

Understanding the Pentagon's Provocation of Russia

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President Kennedy had a unique ability that Pentagon generals did not have. He was able to analyze an international crisis by placing himself in the shoes of his adversary in an attempt to understand his adversary's motives. Doing that enabled him to figure a way out of the crisis that did not involve war. The response of the generals and the Pentagon was always the same: invade, bomb, kill, and destroy.

Today's generals are no different from their counterparts back in the early 1960s. They are unable to step into the shoes of Russian officials and try to figure out a resolution of the crisis in Ukraine. Instead, their answer is bombs, missiles, death, destruction and, now, tanks. They are simply not mentally equipped to do what Kennedy did.

Understanding how Kennedy resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis goes a long way toward understanding what motivated the Russians to invade Ukraine.

In 1962, Kennedy learned that the Soviet Union (i.e., Russia) was installing nuclear missiles in Cuba. With the full support of the Pentagon, Kennedy decided that he could not let that happen. There was no way that U.S. officials were going to permit the Russians to install nuclear missiles pointed at the United States from only 90 miles away.

And yet, the Soviets had every right in the world to install nuclear missiles in Cuba, so long as it was done with the consent of the Cuban regime. After all, even though the Pentagon and the CIA considered Cuba to be a de facto U.S. colony, Cuba was, in fact, an independent and sovereign country. If it wanted Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, it had the right to invite the Soviets to install them there.

Nonetheless, both Kennedy and the Pentagon decided that they would not permit Russia's nuclear missiles to remain in Cuba. Why? Because they simply did not want nuclear missiles pointed at the U.S. from only 90 miles away. They considered such missiles to a grave

threat to U.S. “national security.”

Reflecting how important this principle was to Kennedy, he was even willing to go to nuclear war against Russia to prevent those Russian missiles from being stationed in Cuba. In fact, what is not widely recognized is that Kennedy actually did initiate war against the Soviets. That was when he ordered a military blockade against Soviet ships carrying nuclear weapons to Cuba. Under international law, a blockade is an act of war. Fortunately, the Soviets did not respond with retaliatory war measures.

Yet, Kennedy’s blockade was met with severe disapproval from the generals. It was considered to be too weak. One member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff compared Kennedy’s blockade to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s appeasement of Hitler at Munich. With their one-track mind, the generals were pressuring Kennedy to bomb and invade Cuba. Their insistence on pressuring Kennedy to take an action that would almost certainly result in nuclear war reflected how strongly they felt about not having Russian missiles so close to America’s border.

Thus, if Kennedy were president today, he wouldn’t need to ask why the Russians felt the same way about having U.S. nuclear missiles stationed in Ukraine, which shares a border with Russia. He would understand that their sentiments would be no different from the sentiments of Kennedy and the Pentagon with respect to Russian nuclear missiles in Cuba.

But there was another factor that Kennedy considered when he stepped into the shoes of the Russians in an attempt to understand the crisis and arrive at a mutually agreeable peaceful resolution of it. Ever since Kennedy became president, both the CIA and the Pentagon were hell-bent on achieving regime change in Cuba. That’s what the CIA’s invasion at Cuba’s Bay of Pigs in 1961 was all about. After it failed, the Pentagon began incessantly pressuring Kennedy to initiate a full-scale military invasion of the island. The Pentagon even came up with a fraudulent false-flag operation named Operation Northwoods to provide Kennedy with an excuse to invade Cuba. To his everlasting credit, Kennedy rejected it.

Kennedy figured out that the reason the Cubans wanted those nuclear weapons was to deter the Pentagon and the CIA from invading Cuba again. If the deterrence failed, Cuban officials wanted the nuclear weapons as a way to fight back against a vastly more powerful army.

What mainstream journalists and commentators fail to realize is that in the long state of hostilities between the United States and Cuba, it has always been the United States — specifically the Pentagon and the CIA — that has been the aggressor. Given such, Cuba had every right in the world to defend itself from what Martin Luther King described as the “greatest purveyor of violence in the world.”

When Kennedy came to the realization that it was the obsessive quest of the Pentagon and the CIA to invade Cuba that had provoked the Cuban Missile Crisis, he figured a way out of the crisis. He simply promised Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev that he would never permit the Pentagon and the CIA to bomb or invade Cuba again. His promise worked. The Soviets removed their nuclear missiles from Cuba and took them home.

Except for one thing. At the last minute, Khrushchev asked Kennedy to remove U.S. nuclear missiles from Turkey that were pointed at the Soviet Union. Yes, you read that right. While it

was opposing Soviet missiles in Cuba that were pointed at the United States, the Pentagon had its nuclear missiles in Turkey that were pointed at Russia.

Kennedy understood Khrushchev's point, and he agreed with it. He promised the Russian leader that he would remove the nuclear missiles in Turkey within six months.

Needless to say, most Americans were relieved and pleased with Kennedy's resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Not so, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They were livid. Kennedy had effectively left Cuba permanently in communist control, something that the Pentagon considered to be a grave threat to "national security." As I point out in my book [An Encounter with Evil: The Abraham Zapruder Story](#), the JCS considered Kennedy's resolution of the crisis to be the biggest defeat in U.S. history. They considered Kennedy to be a "weak sister" when it came to confronting the communists. They considered him to be a coward and, even worse, a traitor for making nice with Russia.

What would Kennedy have done with Ukraine if he had been president? He would never have allowed the Pentagon to use NATO to absorb former members of the Warsaw Pact. He would have also recognized that Russia's reaction to U.S. nuclear missiles in Ukraine would have been the same as the U.S. reaction to Russian missiles in Cuba. He would have understood that their reaction to having U.S. nuclear missiles in Ukraine would be no different from their reaction to having those U.S. nuclear missiles in Turkey. In fact, there is no doubt that Kennedy would have recognized that NATO was a Cold War dinosaur that needed to be put down, especially given the end of the Cold War.

Where is President Biden in all this? Needless to say, Biden, unfortunately, is no John Kennedy.

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