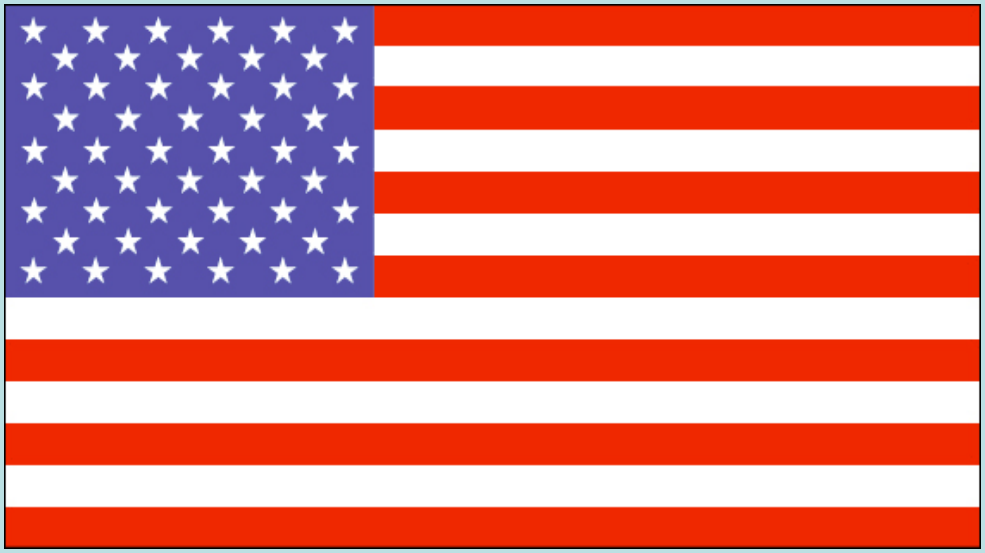
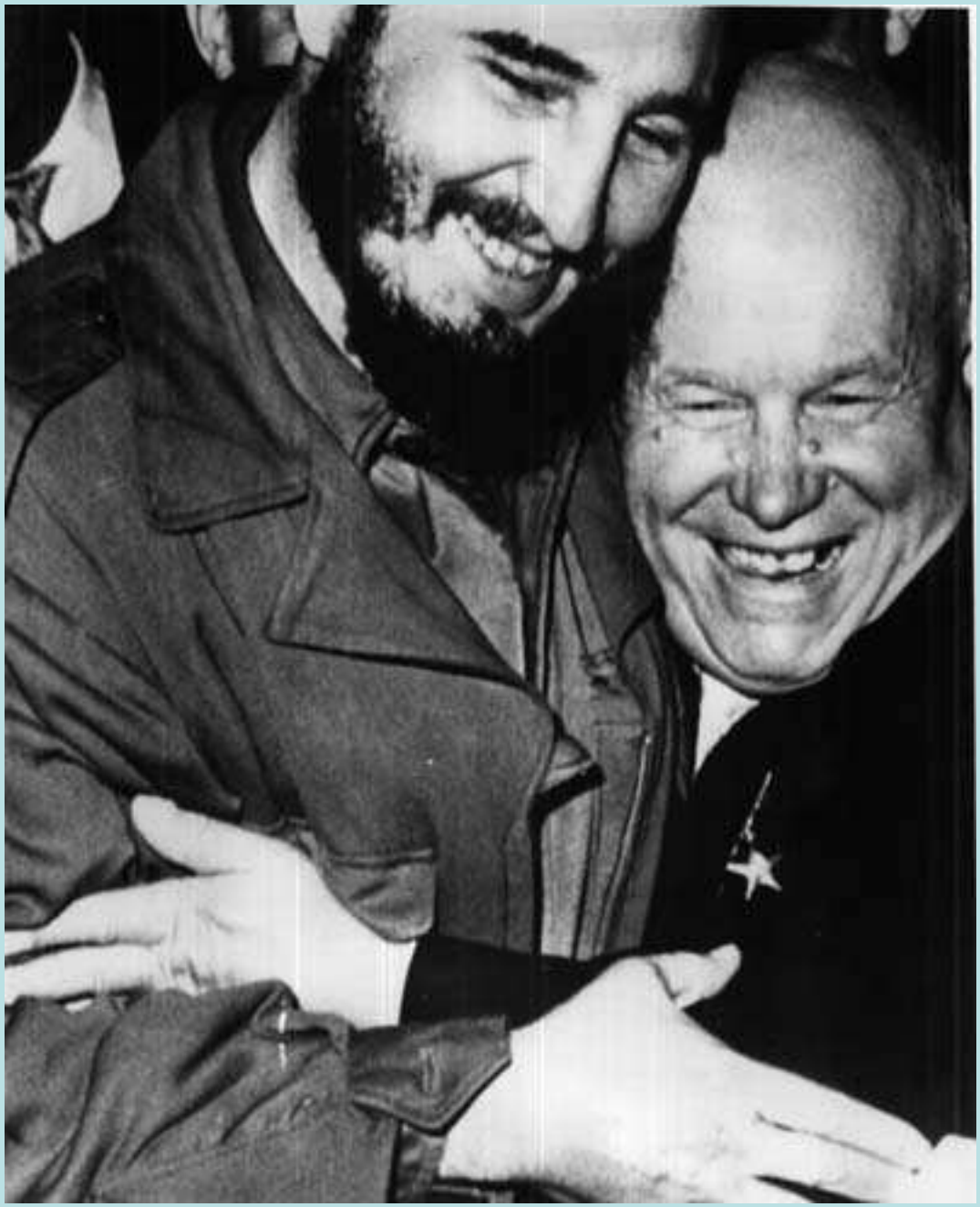
The Cuban Missile Crisis



