Soviets, have placed nuclear missiles in Cuba which can attack major U.S. cities. More missiles are on the way. The Americans might try to invade Cuba again and you want to defend your small island nation. You must figure out what the Americans will do and how



## Top Secret Profile:

# John Kennedy

Born 5/29/17  
President of the  
United States of

America

Born to a wealthy, politically-connected Boston family. Earned law degree at Harvard University. During World War II, Kennedy joined the United States Navy, received serious wounds, and won several medals for bravery. Wrote an important book on American politicians that earned a Pulitzer Prize. Elected senator from Massachusetts. Elected the nation's youngest president in 1960. A popular, energetic president who has attracted many bright people to government service.

The previous United States president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, has denounced the Castro regime. The disastrous CIA-backed invasion of Cuba was planned by the previous administration, but you gave the go-ahead. Now you look weak and Castro wants to rub your face in it.

**CURRENT SITUATION:** American spy planes have discovered Russian nuclear missiles in Cuba capable of destroying Washington, New York, or nearly any other American city. After the embarrassing Bay of Pigs fiasco, the United States looks weak to the Russians and the Cubans. Khrushchev and his Cuban allies are exploiting this perception and testing to see what you—the youngest American president ever—will do. Some advisors think you should bomb Cuba to destroy the missiles, but this might bring the Soviets into a war to defend their allies. What should you do?



## Top Secret Profile:

# Nikita Khrushchev

Born 4/17/94  
Premier, U.S.S.R.

Born to a poor family, fought for the Russian Revolution. Joined the Communist Party, held various positions and rose to become a national leader. After the death of Stalin, became first secretary of the Communist party and later the Soviet premier as well. Has encouraged close ties with Cuba and has provided significant economic support.

Known for strong anti-American speeches, he once took off his shoe, banged it on the podium at the United Nations and declared, "We will bury you." He was furious when a United States spy plane was shot down over his country, and this increased cold war tensions.

Khrushchev will exploit international situations and use any opportunity to denounce the United States and its interests and advance the cause of the Soviet Union.

**CURRENT SITUATION:** You see the new American president as a weakling because his country botched the Bay of Pigs invasion. You believe this provides an opportunity to build up arms in Cuba and to increase the international power of the U.S.S.R.. You put nuclear missiles in Cuba—just ninety miles from the American coast. What will Kennedy do about the missiles, and how will you respond?