

How Communication Between the CIA and Kennedy Administration Influenced the Cuban Missile Crisis

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ABSTRACT

In October 1962, an American U-2 aircraft photograph captured Soviet missile sites, also known as SAM sites, in Cuba. After much debate, Kennedy eventually decided to place a naval quarantine around Cuba to prevent further military buildup and demanded the Soviets remove the missiles. The dissemination of information is crucial to US policy, as it allows policymakers to accurately assess threats and respond accordingly. The relationship between the CIA and Kennedy Administration is rooted in the dissemination of critical information, demonstrating why failures in dissemination can hinder policy. There is a lack of research that analyzes how the lack of communication, miscommunication, and communication of misinformation regarding Cuba contributed to the lack of US preparedness. This project fills this deficit by situating the strategic context of JFK's decisions with the timing & gaps in intelligence briefings. This study chronologically organized and contextualized intelligence reports to evaluate how the relationship between the CIA and the Kennedy administration influenced the Cuban Missile Crisis. Both the timeline and the documents indicate that there was a severe lack of communication between CIA officials and the Presidential administration. It is also evident that prior failures, the election, and abysmal attitudes contributed to both miscommunication or lack of communication. Furthermore, intelligence failure, the cancellation of meetings, changes in photography, and lack of value placed upon CIA intelligence collection contributed to intelligence failure, which led to further communication of misinformation. This research implies that new pathways of communication are needed to stimulate the flow of communication between agencies.

Introduction

The defeat of the Axis powers during World War II transformed both the United States and Soviet Union (USSR) into global superpowers, resulting in the ideological rivalry between Soviet communism and American capitalism known as the Cold War. Central characteristics of this conflict include the race for arms-superiority, build-up of nuclear weapons, and era of espionage.¹ Both the USSR and US planted spies to gather information on adversarial military capabilities and implement reconnaissance missions.²

Following the communist takeover of the Russian monarchy during the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet leaders sought to build the USSR's influence by infiltrating and indoctrinating vulnerable countries to spread the communist ideology. In 1947, the United States adopted the Truman Doctrine, which formally denounced Soviet communism and offered aid to any country threatened by Soviet occupation. The United States enacted this geopolitical strategic policy of containment to prevent the "Domino Theory", which postulates that if one nation fell to Communism, others would follow.

The rise of Communism in Cuba under Fidel Castro concerned the United States due to the Domino Theory. After the Kennedy administration failed to overthrow the Castro regime during the Bay of Pigs invasion, USSR leader Nikita Khrushchev negotiated with Fidel Castro to construct nuclear missile sites in Cuba to prevent further attempts at US invasion.

In late 1962, an American spy aboard a U-2 aircraft photographed Soviet medium and intermediate-range nuclear missile sites (SAM sites) in Cuba. Kennedy was under enormous pressure from the American public, foreign

nations, and US government officials to address the crisis without sparking nuclear war. After much debate, Kennedy decided to place a naval quarantine around Cuba to prevent further military buildup and demanded the Soviets remove the missiles.

For 13 days, the United States and USSR pursued dangerous political and military action, moving closer to nuclear war, also known as brinkmanship. Eventually, both parties recognized that nuclear war would lead to mutually-assured destruction. In a public deal, the Soviets agreed to dismantle the weapon systems in Cuba in exchange for the removal of US missiles in Turkey and a pledge from the United States to not invade Cuba.

The project helps determine how communication between the CIA and Presidential administration influenced the resolution of the Crisis and Kennedy's decision to implement a blockade. Understanding the imperfections in communication during times of crisis could help the US government resolve such issues to strengthen crisis management.

Literature Review

The dissemination of information is crucial to US policy, as it allows policymakers to accurately assess threats and respond accordingly. The relationship between the CIA and Kennedy Administration is rooted in the circulation of critical intelligence, demonstrating why CIA reconnaissance is crucial to policy making. As such, failures in dissemination can severely hinder policy, resulting in severe political ramifications.³

Through historical analysis of CIA documents and National Intelligence Estimates (NIES), Klaus Knorr, a Professor of Public Affairs at Princeton, determined that the CIA failed to warn the government about the possibility of Soviet action in Cuba.⁴ Knorr attributes the lack of warning due to the CIA's refusal to validate intelligence from Cuban exiles. Amy Zegart, a Professor of Political Science at Stanford and fellow at the Hoover Institution, expands upon this finding with her conclusion that the CIA's inability to provide information in a timely manner contributed heavily to the United State's inability to efficiently address Soviet military buildup in Cuba.⁵ By conducting historical analysis, Zegart concluded that despite four gold-standard NIES, there was no concern about Soviet military buildup until the final estimate. Zegart claims that while "it is clear that U.S. intelligence officials discovered Soviet missiles in Cuba days before they became operational, it is equally clear that they utterly failed to anticipate the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba every day before then", which this paper aims to maintain and expand upon.⁶

Other studies, such as Max Holland's historical analysis on the Cuban Missile Crisis at the Center for the Study of Intelligence, contradict Knorr and Zegart. He suggests that the political tensions between the CIA and the White House, and the deliberate selection of intelligence that benefited each party led to gaps in communication about the arms-buildup.⁷ Professor at James Madison University and former CIA analyst Stephen Marrin supports this viewpoint, accrediting the failures in communication to conflicting interpretations of US intelligence. Marrin's case analysis of United States intelligence blunders concludes that varying perspectives of intelligence cloud political decision-making.⁸ Opposing interpretations disrupt the effective integration of intelligence into policy and elongate the timeframe it takes to make decisions.⁹ While Marrin's study did not directly reference the Cuban Missile Crisis, this study aims to contextualize this principle within the frame of this event.

¹ "The Cold Conflict." The National WWII Museum, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/cold-conflict>.

² "The Cold Conflict." The National WWII Museum, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/cold-conflict>.

³ "What is Intelligence?" Council on Foreign Relations, World101, <https://world101.cfr.org/foreign-policy/tools-foreign-policy/what-intelligence>.

⁴ Knorr, Klaus. "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles." *World Politics* 16, no. 3 (1964): 455–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009582>.

⁵ Zegart, Amy. The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure, Hoover Institution, "The Cuban

Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure. Hoover Institution”, 2012 <https://www.hoover.org/research/cuban-missile-crisis-intelligence-failure>.

This study also evaluates the Kennedy administration's response to CIA intelligence, and how the timing of intelligence transfer and intelligence gaps influenced crisis strategy. Richard M. Pious, a Professor of Political Science at Columbia University, utilized historical analysis to assess how Kennedy formed his decisions based on the information he had at the time. Pious concluded that “at every stage of the crisis, organizations acted (or tried to act) on their own” since each “wanted to get in on the action”, all of which was “counterproductive and irrational”, and “[increased] the level of risk”.¹⁰ Karthik Gopalan, a researcher at the Foreign Policy Journal, utilized content analysis to establish that the President instructed “the clamps were to remain on the release of certain information regarding Cuba except for the barest minimum access on a need-to-know basis”, suggesting that the President contributed to the lack of communication during the crisis.¹¹ Furthermore, Robert Gates, the 1988 CIA director, indicated that US Presidents are unreceptive to CIA intelligence and disregard CIA recommendations. Gates asserts that presidents have unrealistic expectations for intelligence, and therefore presidents dismiss most intelligence on the basis that it might start controversy.¹²

Gap

What is key to understanding Kennedy's decision to implement a blockade rests on the intelligence Kennedy had when strategizing during the Cuban Missile Crisis. This study aims to prove that the lack of communication, miscommunication, and communication of misinformation regarding Cuba between the CIA and White House impacted the decision-making process during the Cuban Missile Crisis. As previously mentioned, Klaus Knorr determined that the CIA's inability to attain accurate estimates about conditions in Cuba contributed to the lack of warning about the crisis. However, Knorr did not evaluate how that lack of warning influenced Kennedy's decision-making process.¹³

Similarly, James Blight et al. analyzed the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis from the testimony of ExComm officials.¹⁴ Numerous sources explain how debates during ExComm meetings influenced Kennedy's decisions, but do not reference the CIA's position apart from Director of Intelligence (DCI) McCone's limited perspective. Therefore, there is a gap in how the communication between the CIA and Presidential Administration from January to October 1962 informed the Cuban Missile Crisis resolution.

