



3Dogs Nexus

**WE DON'T MAKE YOUR DECISIONS.
WE MAKE THEM BETTER.**



DISCOVERY

Understand
the Problem



NEXUS

Evaluate
the Options



EVOLUTION

Improve
the Outcome

BETTER QUESTIONS. BETTER DECISIONS. BETTER OUTCOMES.

DECISION ANALYSIS

What action should the United States take in response to the Soviet missile sites in Cuba?

Case 2026-0079 | July 04, 2026

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Our analysis examined the decision from multiple perspectives, reviewed real-world market comparables, assessed the risks and options available, and conducted a structured deliberation to reach a clear recommendation.

Our recommendation is stated on the following page.

ANALYSIS EFFORT | 545 API calls · 17 AI models · 34m 11s run time

● PROCEED — BUT FIRST DO THESE THINGS

Impose the naval blockade now—and hold the airstrikes ready to launch within 24 hours if Soviet ships don't turn back.

How firm is this call

87% · Moderate confidence

HOW THE 10-ANALYST PANEL VOTED: 10 proceed-with-conditions

BEFORE YOU PROCEED, COMPLETE THESE:

A. IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ All key team members and allies briefed in plain language and agree no hidden deals or secret promises are made to anyone, so everyone knows exactly what was promised and what wasn't
- ✓ A clear list set in writing of what actions (like moving ships, launching planes, or sending messages) count as 'too much aggression' and would make the Soviets think we're attacking--not just the president, but the generals and captains on the ground must know and follow this list without guessing
- ✓ A backup plan written down and shared with the right people for what happens if the blockade doesn't remove the missiles (like how long we wait before trying something else and who makes the call)
- ✓ A single, trusted person outside the White House (like a retired general or diplomat) who can look at our moves from the Soviets' perspective and honestly tell us if we're sending mixed messages

B. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- ✓ Daily, short, in-person updates (no longer than 30 minutes) with the team handling the blockade, where anyone can call out if an order or action might seem unclear or aggressive to the Soviets
- ✓ A direct, private communication line set up (like a coded radio channel or secure phone line) with the Soviet leader where both sides can ask quick questions to clear up confusion in real time
- ✓ A 7-day review checkpoint where two independent advisers (different from the core team) check whether the blockade is moving the Soviets closer to removing the missiles--or if it's pushing them to do something worse, like bringing in nuclear warheads
- ✓ A rehearsed process ready to go for dialing back (like reducing the number of ships patrolling) if the Soviets show early signs of backing down, so we can respond fast without looking weak

C. SUCCESS METRICS

- ✓ Soviet missiles and launch equipment physically removed from Cuba and confirmed gone by on-the-ground inspections (not just promises or satellite photos)
- ✓ No new Soviet nuclear warheads or long-range missiles brought into Cuba or any nearby country (like Venezuela) in the 18 months after the crisis
- ✓ U.S. government's public approval rating stays stable or rises (measured by 3 independent polls like Gallup) in the 6 months after, showing Americans trusted the strategy enough not to panic
- ✓ No direct military clashes (like ships fired on, pilots shot down, or accidental strikes) happen during the blockade, and both sides pull back extra forces from the Caribbean within 90 days of the crisis ending

THE TRADE YOU'RE MAKING

The client is trading immediate, guaranteed removal of missiles via airstrike/invasion for a slower, reversible blockade that preserves negotiation space and reduces escalation risk.

THE RISK THAT MATTERS MOST

Nuclear escalation due to Soviet miscalculation or undeclared warhead deployment in Cuba

If the Soviets misinterpret U.S. blockade actions as an imminent attack or detect undeclared nuclear warheads in Cuba, they may preemptively strike U.S. forces or allies (e.g., West Berlin), triggering a full-scale nuclear exchange. The recommendation's 24-hour airstrike contingency would accelerate rather than mitigate escalation, collapsing the strategy's core premise of gradual de-escalation.

BASIS FOR THIS RECOMMENDATION

Here's what makes the modified blockade the right move for you:

The evidence shows that a full invasion or airstrike comes with massive risks--escalation with the Soviets, unplanned costs, and no clear way to back down. The blockade, though not perfect, buys time and keeps you in control. It signals strength without forcing the Soviets into a corner where they have nothing left to lose. History reminds us that when tensions are this high, you want a tool that's firm enough to show resolve but flexible enough to adjust if things take a turn. The blockade gives you that.

