

Bill of Rights in Action



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LENIN AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

VLADIMIR LENIN DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO REVOLUTION. A DISCIPLE OF KARL MARX, HE SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE PLANNING A WORLD-WIDE REVOLUTION. HE BELIEVED WORKERS WOULD RISE UP AND DESTROY CAPITALISM AND A HAPPY, CLASS-LESS SOCIETY WOULD EMERGE.

IN RUSSIA IN 1917, LENIN AND HIS BOLSHEVIK PARTY DID SUCCEED IN SEIZING POWER AND IN FOUNDING THE FIRST COMMUNIST REGIME. BUT THE REVOLUTION DID NOT SPREAD INTO EUROPE, AS LENIN HAD HOPED, AND HIS NEW RUSSIAN SOCIETY SOON DEGENERATED INTO A TOTALITARIAN STATE.

Lenin was born in 1870 in Simbirsk, a small city far from the Russian capital where, according to his brother Alexander, “one could grow up completely dull.” His father was a school “inspector”—in charge of



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IN 1917, LENIN, recently returned from Europe, made speeches calling for “all power to the soviets.”

building schools and training teachers in thousands of villages. Lenin was a top student in school and a model of good behavior. But his life changed forever in March 1887 when his brother Alexander was arrested and executed for plotting to assassinate the czar, Alexander III.

The czar’s father, Alexander II, had been assassinated six years earlier. Alexander II had worked to reform and modernize Russia. He issued an edict that freed peasants—who had been serfs—and took land

away from noblemen who owned most of the farmland. He drafted plans to create an elected parliament, or Duma, which were completed the day before he died. But the plans were never released, and after the assassination, his son, Alexander III, became czar. Alexander III dismissed the idea of a Duma and began to clamp down on dissent. Russian factory workers, poorly paid, were not allowed to protest and were forbidden to form trade unions. Student groups were closely watched and constantly harassed by the police. The suppression of civil liberties and police brutality returned in full force. And terrorist groups, like the one that Lenin’s brother had joined, continued to plot assassinations and to incite revolution.

Lenin’s Plans for Revolution

Lenin enrolled in Kazan University in 1887, but he was expelled after only three months for signing a petition complaining about student affairs. He earned a law ►

COMMUNISM

This edition of *Bill of Rights in Action* looks at issues related to communism. The first article explores Lenin and the Russian Revolution, the revolution that put the first communist government in power. The second article examines the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cold War standoff between the U.S. and Soviet Union that almost led to nuclear war. The last article looks at North Korea, a poor, outcast, communist nation with nuclear weapons.

World History: Lenin and the Russian Revolution

U.S. History: The Cuban Missile Crisis

Current Issue: North Korea: The Rogue Nation

Guest writer Lucy Eisenberg, Esq., contributed the first two articles on Lenin and the missile crisis. Our longtime contributor Carlton Martz wrote the article on North Korea.

WORLD HISTORY



IN 1905, RUSSIAN troops massed outside the Winter Palace fired into a group of peaceful protesters.

degree in 1891, and two years later, he moved to St. Petersburg, then the Russian capital, and began writing revolutionary propaganda. In 1895, he was arrested for attempting to organize a labor movement and plotting against Czar Alexander III. He spent 14 months in prison and was then sentenced to three years in exile in Siberia.

During his time in exile, Lenin continued to read and write about revolution. He studied the works of many revolutionary theorists and Russian activists who were working underground to end autocracy (a regime where one person, such as the czar, rules with unlimited power). Lenin also worked with European socialists who were working to foment the worldwide revolution prophesied by Karl Marx.

Marx was a German socialist who had written a book 50 years earlier titled *The Communist Manifesto*. Marx believed that industrialists and other businessmen, whom he called the bourgeoisie, were using their wealth and political power to exploit the working class, whom he called the proletariat. According to Marx, this exploitation would lead to a worldwide worker revolution and a “violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie.” He believed that the proletariat would control the government, which would confiscate all the means of production, like factories, mines, and farms, and that eventually there would be no

more class struggles and no need for a government.

Many Russian liberals, including businessmen and some noblemen, did not agree with Marx’s socialist theories. But they did believe in the overthrow of autocracy and in the struggle for civil rights and democratic institutions, such as a representative Duma. But Nicholas II, who became czar in 1894, had no interest in constitutional reform, which he denounced as “senseless dreams.”

Lenin was initially conflicted about whether to support the liberal activist groups who were working to establish a democratic government. But by 1900, he had decided to break with the liberal bourgeoisie and devote his time to organizing an effective revolutionary movement. His goal would be to organize a political party “to inculcate socialist ideas and political self-consciousness into the mass of the proletariat.” Accomplishing this goal, he wrote, would require full-time professional revolutionaries “who devote to the revolution not only their free evenings, but their whole life.”

After completing his term of exile in Siberia in 1900, Lenin went to Europe, where he lived until 1917. In Munich, he and a group of Marxist compatriots, founded a revolutionary newspaper, *Iskra*. In 1902, he wrote out his ideas of how to make the revolution happen. In his essay titled “What Is To Be Done,” Lenin laid out a blueprint for

the communist structure and for what would become the Bolshevik Party. What needed to be done, he wrote, was to create a party of professional revolutionaries who would dictate “a positive program of action.” It would teach the working classes that the whole political system is worthless and combine the existing revolutionary forces into “a single gigantic flood” of revolution. Under Lenin’s plan, as one commentator described it, a small group of professional revolutionaries would be the architects, and the workers would be the bricklayers to build a new structure “without having seen or understood, let alone approved, the master blueprint for the new society.”

