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JFK Foreign Policy II

Lead: In October 1962, President Kennedy's foreign policy and his leadership and diplomatic skills were tested during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Unlike the Bay of Pigs, in this event he took his own counsel and scored a significant victory.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: In July 1962, led by Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviets began to install missiles in Cuba. The Russians were convinced that a second American attack on the Castro

regime was imminent. Kennedy learned of the missile sites from spy flights over the island on October 16, 1962. Six days later, he went on national television and announced:

All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back. It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union. (28 sec)

At first the Russians and their Cuban clients were defiant and

American troops in Florida prepared to invade the island. For six tense days, Kennedy's posture was one of caution. Politically, he had to take a hard stance against "communist penetration" of the western hemisphere. On the other hand, he did not want to do anything to jeopardize a peaceful resolution.

To his Executive Committee officials, Kennedy said, "We don't want to push him [Khrushchev] to precipitous action.....Give him time to consider. I don't want to put him into a corner from which he cannot escape."

On October 28, Kennedy and Khrushchev reached agreement and

the real possibility of nuclear war was averted. Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba. In a secret protocol, Kennedy promised not to invade Cuba. In addition, also secretly, Kennedy agreed to remove nuclear-tipped missiles from Turkey. This diplomatic victory for the United States strengthened Kennedy's reputation for cool leadership in a time of crisis and led to a tuning down of tensions in U.S.-Soviet relations, establishment of the "hot line" between Washington and Moscow and The Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

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