



## **International Negotiation: “The Cuban Missile Crisis” Template for Social Change**

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### **Preface**

According to Samuel Huntington (1997) “The main responsibility of Western leaders is to recognize that intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is the single most dangerous source of instability or [wars] in the world. The ‘West’ should attempt not to reshape other civilizations in its own image, but to preserve and renew the unique qualities of its own civilization” (as cited in *Global Issues*, 1999/2000, p.18).

However, former President of the United States, J. F. Kennedy, on the cusp of US-Soviet Union nuclear war, redefines American Foreign Policy to signal ‘engagement’ rather than ‘exceptionalism’ during the height of the Cold War. He observed:

“Our problems are man-made. Therefore, they can be solved by man. ... No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man’s reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable...There is no single key to peace, no...magic formulas...[Therefore] genuine peace must be a product of many nations, the sum of many acts. It must be dynamic, not static, changing to meet the challenge of each new generation. Signing that document [Nuclear Test Ban Treaty] was not a victory of one party over another...but a triumph of peace over war, of negotiation over faith, of faith over fear. And the spoils of that victory are shared by all people wherever they live” (as cited in Blight, 2002, p. 1).



## Introduction

The post-World War II closest in history the world has ever come to the brink of “abyss of destruction” (James, 2002, p. 1) with Nuclear Weapons was when the two superpowers – Russia (Former USSR) and United States bumped heads during the “1962 Cuban Missiles Crisis”. A term used by the US to refer to her impasse with USSR over the latter’s missiles deployment in Cuba. The Soviet Union, calls this same event the “Caribbean Crisis of 1962” (Garthoff, 1988, p. 61) while in Cuba it was called “The October Crisis” (Blight, 2002, p. 5).

Most of the literatures on Cuban missile crisis treated the negotiation process of the conflicting parties or the actors as “entities in themselves” trying to make good or cut deals appropriate for their respective parties. Otomar (1995) observed that in order to fully grasp the negotiation dynamics with its challenges, an analyst must contextualize and conceptualize the whole process as a complex web of international war of power dynamics. This means that the negotiation process must be seen as a continuum of balance of power. This paper focuses on analyzing the negotiation process of this crisis. Also I will establish the fact that both the distributive (i.e. hard tactics) and integrative (i.e. positive-sum) negotiation styles operated in-tandem to avert the missile crisis. The main objective of this paper was to show the dynamics of crisis management and the need to use ‘rational-cool-calm-self-belief diplomacy in the face of contending and provocative rhetoric’s.

According to James (2002), on October 14, 1962, two American reconnaissance planes flying over Cuba identify a construction of lunch sites at “Pinar del Rio in Western Cuba” (Blight, 2002, p. 9, Garthoff, 1988; Paul-Sampino, 2003; Martin, 2002; Fischer, 2001; Rajagopalan, 2000) for an installation of intermediate-range nuclear missiles capable of reaching United States. In April 17 1961, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) – an intelligence agency of US, trained about “1300 Cubans exiles to intervene in Cuba’s domestic political affairs and to overthrow Fidel Castro in an operation called ‘Bay of Pigs’” (James, 2002, p. 2; Rajagopalan, 2000, p. 2). However, due to lack of credible opposition leader, the operation failed. Another invasion was planned to coincide with October, 1962 under the codenamed “Operation Mongoose” (Garthoff, 1989). Fidel Castro, realizing danger of an eminent US invasion to overthrow his government negotiated defensive security pact with the Soviet Union under Premier Nikita Khrushchev in May to station Soviets-made medium-range missiles in Cuba (Rajagopalan, 2000; Martin, 2003; James, 2002).

The Soviet’s kept this mission secretly under its Military General Anatoli Gribkov, where they subsequently deployed the total missiles of “98 tactical nuclear weapons (with 80 nuclear-tipped, 90 kilometers-anti-ship cruise missiles, 6 atomic bombs for the specially modified II-28 bombers and 12 ‘Luna’ [which NATO calls FROG], 40 kilometers-range battlefield missiles” (Rajagopalan, 2000, p. 3). In October 16, 1962 President Kennedy ordered the ‘quarantine’ (blockade) of Soviet missiles shipment to Cuba, and also demanded that all the missiles should be removed from Cuba. In October 28, the Soviet dismantled and removed their missiles from Cuba while US pledged to remove their ‘Jupiter’ missiles from Turkey and Italy as well as calling off the invasion of Cuba. The missile crisis was thus averted (James, 2002; Rajagopalan, 2000).