The Revolutions of 1917

At the turn of the 20th century, Russia was still an agricultural economy (four-fifths of its population were peasants). Most peasants did not own the land they worked and resented that most land was owned by noblemen. Russia was just beginning to industrialize. With capital investments by European investors, railways, mines, and factories were being built. In search of better work, millions of peasants began flooding into the cities. But urban conditions were generally terrible. Working days were long, wages low, and strikes were forbidden. Tensions and political unrest began to grow.

Political activism was on the rise. Many revolutionary intellectuals formed secret organizations dedicated to organizing a peasant revolution and ending the evils of the landlords. Other Marxists, like Lenin, fled to Europe, where they produced political propaganda, held party congresses, and made speeches to large groups of workers.

Russia’s defeat in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 inflamed anger at the czar and his government. Anger grew after “Bloody Sunday” in January 1905, when government troops fired on people marching peacefully to the Winter Palace to

present a petition to the czar. Workers and soldiers began to organize in councils known as “soviets.” Unrest continued through the summer, culminating in a general strike in October that paralyzed the country.

The czar responded to the general strike by forming a Duma and providing voting rights. Slowly, political unrest declined. But the outbreak of World War I in 1914 brought new pressures on the government. Russia had allied with the West to fight against Germany. But the Russian army was repeatedly defeated, Russian cities suffered from food shortages, and the troops began to revolt. By early 1917, the czarist government had lost all power. The czar abdicated, and his brother, Michael, fearing for his safety, declined the throne. On March 13, 1917, the 300 year-old Romanov dynasty ended.

The Duma assumed control as the Provisional Government, composed largely of leaders of the bourgeois and liberal parties. The Petrograd Soviet and Workers and Soldiers Deputies emerged as a separate, self-appointed government, which claimed to speak for all the workers and soldiers in Russia. And then there was Lenin, who decided that his time had come to claim power and lead Russia.

Lenin favored Russia’s ending its involvement in the war. The German government, also wanting Russia out of the war, arranged for a “sealed train” with German guards to help carry Lenin back to Russia.

On April 13, 1917, he arrived at the Finland Station in St. Petersburg. The next day he delivered two speeches, stating that he did not intend to cooperate with the Provisional Government and calling for “all power to the soviets.” Over the next six months, he persuaded the other leaders of the Bolshevik Party to follow him and to assemble a small military force from soldiers in the Petrograd Soviet. On October 24, his troops occupied crucial points in the capital including banks, railroad

aristocrats and landed gentry were seized without compensation, with the goal of distributing the land to the peasants. But the result created more, not less, government control. The attempt to nationalize industry—referred to as “War Communism”—caused so much disruption that strict economic centralization was put in place. And after the land decree, the peasants were producing less food than usual, and the government ordered food to be taken from them.

The revolution did not spread into Europe, as Lenin had hoped, and his new Russian society soon degenerated into a totalitarian state.

stations, and bridges. The next day, they took over the Winter Palace where the Provisional Government was headquartered. The prime minister escaped, but the other ministers were arrested and taken to jail. A second revolution had taken place, and a new government, with Lenin as chairman, was in power.

The Aftermath of Revolution

Shortly before arriving back in Russia, Lenin had finished writing a pamphlet titled “The State and Revolution.” His pamphlet set forth a utopian view of how society would change after the revolution. In the post-revolution society, he wrote, people would subordinate their needs to the needs of the whole society; there would be material abundance for all; and man’s competitive spirit would disappear. In this utopian world, there would be no need for any coercion, and the state would “wither away.”

This was not to be. Between 1917 and 1921, the Bolshevik Party began its socialist program. Industries and factories owned by the bourgeoisie were seized by the state and supposedly transferred to workers’ control. Large estates owned by

The War Communism policy damaged the country’s economy. Russia was soon consumed by a civil war, which began as more and more people became disenchanted with the Bolshevik Party (which renamed itself the Communist Party in March 1918). Lenin’s decision to withdraw from the World War I by making peace with Germany in 1918 (the treaty of Brest-Litovsk) helped fuel the anger of counterrevolutionary forces, which mobilized a “White Movement” to fight to depose the Communist Party. Many thousands died in the civil war, which lasted until 1921. As the country began sinking into a terrible economic depression, thousands more died from famine and disease.

The party’s response to opposition—and to an assassination attempt on Lenin in August 1918—was the “Red Terror.” In September 1918, the Communist Party newspaper called for workers to “crush the hydra of counterrevolution with massive terror.” Security police, called the Cheka, began arresting all opponents, including rioting workers and army deserters. The Red Terror was aimed at exterminating everyone who opposed the new regime. Thousands were ►

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BOLSHEVIK TROOPS MARCH on Red Square, Moscow, during the Russian Revolution.

shot without even the formality of a trial or revolutionary tribunal. “Class enemies” were put in forced labor camps policed by the Cheka. As a result, all vocal opposition disappeared, and the bourgeoisie vanished from the political system.

Will Socialism Work?

In 1921, Lenin realized that the socialist system he had put in place during the civil war had not worked. At the 10th Party Congress in March 1921, he told the delegates that it was necessary to slow down the transition to socialism. “What is needed,” he said, “is a much longer period of preparation, a slower tempo . . . in order to determine our basic tasks in the coming year and in order to avoid . . . mistakes in the future.”