⁶ Zegart, Amy. The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure, Hoover Institution, “The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure. Hoover Institution”, 2012 <https://www.hoover.org/research/cuban-missile-crisis-intelligence-failure>.

⁷ Max Holland “The ‘Photo Gap’ That Delayed Discovery of Missiles.” Studies in Intelligence Vol. 49 No. 4, Central Intelligence Agency - Center For The Study of Intelligence , 2005, <https://www.cia.gov/static/df2ab56225a9cbc6dbc634699e15d768/Photo-Gap-Delayed-Discovery.pdf>

⁸ Stephen Marrin (2007) At Arm's Length or At the Elbow?: Explaining the Distance between Analysts and Decisionmakers, International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence, 20:3, 401-414, DOI: 10.1080/08850600701249733

⁹ Stephen Marrin (2007) At Arm's Length or At the Elbow?: Explaining the Distance between Analysts and Decisionmakers, International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence, 20:3, 401-414, DOI: 10.1080/08850600701249733

¹⁰ Pious, Richard M. “The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Limits of Crisis Management.” Political Science Quarterly 116, no. 1 (2001): 81–105. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657821>.

¹¹ Gopalan, Karthik. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Foreign Policy Journal, 16 Aug. 2010, <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2010/08/16/kennedy-and-the-cuban-missile-crisis>

¹² Gates, Robert M. “OPPORTUNITY UNFULFILLED THE USE AND PERCEPTIONS OF

INTELLIGENCE AT THE WHITE HOUSE.” Central Intelligence

Agency, 1988, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp89g00720r000800100002-0>.

¹³ Knorr, Klaus. “Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles.” *World Politics* 16, no. 3 (1964): 455–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009582>.

¹⁴ Bundy, McGeorge, and James G. Blight. “October 27, 1962: Transcripts of the Meetings of the ExComm.” *International Security* 12, no. 3 (1987): 30–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538801>.

This study will situate the strategic context of Kennedy’s decisions with the timing and gaps in intelligence briefings to evaluate the implications of good communication, miscommunication, and communication of misinformation. While they may sound similar, each has its own ramifications. Miscommunication means a message is heard, but not interpreted or understood correctly. However, the communication of misinformation, which is incorrect information that the sender believes in true, can distort facts and judgments.

Methodology

This study uses inductive reasoning and historical analysis of primary documents including meeting transcripts, CIA documents, presidential documents, and other sources. The researcher contextualized the documents and created a timeline of the Cuban Missile Crisis, including when Kennedy received information from the CIA and the timing of his decisions. This research also reflects on the intelligence capabilities of the CIA and evaluates how CIA intelligence influenced Kennedy’s course of action. This methodology corresponds to the topic of inquiry because such analysis may show how communication influenced certain decisions according to the foundational sources.

Methodology Alignment

This study employed a similar methodology that closely aligns with several studies. The study conducted by Amy Zegart, which aims to understand the “organizational weaknesses in intelligence analysis” during the Cuban Missile Crisis aligns well with this study’s topic of inquiry.¹⁵ Zegart summarized and interpreted the pre-Cuban Missile Crisis intelligence estimates about Cuba, evaluated the timing of each estimate release, and analyzed the impact of these estimates on each agency.¹⁶ This study utilized a similar method of analyzing primary historical documents and creating a timeline of the release of information from both the Kennedy administration and CIA to evaluate communication. However, this study differs from Zegart’s as she evaluated the timing of communication and the release of information prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis while this study evaluates such factors before and during the Crisis. Max Holland utilized a similar method to evaluate the factors contributing to the Cuban Missile Crisis Photo-Gap. Holland chronologically organized CIA Cuban Missile Crisis documents, contextualized documents and intelligence reports about U-2 aircraft surveillance, and evaluated how the relationship between DCI McCone and the Kennedy administration led to the Photo Gap.¹⁷ This study also utilized historical analysis of government and CIA documents from the crisis as this study’s topic of inquiry and expected findings align well with that of Holland’s study.

¹⁵ Zegart, Amy. The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure | Hoover Institution The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure. Hoover Institution, 2012 <https://www.hoover.org/research/cuban-missile-crisis-intelligence-failure>.

¹⁶ Zegart, Amy. The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure | Hoover Institution The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure. Hoover Institution, 2012 <https://www.hoover.org/research/cuban-missile-crisis-intelligence-failure>.

¹⁷ Max Holland “The ‘Photo Gap’ That Delayed Discovery of Missiles.” *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 49 No. 4, Central Intelligence Agency - Center For The Study of Intelligence, 2005,

<https://www.cia.gov/static/df2ab56225a9cbc6dbc634699e15d768/Photo-Gap-Delayed-Discovery.pdf>

¹⁸ Baruwa, Ikeoluwapo. "Nature of Knowledge in Philosophy." Journal of Education Society and Behavioural Science, September 2022, DOI:10.9734/JESBS/2022/v35i1030463

¹⁹ Alex Wellerstein, "The Kyoto Misconception: What Truman Knew, and Didn't Know, About Hiroshima," in Michael D. Gordin and G. John Ikenberry, eds., The Age of Hiroshima (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2020)

²⁰ Alex Wellerstein, "The Kyoto Misconception: What Truman Knew, and Didn't Know, About Hiroshima," in Michael D. Gordin and G. John Ikenberry, eds., The Age of Hiroshima (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2020)

This study employs an "epistemological" approach, which is "the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge".¹⁸ This approach analyzes knowledge from various viewpoints depending on certain factors that led to a person's knowledge. In this research, the epistemological approach is used to conclude "what was known, what was not known, and when various knowledge [changed] over time", an approach used by Alex Wellerstein to understand what contributed to President Truman's decisions during World War II.¹⁹ An epistemological viewpoint allows a researcher to understand what information mattered "and what did not" despite the subjectivity of interpreting historical decision-making.²⁰ Wellerstein's study suggests that analysis of historical events from an epistemological viewpoint can lead to important insights and limit subjectivity.

Criteria for Primary Sources

It must be acknowledged that these files contained hundreds of documents, so not every document was thoroughly assessed. Therefore, parameters were set to ensure the narrowness of this study.

The sources analyzed for this study come from the government and intelligence databases listed:

- The National Security archive - FOIA, The George Washington University
- Center for the Study of Intelligence/CIA Reading Room
- JFK Library/Ronald Reagan Library Archives
- Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume X, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath - Office of the Historian
- President's Office Files (fully digitized)
- National Security Files (Meetings & Memoranda series, documenting the NSC and EXCOMM)

Parameters For Documents:

- Needs to be written within the period of 1961-1962
- Primary topic: Cuban Missile Crisis/Operation Mongoose
 - The primary focus of the documents must be on the Kennedy administration (Excomm, Special Group Augmented 5412) or the CIA (used to narrow focus and limit extraneous information from impacting the results of the study)
- Evidence/Documents selected must fit into one of these categories:
 - Photo-Gap
 - Major Gaps in Communication
 - Changing of Meeting Schedules
 - CIA Communication about Soviet Activity
 - Operation Mongoose
 - The President Limiting Communication
 - Relationship between the Communication of Intelligence and the Implementation of a Blockade
- Documents need to be verified for authenticity/Come from Government or Document Library

Permission/Authenticity:

Permission was obtained from the JFK Library to utilize their files on the Cuban Missile Crisis. Files included President's Office Files, National Security Files, Robert Kennedy Attorney General Papers, oral history interviews, and other documents related to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Every source was screened to verify the authenticity of the documents. Sources primarily came from government agencies, intelligence organizations, archives, and libraries. Additionally, most sources were the same as those used by Amy Zegart, James Blight et. al, and other foundational sources to align the study as closely as possible.

Each document used is listed in Index A, and corresponds with the "Document #" used in citations.

