



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** The Cuban Missile Crisis was a high point of what came to be known as the Cold War. State the major reasons behind it along with its consequences. (250 words)

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### Approach

- Briefly explain the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- Enumerate the reasons behind it.
- Discuss the consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- Conclude suitably

### Ans.

Cuba got involved in the Cold War after Fidel Castro seized power from the USA backed dictator Batista in 1959. In 1961, USA broke diplomatic ties with Cuba which resulted in the relationship between the USSR and Cuba getting better. In 1961, Castro announced that he was a Marxist and Cuba was a socialist country.

The USA continued its efforts to destroy the Castro regime in Cuba by military and tactical efforts. Cuba appealed to the USSR for military help. Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union, decided to convert Cuba into a Russian base. The installation of weapons put the US, for the first time, within the range of USSR's missiles and nearly doubled the number of cities in the American mainland, which could be threatened by the USSR. The situation became very tense and it appeared as if a nuclear war was imminent. This event came to be known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The crisis came to an end after an appeal was made by the Secretary-General of the UN. The USSR agreed to withdraw the missiles and destroy the launching sites in Cuba, and in return, the USA agreed not to invade Cuba again.

### The major reasons for the Cuban Missile Crisis were

- Cuba was under threat of military invasion from the USA, so the USSR wanted to help as a gesture of solidarity with Cuba which was an ally of the Soviet Union.
- The USSR lost the lead in developing Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), so it was looking for an opportunity to encircle the USA from a close range.
- In 1959, the USA deployed Jupiter missiles in Turkey. It threatened the security of the USSR, hence, Cuba seemed to be an ideal place to initiate counter-strike against the USA.
- The Soviets felt uneasy about the number of nuclear weapons that were targeted at them from Western Europe and Turkey, and deployment of missiles in Cuba could be used for bargaining with the West.

### Despite lasting for a few days, the Cuban Missile Crisis had important consequences

- The world came to realise how easily a nuclear war can be started.
- A hotline was introduced between USSR and USA to allow swift consultations.

- In 1963, the USA, the USSR and Britain signed a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, agreeing to carry out nuclear tests only underground to avoid polluting the atmosphere any further.
- The Cuba-USSR relationship was extremely cool for several years as Cuba felt betrayed.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was an important event in the Cold War era, which made the world realize the threat posed by the weapon race of USA and USSR, and it proved to be a kick-start for the movements to make the world safe from the horrors of a nuclear war.

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