With this in mind Lenin put into place a New Economic Policy (NEP) and began to restore some freedom of trade and a limited kind of

capitalism. The NEP ended the food requisitions from the peasants and allowed small businesses to open for private profit. And it proved successful: Agricultural production increased dramatically, and by 1928, the economy had been restored to the pre-World War I level. Even so, many hard-line Bolsheviks were angry because they saw the New Economic Policy as a betrayal of Communism and Marxism.

But Lenin was not ready to allow dissent. In the same year that the NEP was introduced, the 10th Party Congress passed a resolution “On Party Unity.” It outlawed all factions within the party. Party members who opposed policies adopted by the Central Committee would be expelled from the party. All political opposition within the Communist Party was ended. The one-party state did not even allow democracy within its own party.

The New Regime

In 1918, Russia was officially renamed as the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (soon the USSR), and the capital was moved to Moscow. The new one-party state was run by a Council of People’s Commissars, with Lenin as chair, or prime minister. But Lenin did not have long to live. In May 1922, he suffered the first of two strokes and died in January 1924.

In his last years, while he was ill, Lenin expressed unhappiness with the state of existing Soviet

institutions. In one article, he wrote of the need to change the focus from political struggle and revolution to “peaceful, organizational ‘cultural’ work” and of the need for a “cultural revolution” to bring universal literacy to Russia. In his last article, “Better Fewer, But Better,” he argued again of a need to slow down change and to reduce the state machine. He also tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent his successor, Joseph Stalin, from taking power.

After a power struggle, Stalin did take power in 1929. In the 1930s, the economy failed and food was in short supply. Stalin ordered the government to take away all grain crops from peasant farmers. When criticism of Stalin mounted, the secret police rounded up “enemies of the people,” including Communist Party members. Thousands were executed, imprisoned, or set into exile without a trial. High-profile party members were given “show trials” in which they “confessed” their guilt. Stalin ruled by terror, and the Soviet state was a totalitarian police state.

FOR DISCUSSION AND WRITING

1. What do you think were the main causes of the Russian Revolution?
2. Describe the two revolutions that occurred in 1917. Can you think of other revolutions in history that began with moderate governments and ended with radical governments?

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LENIN (left) SITS NEXT to his successor, Joseph Stalin.

ACTIVITY

Who Is to Blame for Soviet Totalitarianism?

Much has been written on the Russian Revolution and its aftermath. Historians agree that Stalin ruled over a ruthless, totalitarian regime. Over the years, however, a question has been debated: Was Stalin primarily responsible for the totalitarianism that ultimately gripped the Soviet Union or did Leninism lead to Stalinism? Some historians believe that Lenin set the new state on a good course only to have Stalin lead it to totalitarianism. Other historians argue that the foundation of totalitarianism can be found in Lenin’s rule.

In small groups, do the following:

1. Look for and discuss points that would support each side of the debate.
2. Decide which side of the debate you agree with.
3. Be prepared to report the points on both sides, your conclusion, and the reasons for your conclusion.

THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

IN OCTOBER 1962, THE WORLD STOOD ON THE BRINK OF NUCLEAR WAR. THE SOVIET UNION HAD INSTALLED NUCLEAR MISSILES IN CUBA, WHICH COULD REACH ALMOST EVERY U.S. CITY. WHEN THE UNITED STATES DEMANDED THE MISSILES BE REMOVED, THE SOVIETS REFUSED. FOR 13 DAYS, THE TWO POWERS STRUGGLED TO FIND A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION.

On January 1, 1959, revolutionary forces toppled the regime of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, an ally of the U.S. The leader of the revolution was Fidel Castro, who became the new premier of Cuba.

Castro promised democratic rule, but instead he consolidated power. Thousands of Batista supporters were executed or sent into exile. Many Cubans, especially the wealthy and well-educated, fled the island and settled in nearby Florida.

Castro's government seized large farms and sugar plantations, many owned by Americans, and turned them over to peasants or to government-run enterprises. Castro took over privately owned businesses, including oil refineries owned by American companies Texaco, Esso, and Shell. In September 1960, Cuba nationalized all U.S.-owned banks as well as foreign-owned cigar factories and cigarette plants.

The U.S. retaliated by imposing restrictions on trade. President Dwight D. Eisenhower stopped all sugar trade with Cuba and ended all oil deliveries.

This was at the height of the Cold War, the conflict between the Western and Soviet blocs. Eisenhower did not want to see a communist nation a mere 90 miles from the U.S. Before leaving office, he approved a plan to overthrow Castro.

The CIA began training and equipping Cuban exiles to become a guerrilla force that could overthrow

Castro. The new president, John F. Kennedy, approved the plan with modifications. As it turned out, the operation was poorly planned and executed. Of the 1,400 guerillas who landed at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, almost every one was killed, wounded, or captured in three days. While the U.S. tried to deny any role in the operation, it was clear to everyone that the U.S. government had been closely involved.

Cuba Makes Friends With the Soviets

Even before the Bay of Pigs invasion, Castro had begun developing relations with the Soviets. When the U.S. stopped buying Cuba's sugar, the Soviet Union stepped in. Early in 1960, the two countries signed an agreement. The Soviet Union would buy 425 tons of sugar from Cuba in 1960 and 1 million tons in each of the next four years. It would pay for the sugar with shipments of 6 million barrels of oil each year (and a small amount of money). In May, the two countries established formal diplomatic relations. And in September 1960, Castro visited New York and delivered an almost five-hour speech to the U.N. General Assembly attacking U.S. policy toward Cuba and boasting of his friendship with the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev.