There are several limitations to this method. Most researchers acknowledge that historical analysis is subjective and relies on personal interpretation, resulting in conflicting conclusions.²¹ This is a limitation for all historical studies. Steps taken to limit such subjectivity include alignment to foundational sources and reliance on the epistemological approach.

Data Collection & Analysis Method

5368 pages of documents were read. 169 documents from President Point of View and 107 documents from CIA Point of View were analyzed. This study utilized the following spreadsheet:

Name of Category:	Function:
A: Origin of Source	The goal of this column is to keep track of where the source came from. This simplifies the process to cite and verify all evidence when reflecting on the findings.
B. CIA or President Point of View	This POV column categorizes which pieces of evidence fall under a CIA or Presidential administration Point of View. This is important because this study aims to determine how the communication between the CIA and President administration played a role in the decision-making process during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Thus, differentiating between the two POVS can determine who from each party had information or contributed information at a given time.
C. Time Stamp of the Document	The time stamp column is formatted depending on the document. Most utilized the format: Month Day, Year. Others included the location in which the conversation/information on the document originated. This is important because it organizes the time stamps for the timeline used in analysis.
D. Evidence Quote OR Summary of Document	The evidence column notes important excerpts from the document that are analyzed/relevant to the topic of inquiry. Most excerpts are either copied and pasted from the verified documents or summarized if needed.
E. File Name /Document Number	This column serves as a naming system for each document. The name/title of the document and database where the document came from are listed. This column is used to name files in the timeline needed for the findings/analysis section.
F. Analysis	This column organizes connections to foundational sources, thoughts about the excerpts, connections to other documents, preliminary analysis of the documents, how the documents answer or relate to the research question, and other comments related to the project. Rows highlighted in GREEN and PURPLE signify extra relevance or important information that is significant to the findings of this research project.

A	B	C	D	E	F
Document Origin (f CIA or President	F Time Stamp of Doc	Evidence Quote and Summary		File/Place Name/Title (Analysis (Connect to related decisions/prelim thoughts)

Findings/Analysis

²¹ Crane, Susan A. "Historical Subjectivity: A Review Essay." *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 2 (2006): 434–56. <https://doi.org/10.1086/505803>.

Date	Time (Military)	Point of View (Kennedy Administration or CIA)	Citations # of Document
Tuesday January 3, 1961	1:00	Kennedy Administration	1
	12:30	Kennedy Administration	2
Wednesday January 4, 1961		Kennedy Administration	4
Thursday January 5, 1961		Kennedy Administration	3
		Kennedy Administration	5
		Kennedy Administration	6
Thursday December 14, 1961		Kennedy Administration	8
Thursday December 21, 1961		Kennedy Administration	9
Wednesday December 27, 1961	14:45	Kennedy Administration	10
Thursday January 11, 1962		Kennedy Administration	11
Wednesday January 17, 1962		Kennedy Administration	12
Thursday January 18, 1962		Kennedy Administration	13
		Kennedy Administration	14
		Kennedy Administration	14
Friday January 19, 1962	11:00	CIA - Richard Helms Chief of Operations, DD/P	7
		Kennedy Administration	15
Saturday January 20, 1962		Kennedy Administration	16
		Kennedy Administration	17
		Kennedy Administration	17
Tuesday February 20, 1962		Kennedy Administration	18
Friday March 2, 1962		Kennedy Administration	20
Tuesday March 13, 1962		Kennedy Administration	21
		Kennedy Administration	22
		Kennedy Administration	22
Wednesday March 21, 1962		Kennedy Administration	23
Thursday April 5, 1962		Kennedy Administration	24
Friday April 6, 1962		Kennedy Administration	25
Tuesday April 10, 1962		Kennedy Administration	26
		Kennedy Administration	27
		Kennedy Administration	27
Wednesday April 11, 1962	14:00	Kennedy Administration	28
Thursday April 12, 1962		Kennedy Administration	29
Wednesday April 18, 1962		Kennedy Administration	30
Thursday April 19, 1962		Kennedy Administration	31
Thursday April 26, 1962		Kennedy Administration	32
Tuesday May 1, 1962		Kennedy Administration	33
Thursday May 3, 1962		Kennedy Administration	34
Monday May 7, 1962		Kennedy Administration	35
Thursday May 24, 1962		Kennedy Administration	36
Thursday May 31, 1962		Kennedy Administration	37
Thursday June 7, 1962		Kennedy Administration	38
Friday June 8, 1962		Kennedy Administration	39
Thursday June 14, 1962		Kennedy Administration	40
		CIA	41
		CIA	41
Tuesday July 3, 1962		Kennedy Administration	42
Thursday July 5, 1962		Kennedy Administration	43
Saturday July 14, 1962		Kennedy Administration	44

		Kennedy Administration	45
		Kennedy Administration	46
Wednesday July 18, 1962			
Thursday July 19, 1962		Kennedy Administration	47
Monday July 23, 1962		Kennedy Administration	48
Tuesday July 24, 1962		Kennedy Administration	49
		Brig. Gen. Lansdale	50
		Kennedy Administration	51
Wednesday July 25, 1962			
Tuesday July 31, 1962		Kennedy Administration	52
		CIA	53
		Kennedy Administration	54
Wednesday August 1, 1962			
Thursday August 2, 1962		CIA	55
Monday August 6, 1962		Kennedy Administration	56
Wednesday August 8, 1962		Kennedy Administration	57
Thursday August 9, 1962		Deputy Secretary of Defense	58
Editorial Note August 9-13		Kennedy Administration	59
Monday August 13, 1962		Kennedy Administration	60
Tuesday August 14, 1962		Kennedy Administration	61
Wednesday August 15, 1962		Kennedy Administration	62
Thursday August 16, 1962		Kennedy Administration	63
		Kennedy Administration	64
		Kennedy Administration	65
Friday August 17, 1962			
Monday August 20, 1962		CIA	66
		Kennedy Administration	67
		CIA	68
Tuesday August 21, 1962			
		Kennedy Administration	69
		CIA	70
		Kennedy Administration	71
Wednesday August 22, 1962			
		CIA	72
		Kennedy Administration	73
		Secretary of State	74
		Kennedy Administration	75
Thursday August 23, 1962			
		Kennedy Administration	76
Friday August 24, 1962	9:07 PM	Kennedy Administration	77
Saturday August 25, 1962		Kennedy Administration	78
Thursday August 30, 1962		Kennedy Administration	79
		Kennedy Administration	80
		Kennedy Administration	81
Friday August 31, 1962			
		CIA	82
		Kennedy Administration	83
		Kennedy Administration	84
		Kennedy Administration	85
		Kennedy Administration	86

Saturday September 1, 1962			
		Kennedy Administration	87
Monday September 3, 1962		Kennedy Administration	88
		CIA	89
Tuesday September 4, 1962		Kennedy Administration	90
Wednesday September 5, 1962		Kennedy Administration	91
		Kennedy Administration	92
Thursday September 6, 1962		Kennedy Administration	93
		CIA	94
	10:00	CIA	95
Monday September 10, 1962		Kennedy Administration	96
Wednesday September 12, 1962		Kennedy Administration	97
		CIA	98
Thursday September 13, 1962		Kennedy Administration	99
		Kennedy Administration	100
Friday September 14, 1962		Kennedy Administration	101
		CIA	102
Wednesday September 19, 1962		Kennedy Administration	103
		Kennedy Administration	104
Friday September 21, 1962	16:36	Kennedy Administration	105
Tuesday September 25, 1962		Kennedy Administration	106
Thursday September 27, 1962		Kennedy Administration	107
		CIA	108
Monday October 1, 1962		Kennedy Administration	109
		Kennedy Administration	110
		Kennedy Administration	111
		Kennedy Administration	112
Tuesday October 2, 1962		Kennedy Administration	113
Wednesday October 3, 1962	17:15	CIA	114
		Kennedy Administration	115
Thursday October 4, 1962		Kennedy Administration	116
Friday October 5, 1962	17:15	Kennedy Administration	117
Monday October 8, 1962		Kennedy Administration	118
Thursday October 11, 1962		Kennedy Administration	119
Friday October 12, 1962		Kennedy Administration	120
Saturday October 13, 1962		Kennedy Administration	121
	11:50	CIA	122
		Kennedy Administration	123
		Kennedy Administration	124
Tuesday October 16, 1962	18:30 -19:55	Kennedy Administration	125