Cuban Missile Crisis

- Cuba, small island, 160 km from coast of Florida
- US ally, US businesses & US military base (Guantanamo)
- 1959, Fidel Castro overthrows Battista (US-backed dictator), establishing Communist government.



Fidel Castro
(Communist President of Cuba)

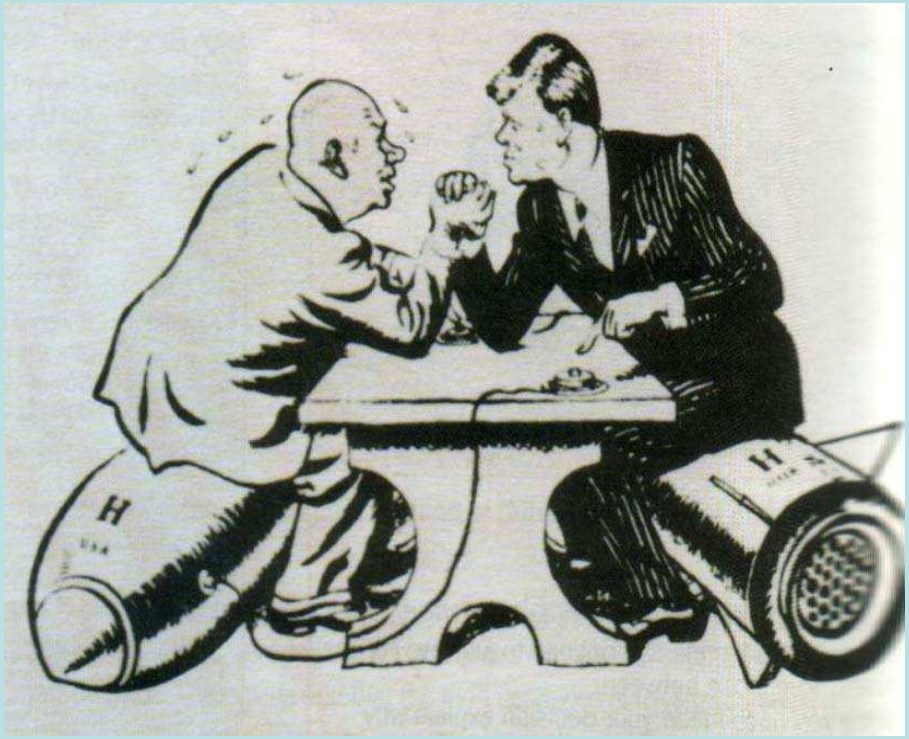
and

Nikita Khrushchev
(Communist leader of USSR)

