



CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

CHARACTER PROFILES

LYNDON JOHNSON (VICE PRESIDENT):

Before becoming Kennedy's Vice President, Johnson served in the House of Representatives for six terms, followed by two terms in the Senate. While serving in the Senate, Johnson embraced the containment theory in Vietnam and crafted two civil rights measures. At the time of the crisis, he originally opposed the idea of blockading Cuba ("Dramatis Personae").

DEAN RUSK (SECRETARY OF STATE):

Secretary of State Dean Rusk supported dignified diplomacy with the Soviet Union, emphasizing civility and communication, and took a diplomatic standpoint while trying to diffuse the Cuban Missile Crisis. When it comes to foreign policy, Rusk believed the U.S. should provide emerging nations with humanitarian aid to lead them to democracy quicker ("Dramatis Personae").

C. DOUGLASS DILLON (SECRETARY OF TREASURE):

At the start of the crisis, Dillon favored a military strike. However, as debates among the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOMM) continued, Dillon ultimately changed his opinion to support a blockade, refuse negotiations, and threaten military action. As a Republican Secretary of Treasury serving a liberal President, Dillon was constantly working to improve the U.S. economy in a more conservative manner, from encouraging an increase in exports to pressuring Congress to pass more tax cuts ("Dramatis Personae").

ROBERT MCNAMARA (SECRETARY OF DEFENSE):

A former business executive and current Secretary of Defense, McNamara supported diplomatic actions as an approach to the crisis, fearful that a military strike could trigger a nuclear war ("Dramatis Personae").

ROBERT KENNEDY (ATTORNEY GENERAL):

Prior to the missiles arriving in Cuba, Robert Kennedy had been preparing attacks and situations to destabilize Castro and his government. With that idea in mind, Attorney General Robert Kennedy originally had a differing proposal compared to other members of EXCOMM; one which favored an invasion of Cuba ("Dramatis Personae").

JOHN McCONE (DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE):

CIA Director McCone foresaw the Soviet development of missiles and ordered the spy planes which discovered them. He had a strong belief that the U.S. should forego an airstrike, but only after providing Khrushchev and Castro a 24 hour warning period to remove the missiles. McCone did not think a blockade would be effective because the Cubans could easily launch the missiles against the United States (“Dramatis Personae”).

GENERAL MAXWELL TAYLOR (CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF):

Appointed just two weeks before the crisis, Taylor believed the best solution would be to launch airstrikes against Cuba, quarantine the Island through a naval blockade, and prepare for an invasion of the island (“Dramatis Personae”).

LLEWELLYN THOMPSON (AMBASSADOR AT LARGE):

Thompson was one of Kennedy’s key advisors throughout the Kennedy administration and encouraged Kennedy to pursue a naval blockade of Cuba instead of any form of invasion or airstrike. Thompson believed that the Soviet Union placed the missiles in Cuba with hopes of bargaining, not threatening (“Dramatis Personae”).

THEODORE SORENSEN (SPECIAL COUNSEL):

Sorensen was Kennedy’s chief speechwriter, holding the duty of constructing speeches and letters for Kennedy that would not upset the leaders of the Soviet Union. Therefore, he favored the naval blockade of Cuba to open the doors of negotiation (“Dramatis Personae”).

McGEORGE BUNDY (SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS):

Bundy was noted to often play the devil’s advocate with the President to get Kennedy to consider all possible outcomes. Bundy first suggested ignoring the missiles by not taking any action and a few days later, he proposed a surprise airstrike (“Dramatis Personae”).

GEORGE BALL (UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE):

George Ball compared an invasion or attack on Cuba with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Ball thought that an attack on the new missiles in Cuba wouldn’t end the crisis, but just start it (“Dramatis Personae”).

ROSWELL GILPATRIC (DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE):

Gilpatric became politically involved with Cuba after the Bay of Pigs when he was added to the Special Group, tasked with forming strategies to eliminate Castro and his government. Gilpatric was very close with McNamara and supported his diplomatic approach of a naval blockade (“Dramatis Personae”).

