

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

stringing barbed wire in the middle of the zone. The Berlin Wall, soon to become a high concrete and cement block barrier, was begun.

Kennedy was vacationing in his yacht off Hyannis Port, and he was not notified until noon on the 13th. He was reportedly furious, and he summoned CIA director McCone to examine the intelligence failure. CIA, in sifting through everything that had been available, did find one significant bit of information. A 9 August COMINT report of an East German Communist Party message discussed plans to begin turning all foot traffic back at the sector border, and the Watch Committee assessment had stated that this might be the first step in a plan to close the border.⁵⁵ McCone could come up with no other predictive information; the Berlin Wall was still regarded as an intelligence failure, despite the existence of fragmentary COMINT.

Kennedy denounced the Berlin Wall, and American-Soviet relations worsened. On 1 September the Soviets ran their first nuclear test since 1958, breaking an informal moratorium that had been in place since the middle of Eisenhower's second term.

But the one bright spot was in comparative strategic strength. The so-called Missile Gap, which had loomed so large in 1960, had become a proven chimera. In September 1961 Lyman Lemnitzer, the chairman of the JCS, briefed Kennedy that the U.S. enjoyed a 7 to 1 advantage in strategic nuclear delivery capability. The Soviets still had only ten to twenty-five operational ICBMs, and Kennedy could launch more than 1,000 delivery systems carrying 1,685 nuclear warheads, compared with 253 for the Soviets.⁵⁶

The Buildup to Crisis

In late 1961, as a result of the Kennedy administration's continuing concern with Cuba, the intelligence community was directed to increase its efforts against the island. NSA instituted a rapid buildup of the problem, almost certainly in response to this edict.⁵⁷

NSA's initial plan was forwarded to McNamara in November. It included manning additional positions at the Navy site in Puerto Rico, bringing TRS resources into the picture, and instituting a new program for translating Cuban communications. This and an augmented plan presented in February of 1962 were pushed rapidly ahead.

Given the go-ahead, NSA assembled cryptologic resources with remarkable speed. The most significant addition was the *Oxford*. This first TRS had been launched in 1961, and the early plans were for an African coastal cruise. But NSA diverted the vessel to copy the new microwave communications in Cuba. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The *Oxford* conducted a hearability survey off the coast of Cuba in December 1961, and it soon began forwarding [REDACTED] intercept to NSA.⁵⁸

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(c)

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~~HANDLE VIA TALENT KEYHOLE COMINT CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS~~

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