Soon after the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, Castro cemented his relations with the Soviet Union.

Cuba, he declared, was a socialist country, and "I am a Marxist-Leninist and will be a Marxist-Leninist until the last days of my life." Fearing another invasion of the island, he turned to Khrushchev for help, not just for oil and to buy sugar, but also for defense.

Khrushchev quickly agreed to supply weapons to Castro. During 1961, the Soviet Union provided Cuba with a lot of military aid. It was important, Khrushchev told his advisers, to protect Castro's revolution against another U.S. assault and preserve a "communist outpost" in the Western hemisphere.

In April 1962, Khrushchev developed another plan as well. In addition to providing conventional military weapons, Khrushchev decided to build Soviet bases in Cuba armed with nuclear missiles capable of attacking the United States.

Khrushchev had three primary reasons for putting missiles in Cuba. First, the Soviet Union lagged far behind the United States in long-range missiles. It probably only had three dozen intercontinental missiles, which, if fired from Russia, could reach the U.S. In comparison, the United States had an arsenal of 170 intercontinental missiles, was rapidly building more, and had eight submarines, each carrying 16 long-range missiles. The Soviets did, however, possess many intermediate range missiles. These missiles could reach most of the United States from Cuba. ►



A U.S. NAVY plane flies over a Soviet freighter headed to Cuba during the missile crisis.



FIDEL CASTRO IN a 1959 photograph. The Cuban leader did not retire until 2008.

Second, the U.S. had recently installed nuclear missiles in Turkey, a country bordering the Soviet Union. Khrushchev thought installing nuclear missiles in Cuba balanced the threat from Turkey.

His final reason was to protect Cuba from an attack by the U.S. Khrushchev believed that once the missiles were in place, Kennedy would do nothing about them. He viewed Kennedy as young and inexperienced and thought the Bay of Pigs fiasco had deeply weakened him.

In May 1962, a secret delegation of Soviet officials arrived in Cuba and presented Khrushchev's proposal to Castro. The delegation was also instructed to find out if the missiles could be deployed secretly, without detection by the U.S. In June, the delegation returned to Moscow and told Khrushchev that Cuba had agreed to deploy the nuclear missiles and that they could be hidden from view. One month later, the missile deliveries began.

The Crisis Begins

The Soviets worked hard and fast on their plan to secretly build nuclear bases in Cuba. In June 1962, the military equipped a fleet of 85 ships to bring weapons, equipment, and troops for installing the bases. The plan called for 40 rocket launchers with 60 nuclear missiles. The missiles each had an explosive

power of 200 to 800 kilotons, which was 10 to 40 times more than the power of the atomic bomb that the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, during World War II. The missiles were to be protected from an air attack by anti-aircraft launchers armed with surface-to-air (non-nuclear) missiles (SAMs) built around the island.

The first ships set off in July, sailing out of seven different Soviet ports, which were guarded by secret police. Even the sailors and their captains did not know their true destination until they opened sealed orders at sea. To confuse any observers or spies, many of the troops were issued fleece-lined parkas—and some even skis—as if they were headed to a cold, icy destination. Others were luckier and sailed disguised as tourists on passenger ships.

During the summer, the undercover plan worked despite rumors from informants in Cuba saying that they had seen Russian-built fighter jets. On August 9, U.S. spy planes photographed surface-to-air missile sites. But these were not of great concern because they were defensive weapons.

Everything changed on Sunday, October 14, when an Air Force pilot brought back 4,000 feet of film from a 12-minute reconnaissance flight over Western Cuba. The next day, analysts reviewed pictures on the film of two sites with scratched

earth and large missile tubes. After hours of analysis, the CIA concluded that these were bases with intermediate-range missiles and launchers. On Tuesday, October 16, the information was passed on to the White House.

The missiles in Cuba changed the balance of power. The Soviets might have many missiles that could reach the United States. And the U.S. would have far less warning time if an attack were launched from Cuba.

President Kennedy faced momentous decisions. He had to decide, in the words of one commentator, whether the missiles posed such a danger that their removal justified the threat of nuclear war. And Kennedy had to deal with Nikita Khrushchev, who had lied to him. Only a month earlier, Khrushchev had sent messages clearly implying that only defensive weapons were being sent to Cuba.

The missiles in Cuba changed the balance of power.

For the next week, Kennedy met daily (and often into the night) with an “ExComm” committee that included his secretaries of state and defense and his top military advisers. The committee members disagreed on how to get the nuclear missiles out of Cuba.

On one side, the diplomats counseled negotiation and making a deal. “We have an obligation,” said Secretary of State Dean Rusk, “to do what has to be done—but to do it in a way that gives everybody a chance to pull away from it before it gets too hard.”

On the other side, the joint chiefs of staff wanted to attack without any delay for negotiations. They wanted to bomb not just the missile

bases but all planes, airfields, and storage sites and then finish with a full-scale invasion.

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara suggested a compromise plan that would allow time for negotiations. He proposed putting a naval blockade around Cuba to stop all shipments of offensive weapons and warning that any attack from Cuba would be treated as an attack by the Soviet Union.