Wednesday October 17, 1962	8:30	Kennedy Administration	126
	8:30	CIA	127
	16:00	CIA	128
		Kennedy Administration	129
		CIA	130
		Kennedy Administration	131
		CIA	132
		Kennedy Administration	133
		CIA	134
Thursday October 18, 1962		CIA - ARTHUR C. LUNDAHL Director National Photographic Interpretation Center	135
	17:00	Kennedy Administration	137
	11:00	Kennedy Administration	138
		Kennedy Administration	136
		CIA	139
		Kennedy Administration	140
		CIA	141
Friday October 19, 1962		CIA	142
Saturday October 20, 1962	14:30-17:10	Kennedy Administration	143
	14:30-15:00	CIA	144
		Kennedy Administration	145
	10:00	CIA	146
	12:30 - 16:50	Kennedy Administration	147
		CIA	148
	16:30	CIA	149
		CIA	150
	22:00	CIA	151
Sunday October 21, 1962			
	15:00	Kennedy Administration	152
		CIA	153
		CIA	154
		Kennedy Administration	155
	17:00	CIA	156
		Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence National Photographic Interpretation Center	157
Monday October 22, 1962	10:00	CIA	158

Tuesday October 23, 1962	10:00	Kennedy Administration	159
		CIA	160
	18:00	Kennedy Administration	161
	18:00	Kennedy Administration	162
Wednesday October 24, 1962		Kennedy Administration	163
		Kennedy Administration	164
	10:00	Kennedy Administration	165
		Kennedy Administration	166
		Kennedy Administration	167
	15:25	Kennedy Administration	168
	17:00	CIA	169
	20:25	Kennedy Administration	170
	22:30	Kennedy Administration	171
	23:15	Kennedy Administration	172
	23:25	Kennedy Administration	173
	0:30	Kennedy Administration	174
	10:00	Kennedy Administration	175
		Kennedy Administration	176
Thursday October 25, 1962	17:00	Kennedy Administration	177
		Kennedy Administration	178
		Kennedy Administration	179
	10:00	Kennedy Administration	180
	14:30	Kennedy Administration	181
	14:30	CIA	182
Friday October 26, 1962		Kennedy Administration	183
		Kennedy Administration	184
	10:00	Kennedy Administration	185
		CIA	186
	11:00	Kennedy Administration	187
	16:00	Kennedy Administration	188
Saturday October 27, 1962	21:00	Kennedy Administration	189
		Kennedy Administration	190

Sunday October 28, 1962	11:10	Kennedy Administration	191
	22:00	CIA	192
Monday October 29, 1962	10:00	Kennedy Administration	193
		Kennedy Administration	194
	18:30	Kennedy Administration	195
Tuesday October 30, 1962	10:00	Kennedy Administration	196
Wednesday October 31, 1962		Kennedy Administration	197
	10:00	Kennedy Administration	198
		CIA	199

This timeline was constructed from the documents listed in the methods section. Each document is listed chronologically with the viewpoint (CIA or Kennedy Administration) and the document's title. The goal of this timeline is to understand how the timing of communication (telegrams, memorandums, & meetings) between the CIA and Kennedy Administration impacted Kennedy's decisions during the Cuban Missile Crisis. This timeline was compiled using Google Sheets because it helped organize the information in chronological order and such software was used in studies conducted by the foundational researchers. It should be noted that all charts below include analysis.

Analysis of Timeline

Cuban Missile Crisis Photo-Gap

Despite four National Intelligence Estimates (NIES) that reported and predicted Soviet activity in Cuba, the US Intelligence community was unaware of Soviet military build-up. This chart evaluates how the timing of the NIES contributed to sparse communication of intelligence and the communication of misinformation.

National Intelligence Estimate Dates	Information Relayed Meaning: Information in the National Intelligence Estimates sent to various agencies	Implications/Decisions based on National Intelligence Estimates (Analysis) Meaning: Decisions, results, and consequences of the information relayed in the National Intelligence Estimates.
January 17th, 1962	CIA officials believed that Soviet implementation of military bases in the Caribbean was unlikely. ²²	Next Intelligence Estimate Pushed Back No further action taken.
March 21st, 1962	Despite USSR aid to the Castro regime, the CIA maintained that "the USSR would almost certainly not intervene directly with its own forces." ²³	Prompted draft of an appropriate course of action for the United States to if the Soviets establish a military base in Cuba" at a meeting on March 22nd (no official plan was ever thoroughly vetted) March 21st intelligence estimate was supposed to be released on February 7 th -> delay and insufficient planning support that the US government did not place substantial value on estimates
August 1st, 1962	Detailed the beginnings of Soviet military buildup in Cuba, but held no real concern for total Soviet military interference. ²⁴	No other estimates between March 21 st and August 1 st , 1962 -> CIA failed to take the possibility of Soviet military engagement in Cuba seriously, Lack of timely information -> CIA spread the firm stance that the Soviets would in no way engage in military buildup in Cuba (Communication of misinformation -> contributed to lack of preparedness)
September 19 th , 1962	Evidence of huge Soviet military buildup, including missiles, weapons, technicians, ground forces, etc, in Cuba started in July, which was still technically not correct after further review. ²⁵	Failed to get consistent estimates over the period from January 1962 to September 1962/accurately assess the threat of Soviet military buildup. Estimates during the months of April-July could have changed the timeline of the Cuban Missile Crisis -> "to embark on the current military buildup in Cuba probably was made in April 1962...The program probably was planned and set in motion during the period April through June."

This analysis suggests the gap in intelligence led to the communication of misinformation during the crisis. Kennedy administration officials were not sufficiently informed of the high possibility of Soviet interference in Cuba due to the lack of accurate information in the NIES. From an epistemological standpoint, the CIA presented the NIES in a non-urgent manner. Therefore, the Kennedy Administration lacked serious consideration for the possibility of Soviet military build-up. The lack of intelligence gathering between March and October 1962 accounts for the communication of misinformation, and relates to Zegart's conclusions that US intelligence failed to accurately predict Soviet action, which contributed to lack of US preparedness. This paper concurs with Zegart's findings by evidencing that the CIA failed to notify the Presidential administration with sound information, resulting in inefficient crisis management.

Major Gaps in Communication

Gaps in communication between the CIA and Kennedy Administration about Cuba from January through October 1962 were assessed differently in relation to how close the dates of the gap were to the timing of Soviet Military Buildup and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Gaps closer to these events constituted more significance. This chart illustrates how gaps in communication from January through October 1962 affected decisions to resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Dates of	Context Behind Communication Gap	Implications of Communication Gap (Analysis)
Communication Gap (ac-cording to timeline)	Meaning: Circumstances, conditions or events going on at the time that influenced the reason for the gap in communication.	Meaning: Decisions, results, and consequences of gaps in communication.
January 20 th - February 20 th	Lack of concern for military buildup evident in the January 17 th National Intelligence Estimate. ²⁶ (Same for February 20th-March 2nd gap)	Officials from both the CIA & Kennedy administration believed the United States truly had the upper hand -> did not address Cuba between January 20 th - February 20 th .
March 21 st , 1962- April 5 th 1962	March 21st National Intelligence Estimate was released -> Heavily discredited the possibility of Soviet military buildup in Cuba. ²⁷	No valid communication between the CIA and Kennedy administration about Cuba other than for Project Mongoose Incomplete preparation for possibility of Soviet Buildup started on March 22nd
June - Recording of Communication only on June 7 th , 8 th , and 14 th 1962	Planning of Project Mongoose	No consideration of military buildup in Cuba Mongoose took away intelligence collection resources Incomplete coverage despite collection efforts Inefficient planning within Mongoose -> leads to same parties miscommunicating during the Cuban Missile Crisis
August 1 st - August 9 th	On August 1 st , 1962, estimates indicated the start of Soviet military buildup. ²⁸	No documents indicating Kennedy's response to the August 1 st estimates until August 9th. Information of this quality should have been directly taken to the President on August 1 st Gap in communication pushed back Kennedy's decision to order more intelligence and address Soviet military buildup
August 29 th - September 7 th	On August 29 th , U2 photography confirmed extensive Soviet military sites in Cuba. ²⁹	Kennedy and his advisors vetted the idea of gaining more photographic coverage on Cuba at the September 7 th and 16 th meetings (could have occurred sooner had intelligence been communicated on August 1 st)
September 19 th - September 21 st	Final National Estimate released on September 19 th -> confirmed the Soviet military buildup ³⁰	September 19th Estimate not addressed by Kennedy until September 21 st -> Kennedy addresses Secretary of Defense McNamara about the possibility of attacking the confirmed missile sites. Kennedy decided to put McNamara/Johnson in charge of plans Lack of communication between September 19 th and 21 st about the definite confirmation of missile sites and plans to deal with such developments influenced decisions because it limited the different courses of action Kennedy could pursue Took CIA awhile to have a definite confirmation (September 19 th National Estimate after the August 29 th photography) Lengthy gap of intelligence hinders the president's ability to make decisions during this time