It is important to note that the parties in this crisis were Washington, Moscow and Havana. However, during the crisis negotiation, the actors were overtly reduced to two –the US and Soviet Union, with Cuba as the ‘participant-observer’ even though their territory was the environment or the context of the crisis. This crisis seems to be a quid pro quo for the superpowers, because they “both [made] gains with coercion and [avoided] disaster with accommodation” (Gilbert & Lauren, 1980, p. 25). Clearly, Khrushchev was not defending Cuba as he would have the world to believe.

According to Gilbert & Lauren (1980) international negotiations of crisis management is simply not enough to identify the “critical variables” (such as the parties or issues of the conflict) rather to explain which variable is historically constant or changing with time (i.e. the purposes and objectives) by exploring the intellectual capacities of decision-makers to clearly articulate, delineate, and understand management techniques by considering the dynamics of inter-group and within group variations. Besides, in the international system, one’s willingness to reach a compromise and to exercise some maximum restraints i.e. playing the game with ‘rational-cool-calm-self belief-diplomatic disposition’ is very rewarding (Kremenjuk, 2002).

Negotiators, therefore, must understand that “the players” in conflicts usually starts off with zero – sum negotiation tactics and most often than not ends up with the collective search for creative alternatives after all options have been weighed.

Thus, in the latter stages of the Cuban missile crisis the integrative negotiation style influenced the “decisions and results [as well as] eliminating any productive panic” (Gilbert & Lauren, 1980, p. 654) from the actions and inactions of the major players. Therefore, this study will be driven by the following (questions):

(Why) parties always begins negotiations with distributive (hard or competitive or contentious) tactics and end up with integrative (collaborative or “win-win”) tactics?

Gilbert & Lauren (1980) argued that zero-sum situations in game theory, always leads to “a gain for one side, [and] by definition is a loss for the other” (p. 646). However, Perlmutter (1975) by extension noted that when parties realized that they are “partners in a common pursuit... [they] shared risk, [and] mutually desired to avoid escalation, and [fight for a] common interest to escape the looming disaster of war” (cited in Gilbert & Lauren, 1980, p. 646).

(How) have hard tactics negotiations more likely lead to negotiation failures?

According to Druckman (2001) predatory or hard tactics could lead to competitions of both global and specific needs of parties. However, Fisher & Ury (1991) the basic movements that exist in problem-Solving approach of resolving conflicts is moving parties from positions to global interests, that is focusing on the bigger picture not dwelling on parochial needs.

Moreover, the hypotheses and basic negotiation questions driving the Caribbean crisis of 1962 in this study are: Who are the parties in the negotiation process? What makes parties or actors contend in negotiation? Why is the contending parties negotiating? Where is the contending parties negotiating? How are the actors conducting the negotiations process? And finally, what makes parties to integrate?

It is hoped that this paper will lend credence to integrative negotiations by helping to control the volatile social, economic, and political volcanoes of the world. Finally, the significant



of this research paper is based on Vegetius's doctrine of "si vis pacem, para bellum" - that is - if you want peace, prepare for [negotiation] not war (Schofield, 2000, p. 761).

### **Who were the parties in this negotiation process?**

The parties are the actors or players who are involved in the negotiation process. The actors are usually the conflicting parties. The primary conflicting parties, in the Cuban missiles crisis were Washington and Havana. Rubin et al (1994) observed that as conflict progresses or escalates parties' increases; at the same time the tactics, strategies and techniques of parties also changes. Thus, the Soviet Union became a secondary party to Havana, in the missiles crisis. They later assumed a "frontline role" in the crisis. From this position therefore, the Soviet Union assumed direct control over the crisis and the subsequent negotiation process. Thus the negotiation process of the Cuban missile crisis, directly involved the United States and the Soviet Union, with Cuba, becoming "the bargaining-chip" of the Soviet Union.