Kennedy chose the compromise plan. At 7 p.m. on October 22, he spoke to the nation on television and announced, for the first time, that nuclear missiles had been discovered in Cuba. He described his decision to put a blockade in place. The U.S. Navy would stop, board, search, and turn back any ships bound for Cuba carrying cargoes of offensive weapons. He announced that the U.S. would continue aerial surveillance of Cuba, and that if “offensive military preparations” continue, “further action will be justified.” He warned the Soviets that any nuclear missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as an attack by the Soviet Union “requiring a full retaliatory response.” And he asked Khrushchev to “move the world back from the abyss of destruction” by withdrawing the weapons from Cuba and by “participating in a search for peaceful and permanent solutions.”

Stepping Back From the Brink

For six days after October 22, the world anxiously waited. No one knew how Cuba would react to having aerial reconnaissance planes flying over the island and to having a U.S. naval blockade. No one knew what actions by the Cubans or Soviets might trigger “further action” by the U.S. and how the Soviets would respond. Many believed that if the U.S. and the Soviet Union did not come to an agreement, nuclear war could erupt. Such a war would not just involve Cuba, but also the U.S., the Soviet Union, and possibly Eu-

rope. The Soviets and the Western allies had bitterly disagreed over how to divide Germany after World War II, and that dispute continued to fester.

The U.S. began planning for possible military action. Marines were sent to Florida and Georgia. Wives and children of soldiers were evacuated from Guantanamo (the military base that the U.S. had maintained in Cuba for decades). Reconnaissance planes flew over Cuba to monitor the missile bases. In the U.S., bombers in various locations were equipped and made ready to take off on 15 minutes notice.

After the blockade went into effect on Wednesday, October 24, Khrushchev sent a defiant letter to Kennedy. He stated that he would order his ship captains to run the blockade and to defend their ships, if necessary.

The next day, the United Nations became involved and asked the U.S. for a two week “pause” in the blockade. The U.S. refused, but agreed to preliminary talks through the U.N. provided that Soviet ships avoided the blockade line. Khrushchev and Kennedy began negotiating.

Khrushchev, through U.N. Secretary General U-Thant, offered a bargain: The Soviets would withdraw their missiles in exchange for a pledge from the U.S. not to invade Cuba.

Kennedy was encouraged that an agreement could be reached until

he received another letter on Saturday, October 27. It contained a new condition: that the Soviets would only agree to withdraw their missiles if the U.S. promised not to invade Cuba **and** also promised to withdraw its missiles from Turkey. Khrushchev’s new proposal was broadcast on Soviet radio.

By tying Cuba and Turkey together, Khrushchev had thrown a log jam into the possibility of a deal. The decision to put missiles in Turkey had been approved by NATO, the Western military alliance. President Kennedy thought that if the U.S. decided unilaterally to remove its missiles from Turkey, it would weaken the NATO alliance.

The crisis got even worse. SAM rockets fired from a Soviet base in Cuba knocked a U-2 spy plane from the sky, killing the pilot. Kennedy’s advisers struggled throughout the day on Saturday over what to do. Some military advisers wanted to bomb all the SAM bases; others wanted a full-scale invasion. Finally, Kennedy decided that he would publicly accept Khrushchev’s initial offer of withdrawal in exchange for a pledge not to invade, and he would give a secret agreement to the Soviets to close down the U.S. missile bases in Turkey in four to five months (the time it would take to get NATO approval).

On Saturday night, Robert Kennedy, the president’s brother ►



DURING THE CRISIS, President Kennedy decided on a course of action proposed by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, right.

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IN 1961, LONG before the crisis, Kennedy and Khrushchev had met in Austria. Khrushchev judged Kennedy as young and inexperienced.

and attorney general, met with the Soviet ambassador and conveyed the president's offer to remove the U.S. missiles from Turkey. He also explained that the offer would have to be kept secret. And unless an agreement was reached by Sunday, an invasion of Cuba would likely begin.

The next morning, Khrushchev agreed to the offer and wrote a warm letter to President Kennedy that was broadcast over Moscow radio. The Soviet government, he said, will dismantle the "offensive" weapons, which will be crated up and returned to the Soviet Union. By November 9, the Soviets had removed all of its 42 missiles, and by

late April 1963, the U.S. had dismantled its missiles in Turkey that had threatened the Soviet Union.

Aftermath

The Cuban Missile Crisis is the closest that the world has ever come to a nuclear war. It brought home the need to end the nuclear arms race and for better communications between the two powers. Soon after the crisis ended, the U.S. and the Soviet Union began serious negotiations on a test ban treaty and within a year negotiated an agreement to end nuclear tests in the atmosphere. In August 1963, they also agreed to install a hot-line between Moscow

and Washington for immediate and direct teletype communication in times of crisis. And in June 1963, Kennedy spoke at a graduation ceremony at American University, making a plea for "peaceful coexistence" with the Soviet Union. But should war break out again, he warned, as long as the U.S. and the Soviet Union have nuclear weapons, "All we have built, all we have worked for, would be destroyed in the first 24 hours."

Kennedy and Khrushchev, the opposing leaders in the crisis, did not stay in power much longer. A year after the crisis, Kennedy was assassinated. The following year, Khrushchev was forced out of office. Only Castro remained in power. He retired in 2008, after almost 50 years as the leader of Cuba.