While the US deferred dealing with the Cuban Missile Crisis, Soviet military buildup became more rapid overtime, limiting courses of action available. Such deferrals were the result of inefficient communication and several lengthy gaps in the communication of intelligence explained in the chart, hindering Kennedy's ability to make timely decisions.

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- 22 Document 12
23 Document 23
24 Document 54
25 Document 103

Changes In Meeting Schedules

The changing, delay, or cancellation of meetings and the creation of joint-projects or committees impacted the communication between Kennedy Administration officials and the CIA. This section aims to understand how such changes impacted communication and the decision-making process.

As shown in the table below, the disintegration of key meetings led to internal tensions and inefficient communication, which lengthened the time it took to make decisions to resolve the crisis. This aligns with Stephen Mar-rin's finding that differing perspectives on intelligence elongate the decision-making process. The dissolution of meetings and communication avenues led to the polarization of presidential advisors during the crisis, ultimately extending the timeline for crisis management. Such extensions impacted Kennedy's decisions because they limited the courses of action available, detailed in section [4.2.6].

Date of Meeting Change	People/Groups Involved	Changes in Meeting Schedules Meaning: Changes in frequency or timing of meetings.	Implication of Changes (Analysis) Meaning: Decisions, results, and consequences of changes in meeting schedules.
April 5th, 1962	General Lansdale (Chief of Operations), John McCone - CIA Director, The Attorney General; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Gilpatric, General Taylor, and General Carter	Special Group for the Operation Mongoose implemented weekly CIA progress reports every Tuesday which were continued throughout the period of the Cuban Missile Crisis.	Implemented weekly meetings during a period of non-crisis Provided an extra avenue for communication However, meetings didn't result in consistent communication because of opposing perspectives and tensions between agencies
October 5 th , 1962	Special Groups 5412, CIA, Operation Mongoose, National Security Council (Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency)	National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy "rejected the idea of regular NSC meetings". ³¹ Bundy rejected the idea (calling) the several Special Groups 5412, CIA, Mongoose...feeling it was better to keep them separated." ³² McCone stated "he intended to request occasional NSC meetings to review specific estimates on other intelligence situations", indicating that these meetings were important for the communication of new intelligence. ³³	National Security Council meetings: Foster communication between the Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Limiting these meetings narrowed down avenues for communication of crucial information from involved parties advising the President Implications of this decision include the further polarization of agencies and their recommendations for the President, which lengthened the time it took to address the Soviet military buildup. Keeping these teams separated heavily contributed to the lack of communication about the capabilities of several agencies c. These teams were working on Cuban-related intelligence efforts -> lack of unity and chances in communication between teams d. Limited flow of information about Cuba throughout the US government according to several Operation Mongoose Memorandums and President Kennedy.
October 16 th , 1962	John McCone - CIA Director, The Attorney General; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Gilpatric, General Taylor, and General Carter, General McNamara, Bundy	The Attorney General stated that "he will hold a meeting every morning at 09:30 with...representatives from the various agencies" to speed up progress. ³⁴	Attorney General Robert Kennedy made the top officials aware of the lack of flow of information/inefficiency of weekly meetings, especially after the cancellation of regular NSC meetings. President was dissatisfied with current progress -> meetings created to speed up progress. Weekly meetings unable to provide consistent communication from the different parties involved The lack of communication hindered the planning and execution of solutions

- 26 Document 12
- 27 Document 23
- 28 Document 54
- 29 Document 78
- 30 Document 103

Conclusion for Timeline

The analysis of the timeline indicates that there were multiple points from January - October 1962 with evident miscommunication and communication of misinformation between the Presidential administration and the CIA. These instances led to inefficient planning, deeply contrasting perspectives and political judgments, and clouded decisions. Inefficient communication is also evident in the Cuban Missile Crisis Documents, which are evaluated in the following sections.

Analysis of Documents

CIA Communication About Soviet Activity

This section details the effectiveness of CIA communication to the Presidential administration about the confirmation of Soviet activity in Cuba within the documents.

On August 10th, 1962, the CIA Director McCone reported on the “accelerated Soviet supply of personnel and material to Cuba.”³⁵ However, on August 21st, 1962, it became clear that “information available to the Agency since August 10th indicated that the extent of Soviet supply operations was much greater than [the CIA] reported on August 10th.”³⁶ The scope of Soviet military buildup was clearly not communicated by the CIA to the presidential administration until almost 11 days after. This led to a delay in further analysis of Soviet intervention, which eventually occurred on August 29th. This conclusion supports Max Holland’s finding that the picking of select pieces of intelligence led to inefficient planning during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Despite having updated reports, the CIA only communicated certain pieces of intelligence, which limited the presidential administration's ability to propose and decide on potential resolutions that could successfully deal with the Soviet military buildup.

Similarly, “CIA officers [alleged] that intelligence on offensive missile bases in Cuba had been available for several days before it was called to the attention of the President.”³⁷ The officers also stated that “there were no U-2 photographic reconnaissance missions over Cuba from August 29th to October 14th” due to bad weather and “to avoid activating the SAM Air Defense installations.”³⁸ This evidence demonstrates that the CIA knew about early Soviet activity in Cuba and did not communicate such intelligence effectively. This gap in intelligence and communication hindered Kennedy’s ability to choose a course of action, evident in section [4.2.6].

Operation Mongoose

Another important factor impacting the communication during the Cuban Missile Crisis was the communication standards during Operation Mongoose, and how both events intersected. This section of the paper aims to analyze how such miscommunication related to Operation Mongoose impacted communication and intelligence release during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

