

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis is a non-fiction account of the [Cuban missile crisis](#) of 1962, written by [Robert F. Kennedy](#). The book was released in 1969, a year after his assassination.

Thirteen Days details the many meetings of the [John F. Kennedy](#) cabinet and [Joint Chiefs of Staff](#) (formed into the [ExComm](#)) (Executive Committee) during the tense period after the Soviet missile build-up on Cuba was discovered.

1 – Opening scene

First image
Missile launching

First words
None

Last image
Military plane taking aerial pictures

Last words
None

What do the first images symbolise ?

How did this crisis start ?

2 – Missiles in Cuba

First image
Kevin Costner (Kenneth O'Donnell) sleeping

First words
Hey !!!

Last image
Missile experts looking for a photo match on a book of pictures taken by a spy

Last words
That's it. That's the one we're looking for

How did the director chose to introduce some of the characters and the main action set ?

What seemed to preoccupy JFK ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

What was curious about the picture representing the missile ?

3 – “I need to see the president”

First image

Bundy talking to O’Donnell

First words

“I need to see the president”

Last image

JFK looking at his family in the garden

Last words

Pearl

Harbor

Where were the aerial pictures taken ?

What did they show ?

Why is it a problem for the USA ? Where is Cuba ?



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According to the Kennedy's, who seems to be responsible for putting missiles into Cuba ?

Which dramatic war event does this reminds the Kennedy administration ? Why ?

4 – National security meeting

First image
Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell walking in a corridor

First words
Good morning gentlemen

Last image
Kennedy

Last words
We have to get those missiles out of there

Until then, only civil servants seemed to be concerned by the problem. Who's new around the table ?

How many missiles are there in Cuba ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days



Which part of the US territory is threatened ? What casualties ?

Why Cuba ?

What could be the diplomatic consequences for the USA if nothing was done ?

What are US options ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

5 – EX COMM experts

First image

Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell walking out of the White House

First words

No matter what Khrushchev's intentions are (...), I don't see anyway around hitting him

Last image

Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell in President's office

Last words

JFK must go to Connecticut

What could be the consequences if USA attacked Cuba immediately ? If not ?

What was the administration's first decision ?

What's the general mood during this first meeting ?

What does the joint-chief recommend ?

How did Americans consider the Soviets ?

What were the consequences ?

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What is Kennedy afraid of ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

6 – EX COMM options

First image
October 17th (Wednesday) / Plane landing

First words
Isn't anybody working in Connecticut ?

Last image
Mac Namara and other EX COMM members

Last words
The scenario calls for the blockade of Cuba

What other option is advocated by EX COMM ? Why is it possible ?

7 – Military options

First image
Soldiers on an air base loading missiles on planes → U2 taking other pictures on Thursday October 18th 1962

First words
The situation is worse than we thought

Last image
O'Donnell going out, followed by press officer

Last words
Ask Bundy - I did, he said to ask you

How is the situation worsening ?



How are the USA preparing for an eventual war ?

What is stopping Kennedy ?

How would you describe the relationship between the Kennedy administration and the US army ?

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8 – JFK meets Dobrynin and Gromyko

First image

Soviet ambassadors coming out of a car (black and white image)

First words

Mr. Gromyko a statement please

Last image

Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell in Kennedy's office

Last words

Well I'm not – Watch this

Which domestic problem is Kennedy's administration starting to face ?

Kennedy-Gromyko meeting was planned before the crisis began. Kennedy took the opportunity to remind that according to a previous declaration (September 13th 1962), soviet military assistance is only defensive. What was Gromyko's answer to Kennedy's question asking if there were offensive weapons in Cuba ?

How would Kennedy have reacted if Gromyko had acknowledged the fact that missiles were installed in Cuba ?

9 – JFK and mayor Daley

First image

Friday October 19th - Kennedy shaking hands with mayor Daley in Chicago

First words

None

Last image

Bob Kennedy hanging up

Last words

I'll see you tomorrow

Why is it so difficult to hide the situation to the press ?

Which options is finally accepted ?

What other problem emerged ?

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10 – Quarantine or air strike

First image

Press conference with press officer

First words

The President has a cold

Last image

Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell outside the White House

Last words

We've got bigger problems right now

Why is this blockade qualified as a quarantine ?

How is this quarantine going to work ?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this option ?

Which third option is proposed by the US representative at UNO ?

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11 – An explosive scoop

First image

A party attended by O'Donnell and US ambassador to UNO

First words

Honey I'll be right back

Last image

Times editor on the phone

Last words

Yes M. President

How did JFK deal with the press ?

12 – Plan DEFCON 3

First image

Church choral – Sunday October 21st 1962

First words

None

Last image

Kennedy behind his desk

Last words

DEFCON

3

What does this scene tell us about Kennedy's belief ?