FOR DISCUSSION AND WRITING

1. What do you think were the causes of the Cuban Missile Crisis?
2. What reasons did Khrushchev have for putting nuclear missiles in Cuba?
3. Why did the United States consider the Cuban missiles unacceptable?
4. What deal was struck to end the crisis? Do you think it was a good deal for the United States? Explain.

ACTIVITY

Oral History Interview

Like the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Cuban Missile Crisis was unforgettable to most of those living at the time. In this activity, students interview someone who remembers the crisis.

Each student should do the following:

1. Find and get permission to interview someone who was at least 10 years old at the time of the crisis.
2. Ask the person to describe what he or she remembers about the crisis. Be sure to ask:
 - a. Where were you living during the crisis?
 - b. How did you react to the crisis? How were others reacting?
 - c. What, if anything, happened out of the ordinary?
 - d. What are your most vivid memories of the crisis?

If the person did not hear about the crisis, ask the person to explain why. Then ask: What was the most important news event in your life? Ask follow-up questions.

3. Write a report on and be prepared to discuss what the person experienced. Include the answers to the questions and the person's age during the crisis. If the person did not hear about the crisis, explain why and discuss the news event that the person found most important.

NORTH KOREA:

THE ROGUE NATION

SINCE WORLD WAR II, A COMMUNIST REGIME IN THE HANDS OF A SINGLE FAMILY HAS RULED NORTH KOREA. TODAY, WHILE THE PEOPLE GO HUNGRY, THE REGIME DIVERTS SCARCE RESOURCES TO A HUGE MILITARY AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT.

When the Japanese surrendered in 1945, the Soviet Union and the United States agreed to temporarily divide and occupy Korea, an ancient land seized by Japan in 1910. American-occupied South Korea held elections that led to the creation of the Republic of Korea with Seoul as its capital.

The Soviet dictator, Joseph Stalin, appointed Kim Il-Sung to rule North Korea. Kim (Korean family names come first) was a Korean communist and major in the Soviet Red Army who had fought the Japanese in China.

Kim and other Korean communists established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its capital at Pyongyang. Kim developed a form of communism that stressed a self-supporting economy and strong military with him as the leader for life.

He followed Stalin's model of emphasizing heavy industry (e.g., steel making) run by the government. Also like Stalin, Kim confiscated privately owned land to form large farms where the farmers worked for the government.

Kim wanted to re-unify Korea by taking the South by military force. With the help of the Soviet Union, he built a huge military. Then he convinced Stalin that the Americans would never interfere if he invaded South Korea. U.S. occupation forces had withdrawn from Korea in 1949.



THIS MASSIVE STATUE of Kim Il-Sung stands in the capital of North Korea. More than 500 statues of Kim dot the North Korean landscape.

Wikimedia Commons—John Pavelka

In June 1950, Kim launched an invasion of South Korea. U.S. President Harry S. Truman quickly ordered American troops to aid the South Koreans. His decision to intervene backed his recently announced Truman Doctrine, which declared that the U.S. would act to contain communist aggression.

The newly formed United Nations condemned the North Korean attack and called for member nations to help defend South Korea. The combined U.S. and U.N. forces pushed the North Koreans back all the way to North Korea's border with China.

At this point, communist China entered the war on the side of North Korea. Battle lines then moved back and forth until both sides signed an armistice in July 1953.

The armistice was not a peace treaty. Even today, almost 60 years later, the Korean War technically has not ended. The armistice did create a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). This is a military-free zone 2.5 miles wide that today forms the border between North and South Korea.

'Great Leader'

During the war, North Korea lost half a million soldiers, countless numbers of civilians, and most of its industry. After the war, Kim forced workers to participate in "speed battles" to rebuild heavy industry, but he neglected consumer goods. Kim fed the nation by rationing the harvests from the large government farms.

For a while, the emphasis on industrial production pushed North Korea ahead of South Korea economically. But North Korean industrial goods were so shoddy that few countries wanted to buy them. This deprived the country of foreign currency needed to import fuel oil, spare parts, consumer goods, and food.

Kim also diverted nearly a third of the nation's economic production to rebuild his military. He never gave up his ambition to conquer the South.

North Korea depended heavily on borrowed money, aid, and discounted prices on imports from the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union fell in the early 1990s, ►

however, North Korea lost most of its trade privileges with Russia and the other countries that emerged from the Soviet Union. Soon, the economy began to collapse.

Calling himself “Great Leader,” Kim announced in 1980 that his son, Kim Jong-Il, would succeed him as the leader of North Korea. The “Great Leader” appointed his son to important Communist Party and military positions. As the elder Kim grew older, he passed on more governing authority to his son.

When Kim Il-Sung died in 1994, after 48 years of dictatorship, Kim Jong-Il took over. The new Kim, age 53, instructed his people to call him “Dear Leader.”

‘Dear Leader’

The “Dear Leader” indulges himself with luxuries like imported brandy and multiple palaces. His marriage status is unclear. He has had numerous mistresses who gave birth to most of his children, including three sons.

Soon after Kim inherited the role of supreme leader, North Korea suffered a famine brought on by floods and droughts and made worse by the regime’s mismanaged economy.



KIM JONG-IL SUCCEEDED his father as leader of North Korea. He has been in ill health and reportedly is preparing his son Kim Jong-Un to succeed him.

The regime cut food rations, which led to widespread starvation.