31	Document 117
32	Document 117
33	Document 117
34	Document 124
35	Document 67
36	Document 67

Related Date	Agencies/People Involved	Important Evidence/Key Information from Documents	Implications of Lack of Communication during Operation Mongoose Meaning: How communication about Operation Mongoose impacted planning, decisions, or outcomes of Operation Mongoose.	Relation to Cuban Missile Crisis/Continuing Patterns Meaning: How communication about Operation Mongoose impacted planning, decisions, or outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
October 4, 1962	Attorney General, Lansdale, McCone	<p>The Attorney General was seriously “dissatisfied with lack of action in the sabotage field, went on to stress that nothing was moving forward, commented that one effort attempted had failed, and expressed general concern over the developing situation.”³⁹</p> <p>General Lansdale, who was trying to salvage the project as the leader, pointed out “that no sabotage had been attempted and gave the general impression that things were all right.”⁴⁰</p> <p>“McCone then stated that phase one was principally intelligence gathering, organizing and training, that no sabotage was authorized, that one operation against a powerhouse had been contemplated but was discouraged by the group, that he had called a meeting to review matters this morning and that he had observed a lack of forward motion.”⁴¹</p> <p>The Attorney General refuted this claim stating that “the Special Group had not withheld approval on any specified actions to his knowledge, but to the contrary had urged and insisted upon action by the Lansdale operating organization.”⁴²</p>	<p>- Miscommunication contributed to the postponement of operations and sabotage, evident by reaffirmation after this conversation to move forward with more “dynamic action”</p> <p>- Change the format of the planning for Operation Mongoose to “a format of separate planning for each Department and Agency involved”</p> <p>-> divided communication and the flow of information between agencies</p>	<p>- Attorney General and McCone, two key players in the Cuban Missile Crisis, had completely opposite ideas of when and how the sabotage plans for Operation Mongoose would be implemented.</p> <p>- Such miscommunication and lack of flow of information led to tensions between agencies that continued during the period of Cuban Missile Crisis/Soviet Military Buildup (October)</p> <p>-> led to further polarization during Cuban Missile Crisis and disagreements over the correct course of action</p> <p>- Influenced Kennedy’s decision because opposing agencies provided conflicting ways to resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis leading to further confusion</p>
April 26, 1962	McCone, Special Group (Augmented)	<p>“McCone expressed dissatisfaction with progress; stated nothing had been accomplished in putting Cubans in the Army for training and that no actions had been taken on matters decided two weeks ago.”⁴³</p> <p>The Attorney General declared that in the last six month’s effort through Operation Mongoose “the program had not advanced to the point we had hoped” as the program was “still lacking in intelligence.”⁴⁴</p> <p>Although “the responsible agencies have worked vigorously to accomplish this objective...the Special Group (Augmented) does not feel that the information obtained has been adequate to accurately assess the internal</p>	<p>- Plans that were carried out through Operation Mongoose were inefficient</p> <p>- Operation Mongoose team spent months trying to collect intelligence from Cuban refugees & train Cuban rebels to fight Castro</p> <p>- Complete failure & took away resources from intelligence collection efforts -> different intelligence collected could have allowed the US government to discover the missiles earlier</p>	<p>- Mongoose took away other plans for Cuba (other versions of intelligence collection such as U-2 photography, which could have caught the Soviet Military Buildup earlier)</p> <p>- Better collection could have occurred if the focus was not to collect intelligence from refugees.</p>

- 37 Document 186
- 38 Document 143
- 39 Document 116
- 40 Document 116
- 41 Document 116
- 42 Document 116
- 43 Document 32
- 44 Document 46

		conditions.” ⁴⁵		
October 25 th , 1962	Lansdale, Mongoose Special Group	Lansdale, who had misfired with Operation Mongoose and failed to prevent the Cuban Missile Crisis, felt badly cut out of the picture and appears to be seeking to reconstitute the MONGOOSE Special Group operations during this period of impending crisis.” ⁴⁶ However, Operation Mongoose, as acknowledged by many from the Presidential administration, became “an impossible procedure under current circumstances.” ⁴⁷	More immediate tensions between agencies	- Tensions carried over to Cuban Missile Crisis according to CIA Cuban Missile Crisis Documents - Lasting reminders of failure regarding Cuba led to rash decisions and inefficient communication due to personal vendettas
August 16, 1962	Lansdale, Special Group (Augmented)	Most of the documents related to Operation Mongoose evidence lack of progress, dissatisfaction with current action, and stalling of important plans. One example of this is from August 16 th party) 1962. A memorandum of the Special Group Meeting reported that the “meeting was generally unsatisfactory” because “Lansdale and [the] CIA [grew] out of the position” and acted upon different plans. “Secondly, the policy implications were not acted upon” that were discussed in previous meetings.” ⁴⁸	- Differences between Lansdale and CIA needed to be straightened out by Harvey (3rd party) - Acknowledgement of the difference of opinion between Lansdale and McCone	- Parties (both of which were involved in settling the Cuban Missile Crisis) were unable to settle their issues with one another -> miscommunication in the future
January 20, 1962	McCone, Lansdale, General Cabell	McCone thought of Lansdale's paper which detailed several plans that McCone regarded as “extreme in some regards, most particularly its criticism of the estimate of the Cuban situation.” McCone also “questioned whether many of them could be done in the time schedule, and some of them probably not at all.” When Lansdale insisted on sticking to his timeline, McCone asserted that attempting to “adhere to all the elements of the proposed Cuba Project timetable” would force the CIA to “act on the basis of extremely inadequate information.” Additionally, General Cabell “pointed out that Lansdale is often inclined to commit and promise that the CIA can do more than we are capable. He said we must not allow anyone to commit the Agency to a task it cannot fulfill.” It is also noted in an August 31 st memorandum of Operation Mongoose from Lansdale that “timely operational intelligence is vital to CIA current operations.” ⁴⁹	- Lansdale, therefore, was not aware of “some CIA movies made” and misunderstood the objective of such actions.	- Misunderstandings of CIA capabilities, as McCone made clear, led to the failure of Operation Mongoose - Lansdale, knowing this information, still stuck to his original timetable - Clear disregard for CIA recommendations -> continued during the Crisis and aligns with Robert Gate's assertion that critical CIA information is overlooked by other agencies to ensure their own needs.

The Operation Mongoose documents demonstrate the lack of progress, dissatisfaction with current action, and stalling of important plans that continued into the timeline of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Kennedy's Limitations on Communication

President Kennedy made key decisions that impacted the distribution of information during the crisis. Such actions are necessary to assess since this study aims to determine all factors affecting communication between the Kennedy Administration and the CIA, and the implications of such factors on the decision-making process during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Between January and October 1962, the President directly limited communication of information regarding Cuba several times. During a 5412 Special Group meeting, the president made clear his intention of obtaining permission to have copies made and circulated on a strict need-to-know basis.” CIA Director McCone concurred, stating that “knowledge of this project must be held to an absolute minimum.”⁵⁰ While both McCone and the President agreed, this decision impacted Kennedy's ability to have timely information about current conditions in Cuba while making decisions, which is seen in section [4.2.6]. This correlates to Gopalan's conclusion that the President's directives contributed to the lack of communication between involved agencies working to resolve the crisis, limiting his ability to take decisive action.

⁴⁵ Document 65
⁴⁶ Document 161
⁴⁷ Document 161

48	Document 63
49	Document 17
50	Document 8

On August 1st, President Kennedy instructed Acting Intelligence Director Marshall Carter to limit access to U-2 photography analysis. However, both defense and CIA operatives needed this information to run estimates that would predict future Soviet action. These estimates would have been useful in late October when the government couldn't determine the most effective way to combat and prevent further Soviet military buildup. Similarly, on October 11th, 1962, McCone showed the President photos of crates landing in Havana presumed to carry IL 28s. To this, "the President requested [this] information be withheld at least until after" the mid-term elections. However, McCone "stated that these particular photographs could not be restricted as they had been disseminated to the Intelligence Community." After hearing this, "the President further requested all future information be suppressed. McCone stated this was extremely dangerous." It was agreed that "all those involved in 'giving advice to the President' would be fully informed."⁵¹ However, the President decided to suppress information to operational divisions and the joint and specified commands, which includes most CIA operatives. Despite the clear danger of suppressing communication and McCone's recommendation, the President still limits dissemination, demonstrating the tensions between the CIA and Presidential administration. This aligns with Robert Gate's claim that the President dismisses intelligence because of controversy and disregards important CIA recommendations, leading to further inefficacy seen in the decision-making process.

Changes in Photography/Reconnaissance Flights

This section details the relationship between the changes in intelligence collection from overhead flights, the communication of this intelligence, and Kennedy's decisions, while analyzing the implications of such changes on crisis management.

