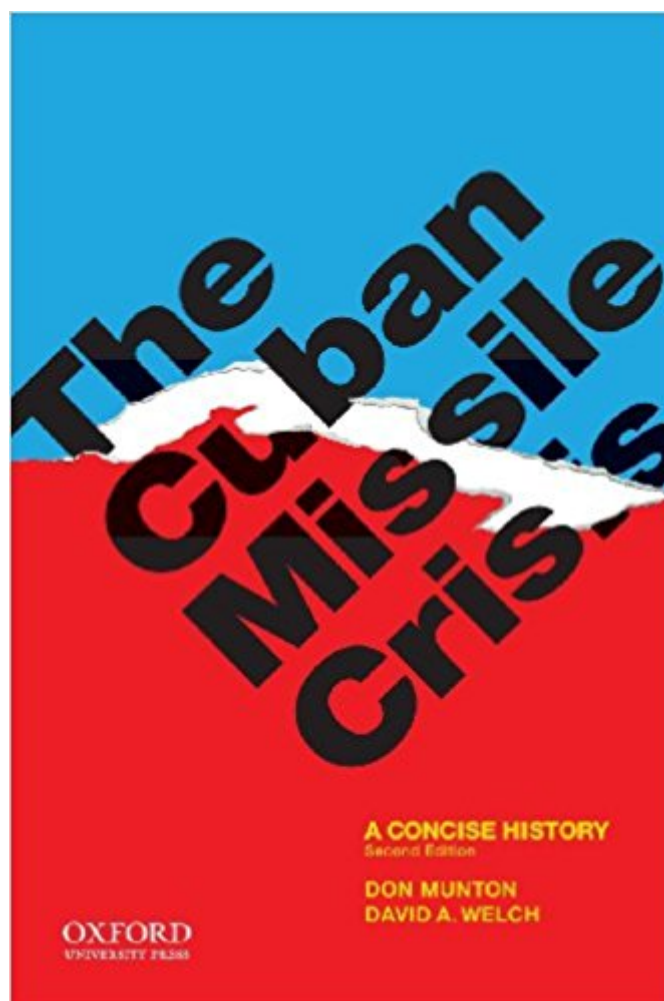


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# The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Concise History



## Synopsis

In *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Concise History*, Second Edition, Don Munton and David A. Welch distill the best current scholarship on the Cuban missile crisis into a brief and accessible narrative history. The authors draw on newly available documents to provide a comprehensive treatment of its causes, events, consequences, and significance. Stressing the importance of context in relation to the genesis, conduct, and resolution of the crisis, Munton and Welch examine events from the U.S., Soviet, and Cuban angles, revealing the vital role that differences in national perspectives played at every stage. While the book provides a concise, up-to-date look at this pivotal event, it also notes gaps and mysteries in the historical record and highlights important persistent interpretive disputes. The authors provide a detailed guide to relevant literature and film for those who wish to explore further. Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the crisis, this revised and updated edition of *The Cuban Missile Crisis* is ideal for undergraduate courses on the 1960s, U.S. foreign policy, the Cold War, twentieth-century world history, and comparative foreign policy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Don Munton is Professor and Founding Chair of International Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia. David A. Welch is CIGI Chair of Global Security and Interim Director of the Balsillie School of International Affairs, and Professor of Political Science at the University of Waterloo.

Good book to understand the factors that played into how the Cuban missile crisis came about.

as new

Very satisfied

This is an interesting little book (103 pages of text). In effect, it is an executive summary of the thousands of pages of memoirs, histories, records and other materials that describe the thirteen days in October 1962 that have become known as "The Cuban Missile Crisis." It is written in an interesting style and takes into account the actions and motives of the three main decision-makers, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, U.S. President John F. Kennedy, and Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro. Less helpful are the authors' opinions that Khrushchev, Kennedy and Castro indulged in "mirror-imaging," i.e., assuming that others saw the world in the same way that they did, and thereby seriously miscalculated the consequences of their actions. The scope of Khrushchev's plan to deploy nuclear weapons in Cuba is presented in detail. The deployment called for 60 medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles, 49 tactical nuclear warheads, 80 fighter and bomber aircraft, some of which were accompanied by nuclear bombs, 14,000 combat soldiers, and other more conventional weapons, patrol boats and support personnel. The plan was hatched in May; and by mid-July, the deployment had begun. By the end of August, the United States knew that something was happening between Russia and Cuba, but the movement of men and material was a closely guarded secret. On October 15, 1962, a high altitude U-2 spy plane provided the United States with photographic proof of the construction of Soviet missile sites in Cuba. President Kennedy chose not to make public the disclosure, but instead formed an executive committee to study the situation and to make a recommendation of what should be the response of the United States. Several possibilities were discussed, including a blockade, a "surgical" air strike, a general air strike and a full-scale invasion of Cuba. Kennedy chose a blockade as the most desirable response, and identified a settlement with Russia removing its missiles from Cuba and the U.S. removing its missiles from Turkey as the most desirable end result. There followed one week of negotiation that resulted in the settlement that Kennedy sought. The book also describes the problems encountered in carrying out the settlement, and the disposition of the tactical nuclear weapons, of which the U.S. was unaware. The authors are university professors, so it is not surprising that in their conclusion they pose "the question of what we can learn about world politics, and indeed about history from this pivotal event." They conclude that the most significant lesson is "that Great Powers ignore the needs, desires and perspectives of smaller countries at their peril," and stretch to apply that concept to present day Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. That is quite a stretch. Ironically, in resolving the

Cuban Missile Crisis, both the Soviets and the United States ignored the desires of Fidel Castro.

This book did exactly what the authors set out to do: identify and examine the main points of the Cuban Missile Crisis. For those looking for an in-depth historical examination, buy something different. If you are interested in understanding the events surrounding the Crisis and the Thirteen days of the event itself, buy this book. Also interesting are the parallels drawn between Kennedy's handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis and our current administration's disastrous foray into Iraq. Maybe someone should send Dubya a copy... it would probably be a quick read even for him.

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