### **What made the parties or players contended during negotiation?**

Negotiation at the early stages of the Cuban missile crisis was characterized by distributive (zero-sum) negotiation tactics. However, in the latter stages, the actors began to use the integrative (positive-sum) negotiation style. As a result most of the literatures treated the negotiation process of the crisis as either distributive or integrative. This therefore, gives the impression of two separate processes of negotiation. However, according to Otomar (1995, p. 48-64) the usual nature of most negotiations began with 'hard and contending tactics but invariably ends with cooperation and partnership. Thus the two supposedly processes must not be seen as separate entities rather must be considered as a "continuum". That is, the "Distributive-Integrative Negotiation Continuum" (p. 58).

According to Harvard Business Essentials Series (HBES) (2003, p. 3-4) every initial negotiation stage has the tendency of making parties compete, in most cases over the distribution of a fixed sum of value. This makes the parties to contend, thus any gain to one party was a loss for the other. William Zartman calls the distributive negotiation process, the unilateral model. He noted that the model is characterized by power-playing tactics, use of force and also the parties view negotiations through a tunnel vision. This type of negotiation stresses on achieving independent objectives. In fact it is based on the 'survival of the fittest' maxim (as cited in Kremenyuk, 2002, p. 348-351).

Moreover, Garthoff (1988, p. 69-71) stated that during the Cuban missiles crisis, the maverick Soviet historian Roy Medvedev revealed that the reaction of Khrushchev after Kennedy had invoked the naval blockade against the "24 launchers with 42 of 48 planned SS-4 missiles, and 32 SS-5 missiles for 16 planned launchers" (p. 70); that "Khrushchev initial reaction was to run the blockade, by letting the Soviet ships proceed, [which consequently] placed the responsibility for initiating the use of force on the United States" (P. 71). This is a typical 'move and countermove' between the US and Soviet Union. More so, Garthoff (1988)



again noted that another brute use of force was demonstrated when one of the Soviets' tanker's, - Grozny, started moving toward the blockade line, and also the shooting down of Americans U-2 reconnaissance airplane over Cuba.

### **Why was the contending parties negotiating?**

The objectives of the parties in the Cuban missile crisis formed the bases of their contentions. Among some of these objectives are values differentials, different resources such as territory, political autonomy, power, propagation of ideology, pursuit of economic and technological interests, and defense superiority (Ury et al, 1988, p. 14-19; James, 2002, p. 3; Rajagopalan, 2000, p. 3; Chang & Kornbluh, 1998; Garthoff, 1988).

Garthoff (1988) discovered researching the Soviet archival sources that defense superiority and ideological propagation were paramount in the Cuban missile crisis. Regarding defense superiority, the Soviet's objective was to "shore up... geostrategic position at a time when the United States had a growing missile gap in its favor and USSR lacking sufficient intercontinental missiles to offset the American advantage" (p. 66). This might have given the Soviet's offensive advantage which might equalized the power differentials between them and the United States. Khrushchev's observation attests to this fact that "USSR does not accept America should be everywhere and to rule everywhere. It is one thing when US were very powerful, but now there is a force as great as yours" (James, 2002, p. 3). More so, the Soviet's position on defense superiority became evident when they argued US should renounce publicly not to invade Cuba, and remove its Jupiter missiles from Turkey as a precondition for their (Soviet's) withdrawal of its "missiles deployments and the 42,000 forces from Cuba" (Garthoff, 1988, p. 67-69). Also the evidence of ideological propagation is when McCone (the US Director of Central Intelligence) articulated the two underlying objectives of US global position on ideology. His comments was "one, [we will] dispose of the missile sites, and [the] other, getting rid of Castro's Communism in the Western Hemisphere" (James, 2000; Rajagopalan, 2000).

### **Where the negotiation activities did took place?**

HBES (2003) defines "where" to include the context, conditions and constraints under which actors of a negotiation process operated or are operating. Fisher (2001) stated that the face-to-face confrontation between the two superpowers occurred on October 20, 1962 when President Kennedy ordered the naval blockade, whereas the Soviet's vessels were still advancing the blockade line. Fisher, further, noted that "the US naval quarantine of Cuba [at sea] was accompanied by series of military and diplomatic moves, and countermoves which were not all authorized by the political leadership of the two main opponents" (p. 291). Such was the background of the negotiation.

