



Blue Moon over Cuba: Aerial Reconnaissance during the Cuban Missile Crisis (General Aviation)

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With a Foreword by Michael Dobbs, author of *One Minute to Midnight*.

Human intelligence was lacking during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the various intelligence agencies had to rely on their most reliable means to guide them - aerial photography. Photographs of the missile sites were effectively used to persuade doubtful allies, as well as adversaries, that the evidence was real, and they rallied worldwide support of the American strategies focused on the removal of the offensive weapons from Cuba. President Kennedy's Executive Committee of the National Security Council opened each meeting with a briefing of the latest analysis of the previous day's photo missions. Aerial photography was soon recognized as essential to the outcome of the crisis.

Both President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev recognized that they did not completely control events, and understood that unexpected events could spiral the crisis out of control. While precipitating the crisis by the introduction of offensive weapons in Cuba, Khrushchev stepped back from the nuclear abyss that both countries were heading for. Kennedy on the other hand utilized his military options in an effective strategy of ratcheting up pressure and, at the same time, resisting his civilian and military advisors' demands for attacking Cuba. Photographic intelligence gave him the time to develop a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

Most books on the Cuban Missile Crisis tell the story through the perspective of memoirs of those who advised President Kennedy, as he struggled to avoid World War III. This book explains the critical events, along with the experiences of those who execute presidential commands in times of national crisis. Their competence, or lack of it, often can mean the difference between war and peace. The history unfolds as the reader is put into the cockpit of a supersonic photo jet, giving a fresh perspective of those suspenseful thirteen days. Michael Dobbs, author of *One Minute To Midnight*, describes *Blue Moon over Cuba* as 'a wonderful contribution to the body of Missile Crisis literature. The book will undoubtedly be the most authoritative and complete account of the low-level reconnaissance over Cuba.'

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