How do we understand that the situation is becoming tenser ?

What seems to worry JFK ? What did he decide ?

13 – Uncertain JFK

First image

Monday, October 22, 1962 - Press officer announcing President's address this very day.

First words

None

Last image

O'Donnell closing Kennedy's office door.

Last words

Wear something nice for the TV. Make sure Jacky picks it.

What problem is facing JFK before his address ?

14 – President's speech

First image

O'Donnell entering the press conference room.

First words

OK everybody I think we're ready

Last image

Close-up on Kennedy on a TV screen

Last words

Retaliatory response against the Soviet Union.

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

Listen to the speech and fill the gaps

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the _____ military buildup on the island of _____. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive _____ is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a _____ capability against the Western Hemisphere.

(...)

Acting, therefore, in the _____ of our own security and of the entire _____ Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution as endorsed by the Resolution of the _____, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

First: To halt this offensive buildup a _____ on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive _____, be turned back.

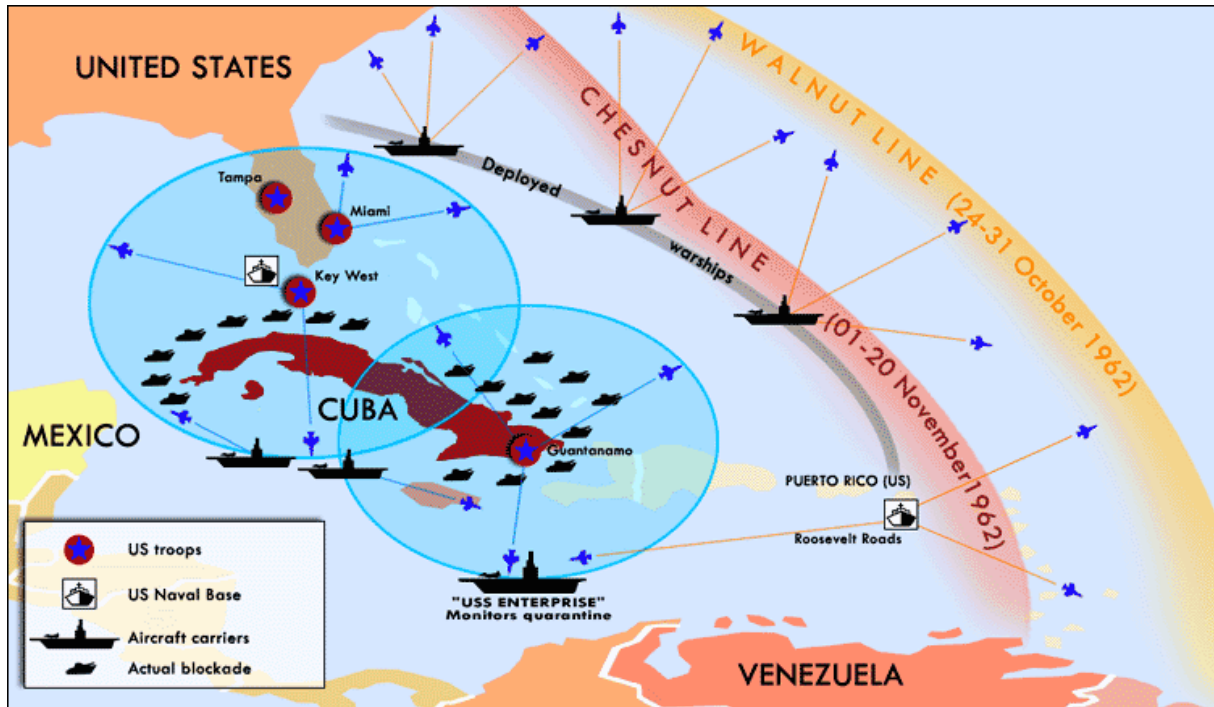
(...)

Second: I have directed the continued and increased close _____ of Cuba and its military buildup. (...) Should these offensive military preparations _____, thus increasing the threat to the hemisphere, further action will be justified. I have directed the _____ to prepare for any eventualities (...)

Third: It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any _____ launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an _____ by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory _____ upon the Soviet Union.

What did Kennedy finally decide ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days



15 – Rules of intervention

First image

Tuesday October 23, 1962 – The White House

First words

None

Last image

JFK and O'Donnell in JFK's office

Last words

Those chains of command end at one place : me.

How did the Soviet respond ?

What did the American Navy set up to prevent this ?

What other measures were set up by the army ?

How was it understood by the Kennedy administration ? How did it react ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

16 – Low level flight

First image

O'Donnell behind a door looking at the switchboard operators

First words

White House

Last image

Close up on pilot in war conference room

Last words

It was a cake walk Sir

Why do you think the mission was planned during daytime and not night-time ?

