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Analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP CAPSTONE (MGMT 650)

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Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban missile crisis was a confrontation among the United States, Cuba, and the Soviet Union from October 15 to 28 in 1962. Leaders of the U.S. and the Soviet Union engaged in a tense and 13-day political and military standoff during the Cuban missile crises. After some failure operations by the United States to overthrow the Cuban regime, Cuba and the Soviet Union secretly began to build bases, for increased ability of the Cuban medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missiles to attack much of indigenous capabilities, in Cuba. A United States air force U-2 plane took pictures which proof the Soviet Union construct missile bases in Cuba in an aerial reconnaissance on October 14, 1962. The United States considered attacking Cuba from air and sea against Cuba with military blockade. The United States announced that it would not permit the soviet union deployed offensive weapons, asked the Soviet Union to pull out the under construction or completed missiles from Cuba and remove all offensive weapons. On the Soviet Union side, Premier Nikita Khrushchev wrote a letter to Kennedy, said the blockade is "an act of aggression propelling humankind into the abyss of a world nuclear-missile war". When President John F. Kennedy and United Nations Secretary-General U Thant reached a public and secret agreement with Khrushchev on October 28, 1962, the crisis was over. In the public part, the offensive weapons in Cuba would be dismantled, withdrawal and shipped back to the Soviet Union, under the supervision of the United States, whereas the United States declared not to invade Cuba.

Public Announcement

In a media address on October 22, 1962, United States president, John Kennedy announced Americans about the presence of the missiles in Cuba. He also explained his decision about naval blockade around Cuba. He also made it clear the U.S. was prepared to use military force if necessary to neutralize this perceived threat to national security. Following this news, many people feared the world was on the brink of nuclear war. However, disaster was avoided when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev offered to remove the Cuban missiles in exchange for the U.S. promising not to invade Cuba. Kennedy also secretly agreed to remove U.S. missiles from Turkey.

Need of Communication

In crises situation, the pace of conflict was accelerating. Both the countries needed to react very quickly to change the conditions. Often at the time of crises, communication gets cut off or distorted entirely. But at the time of missile crises, both the leaders of U.S. and Soviet Union communicate with each other and they know communication needed to be increased not cut off to get solution of the crises. If there was no or less communication at that time, cold war might be converted into nuclear war.

Communication between U.S. and Soviet Union

During the crises, both the sides exchanged many letters to communicate with each other. These letters were both formal and back channel. On October 22, President Kennedy sent a letter to Khrushchev indicating that they found Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. Those missiles were dangerous for U.S. In next two days, On October 23 and 24 Kennedy received two letter in reply which indicates deterrent nature of missiles and peaceful intension of

Khrushchev and Soviet Union. In the next two letters from Khrushchev, he proposed that missile installations would be dismantled and personnel removed if U.S. assured that they would not invade Cuba and dismantled its missile installation in Turkey. U.S. accepted first condition publically and second condition privately (not giving any information to media about it). On 28th October, Khrushchev announced that they would dismantled missiles and returned them to Soviet Union.

Poor Modes of Communication

One of the scariest things in Cuba missile crises was lack of reliable form of communication. Letters were the communication mode between Moscow and Washington. These could take seven hours to transmit message from one nation to another. Imagine, if there was any delay to transmit message, it might increase the chances of world war.

Both the sides did not want the risk starting another world war only because of poor communication. To improve communication, a hotline was established between Washington and Moscow. So, both the leaders could communicate directly.

Factors of successful communication

There are three factors contributed in the successful communication between United States and Soviet Union to prevent escalation. There three factors are:-

1. The United States president limited his demands. He demanded only to remove Soviet missiles from Island. If he demanded further then they would have provoked greater resistance.

2. President Kennedy used blockade of Cuba only to give pressure on Soviet Union. He did not involve immediate force in blockade. By doing this he got more time to do effective communication with Soviet Union Leaders.
3. Both Kennedy and Khrushchev, follow the important principles of crises management. Kennedy sent clear and consistent message to Soviets to slow down the pace of crises and gave strong preference for peaceful solution.

Vroom-Jago-Yetton model

Leadership Style of John F. Kennedy

John F Kennedy was the one of the best leader in the best leader in the world which he was shown at the time of Cuba missile crises. He had a public good image that appealed most Americans. He was the 35th president of United States. On the time of Cuba missile crises, he shows his great leadership style. He had meetings with his advisors and defense officials to overcome with this crisis. He did not show aggressive behavior to take a decision. He listen all the suggestions of group meeting members and also think about the security of his country before taking his decision. After few days' discussion, his decision of blockade Cuba shows his **consultative** style of leadership.