A Human Rights Watch report concluded that the famine in the late 1990s “killed millions of people and stunted the development of many children for life.” While this horror was going on, the government diverted much of the food supply to the regime elite and the military.

The mass starvation finally forced Kim to accept food aid from the United Nations and donor countries such as South Korea, China, Japan, and the United States. Kim, however, rejected free market reforms that would have increased food production.

Today, the North Korean people continue to suffer from shortages of food and consumer goods. In addition, the Kim regime spends less on health care for its people than any other nation in the world.

Having few exports to sell, North Korea buys some imported goods with profits from opium poppy production and by counterfeiting U.S. dollars. Even so, North Korea remains dependent on international aid for much of its food needs. Kim’s military currently consumes 25 percent of the nation’s economic production.

Kim holds on to power by keeping regime and military leaders happy while repressing the people. The regime trains its people in the schools, workplace, and military to believe that the “Dear Leader” can do no wrong.

The regime controls all television, radio, and newspapers. Internet use is limited to trusted members of the regime and military. Those who dissent or even displease the regime are condemned to slave labor prisons, sometimes with their entire families.

North Korea’s Neighbors

Since the Korean War, North Korea has occasionally met with South Korea to discuss reunifying the country. These talks have resulted in a few minor agreements that usually

The regime controls all television, radio, and newspapers. Internet use is limited to trusted members of the regime and military.

included the South sending food and other aid to the North.

Every time both sides reached an agreement, however, North Korea seemed to sabotage the effort with violent acts like trying to assassinate two of South Korea’s presidents. Some experts think this behavior by North Korea is a way to pressure the South Koreans for new talks that will yield more aid.

Most Russian military and economic aid to North Korea has disappeared since the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Relations with Japan worsened recently. Japan discovered that in the 1970s, North Korea kidnapped some of its citizens and forced them to train spies in the Japanese language and culture.

Today, the Kim regime’s only foreign support comes from China. The Chinese prop up North Korea with trade and aid because they fear that if the Kim regime collapses, millions of North Korean refugees will flood into China.

‘Military First’

Kim has a “military first” policy. His army, navy, and air force prosper even as the North Korean people go hungry. North Korea now has the fifth largest military in the world with over a million members.

Kim has deployed 70 percent of his ground forces close to the DMZ

border with South Korea. He also has trained an elite corps of Special Operation Forces whose mission is to spearhead an invasion of the South. In addition, large numbers of long-range artillery, some with chemical warheads, could easily destroy the South Korean capital of Seoul less than 40 miles away.

North Korea also possesses hundreds of missiles that can strike all parts of South Korea and Japan. The North Koreans are working on a long-range missile that may someday be able to reach the U.S., possibly with a nuclear warhead. The Kim regime has sold its missile technology to other countries as another way to get foreign currency to buy needed imports.

Nuclear Weapons

The Soviet Union helped North Korea build its main nuclear research facility at Yongbyong after the Korean War. While declaring the nuclear facility was only for developing electric power, Kim Il-Sung really wanted to produce nuclear weapons to prevent the U.S. from threatening his regime.

In 1985, North Korea signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This prohibited North Korea from manufacturing nuclear weapons or assisting other countries in making them. The NPT also required North Korea to accept U.N. inspectors to monitor its nuclear program. In 1992, North and South Korea agreed not to “test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, display, or use nuclear weapons.”

In 1994, soon after Kim Il-Sung died, North Korea and the U.S. signed an Agreed Framework to “freeze” the Yongbyong nuclear program with U.N. inspection. In exchange, the U.S. promised to coordinate annual oil shipments to North Korea until an international group built two nuclear power plants there.

Kim Jong-Il, however, secretly acquired advanced nuclear weapons



A NORTH KOREA SOLDIER (left) eyes a South Korean soldier at the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas.

Defense Imagery.mil

technology from Pakistan. In 2002, the U.S. confronted the North Koreans with evidence that they had been producing enriched uranium in order to develop nuclear weapons. The North Koreans denied this.

The U.S. accused North Korea of violating the Agreed Framework and the no nuclear weapons treaty with South Korea. Construction of the two nuclear power plants for North Korea stopped.

The North Koreans retaliated by expelling the U.N. nuclear inspectors, restarting nuclear operations at Yongbyong, and withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Despite signing this treaty in 1985, North Korea has sold nuclear weapons materials and technology to Iran, Syria, and other nations.

Six Party Talks

Under pressure from China, North Korea agreed in 2004 to return to nuclear weapons negotiations. The Six Party Talks included the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea. In 2005, the North Koreans committed themselves to “abandoning” their nuclear program in exchange for economic assistance and a pledge from the U.S. not to attack.

In 2006, however, North Korea conducted intermediate- and long-range missile tests followed by its

first underground test of a nuclear explosive device. The next year the North Koreans were back at the Six Party Talks. They agreed to “disable” nuclear operations at Yongbyong under U.N. inspection if the other parties would provide economic and food aid.

Then in 2009, North Korea carried out a long-range missile test and a second test of a nuclear explosive device. This time the U.N. passed a resolution, calling on member nations to seize North Korean ships or planes, carrying any materials for nuclear weapons. North Korea withdrew from the Six Party Talks, expelled U.N. inspectors again, and again restarted operations at Yongbyong.

By early 2011, the Six Party Talks had not resumed. North Korea has expanded its uranium enrichment operation.

What Next?

