

Name: _____ Date: _____ Due Date: _____

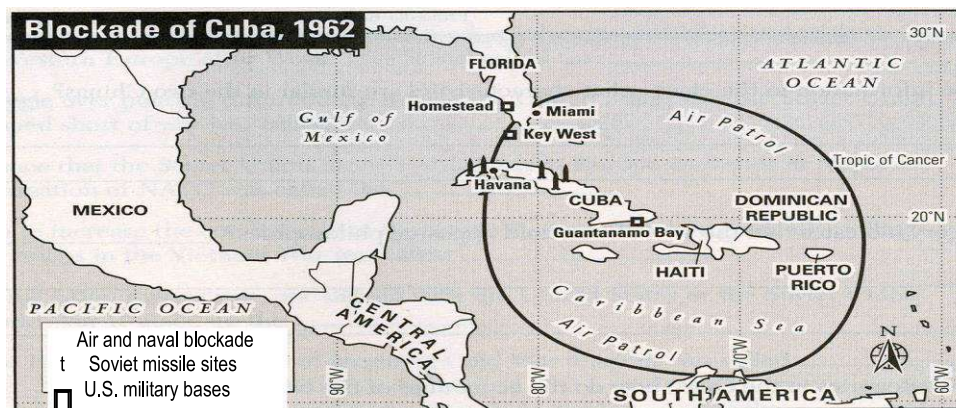
Political and Economic Change in Latin America

After World War II, rapid industrialization, population growth, and a lingering gap, between the rich and the poor led Latin American nations to seek aid from both superpowers. At the same time, many of these countries struggled to move from dictatorships and military control to democracies.

In the 1950s, Cuba was ruled by an unpopular dictator, Fulgencio Batista, who had U.S. support. Cuban resentment led to a popular revolution, which overthrew Batista in January 1959. A young lawyer named Fidel Castro led that revolution. At first, many people praised Castro for bringing social reforms to Cuba, improving the economy, and raising the standard of living for many Cubans. Yet Castro was a harsh dictator. He suspended elections, jailed or executed his opponents, and tightly controlled the press. When Castro took over U.S.-owned sugar mills and refineries, the United States ordered an embargo on all trade with Cuba. Castro then turned to the Soviets for economic and military aid. In exchange for Soviet support he backed Communist revolutions in Latin America and Africa. Soviet aid to Cuba ended abruptly with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. This loss dealt a crippling blow to the Cuban economy. But the aging Castro refused to adopt economic reforms or to give up power.

1. What are the **three** problems that Latin America faced after World War II?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. What changes did Fidel Castro receive a lot of praise for instituting?
3. How did Castro rule like the unpopular dictator Fulgencio Batista?
4. Why did Cuba turn to the Soviet Union for aid?
5. What problems did Cuba face upon the collapse of the Soviet Union?

The Cuban Missile Crisis



In 1962, the world narrowly escaped nuclear holocaust during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The United States and the Soviet Union faced each other in a dispute over Soviet placement of nuclear missiles in Cuba, 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

There are several possibilities why the Soviets placed nuclear missiles in Cuba. First, the missiles could protect Cuba from possible U.S. military aggression. Second, the Soviets would gain a strategic advantage on the United States in case of global nuclear war. Finally, the missiles would counter the U.S. installation of missiles in Turkey, near Soviet territory, in 1959.

The U.S. government had an idea Soviets wanted to place missiles in Cuba for some time. However, it was not until August 29, 1962, that a U-2 spy plane confirmed this to President John F. Kennedy. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara proposed three courses of action for the United States. First, it could try to resolve the problem diplomatically by discussing it with the Soviets and the Cubans. Second, it could form an air and naval blockade around Cuba to prevent further shipments of missiles. Finally, it could order an air strike to destroy the missiles and then invade Cuba.

On October 22, Kennedy announced a blockade of Cuba. The United States would seize "offensive weapons and associated materiel" that the Soviets were delivering to Cuba. After six tense days, Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, agreed to halt further shipments of missiles and to dismantle the existing ones in Cuba. He agreed to this only after Kennedy promised not to invade Cuba. Khrushchev also wanted the U.S. missiles removed from Turkey. In formal negotiations, Kennedy refused but then informally agreed to remove them and did so.

Documents released 35 years later reveal that, unknown to both U.S. and Soviet leaders, Soviet field commanders in Cuba had complete authority to fire their missiles. In addition, U.S. military officials undertook several secret sabotage missions in Cuba, and an American aircraft accidentally strayed into Soviet airspace at the height of the crisis. Any of these situations could have triggered a nuclear war.

6. Why do you think the US government wanted to remove Soviet missiles in Cuba?
7. Describe the area of the US blockade.
8. According to the map, how many military bases did the United States have in this area?
9. What are some of the reasons for the Soviet placement of missiles in Cuba?
10. What options did the United States have to counter the Soviet build-up of missiles in Cuba?
11. What were some of the unexpected situations that might have started a nuclear war in 1962?
12. Why do you think Kennedy decided to remove US missiles from Turkey?