Significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis—new features:

a. de facto recognition of the other’s legitimacy and consequently de-emphasis of the irreconcilable ideological differences;

b. mutually, if tacitly, agreed spheres of influence, the American sphere being both far looser and far larger;

c. no direct military conflict between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in Europe or elsewhere, so that the major wars involving the two (Vietnam and Afghanistan) were fought indirectly or by means of proxies;

d. agreement, again tacit, not to use nuclear weapons except as ultimate resort on the vital assumption of MAD (mutually assured destruction.).

Definition of Soviet Military Doctrine:

Military doctrine is the system of views that a state holds at a given time on the purpose and character of war, on the preparation of the country and the armed forces for it, and also on the methods of waging it. Military doctrine has two aspects: the political and the military-technical. The former sets out the political purposes and character of war and the way in which these affect the development of the armed forces and the preparation of the country for war. The military-technical aspect deals with the methods of waging war, organization of the armed forces, their technical equipment and combat readiness.

The Soviet concept of military doctrine cannot be properly understood without reference to the concepts of military science and military art. Military science is defined as the system of knowledge about the character and laws of war, the preparation of the armed forces and the country for war, and the methods of waging it. Military art is the theory and practice of preparing and conducting military operations, and thus embraces strategy, operational art and tactics.

Sokolovsky, Soviet Military Strategy (1962):

One of the important positions of Soviet military doctrine is that a world war, if unleashed by the imperialists, will inevitably assume the nature of a nuclear-rocket war, i.e., a war in which the main means of destruction will be nuclear weapons, while the main means of delivering them to the target will be rockets...

It should be emphasized that, with the international relations existing under present-day conditions and the present level of development of military equipment, any armed conflict will inevitably escalate into a general nuclear war if the nuclear powers are drawn into this conflict.

The logic of war is such that if a war is unleashed by the aggressive circles of the United States, it will ultimately be transferred to the territory of the United States of America. All weapons—ICBMs, missiles from submarines, and other strategic weapons—will be used in this military conflict...

In order to achieve these decisive political and military goals with which the socialist coalition will be confronted in a future war, it is not nearly enough to destroy the enemy’s means of nuclear attack, to defeat his main forces by nuclear-rocket attacks, and to disorganize the interior. For final victory in this clearly-expressed class war it will be absolutely necessary to bring about the complete defeat of the enemy’s armed forces, to deprive him of strategic bridgeheads, to liquidate his military bases, and to seize strategically important regions. Moreover, we must not allow enemy ground armies, air, and naval landing forces to invade the territories of the socialist countries; we must hold these territories; the internal security of the socialist countries must be protected from subversive actions of the aggressor. All these and a number of other problems can be solved only by the Ground Troops in cooperation with the other services of the Armed Forces.

Georgii Arbatov:

Détente is not a continuation of Cold War by other, more cautious and safer, means. It is a policy that, by its nature and objectives, is opposed to Cold War, and is aimed not at gaining victory in conflicts by means short of nuclear war, but at the settlement and prevention of conflicts, at lowering the level of military confrontation, and at the development of international cooperation.