Date Related to Photography/Recon	Change Made to or Issue Acknowledged with Photography	Implication of Changes on Communication and Decisions about Photography
	Meaning: Any changes or edits to photography/reconnaissance efforts for Cuba such as but not limited to changing timing and location of flights, number of flights, restrictions on photography, and shifts between low-coverage and high-coverage reconnaissance.	Meaning: How changes in communication related to photography impacted planning, decisions, or outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
April 10, 1962	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reconnaissance in Cuba was low-priority after the shattering of US-Cuban relations with the Havana telegram - Recon efforts in Project Mongoose attempted to increase intelligence coverage of Cuba - Despite new efforts, the group admitted that "the current plan does not constitute and does not permit a maximum intelligence and covert action program against Cuba."⁵² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirmed there was no clear and complete coverage of Cuba - Accounts for the lack of information in the National Intelligence Estimates -> resulted in the communication of wrong info - Influenced photo-gap of the Cuban Missiles. - Despite confirming lack of coverage the same plan continued -> wasted resources.
October 5, 1962, 5:15 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - George Bundy restricted U-2 flights which "placed the United States Intelligence Community in a position where it could not report with assurance the development of offensive capabilities in Cuba - McCone "felt it most probable that Soviet-Castro operations would end up with an established offensive capability in Cuba including MRBMs - Bundy took issue with this extreme case: He "felt the Soviets would not go that far, that he was satisfied that no offensive capability would be installed in Cuba because of its world-wide effects and therefore seemed relaxed over the fact that the Intelligence Community cannot produce hard information on this important subject" - McCone, clearly angry with Bundy's ignorance, said that "Bundy's viewpoint was reflected by many in the Intelligence Community, perhaps a majority, but he just did not agree and furthermore did not think the United States could afford to take such a risk."⁵³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - McCone's concerns about the U-2 flights and Soviet action were miscommunicated because Bundy didn't take McCone's position into account -> leading to lack of confusion about central objectives - McCone expresses clear frustration about the likelihood of offensive capabilities as a probability and importance of intelligence collection - Bundy's lack of value for intelligence efforts -> refused to properly take McCone's position into account (communication between Bundy and McCone unproductive - miscommunication) - Admitted this miscommunication led to unclear policy so "[their] objectives were not determined and therefore [their] efforts were not productive." - Finding aligns with Robert Gates's conclusion that those working for the presidential administration don't value CIA data or recommendations - Led to faulty plans that put US at risk

October 5, 1962, 5:15 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretary of Defense deferred the decision to conduct low-level coverage in certain areas of Cuba another week Special Group 5412 also postponed low-level photography of critical Cuban targets⁵⁴. 	Other agency heads also discounted the importance of CIA intelligence during the crisis.
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Instances of Good Communication vs. The Acknowledgement of the Lack of Communication

This chart evaluates both instances of good communication and the acknowledgment of the lack of communication between government officials. This is essential because such acknowledgments should have led to improvements in communication. This research, demonstrated in the chart, assesses this relationship.

Evidence of Good Communication	Implications of Good Communication	Evidence of Acknowledgement of Lack of Communication, Miscommunication,	Implications of Acknowledgment of Lack of Communication
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	Meaning: How good communication impacted planning, decisions, or outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis.	and Communication of Misinformation	Meaning: How the acknowledgement of the communication impacted the planning, decisions, and outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
As a result of the lack of progress of Operation Mongoose, President Kennedy mandated that "all U.S. Departments and Agencies participating in Operation Mongoose will assist in the preparation of these plans, as required. Plans should include a description of the assumed contingency situation, specific actions to be taken and by whom, timing required, and an indication of post-action requirements." ⁵⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandate ensures that all plans related to Operation Mongoose and Cuba are thoroughly vetted by every involved agency Opens flow of information between agencies Consistent communication and thorough understanding of plans 	President Kennedy even went as far as to say that the "the top leadership of the CIA" need to be "impelled to check the situation all the way down the line" and that CIA need to carry out their "clearcut and definite responsibility." ⁵⁶	President was dissatisfied with the lack of CIA communication & lack of CIA adherence to their duty
Executive Committee of the National Security Council "for the purpose of effective conduct of the operations of the Executive Branch in the current crisis" which would "meet, until further notice, daily at 10:00 a.m. in the Cabinet Room." ⁵⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily meetings facilitated regular communication between all involved agencies starting Tuesday, October 23rd. Very late into the crisis Helped manage communications/planning during heightened tension between the Soviets & US 	The Kennedy administration was shocked "after the last Cuban episode [about] the weakness of top-level CIA control—the discrepancy between what high CIA officials thought their operatives were saying and doing in the field, and what these operatives were actually saying and doing." ⁵⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President clearly recognizes the CIA has done a faulty job in communicating their actions and knowledge Such half-truths limit the flow of information between the CIA and presidential administration

<p>"On October 18, 1962, the Central Intelligence Agency released a 'Joint Evaluation of the Soviet Mission Threat in Cuba,' based on intelligence obtained as of 9 p.m. that day."⁵⁹</p>	<p>- Analysis of U-2 photography missions from October 14th, 15th, and 17th -> faster than the analysis of other U-2 missions (even ones that confirmed the missiles in Cuba)</p> <p>- Communication of this information is crucial for plans for both airstrike & blockade</p>	<p>At the Daily White House Staff Meeting on October 31, 1962, President Kennedy acknowledged that critics "had already begun to howl about intelligence shortcomings during the period prior to the crisis"</p> <p>To answer such criticisms, the president and advisors decided that it would be best to say that "Aerial photographs taken on August 29th revealed no missile sites. It was not until October 14th that photographic evidence of the sites and missiles was available."</p> <p>On the same day, Director McCone also "acknowledged that from September 15 on we had failed to evaluate properly the refugee reports and reports from third country representatives in Cuba. He explained this failure in part by referring to the September 19, 1962 National Intelligence Estimate which stated all the reasons why [they] did not think the Russians would deploy nuclear weapons to countries outside their borders. This estimate, in effect, prompted evaluators to downgrade the fragmentary reports...between September and early October."⁶⁰</p>	<p>- Proves that the President acknowledged that there were intelligence failures regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis</p> <p>- Document indicates the President has no idea about the missiles in the August 29th photographs (unlikely) or that the President didn't want to admit the amount of time it took to act on the information</p> <p>- McCone not only admits to the intelligence failure but also to the limiting further intelligence collection</p> <p>- Intelligence failure contributed heavily to the communication of misinformation -> serious impact on Kennedy's knowledge and the advice others were giving to him during Crisis</p>
		<p>. One example of this from the 421. Memorandum prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency for the Executive Director September 10th. While debating the need for extended overhead flights</p> <p>"covering the remainder of the island not covered in the 29 August and 5 September</p>	<p>- In many meetings -> no conclusion on how to resolve the crisis</p> <p>- General Carter cautioned that this plan was still not intended to provide full-coverage</p> <p>- Despite the knowledge of an immediate threat, the lack of compromise and decision-making limited the action taken to deal with</p>
		<p>missions."</p> <p>"General Carter is reported to have said, "There they all go again and no decisions."⁶¹</p>	<p>the Cuban Missile Crisis</p> <p>- While there was communication between several parties -> communication was not productive</p>

Despite several acknowledgments of miscommunication or the lack of communication, there was little improvement in communication standards about intelligence and plans. Evidence and analysis in the above chart assert that inefficient communication contributed to the prolonging of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Communication of Intelligence and the Implementation of a Blockade

This section details how miscommunication, communication of misinformation, and the lack of communication addressed in the previous sections influenced Kennedy's decision to implement a blockade around Cuba. This section also addresses how communication between October 15th - 28th, the critical period during the Cuban Missile Crisis, influenced the resolution of the crisis.

At 8:30 p.m. on October 15 when "CIA Deputy Director Carter reported to McGeorge Bundy the hard evidence of the MRBM's...the President's Special Assistant decided not to notify the President that evening."⁶² Carter's information supported an immediate nuclear threat that the Presidential Advisor kept from the President.

Meanwhile, Soviet construction of SAM missile sites in Cuba increased rapidly. Bundy's actions engendered less time for the President to address the situation and decide a plan of action, indicating a lack of communication within the presidential administration.

On October 17th 1962, McCone made the following recommendations for three principal courses of action to resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis, including "(1) Do nothing and live with the situation (2) Resort to an all-out

blockade which would probably require a declaration of war, and to be effective would mean the interruption of all incoming shipping. (3) Military action”. However, “discussions...were inconclusive and it was asked that the group reassemble, and develop their views on the advantages, disadvantages, and effects” of each option.⁶³ The President’s suppression of information, U-2 photo-gap from August 29th to October 14th, and previous ineffective meetings from September-October contributed to the deficit in information regarding each course of action presented, resulting in a lack of collective understanding about forward motion. Even so, the October 17th meeting allowed “the views of all parties responsible for giving advice to the President” to air.⁶⁴ This is an open avenue for all agencies to express their own opinions, and serves as an example of an improvement in communication.