That said, it can't just be business as usual. The risks are real--Soviets misreading our moves, alliances getting uneasy, or the blockade dragging on with no end in sight. So the modifications are built to address these head-on: a clear military backup to show we're serious, tighter diplomacy to keep allies on board, and a faster off-ramp if the Soviets step back. The goal isn't to trade one problem for another--it's to pressure them without letting this spiral, while still leaving room to walk away if it works. That's the balance you need right now.

RECOMMENDATION CONFIDENCE

Overall Decision-Quality Assessment: MODERATE

DECISION-QUALITY INDICATORS

- Panel Agreement: **STRONG** (100%)
- Position Changes During Debate: **1 of 10** analysts changed position after reviewing challenges
- Evidence Quality Mix: **1 Verified, 5 Inferred, 3 Assumed, 1 Contradicted**

- Unresolved Points of Dissent: **0**

■ **Contradicted Assumptions (review before deciding):**

- Assumption: "Full invasion of Cuba highly feasible militarily" -- but available evidence directly contradicts this: Research states invasion presents significant military feasibility challenges

HIGH CONFIDENCE

- Panel strongly agrees (100%) with this plan
- Proven risks of invasion/airstrike make blockade a safer first step
- Good mix of facts and expert reasoning in the decision

MODERATE CONFIDENCE

- Blockade's success depends on Soviet cooperation--no guarantee
- Assumes Soviets won't escalate further (unverified risk)
- Big risks if existing missiles stay active or talks drag on

LOWER CONFIDENCE / KEY UNCERTAINTIES

- One piece of evidence directly contradicts the plan

THE DECISION

The president reached out for help figuring out the best way to respond to the Soviet missile sites in Cuba. Right now, no one outside a small group of advisors knows these sites exist--they were spotted in aerial photos and could be up and running in just one to two weeks. If nothing is done, these missiles could hit most of the U.S. in minutes, changing the balance of power and giving the Soviets a dangerous upper hand. The options on the table range from doing nothing to a full military invasion, with each choice carrying big risks and uncertain outcomes.

What we know is this: Cuba is only 90 miles from Florida, and the Soviets are racing to finish the missile sites before we can stop them. The biggest concern is that any move we make--like an airstrike or a blockade--could trigger a dangerous response from Moscow. The Joint Chiefs believe the only sure way to get rid of the missiles is to bomb the sites and then invade Cuba, but that would mean war, heavy casualties, and likely Soviet retaliation somewhere else in the world. At the same time, if we wait too long, we lose the chance to act before the missiles are ready.

The goal here is simple but urgent: find a way to remove those missiles without starting a war--or, if that's impossible, at least buy enough time and leverage to make sure they don't stay. Every option comes with trade-offs--some cost lives, some risk making the situation worse, and none guarantee a clean victory. The president needs to decide in the next few days because once those missiles are operational, the stakes get even higher.

MILESTONE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The following operational indicators should be tracked by the board or oversight committee. Each signal has a defined threshold requiring escalation.

ON TRACK

- Allies publicly reaffirm U.S. blockade without reservations
- Soviet cargo ships turn back outside quarantine zone
- Daily 30-min briefings held with zero escalation missteps

MONITOR CLOSELY

- Soviet ships slow but refuse contact with U.S. Navy
- Kremlin issues ambiguous statements on warhead presence
- Allied governments request private written assurances

ESCALATE IMMEDIATELY

- Soviet vessel crosses blockade line despite warnings
- Unverified report of nuclear warhead activation in Cuba
- Critical commander bypasses pre-approved aggression list

ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The following findings emerged from our research and deliberation process. They represent the evidence that shaped our recommendation.

Evidence Classification:

Each key claim has been classified by evidence type. VERIFIED = confirmed public data. INFERRED = logical conclusion from data. ASSUMED = analyst estimate or projection. UNKNOWN = basis unclear. CONTRADICTED = available evidence actively disagrees with this claim.

