The Cuban Missile Crisis: One Hell of a Gamble

1. Khrushchev’s Decision
   Khrushchev’s May 1962 decision to deploy missiles in Cuba
   His Defense Council statement
   Protection of Cuba
      Fidel Castro’s revolution against Batista (1959)
      Che Gevara/Raul Castro
      Bay of Pigs fiasco
      Moscow’s embrace of Castro
      China factor
   Strategic factor
      Soviet nuclear revolution
      How to deal with American nuclear superiority
      Moscow Air show/Sputnik
      Moscow’s superbomb (57 Megaton bomb)
      Eisenhower’s reaction: IRBM (Jupiter/Thor)
      MRBM (1000 miles/IRBM (2000-3000 miles)
   Khrushchev’s quick fix IRBM + Cuba = ICBM
   Khrushchev and Castro on missile deployment
   Khrushchev’s decision to keep the deployment secret
   Operation Anadyr

2. US Reaction and ExComm
   JFK’s September 4 statement and Khrushchev’s reaction
   Oct 4: First shipment of Soviet missiles arrived in Cuba
   Oct 9, U2 flight began
   Oct 13, Major Richard Heyser’s U2 flight photographed missile site in Cuba
   Oct 15, Photo developed, showing two 70-foot long MRBMs
   Oct 16: first ExCom meeting; Kennedy’s four options:
      surgical operation, general air strike, invasion, naval blockade
      Maxwell Taylor (JCS), McNamara, Bobby Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy
   Oct 18: U2 flight brought IRBM phosos. Taylor for invasion/Thomson for blockade
   Oct 19: JFK to Chicago; ExComm divided into two groups
   Oct 20: JFK returned to Washington. Blockade faction won the day.
   Oct 22. Moscow’s nervous waiting. Moscow’s instructions to Pliyev.
      JFK’s meeting with congressional leaders
      JFK’s televised speech: quarantine
      Khrushchev’s reaction
   Oct 24: The Aleksandrovsk beat the quarantine. MRBM fully operational
   Oct 25: Kennedy’s response to Khrushchev’s letter; Khrushchev’s change of mind
   Oct 26: Khrushchev’s letter to Kennedy
      CIA’s report. ExComm divided. Warhawks won the majority. JFK isolated.
   Oct 27: Scali/Feklisov backchannel negotiations. Khrushchev’s letter percorated
      Moscow: Malinovsky received Pliyev’s urgent telegram.
      Khrushchev’s second telegram to Kennedy (missiles in Turkey)
      Captain Rudolf Anderson’s U2 shot down
      Bobby Kennedy’s meeting with Ambassador Dobrynin
   Oct 30: Moscow: Presidium meeting: Dobrynin’s telegram arrived
      Khrushchev’s answer conveyed through Moscow radio

3. Significance
   US moved to full alert (DEFCON 2)