PAUL NITZE (ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS):

Nitze was one of the hawkish members of EXCOMM, calling for an immediate airstrike due to the missiles dra-

matically altering the nuclear balance between the U.S. and Soviet Union. During his time in the political realm, Nitze constantly called for a buildup of military spending in the U.S. to prevent the Soviet threat of communism from spreading (“Dramatis Personae”).

GEORGE ANDERSON (CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS):

Chief Anderson thought the best solution to the crisis was to confront Cuba with a military invasion which would have eliminated both the missiles and the communist Cuban government. Anderson did not believe, as many did in the EXCOMM meetings, that the Soviets would get involved in a nuclear war over this situation (“Admiral George W. Anderson Jr”)

ADLAI STEVENSON II (US AMBASSADOR TO UN):

Once the missiles were discovered, Stevenson confronted the Soviet ambassador to the UN in an emergency Security Council meeting, demanding that Zorin, the Soviet ambassador, admits to Soviet missiles in Cuba. Stevenson was the first to suggest a missile trade with Turkey and Cuba and constantly reminded EXCOMM that Khrushchev’s reason for placing the missiles in Cuba was to prevent another invasion (“Dramatis Personae”).

EDWIN MARTIN (ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS):

In his position, Martin would constantly advise Kennedy and his policies that affected Latin America. When it came to the missile crisis, Martin advocated the blockade and assisted in briefing members of the Organization of American States to gain their support.

CURTIS LEMAY (CHIEF OF STAFF OF U.S. AIRFORCE):

LeMay strongly favored an airstrike or invasion on Cuba, believing that just a simple blockade would be too weak. LeMay also suspected that if the U.S. did not invade Cuba, the Soviet Union would attempt to move on Berlin (“Dramatis Personae”).

DEAN ACHESON (ADVISOR TO KENNEDY):

Although Acheson no longer held a government position in Kennedy’s administration, he constantly privately advised Kennedy on foreign policies. Acheson believed the best approach to the crisis was to launch narrow airstrikes, solely aiming for the missile sites in Cuba and nothing else (“Dramatis Personae”).

CHARLES BOHLEN (AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE):

As a well trusted advisor to Kennedy and a previous ambassador to the Soviet Union, Bohlen believed that even though diplomacy might not be effective to solve the crisis, it was worth a shot. Bohlen encouraged a diplomatic conversation with Khrushchev before any military actions were taken (“Dramatis Personae”).

PIERRE SALINGER (WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY):

During the crisis, Salinger was tasked with reporting to the public cover stories as to why Kennedy had to leave his trip to Washington early and eventually about the Soviet missiles stationed in Cuba (Glass, Andrew, and Josh Gerstein)

WALT ROSTOW (CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICY PLANNING COUNCIL):

Rostow did not support taking direct military action in Cuba but instead favored a blockade of simply petroleum, oil, and lubricants which would apply pressure to Cuba to rid of the Soviet missiles (“Dramatis Personae”).

RAY CLINE (CIA DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE):

Ray Cline strongly believed in a surgical strike on Cuba. Cline thought that if the U.S did not take strong measures, the Soviet Union would outmaneuver them (“War and Peace in the Nuclear Age”).

WILLIAM C FOSTER (DIRECTOR OF THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY):

Foster worked to negotiate agreements with the Soviet Union to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as stop the testing of nuclear weapons. As the director of the ACDA, Foster’s main purpose was to ease the tensions between the two superpowers through decreasing nuclear stockpiles (Smith).

ROGER HILSMAN (DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH):

Throughout the crisis, Hilsman participated in the deliberations of the U.S. Intelligence board and also worked with President Kennedy directly. Hilsman also became the key conduit between Kennedy and Khrushchev, often relaying messages from the Soviet Premier to the U.S. President (“Interview with Roger Hilsman”)

JOSEPH CARROLL (DIA DIRECTOR):

In early October, Carroll began to lobby for U-2 flights over the places in Cuba where his analysts believed the missiles to be. Carroll was then ordered to collect as much intelligence as possible about the Soviet buildup in Cuba (“DIA’s Role during the Cuban Missile Crisis”).

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