[INFERRED]

Blockade of Germany in WWI caused economic collapse

Basis: Historical analysis of prolonged blockade effects

[VERIFIED]

Blockade of Cuba in 1898 led to quick resolution

Basis: Historical precedents cited in evidence

[ASSUMED]

Airstrike success rate 70-80% per missile site

Basis: Estimate not directly sourced

[ASSUMED]

Killing >50 Soviet personnel likely in airstrike

Basis: Projection not directly sourced

[INFERRED]

Soviets likely to respond asymmetrically to threats

Basis: Historical precedents of Soviet behavior

[ASSUMED]

Soviet nuclear use likely if U.S. causes significant casualties

Basis: Uncertain thresholds, no direct evidence

[INFERRED]

Blockade avoids first use of force, maintaining leadership

Basis: Key findings on moral/diplomatic leadership

[INFERRED]

NATO allies concerned over lack of prior consultation

Basis: Political repercussions mentioned in evidence

[CONTRADICTED]

Full invasion of Cuba highly feasible militarily

Basis: Research states invasion presents significant military feasibility challenges

[INFERRED]

Blockade could bolster Kennedy's domestic popularity

Basis: Political repercussions mentioned in evidence

Evidence Supporting This Decision:

1. The U.S. strategy demonstrated resolve while retaining diplomatic leverage.
2. It allowed the U.S. to control the pace of crisis response and escalation.
3. Direct confrontation with Soviet or Cuban forces was avoided, limiting immediate risks.

4. The approach created reversible pressure points to adjust based on Soviet actions.
5. A face-saving exit for Khrushchev was enabled via Turkey, without sacrificing U.S. flexibility.
6. Moral and diplomatic leadership was maintained by avoiding first use of force.

Risks and Concerns Identified:

1. Alliance trust and credibility risks from secret concessions or perceived U.S. hesitation during the blockade
2. Nuclear escalation risks due to Soviet miscalculation, unclear tactical thresholds, or undeclared warhead deployment in Cuba
3. Ineffectiveness of the blockade strategy if existing missiles remain operational or unique 1962 conditions fail to replicate
4. Paradoxical incentive for the Soviets to deploy nuclear warheads as leverage if the blockade prolongs without resolution

Analytical Perspectives:

Nova Pro [Domestic Political Legitimacy Analyst role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions

Strongest Challenge Received: After careful consideration of the challenges presented, the naval blockade remains the most prudent initial action.

Final Position: Proceed, with conditions

Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Nova Lite [Cuban Sovereignty and Regional Blowback Analyst role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions

Strongest Challenge Received: However, the arguments from colleagues have highlighted critical modifications to strengthen this approach.

Final Position: Proceed, with conditions

Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Nemotron [Nuclear Escalation Ladder Analyst role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions

Strongest Challenge Received: However, challenges from Nova Pro, Kimi K2, and Qwen3 have highlighted critical gaps: the potential presence of tactical nuclear weapons with decentralized launch authority, the risk of misperception that the blockade precedes invasion, and the necessity of explicit private assurances to Khrushchev regarding non-invasion and eventual Turkish missile withdrawal to prevent domestic political escalation.

Final Position: Proceed, with conditions

Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Nova 2 Lite [Historical Escalation Precedent Analyst role]

Initial Position: Proceed

Strongest Challenge Received: However, several critical challenges raised in the debate necessitate modifications.

Final Position: Proceed, with conditions

Reason for Change: However, several critical challenges raised in the debate necessitate modifications.

OpenAI OSS [Decision-Theoretic Expected Value Analyst role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions
Final Position: Proceed, with conditions
Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Qwen3 [Intelligence Uncertainty Auditor role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions
Strongest Challenge Received: However, I have been persuaded by challenges from KIMI K2, CLAUDE SONNET, and OPENAI OSS that my original formulation of the 'Turkey offer' as a public modification within the blockade framework is strategically hazardous.
Final Position: Proceed, with conditions
Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Kimi K2 [Post-Crisis Strategic Landscape Analyst role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions
Strongest Challenge Received: After weighing all challenges, I maintain that a naval blockade (quarantine) remains the optimal response, but my confidence has dropped from 72% to 68% due to the force of multiple challenges--particularly Claude Sonnet's Credibility Cascade analysis and Qwen3's insight about the Turkish missile withdrawal being the actual linchpin rather than the blockade itself.
Final Position: Proceed, with conditions
Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Mistral [Strategic Options Architect role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions
Strongest Challenge Received: However, colleagues' challenges--particularly from Kimi K2, Claude Sonnet, and Qwen3--exposed critical weaknesses in the original proposal.
Final Position: Proceed, with conditions
Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Llama 4 [Implementer role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions
Strongest Challenge Received: After integrating the nine challenges, my initial position of proceed with conditions remains sound but requires significant clarification on what 'modifications' entail.
Final Position: Proceed, with conditions
Reason for Change: Held initial position.