What happened during this low level flight ?

Why did the major-chief summon the pilot ? What did he say ?

17 – On the brink of disaster

First image

Kennedy walking in with O'Donnell and other advisors

First words

Mr President the OAS meeting starts in an hour

Last image

Costner queuing for confession

Last words

None

What is OAS ?

Why does Kennedy need its approval ?

What was the issue ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

How did the American react ?

18 – Straight in the eyes

First image

Wednesday October 24th - The White House and a wall covered with clocks (the Pentagone).

First words

Gentlemen can you hear me ?

Last image

An American officer looking to a soviet vessel through binoculars

Last words

We were eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked.

When the quarantine started, what did the soviet ships ?

What will happen if the American force the sub to surface ?

19 – Plan DEFCON 2

First image

A man taking a phone – the CIA man and Bundy coming to JFK

First words

Mr. President

Last image

Kennedy brothers in JFK's office

Last words

Soviets pull theirs out of Cuba

Is the crisis finished ?

What did the American army try to do ?

What could the Kennedys do ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

20 – A moral fight

First image

A peace demonstration in front of the White House – Thursday, October 25th

First words

What do you think of the Lippman column this morning ?

Last image

O'Donnell going after Bob Kennedy

Last words

Bobby

According to O'Donnell, how would the world understand the deal ?

What were the Soviets doing at the same time ?

What was the American answer ?

21 – Facing world opinion

First image

US ambassador entering the meeting room in UNO

First words

We call for the world to condemn this American provocation, we people of Romania standing solidarity with the people of Cuba.

Last image

Mac Namara on the phone

Last words

How the hell do you loose a goddam tanker.
What the hell is going on over there ?

What was the Soviet strategy in UNO ?

What was the new problem ?

22 – Crossing the line

First image

Friday, October 26th - Soviet ship (Grozny)

First words

Hail him again

Last image

Close up on the admiral

Last words

Mac Namara's diatribe

How did the army react ?

How did Mac Namara react ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

23 – The Russian go-between

First image

Launching of a rocket from the US base of Vandenberg

First words

Who the hell authorised this missile test ?

Last image

Soviet spy leaving the café

Last words

I'll see what I can do

Why was a nuclear war so close at that time ?

Which opportunity sprung suddenly ?

24 – First letter from Khrushchev

First image

The White House – Saturday October 27th at night

First words

None

Last image

O'Donnell leaving his house

Last words

OK I'll be right there – You're beautiful

Khrushchev sent a 10 pages back channel letter confirming the spy's offer. What was JFK's decision ?

25 – Second letter from Khrushchev

First image

Bob Kennedy speaking to O'Donnell

First words

It looks like Fomin was a ploy after all

Last image

Kennedy and his staff.

Last words

Now gentlemen, if anyone has a great idea, now is the time.

What is going wrong ?

What did Kennedy decide ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

26 – Major Anderson

First image

O'Donnell sitting at his desk with a phone in his hand

First words

Major Anderson there is phone call for you

Last image

Bundy talking to O'Donnell

Last words

A plane is missing Kenny. We're presuming
the pilot is dead.

At which moment did the war seem inevitable ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

27 – Race against the clock

First image

Civil and military staff in JFK's meeting room

First words

None

Last image

Bob leaving

Last words

What if it was you two who invited that second letter by raising the possibility of a trade

What's the soviet excuse for this shutdown ?

What was the US army's next move ? Did it succeed ?

What did the Kennedy administration decide ?

28 – First agreement

First image

Advisors in JFK's office

First words

M. President we only have 30 hours left

Last image

Bobby and O'Donnell in the car driving to the soviet embassy

Last words

Take on left

What is Kennedy's final decision ?

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

29 – Face to face

First image

Soviet embassy in Washington where Bobby Kennedy is to meet the Soviet ambassador.

First words

You smell that ? They're burning their documents. They think we're going to war.

Last image

O'Donnell at home

Last words

If the sun comes up tomorrow it's only because of men of good will. That's all there is between us and the devil.

How do you understand Bobby's proposal to the Soviet ambassador ?

30 – A new era

First image

Sun or nuclear mushroom rising

First words

This is radio Moscow. Premier Khrushchev has sent a message to President Kennedy today (Monday October 29th)

Last image

Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell outside the White House

Last words

Ken we're out here

How did this end for each country ?

USA :

USSR :

CUBA :

The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

CHINA :

FRANCE :

GERMANY :

What were the consequences on the Cold War ?

31 – JFK' speech

How would you analyse JFK's leadership in this crisis ?

How was the US army caricatured in this movie ?

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Some information on the movie