In addition, the negotiation took place "at the United Nations [headquarters'] in New York. On October 26, the then UN secretary-General, U Thant met "delegates from US, Cuba and the Soviet union in New York to negotiate the terms of the settlement"(Fisher, 2001, p. 295). Prior to this meeting, President Kennedy received a telegram from Khrushchev stating the



missiles would be removed under the UN supervision but the US must renounce publicly not to invade Cuba. It is important to note that US regarded this move as a proposed deal by Moscow. However, this information had been public in US through the KGB (i.e. the Soviet's intelligence outfit) channels. Besides, later information from the KGB documents revealed that "that informal demarche was never authorized by the Kremlin" (Fursenko & Naftali, 1995, cited in Fisher, 2001, p. 295). This is the kind of contentious tactics of negotiation which Rubin et al (1994, p. 119) calls "the perceived divergence of interest". It is characterized by lofty and rigid aspirations of both sides with little apparent common ground. It uses pressure, politics, or trickery in order to achieve party's goals. The ultimate therefore, is to provoke a response from the other party, a more favorable Best Alternative to Negotiated agreement or find a Zones of Possible Agreement to reach a common ground, and compromise. This condition always leads to long negotiation.

Another constraint was the two leaders does not want to appear "soft or weak" in the eyes of the hardliners or the conservatives in this hot-round-up negotiation. For instance, Fisher (2001) and Rajagopalan (2000) observed that on October 27, 1962; Soviet and Cuban information was that US was about launching an attack on Cuba; Soviet tankers then began to approach the blockade lines. Besides, an American U-2 reconnaissance plane was shot down killing the pilot Major Rudolph Anderson Jr. In addition, the speculation in United States was that, Soviet diplomats were destroying their sensitive documents in anticipation for a full scale war. President Kennedy then invoked Defcon2 (Defense Condition 2), this means the second-highest alert posture for enemy attack. It was during this condition and constraint that Khrushchev communiqué to Kennedy for trade of Cuban missiles for Turkish US Jupiter missiles. US Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy under the direction of J.F. Kennedy met Anatoliy Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to US to close the deal in camera. However, it was done under the "assurance that the Soviet's would not made the agreement public" (Fisher, 2001, p. 298). Thus, these moves and countermoves goes to support the social constructionist view that, people act on the basis of the meanings things such as actions and inactions have on them or meant to them (Lederach, 1995).

### **How the actors did conduct the negotiations process?**

This is primarily the methods, processes and modalities through which the parties are trying to achieve their objectives (HBES, 2003). It is important to realize that the general method employed by the actors in the missile crisis is 'distributive-to-integrative negotiation continuum' process (Otomar, 1995). Even though the existing literatures have treated distributive and integrative negotiation processes separately relative to the Cuban missile crisis, as if these processes are separate entities; realistically they are continuum. To draw from Otomar, the initial stages of the negotiation was purely distributive where contentious tactics such as negotiating from position of strength, threatening and Boulware-ism (i.e. take it or leave it bargaining) took the center stage. Also the negotiation was characterized by high emotions and use of force to achieve negotiated objectives.



However, with the integrative negotiation process collaboration, creative alternatives like consensus building, partnership and the use of third-party diplomatic approach. All of these were explored by the players in the missile crisis. For example, Fisher (2001) and James (2002) had both stated that the US demanded a complete removal of the offensive weapons from Cuba under UN supervision. She (US) also established the fact that any attack on her would be considered as an attack by Soviet Union, which would be retaliated. The Soviet also demanded that US renounced publicly of not invading Cuba and besides “US should remove her Jupiter missiles from Turkey and Italy” (James 2002, p. 3).

Furthermore, Fisher (2001, p. 299-300) noted that the UN, under its Secretary-General U Thant, acted as the third-party by mediating between the three parties in October 26, 1962. UN proposed three ways to stop Soviet Union from reintroducing missiles to Cuba: - American ships will monitor Soviet vessels entering Cuba; Inspection of Soviet and Cuban vessels would be performed by a neutral country; and International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) should be used in this regard. Moscow and Washington were unanimous. However, Washington added that her air reconnaissance over Cuba will continued until she is assured of the total dismantling of the missile sites, and the removal of weapons of mass destruction. Havana, on the other hand, rejected any inspectors on her ports, and accused Khrushchev of betrayal, for not informing her (Cuba) about her (Soviet Union) “clandestine deal of removing the missiles” with US.