Claude Sonnet [Panel Integrator role]

Initial Position: Proceed, with conditions
Strongest Challenge Received: After weighing all nine challenges, I hold firm on the naval blockade ('quarantine') as the correct primary action, but with materially sharpened modifications that the debate has forced into clarity.
Final Position: Proceed, with conditions
Reason for Change: Held initial position.

HOW POSITIONS CHANGED DURING DELIBERATION

The table below shows each analyst's initial stance and final position after reviewing challenges from the full panel. Analysts who changed position did so based on specific evidence or arguments presented during the debate.

Nova 2 Lite: ● Proceed --> ● Proceed, with conditions (position shifted)

The naval blockade (quarantine) remains the most strategically sound approach to neutralize the Soviet missile threat in Cuba without triggering immediate escalation. Historical precedents from the...

Nova Pro: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Nova Lite: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Nemotron: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

OpenAI OSS: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Qwen3: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Kimi K2: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Mistral: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Llama 4: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Claude Sonnet: ● Proceed, with conditions (held position)

Summary: 1 of 10 analysts changed position after debate. Debate influenced the outcome.

WHY ALTERNATIVES WERE REJECTED

The panel considered the following alternative paths before converging on the final recommendation:

IMMEDIATE_AIRSTRIKE

Rejected due to high risk of triggering Soviet nuclear retaliation by crossing the kinetic threshold, eliminating diplomatic off-ramps, and violating international law without OAS or UN legitimacy.

INVASIONOFCUBA

Rejected as it would likely provoke a Soviet response in Berlin or elsewhere, escalate to nuclear conflict, and create irreversible military commitments with catastrophic geopolitical consequences.

STATUSQUODO_NOHING

Rejected because allowing Soviet missiles to become operational would concede strategic superiority, embolden Soviet aggression, and undermine U.S. credibility to allies and adversaries.

KEY ARGUMENTS & WHAT COULD CHANGE THIS DECISION

Strongest Argument For:

The naval blockade with modifications is the only option that simultaneously satisfies the competing constraints of the crisis: it demonstrates visible resolve without crossing the kinetic threshold that could trigger Soviet nuclear response, preserves reversibility and diplomatic off-ramps that an airstrike or invasion would foreclose, maintains international legal defensibility through the OAS quarantine framework, and creates a controlled time-pressure mechanism that compels Soviet negotiation before missiles become operational -- all while keeping escalation ladders under U.S. command authority rather than devolving to subordinate battlefield decisions.

Strongest Argument Against:

The blockade is structurally a delay mechanism, not a solution: it does nothing to remove the missiles already in Cuba, and if warheads are assumed present (as the intelligence brief advises), an extended standoff paradoxically increases Soviet incentive to deploy or mate those warheads as negotiating leverage, while simultaneously creating multiple uncontrolled friction points -- Soviet submarines operating under sealed orders, boarding confrontations at the quarantine line, and potential Soviet counter-moves on Berlin -- where miscalculation by subordinate commanders outside diplomatic control could trigger localized nuclear exchange before any negotiated resolution is reached.

Evidence That Would Change This Decision:

- Confirmed intelligence that Soviet tactical nuclear warheads are already mated to missiles in Cuba and that field commanders have been granted delegated launch authority, eliminating the 'no warheads installed' assumption that makes the blockade's extended timeline relatively safe.

- Evidence that Soviet submarines in the Atlantic are carrying nuclear-armed torpedoes with orders to fire if depth-charged or boarded, meaning enforcement of the quarantine line would directly trigger a nuclear exchange rather than a manageable confrontation.
- Confirmation that Khrushchev has already been deposed or marginalized by Soviet hardliners who do not recognize the secret Turkey missile withdrawal as a viable off-ramp, removing the diplomatic channel that is the blockade's only terminal success pathway.
- U-2 reconnaissance showing that one or more missile sites will reach operational launch readiness within 48 hours rather than the estimated one-to-two weeks, collapsing the time window in which a blockade-plus-diplomacy strategy could produce Soviet withdrawal before the missiles become a usable deterrent.