Kim Jong-Il, now 69, suffered a stroke in 2008. As a result, he apparently chose his youngest son, Kim Jong-Un, to succeed him. We know little of this son’s background or about how he would lead North Korea. Even his age, 28 or 29, is uncertain.

Kim Jong-Il recently speeded up the process of preparing his son to take control of North Korea by ►

appointing him to top Communist Party and military positions. Publicly called “Young General,” Kim Jong-Un’s youth and inexperience might pose a problem if he tries to replace his father within the next few years. Some speculate that a power struggle could erupt among Kim family members, the military could seize power, or even a civil war could break out.

The U.S. is re-evaluating its negotiations with North Korea. Both the South Koreans and Americans now see a pattern in North Korean diplomacy. First, the North Koreans create a crisis like testing missiles. Then, they call for negotiations to get food and other assistance in exchange for agreements they never intend to carry out.

Many experts believe that what Kim Jong-Il most wants is the survival of his regime. Possessing nuclear weapons would be powerful insurance for this. Although the North Koreans have tested a nuclear device, they have yet to produce a deliverable nuclear weapon such as a missile warhead. Therefore, the decision about what policy the U.S. should now adopt toward North Korea is at a crucial stage.

FOR DISCUSSION AND WRITING

1. Some argue that international food assistance for North Korea’s suffering people should be cut off since this aid helps the Kim regime stay in power. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

2. In 2010, the North Koreans torpedoed a South Korean warship and shelled a South Korean island. Why do you think they did this?
3. Does North Korea pose a threat to the United States? Why or why not?

FOR FURTHER READING

“Background Note: North Korea.” U.S. Department of State. 29 Sept. 2010. URL: www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2792.htm

Bechtol, Bruce E. *Defiant Failed State, The North Korean Threat to International Security*. Washington, D. C.: Potomac Books, 2010.

ACTIVITY

U.S. Policy Toward North Korea

Form small groups. Each will take on the role of a national security team to advise the president on what policy to adopt toward North Korea. Each team should discuss the options listed below and adopt a policy to recommend. The policy may consist of one of those listed, a combination of two or more of them, as well as additional ideas developed by the team. Each team should prepare to defend its policy based on information from this article.

Policy Options

- Wait for the regime to collapse, which may happen when Kim Jong-Il dies or can no longer function as leader. The U.S. and China could then cooperate to establish a new non-nuclear North Korea.
- Build up the military defenses of South Korea to deter another attack by North Korea. The U.S. would have to maintain or increase its military forces stationed in South Korea since the Korean War.
- Attack North Korea and overthrow the totalitarian Kim regime.
- Destroy Yongbyong and other nuclear facilities with air strikes.
- Isolate and contain North Korea by enforcing U.N. restrictions on its ability to import or export missiles and any nuclear materials or technology.
- Resume the Six Party Talks to offer economic aid and a promise of no attack on North Korea, thus assuring the survival of the Kim regime.
- Support long-term negotiations between North Korea and South Korea, aiming at eventual reunification. Kim Jong-Il once proposed a confederation (“one country, two systems”) pathway to reunification.

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Standards Addressed

Russian Revolution

National High School World History Standard 38: Understands reform, revolution, and social change in the world economy of the early 20th century. (4) Understands the diverse events that led to and resulted from the Russian Revolution of 1905

National High School World History Standard 39: Understands the causes and global consequences of World War I. (3) Understands Lenin's ideology and policies and their impact on Russia after the Revolution of 1917 . . . (4) Understands the impact of the Russian Revolution on other countries

California History-Social Science Standard 10.5: Students analyze the causes and course of the First World War. (3) Explain how the Russian Revolution and the entry of the United States affected the course and outcome of the war.

California History-Social Science Standard 10.7: Students analyze the rise of totalitarian governments after World War I. (1) Understand the causes and consequences of the Russian Revolution, including Lenin's use of totalitarian means to seize and maintain control (e.g., the Gulag).

Cuban Missile Crisis

National High School U.S. History Standard 27: Understands how the Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics. 1. Understands U.S. foreign policy from the Truman administration to the Johnson administration (e.g., . . . Kennedy's response to the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile crises . . .).

California History-Social Science Standard 11.9: Students analyze U.S. foreign policy since World War II. (3) Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including the following: . . . the Cuban Missile Crisis

North Korea

National High School Civics Standard 22: Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy. (1) Understands the significance of principal foreign policies and events in the United States' relations with the world

National High School Civics Standard 23: Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations. (2) Understands the effects that significant world political developments have on the United States

California History-Social Science Standard 12.9: Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles. (4) Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods (5) Identify the forms of illegitimate power that twentieth-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.

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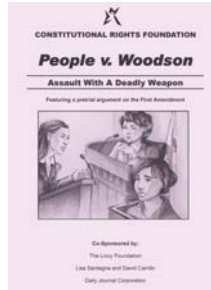
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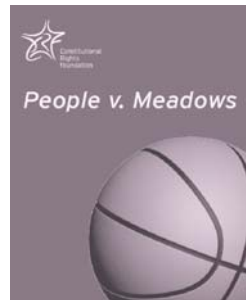
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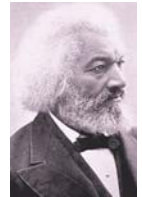
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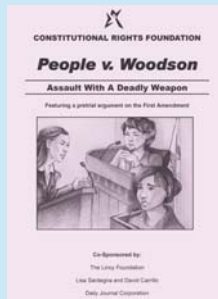
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