- Castro takes over US businesses
- January 1961, US breaks off diplomatic relations
- April, 1961, Bay of Pigs – 1,400 anti-Cuban exiles attempted to overthrow Castro
- Autumn 1962, Cuba has received 1000s of USSR missiles, jets, boats & personnel

Why was the USSR interested in helping Cuba?

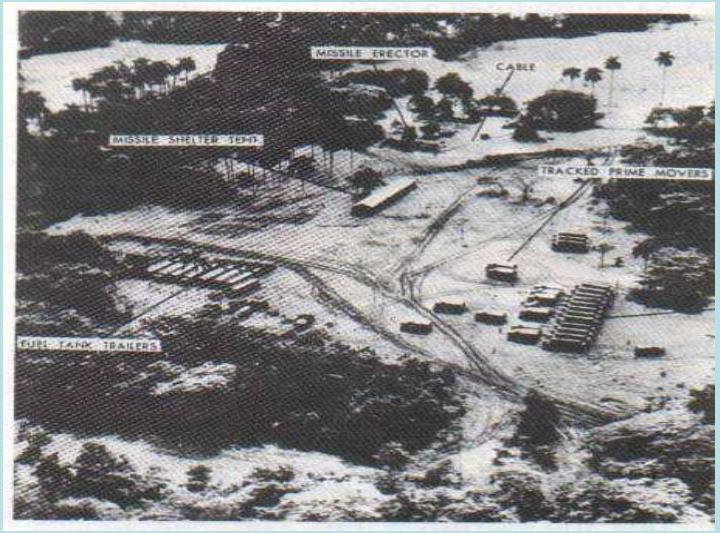
- Cuba was a new Communist state
- Cuba provided a launch base for USSR inter-continental missiles (ICMs)



Why does this cartoonist think that Khrushchev was interested in Cuba?

What happened during the October Crisis?

