

Horn's notes on the unbridgeable Gulf between JFK and the JCS

On October 18th (1962) The US discovered that Russia had placed missiles inside Cuba. This revelation pushed the JCS to discard the blockade of Cuba and to move to a military invasion (the maximum option) of the island and to bomb the missile sites.

October 19th meeting between JFK and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. JFK's concern re: Berlin. . . . Berlin, Berlin, Berlin . . .

All the members of the JCS supported a military invasion of Cuba and bombing of all the missile bases. . .

JFK was in a vice: nuclear war growing out of Cuba or a nuclear war growing out of Soviet move to throw the US out of West Berlin . . . Kennedy was maneuvering for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. . .

He knew what he wanted and it was his leadership during the crisis that enabled a peaceful resolution between the US and the Soviet Union. . . .

After the 2 weeks of the crisis was resolved peacefully (but only narrowly) JFK met with the Joint Chiefs to thank them for their great service in this Most Dangerous Moment in world history.

During this meeting Kennedy was harshly rebuffed and insulted by the military commanders.

The one who led the charge was General Curtis LeMay. . .

What he never suspected was the outburst of some of the Joint Chiefs:

Accounts can be found in books by Michael Beschloss, The Crisis Years and Earl Morris, The Fog of War. . . The general view of the Chiefs was that the US should have invaded Cuba – a military solution was their bottom line.

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Admiral Anderson remarks was "We've been had."

General LeMay exploded: To JFK's praise to the military for their part in this winning the peace through negotiations, LeMay shot back: Won! Hell' We lost! We should go in and wipe them out today." He went on to declare the missile crisis the "greatest defeat in our history" and then added "Mr. President we should invade today."

I think the rifts between Kennedy and the JCS exposed during the Bay of Pigs disaster in 1961 proceeded to widen by the internal debates over Laos and Vietnam (JFK's withdrawal policies from SE Asia) had expanded into an impassable, unbridgeable gulf.

In 1962 the recommendations from Lemnitzer (JCS) "Operation Northwoods" to gin up situations (dishonest pretexts) that the JCS could use to invade Cuba (oust Castro) to have them rejected by Kennedy (and led to the President removing Lemnitzer from the Chair of the JCS and send him to Europe to be head of NATO. . . .

I think the Chiefs saw themselves as throttled by this president and prevented from doing their duty by this irresolute and "chicken" president.

The point here: any US invasion of Cuba would have ignited a thermonuclear WW III. . . .w. the dire consequences we discussed with the unleashing of the US's SIOP mentioned earlier. . .

The mounting crisis: We have Bay of Pigs One in April 1961. . . .in which the JCS conspired w/ the CIA to maneuver JFK into invading Cuba to save the anti-Castro Cubans who were hung up on the beach at Zapata Bay. . .

Then we have the second Bay of Pigs in October 1962 that JFK resolves with Khrushchev avoiding the advice of the JCS to remove the missiles of October ^{By} military action.

Then there was the "Third Bay of Pigs" and that was JFK's American University Speech in June 1963.