

Lesson Plan - Cold War Politics and Culture in the late Twentieth Century United States

CIA Memo, Strategic Consideration, 1962

~~PSALM~~ ~~TOP SECRET~~

ANNEX: Strategic Considerations

1. In weighing their decision to install ballistic missiles in Cuba, the Soviet leaders must have considered the military utility of these weapons with and without nuclear warheads, the targets in the US and elsewhere which they could reach, and the strategic value of deploying missile forces of various sizes in Cuba.

2. Because of their type of guidance and relative inaccuracy, ballistic missiles have utility against fixed targets of known location, and not against such targets as convoys or naval forces at sea. The Soviet 700 and 1,100 n.m. missiles, whose CEP's are estimated to be in the 1 to 1.5 n.m. range, could conceivably be employed with HE warheads against large military centers and urban areas. It is highly unlikely that the Soviets would see any advantage in deployment for this purpose, but they might regard this threat as contribution to the deterrence of Latin American support for US or Cuban refugee operations against the Castro regime.

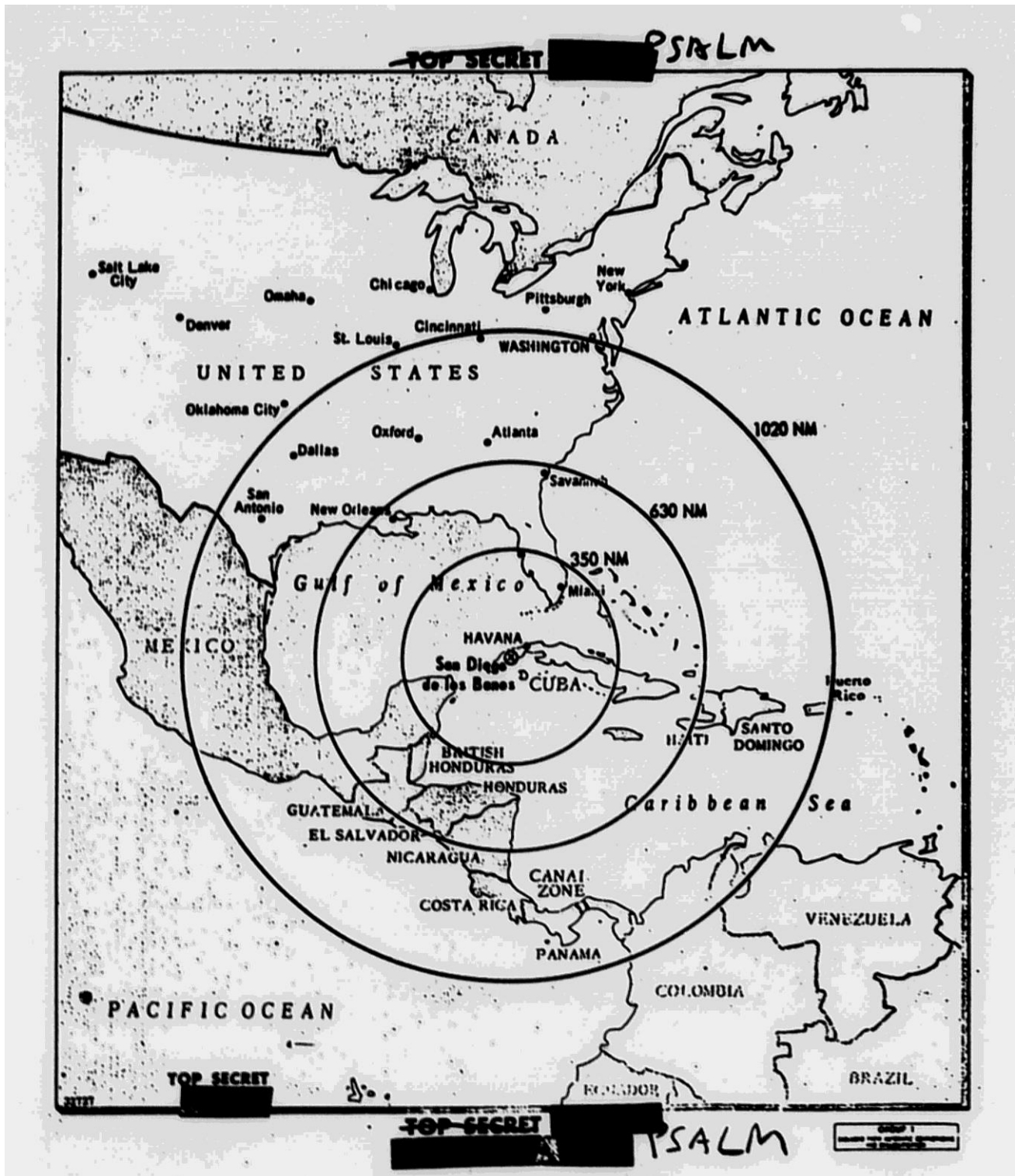
3. Deployed 700 and 1,100 n.m. missiles with nuclear warheads would augment Soviet strategic striking power by virtue of their ability to reach a number of American targets with warheads having yields which are not significantly smaller than those of current Soviet ICBMs. From the present base area in Cuba, 700 n.m. missiles with nuclear warheads could reach eastern US targets within an arc including Savannah and New Orleans, including 7 SAC bomber and tanker bases and at least one important naval base. (The 350 n.m. missiles could reach bomber bases in Florida, of which there are only two.) The 1,100 n.m. missile would threaten a much more significant number of critical military targets, including 18 SAC bomber and tanker bases, an ICBM base, and three major naval bases. In addition, such targets as the Panama Canal and US bases as far east as Puerto Rico could be reached. Both of these missiles have ranges sufficient to reach many US population, industrial and administrative center--including, in the case of the 1,100 n.m. missile, Washington, D.C. Installations of importance to the US atomic energy and space programs also would be within range of Cuban-based 700 and 1,100 n.m. missiles.