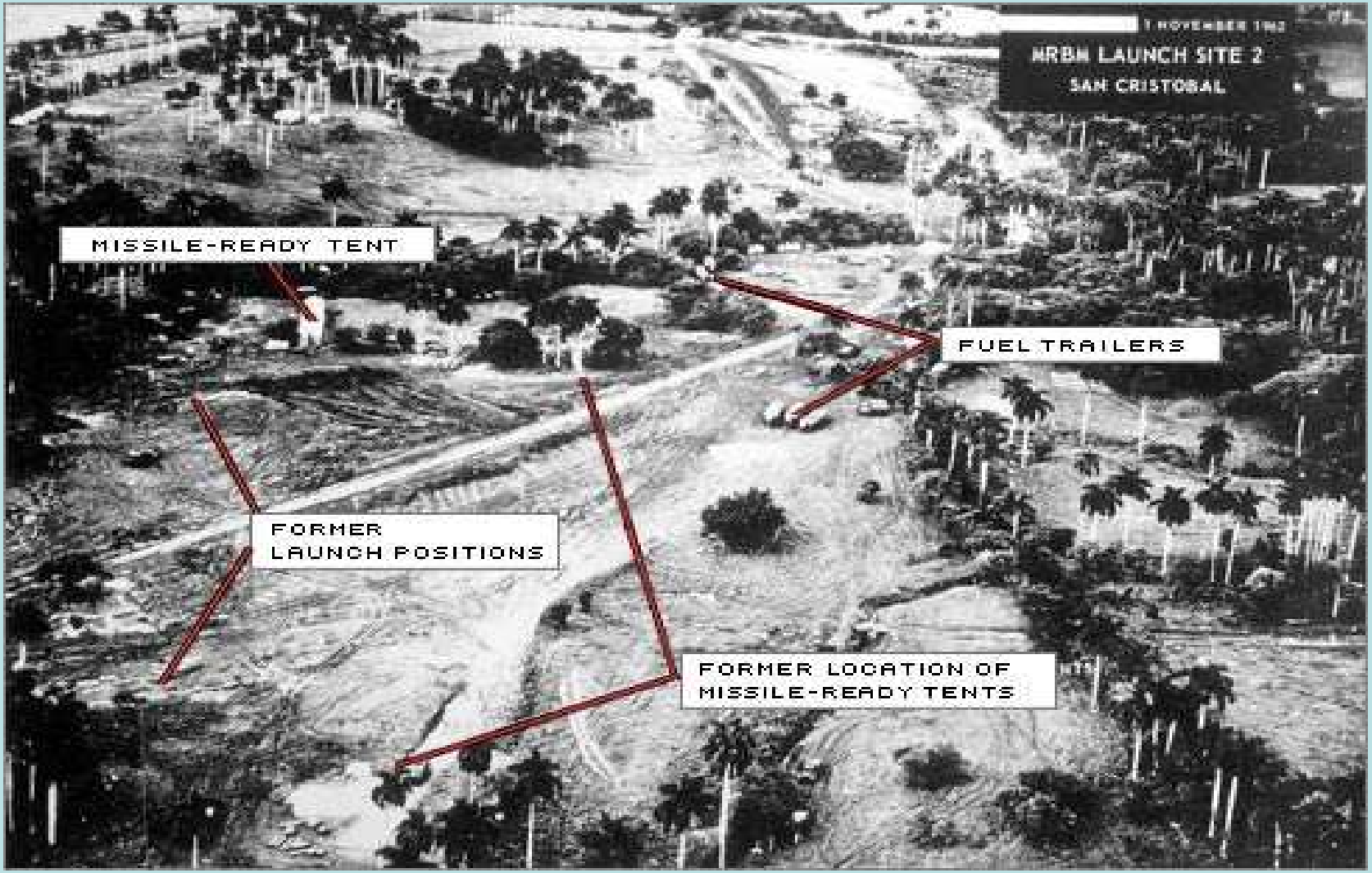
Why have some modern historians questioned the accuracy of these spy plane pictures?