51	Document 119
52	Document 323
53	Document 117
54	Document 198
55	Document 40
56	Document 91
57	Document 155
58	Document 91
59	Document 13
60	Document 198

Early on October 18th, “Secretary McNamara called Mr. McCone [and] expressed great concern over the [October 15th photography reports].” Both he and McCone agreed that “this development demanded more prompt and decisive action.”⁶⁵ This immediate contact between McNamara and McCone regarding the reports indicates an improvement in communication, which improved Kennedy’s ability to respond to the developing crisis as he had up-to-date information. Later that day, after being briefed, Kennedy requested two groups be organized: “One to study the advantages of [a blockade]...second would be referred to [an airstrike].”⁶⁶ Up-to-date information about several courses of action was communicated to Kennedy, allowing him to decide to organize the two groups to explore both possibilities further. However, when these groups presented on October 19th, 1962 at 5 pm, the president “was ‘not at all satisfied’ and sent them back to work”. There are multiple instances where Kennedy pushes back decisions because the information he’s requested is unavailable, even after assigning the retrieval of information to high- ranking officers. Later that night, the CIA released new intelligence about the implications of missile activity from 9 p.m.. This is an improvement in the communication of analysis results as the CIA released information immediately after acquiring intelligence.

On October 19th, 1962 at 11 am, Mr. Johnson, who was in charge of the blockage plan, was still not prepared to present to the group. With this development, Mr. Bundy “doubted whether the strategy group was serving the President as well as it might”.⁶⁷ Even though there was a deficit in information about the different courses of action, the conversation continued, in which disagreements between agency heads stalled decisive action.

October 19th intelligence reports predicted the blockade would not terminate Castro’s regime, and the Soviets would exert “strong direct pressures elsewhere” including US strategic bases in Turkey. Analysts believed “Soviet leaders would not deliberately initiate general war or take military measures”.⁶⁸ These developments led to two vetted plans. Secretary McNamara, who supported the blockade, explained that it would prevent “any addition to the strategic missiles already deployed to Cuba and eventually...eliminate these missiles”. He also stated that the US would “negotiate for the removal of the strategic missiles from Cuba.”⁶⁹ However, General Taylor opposed the blockade and favored an air strike, as did the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President wished, “looking back, that [they] had done earlier what we are now preparing to do”, which may have been possible if there was efficient communication of intelligence.⁷⁰ The Attorney General then stated an air attack could potentially follow a blockade.

McCone opposed an air attack, but affirmed that a blockade would not be sufficient. The President then decided to implement a “blockade and take actions necessary to put us in a position to undertake an air strike on the missiles and missile sites by Monday or Tuesday.”⁷¹ From an epistemological view, the President deferred the final decision multiple times because of the lack of preparedness of officials tasked with communicating key information. The President even wished the decision could have been made earlier. Another important decision to note is that Kennedy delayed finalizing details of the blockade for “as long as a week”, which limits the flow of information between the president and field agents implementing the blockade.

On October 21st, 1962, intelligence expressed that all but two Soviet ships adhered to the blockade. On 3:25 pm on October 24th, 1962, Ball admitted he was “getting a little groggy [as] so many people have different views” about the blockade’s effectiveness.⁷² The differing views and lack of communication of the current situation with the blockade made it difficult to agree upon further action. Most of those advising Kennedy believed “that the Russians are giving way, which [was] not quite accurate.”⁷³

61	Document 96
62	Document 5
63	Document 133
64	Document 129
65	Document 136
66	Document 136
67	Document 138

On October 25, 1962, McCone presented no new material despite the President’s request for “a careful analysis of the present situation inside Cuba.”⁷⁴ Kennedy subsequently instructed him to have drafts of alternative forthcoming major Soviet moves in Cuba. An October 25th intelligence briefing noted that the Soviets intended for the US to escalate tensions, refused to formally acknowledge the blockade, and wanted to negotiate a trade involving other US bases. Epistemologically, this intelligence note is particularly important because it notifies the President that presumably, the Soviets will not initiate war unless the US is the initial aggressor. This helped the President understand Soviet intentions and delay the airstrike to limit the possibility of war.

On October 26th, 1962, McCone reported that he “stood down a CIA operation” to send 10 submarine teams into Cuba, as “he did not believe this should be done by the CIA unilaterally.”⁷⁵ Kennedy agreed and asked that this proposal be discussed. This is a major shift in how the CIA and other agencies communicate and implement their plans. The lack of communication and agreement between agencies early in the crisis prompted agency officials to communicate their plans better. In the same meeting, the President agreed with this concept, stressing “the importance of tying together all existing groups engaged in covert activities...to integrate [their] planning.”⁷⁶ These efforts to improve communication indicate that government officials acknowledge the lack of communication and efficient planning throughout the crisis timeline.

The following day, the President “recalled that he had asked that consideration be given to the withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey some days previously.”⁷⁷ However, Secretary Ball replied that such investigation had not been completed. Information about the missiles in Turkey is key to the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis. To ignore a Presidential direction at this point in the timeline is risky. The meeting ended with “no firm or formal judgments” because Ball was unable to communicate information about the Turkey missiles, lengthening the timeframe to compose a formal resolution.⁷⁸

According to Khrushchev’s letter, on October 28th, the Soviets agreed to remove the missiles in Cuba in exchange for the US missiles in Turkey to be deconstructed.

Conclusion

Both the timeline and the documents indicate that there was a severe lack of communication about the Cuban Missile Crisis between CIA officials and the Presidential administration. Outside factors, such as prior failures, the election, Operation Mongoose, and tensions between agencies contributed to both miscommunication or lack of communication. Furthermore, intelligence failures, including changes in photography, conflicting perspectives on objectives, and the lack of implementation of plans, led to the communication of misinformation, which lengthened the time it took to select a course of action to deal with the crisis. Similarly, the cancellation of meetings and lack of value placed upon CIA intelligence collection contributed to intelligence failure which led to the further communication of misinformation. While efforts were taken on behalf of the government to address these issues, most efforts appeared too late into October to achieve much impact.

68	Document 140
69	Document 143
70	Document 143
71	Document 143
72	Document 170
73	Document 171
74	Document 176
75	Document 180
76	Document 180
77	Document 185
78	Document 187

This study's findings and analysis align with Holland and Marrin's conclusions rather than Zegart and Knorr. Similar to this research, Holland and Marrin concluded that political tensions, inefficient communication of intelligence, and various interpretations of information elongated the timeframe it took to make decisions. While this study supports Zegart's finding that the communication of misinformation through the NIES contributed to the lengthening of the decision-making process, this study clearly aligns better with Holland and Marrin's findings.

There are several limitations to this study. This paper aimed to understand all evident factors contributing to the communication of misinformation during the crisis. However, due to the word count, several findings were limited such as the implications of U-2 Photography and Operation Mongoose. While these topics are addressed as charts or indexes, formal analysis would have improved the study. Additionally, historical analysis is extremely subjective. However, this study aimed to combat this limitation by employing an epistemological standpoint.

Additionally, not every primary source with CIA or Presidential Administration documents was scanned due to the time constraints of this project. The researcher chose certain databases that compiled many related documents to gain an accurate understanding of communication between parties.

This research supports that new pathways of communication are needed to stimulate the flow of communication between agencies. Implications include that the United States government must enhance crisis management and improve inter-agency communication despite opposing perspectives. This includes daily reports, joint-agency meetings, measures to ensure total transparency, and pre-crisis planning such as drawing up tentative and pre-approved plans for emergent situations.

To improve this project, future researchers should include other primary sources in their research to confirm the findings presented in this study. There should be more research conducted specifically about the communication within the CIA during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Future investigation is also needed to understand the polarization of

agencies and influence of prior crises, such as World War II, Vietnam, or Bay of Pigs on the government's ability to communicate about the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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