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Citation: Excerpts from Document 46, "CIA Memorandum, Probable Soviet MRBM Sites in Cuba, 16 October 1962," in *Central Intelligence Agency, CIA documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, editor, Mary S. McAuliffe, [1992], *Federal Documents Microfiche, PREX 3.2:M 69*, Library of Virginia.

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Transcription

PSALM Top Secret [these words scratched out and one word was redacted completely]

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1. In weighing their decision to install ballistic missiles in Cuba, the Soviet leaders must have considered the military utility of these weapons with and without nuclear warheads, the targets in the US and elsewhere which they could reach, and the strategic value of deploying missile forces of various sizes in Cuba.
2. Because of their type of guidance and relative inaccuracy, ballistic missiles have utility against fixed targets of known location, and not against such targets as convoys or naval forces at sea. The Soviet 700 and 1:00 a.m. missiles, whose CEP's are estimated to be in the 1 to 1.5 n.m. [nautical mile] range, could conceivably be employed with HE [high explosives] warheads against large military centers and urban areas. It is highly unlikely that the Soviets would see any advantage in deployment for this purpose, but they might regard this threat as contribution to the deterrence of Latin American support for US or Cuban refugee operations against the Castro regime.
3. Deployed 700 and 1,100 n.m. missiles with nuclear warheads would augment Soviet strategic striking power by virtue of their ability to reach a number of American targets with warheads having yields which are not significantly smaller than those of current Soviet ICBMs [inter-continental ballistic missiles]. From the present base are in Cuba, 700 n.m. missiles with nuclear warheads could reach eastern US targets within an arc including Savannah and New Orleans, including 7 SAC bomber and tanker bases and at least one important naval base. (The 350 n.m. missiles could reach bomber bases in Florida, of which there are only two.) The 1,100 n.m. missiles would threaten a much more significant number of critical military targets, including 18 SAC bomber and tanker bases, an ICBM base, and three major naval bases. In addition, such targets as the Panama Canal and US bases as far east as Puerto Rico could be reached. Both of those missiles have ranges sufficient to reach many US population, industrial, and administrative center—including, in the case of the 1,100 n.m. missile, Washington, D.C. installations of importance to the US atomic energy and space programs also would be within range of Cuban-based 700 and 1,100 n.m. missiles.

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