

## **EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY: THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS**

The West Wing was rife with tension and fear; I could smell it. President Kennedy had just convened EXCOMM, the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, and as the members solemnly took their places around a long, oaken table I sat stone still, trying to assess the situation at hand. The War Room began to fill with a panoply of military and diplomatic functionaries, running around like chickens with their heads cut off.

*Mmmm, chicken.*

A crisis was developing. A crisis that would, for a few terrible moments, envelop the entire world in the horrifying possibility of nuclear self-destruction. The time for decisive measures was at hand. I zealously grabbed my leash with my mouth and dropped it at the President's feet. But he ignored my passionate entreaty. There was to be no ecstatic emptying of my bladder in the fragrant environs of the Rose Garden any time soon.

The situation was obviously worsening; my water dish hadn't been refilled for hours. Apparently U-2 reconnaissance planes had produced indisputable photographic evidence of the existence of medium and intermediate-range Soviet missile facilities on the island of Cuba, one of the few Communist strongholds in the Western Hemisphere. There was only one possible course of action. I quickly made my way to the Roosevelt Restroom, and drank greedily from the toilet.

As I returned General Maxwell D. Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arose to solemnly address the Commander-in-Chief. "Mister President," he said, his countenance somber, "we're looking at only two possible courses of action here: the deployment of a single carrier division targeting the launch facility itself, or a complete and total invasion using all possible force at our

disposal.” I could easily have suggested a third option: a hefty bowlful of Kibbles ’n Bits. But I kept my mouth shut.

As the windowless room filled with the unmistakable redolence of sweat and cigarette smoke, the threat of a global catastrophe wrought by two rival superpowers was fast becoming a grim reality. I gazed imploringly at the President, trying to will him to take action — to do something, *anything* — preferably something involving those little things shaped like miniature T-Bones that taste like bacon. But it was all in vain. “Stay focused,” I told myself, as I methodically sniffed the shoes of National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy.

Suddenly all eyes turned to Admiral Anderson, Chief of Naval Operations. “Mr. President,” he grimly intoned, “in order to prevent the further delivery of offensive weapons to Cuba we must immediately instigate a blockade.”

“But using the term ‘Blockade’ will be legally interpreted as an act of war by the Organization of American States!” I yelped ferociously. “It would be much better to use a less fraught description of the maneuver, say, ‘quarantine,’” I added, batting a squeaking rubber bone between my paws.

But my sagacious advice went unheeded. “Get that mutt out of here!” yelled some cretinous Colonel. “Fools!” I thundered, as a low-level military flunky dragged me from the room by my collar. “This could result in world domination by the Soviets!” I barked. “Or even worse — *squirrels!*”

Thus banished from the corridors of power, I retreated to the comfortable confines of my daybed to lick my wounds. And my balls.

Later — it could have been hours, it could have been days — the looming shadow of the Leader of the Free World appeared over me, leash in hand. The crisis was over.

“Khrushchev agreed to remove his missiles from Cuba,” Kennedy explained to the First Lady, as I delighted in the familiar sensation of the lead snapping onto my collar. “In return we’re dismantling our Jupiter MRBM’s in Turkey.

“What about the OAS?” Jackie asked, batting those beautiful long eyelashes of hers.

“We referred to our naval maneuver as a ‘quarantine,’ not a ‘blockade,’” Jack explained. “We won’t have any problems with them. Let’s go, boy.”

As was my wont, I licked his hand with gratitude. “Good dog,” the Commander-in-Chief purred, patting my head with infuriating condescension.

*If you only knew how good,* I thought to myself, relishing the realization that, now, with the termination of what was perhaps the greatest crisis ever faced by an American presidential administration, I would once again be able to enjoy the unfettered freedoms of life in a constitutional democracy, as well as the mouthwatering delicacy of my own poop.