Furthermore, the negotiation entered into an integrative phase and assumed a bilateral posture involving the two-superpowers. Fisher (2001) noted that “during the last and decisive phase of the crisis the exchange between the two-superpower leaders was conducted exclusively through direct messages between Moscow and Washington. These private exchanges were crucial in resolving the crisis.

### **What made the parties to integrate?**

According to HBES (2003, p. 5) integrative negotiation is also called “win-win” or “collaborative” negotiation. In this process parties seeks to cooperate to achieve maximum benefits by integrating their interests into an agreement while also competing to divide the value. William Zartman, in his view calls integrative negotiation a joint solution negotiation model. He further spells out some of the factors which make parties integrate or come to table. Among some of which were inadequate unilateral resources to continue a conflict, adequate effective counter reaction – which equalizes the power asymmetry between conflicting parties, and finally the hurting stalemate i.e. the calculating the cost-benefit-analysis of a conflict (as cited in Kremenyuk, 2002, p. 351-356).

Thus in the Cuban missile crisis, James (2002) noted that the Soviet Union saw the deployment of its missiles in Cuba under the nose of US will increased their expansion in the Western Hemisphere, increased their power potential and prestige. US, on the other hand, wanted to get the nuclear weapons removed and also to defend the interest of capitalism, having realized that “Cuba has become a beacon of light to workers and the oppressed in Latin America against Capitalism” (p.3). Besides, the US in particular realized that there were adequate effective counter-reaction of nuclear balance from the Soviet Union, which served as a power



equalizer to balance the initial power asymmetry between US and Cuba even though, “the US enjoyed at least 17 to 1 superiority in strategic nuclear warheads, about 5000 warheads to approximately 300 of the Soviet’s as at October, 1962” (Rajagopalan, 2000, p. 2-4).

In addition, the prominence of balanced of power in present nuclear age could be attributed to the deterrence theory. This theory affect all nations, whether the nation attacked has nuclear weapons or not or is an ally of a nuclear nation (Kahn, 1960, quoted in Rubin et al, 1994, p. 145-146). The destructive nature of the nuclear weapon and that there is no or limited defense against them, the only way to protect oneself militarily is to threaten to retaliate in the hope of deterring the other side from using these weapons. Such retaliation is called second strike (Rajagopalan, 2000; Blight, 2002; Rubin et al, 1994). Therefore, to prevent any hurting stalemate and nuclear holocaust, integrative negotiation became a ‘sine qua non’ in averting the Cuban missile crisis.

### **Conclusion:**

In sum, from the above it is abundantly clear that, any peace-loving person in the world would opt for the integrative approach of negotiation to distributive process. However, these two processes are inseparable in reality. Generally, negotiation starts from distributive phase and ends with integrative phase. However, it does not mean that the reverse order of this continuum could not occur in some cases of negotiations.

Garthoff (1989) observed that some of the main reason so much attention has been given to the Cuban missile crisis was that “it has been rightly regarded as the most intensive, dangerous, and climactic crisis of the cold war, and has thus become a unique historical source for the study of crisis management”( p. 1-2 ). It is also essential to note that the crisis did not last for thirteen days (i.e. from October 16 - October 28, 1962) as claimed widely i.e. from the time Washington discovered the construction of launching facilities for the Soviet medium-range missile in Cuba, to Khrushchev’s formal agreement to withdraw, and Kennedy’s pledge not to invade Cuba. However, a consideration must be given to the second phase of the negotiation process which started from October 28 to November 20, 1962, which invariably culminated in the US naval quarantine lifted and the special alert status of the military forces of the two countries (US and Soviet Union) ended.

Also, it is important to recognize that the perspectives of both US and Soviet Union were shaped by the dynamics of the negotiation process. Garthoff (1989) noted that the US trade embargo against Cuba in 1960, the excommunication of Cuba by the Organization of American States (OAS) at Punta del Este, Uruguay, the Bay of Pigs invasion in April, 1961 by Cuban migrants in US, and the US covert plan to use Cuban émigrés to raid Cuba in ‘Operation Mongoose’ were considered by Soviet Union as “diplomatic preparation for [Cuban] invasion” (p. 8). On the other hand, the US saw the Soviet missiles deployment in Cuba as bolstering their (Soviet) strategic military power and diplomatic-political strength, while at the same time the deterrence of US attack on Cuba was at most a smoke-screen or secondary objective for the Soviet’s.





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