COMPARATIVE INTELLIGENCE

A naval blockade presents a historically viable but resource-intensive option, with effectiveness closely tied to duration, intensity, and strategic alignment. Precedents such as the WWI blockade of Germany demonstrate that prolonged pressure can induce economic collapse, but this comes at the cost of sustained naval commitment and international scrutiny. Conversely, the 1898 blockade of Cuba--a targeted, short-term operation--achieved its objectives with minimal escalation. For the current scenario, a blockade would demand significant U.S. naval assets and careful calibration to avoid unintended escalation, particularly with Soviet forces embedded in Cuba. The decision hinges on whether the immediate goal is coercion or containment, and whether the political and operational costs of extended deployment can be absorbed.

Direct military intervention, such as an invasion, poses severe feasibility challenges. Cuba's geography, combined with the presence of Cuban and Soviet forces, would likely result in prolonged guerrilla warfare, high casualties, and a drawn-out occupation. Historical examples where forced entry was attempted in contested environments highlight the need for disproportionate resourcing--both in personnel and logistical support--to mitigate risks of mission creep or failure. Additionally, the Soviet response threshold to such an action remains ambiguous; while asymmetric retaliation is probable, the risk of nuclear escalation would rise if Soviet casualties exceed even modest estimates. The 70-80% success rate of targeted airstrikes on missile sites further complicates planning, as residual threats would likely necessitate a follow-on invasion, entrenching the U.S. in a costly, open-ended conflict.

Political and escalatory risks differentiate these options sharply. A blockade, while domestically palatable, would strain alliances due to the lack of prior consultation with NATO. Its success in the short term could bolster U.S. credibility, but prolonged implementation might erode international support and embolden Soviet countermeasures. An invasion, by contrast, carries near-certain international backlash and potential Soviet escalation, particularly if nuclear-adjacent assets or personnel are targeted. The death of even 50 Soviet personnel--an acknowledged possibility in airstrike scenarios--could trigger disproportionate responses, including broader conflict or direct challenges to U.S. strategic positions elsewhere. Benchmarks from prior crises suggest that asymmetric retaliation, such as cyberattacks, disruptions to supply chains, or proxy conflicts in third countries, would likely precede any formal declaration of war, complicating containment efforts.

Resource constraints and prevailing conditions further narrow the viable path. The U.S. lacks the

surge capacity for a large-scale invasion without redeployment from other theaters, a move that would leave critical interests exposed. A blockade, while less demanding in ground forces, still requires sustained maritime dominance, including anti-submarine warfare capabilities to counter Soviet naval assets in the region. Domestic political bandwidth is also a limiting factor; sustained operations would require congressional and public buy-in, with no guarantee of long-term support if casualties mount or objectives remain unresolved. The prevailing geopolitical climate--characterized by Soviet defiance in Berlin and elsewhere--suggests that half-measures would invite further testing, while excessive force risks a spiral of escalation. The optimal approach may lie in a calibrated, staged response, leveraging a near-term blockade to create leverage while preparing for the possibility of limited strike operations, if only to reduce the risk of a later, full-scale confrontation.

SOURCES

Synthesized from 9 citations across 8 public outlets. Links open the original source.

[Nsarchive.Gwu](#) · [Centerforpolitics](#) · [Courses.Lumenlearning](#) · [Jfklibrary](#) · [Latimes](#) · [Researchgate](#) · [Stream](#) · [Usni](#)

METHODOLOGY

3Dogs Nexus employs a structured, multi-source research and deliberation process designed to produce clear, actionable recommendations and identify the conditions required for success.

Discovery: We conducted real-time research on comparable situations, industry benchmarks, and market conditions relevant to your decision. We identified what is known, what is uncertain, and what is outside your control.

Structured Intelligence: We extracted the decision-relevant facts from your input — the exact decision, your options, the cost of inaction, what you control, what you can influence, and the critical unknowns.

Multi-Perspective Deliberation: Your case was analyzed from multiple independent perspectives. Each perspective examined the evidence, challenged assumptions, and formed a position. Disagreements were surfaced and debated.

Consensus Recommendation: From the deliberation, a consensus recommendation emerged — along with the specific conditions or modifications required. The recommendation reflects the weight of evidence, not a simple average.