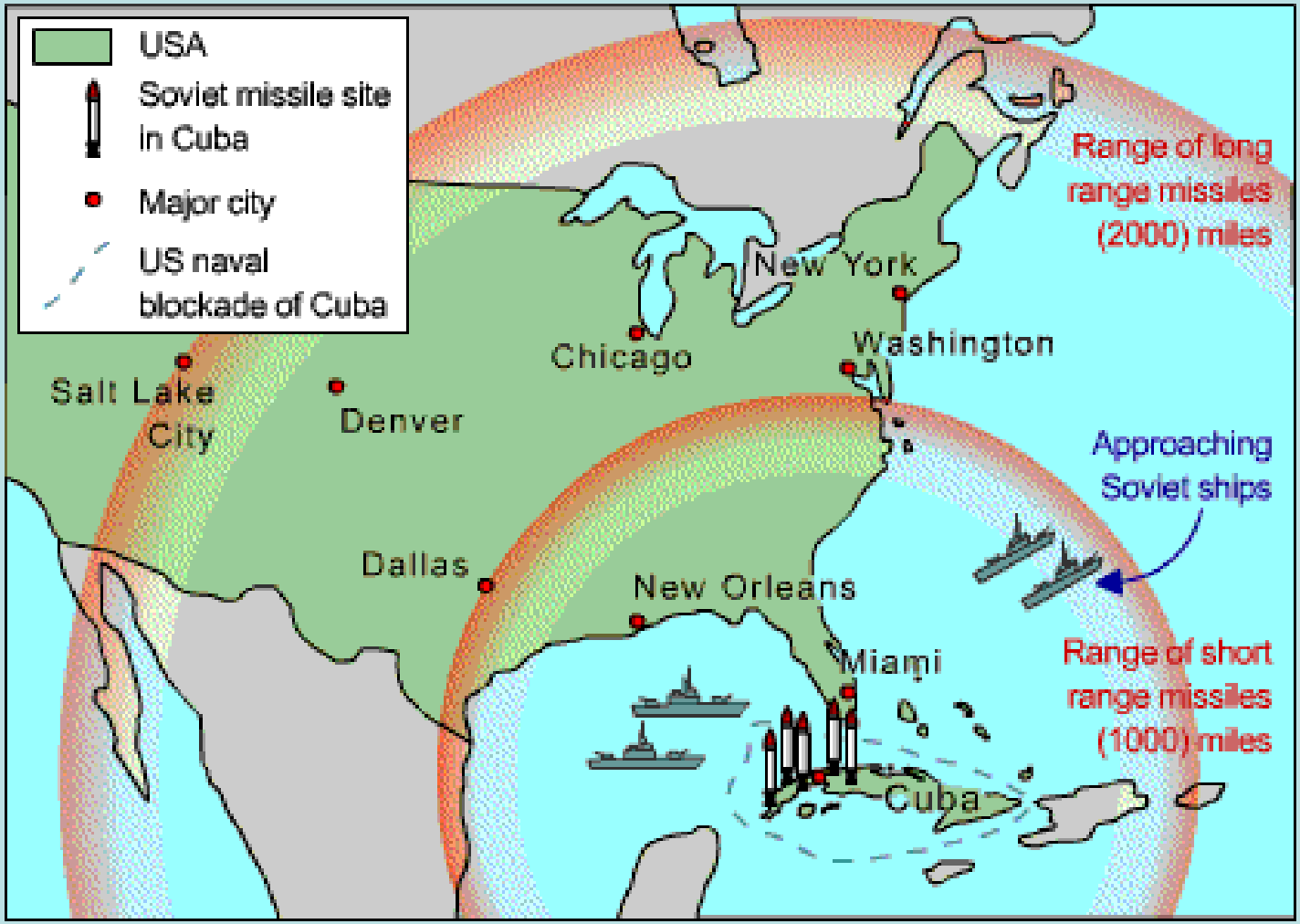


- 14 October 1962, US U2 spy plane takes photos of suspected USSR missile sites on Cuba
- Sites nearing completion, experts believe they could be ready in 7 days
- US spy planes identify 20 Soviet ships bound for Cuba carrying missiles

U2 Spy-plane

The Missiles: One Site




USA
Soviet missile site in Cuba
Major city
US naval blockade of Cuba
Range of long range missiles (2000) miles
New York
Chicago
Washington
Salt Lake City
Denver
Approaching Soviet ships
Dallas
New Orleans
Miami
Range of short range missiles (1000) miles
Cuba