Leadership Style of Nikita S. Khrushchev

Nikita s. Khrushchev was the premier of Soviet Nations. Khrushchev was a transform style of leader. He was older than President Kennedy and having more experienced. He knew that America want to invade Cuba. So, to protect Cuba, he made a plan to increase Soviet Union force in Cuba

and install nuclear missiles over there. During the time of crises Khrushchev showed **Autocratic** leadership style, which is he asked team members for specific information and took decision when he had full information without consulting anyone. In the vroom-jago-yetton model it shows A2 kind of leadership style.

Essence of Decision Making Model

Essence of decision making model is providing the analysis of Cuban missile crises with different decision models. By taking Cuban missile crises as case study, Graham T. Allison provided future studies into governmental decision making. By doing political research, Allison noted that in 1962 government used Rational Actor model to take decision. But he describe that this approach of making decision was violated the law of falsifiability. It also ignores a lot of facts that need to make the final analysis. In response, Allison provides three models of thinking, through which analyst can examine their decision. These models are:

1. Rational Actor Model (Traditional model used by Kennedy)

Rational decision making model is basically treated as primary factor by governments.

First of all, all the goals are briefly examine by the government and evaluate according to their ability. Then pick on e off them according to which is highly payoff.

In Cuba missile crises, Kennedy and his committee had number of options. These options are raging from do nothing to a full invasion. They choose blockade Cuba not to attack on it by force. Because, it can be forced Soviet Union to take next step. In this way, there was no way for Soviet Union to bow U.S. demands and remove their missiles from Cuba.

2. Organizational Process Model

This model argues that government policies were placed limit on nation's action. The organizational model proposed that in the crises situations, leaders need to break it down

and assign it according to pre established organizational lines rather than take it as a whole. Because of limitations of resources and time, it is better to find one most likely possibility which is working to address that issue.

Crises explained that Soviet Union never had nuclear base outside their country. They did not have proper procedures which were adopted by Cuban conditions. As the result, they were easily tracked by U.S.

Kennedy never considered any other option besides a blockade and air strike. Such attacks never guaranteed that U.S. air force attack would disable all nuclear missiles. U.S. navy already had considerable strengthen on field. Because Kennedy already had blockade pre existing plan, so they blockade Cuba according to their plan.

But Soviet Union did not have this kind of pre-existing plan to follow decisive action against missiles. Letters of Khrushchev showed high degree of depression and without having any plan, Soviet Union withdraw from Cuba.

3. The Governmental politics model

Any nation's action is best understood as the political thinking and negotiation by the top leaders of country. Even if the leader has absolute power but there is also the risk order misunderstood or can be ignored. If a leader fails to reach the exact consensus of the matter, other side can take advantage of this disagreement. Because of this different leaders take actions as a group by discussing with their advisors and other political leaders.

In this case, soviets were not open as Americans in their internal affairs. Economy of soviet union at that time was stretched and military leaders were unhappy with Khrushchev policies to cut off the size of army. But Kennedy wanted to give strong response rather than diplomatic one. Kennedy discussed with EXCOMM, attorney

General Robert Kennedy. But he stuck with air force attack or blockade decision. After the Bay of Pigs Invasion fiasco, Kennedy also discussed with CIA. After all the discussion Kennedy decided to blockade of Cuba not to air strike.

Both the leaders showed different style of political thinking. Due to the consultative style of President Kennedy, he decided to blockade of Cuba and having continuous communication with Khrushchev, both leaders' leads to resolution of the crisis.

Cultural difference that had impact on the resolution:

As from our team research every country organization follow their own culture to implement different activities. North American people follow the team to make a decision for organization. As there leadership styles are G2 (group) & consultative (c2). There people work on based experience and their interest. But in Russian countries they follow their leaders rules. There leadership style is Autocratic (A2)

As for Cuban missile crises North America president Kennedy organized the group meeting to come up solution and here he showed the consultative nature of his leadership style. But Russia Soviet Union leader Khrushchev did some research and meeting with their advisor but he took his own decision. So we can see if we work as team then organization can focus on one goal and we can find so many solutions to overcome particular problem. If Russia also considers team to make decision then they might come up with different solution but they impacted by their culture and made a inappropriate decision.