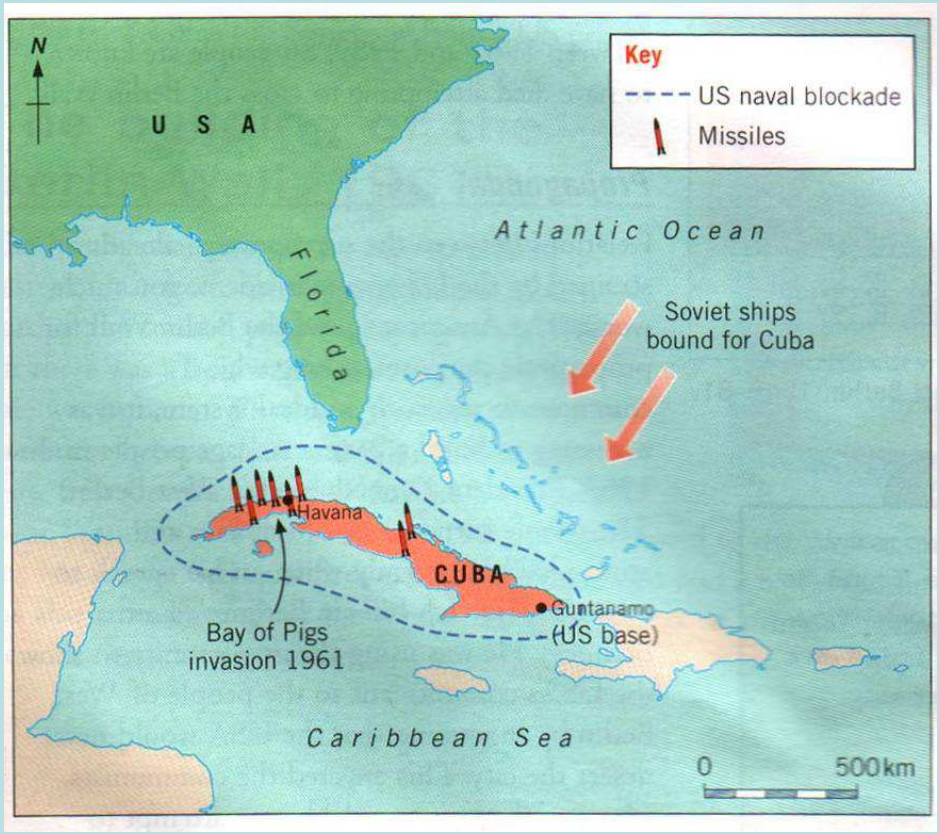
John Fitzgerald Kennedy

What should he do?

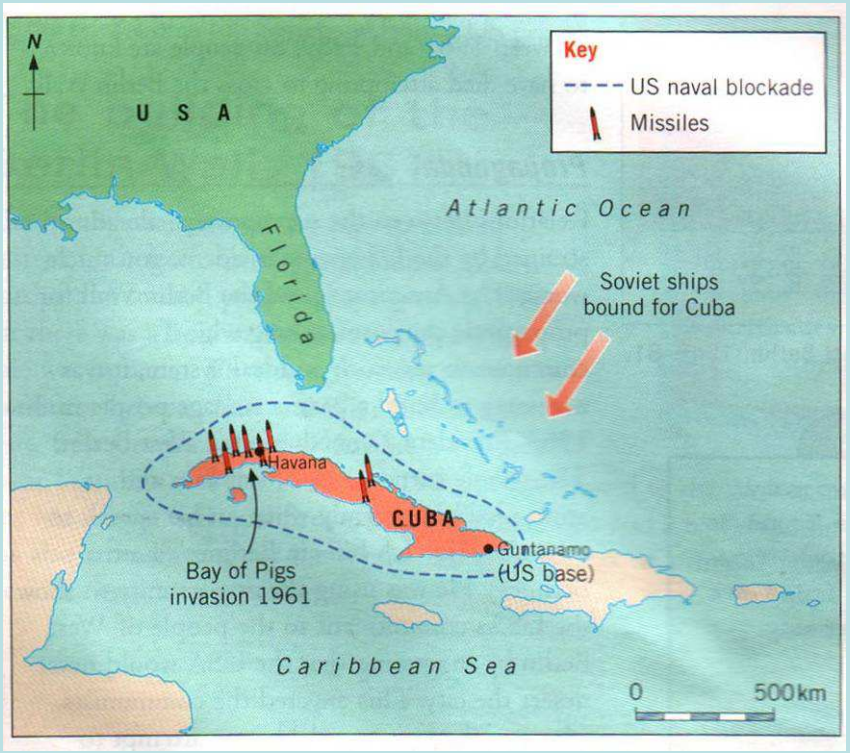
What happened during the October Crisis?

- 20 October, Kennedy decides to blockade Cuba

- 22 October, Kennedy publicly calls on Khrushchev to remove weapons



What happened during the October Crisis?



- 23 October Khrushchev refuses to acknowledge blockade or presence of Soviet missiles on Cuba
- 24 October, 1st Soviet ships (accompanied by submarine) approach 800 km exclusion zone

What was the outcome of the crisis?

- Cuba remained Communist & heavily armed (without nuclear missiles)
- Both leaders didn’t lose face and came away with concessions
- Permanent hotline between White House & Kremlin set up