

The Nuclear Deception

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The Nuclear Deception

**Nikita Khrushchev and the
Cuban Missile Crisis**

Servando González



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Chapter 10

A Missile is a Missile is a Missile

This is not a pipe.

—Caption in *The Treachery of Images*, a 1929 painting by René Magritte depicting a pipe.

The Cuban missile crisis is still a very elusive historical event. For forty years it has captured the imagination of the media, scholars, and the public alike, producing a veritable mountain of articles, scholarly essays, and books. Still, after so much effort by so many privileged minds, some aspects of the Cuban missile crisis continue to defy any logical explanation and are as puzzling today as they were at the time of the event. In this chapter, I will study the alleged evidence of the presence of strategic missiles and their associated nuclear warheads in Cuba in 1962 from the point of view of semiotics.

Is “Photographic Evidence” Evidence at All?

The official story, offered by the Kennedy administration, and accepted at face value by most scholars of the Crisis and later popularized by the American mainstream media, is that, though rumors about the presence of strategic missiles in Cuba were widespread among Cuban exiles in Florida since mid-1962,¹ the American intelligence community was never fooled by them. To American intelligence analysts, “only direct evidence, such as aerial photographs, could be convincing.”² It was not until Sunday, 14 October, 1962, that a U-2, authorized at last to fly over the western part of Cuba,³ brought the first high-altitude photographs of what seemed to be Soviet strategic missile sites, in different stages of completion, deployed on Cuban soil.

Once the photographs were analyzed by experts at the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC), they were brought to President Kennedy who, after a little prompting by a photointerpreter who attended the meeting, accepted as a fact the NPIC's conclusion that Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev had taken a fateful, aggressive step against the U.S. by placing nuclear capable strategic missiles in Cuba. This meeting is considered by most scholars to be the beginning of the Cuban missile crisis.

Save for a few unbelievers at the United Nations⁴ —a little more than a year before, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson had shown the very same delegates “hard” photographic evidence of Cuban planes, allegedly piloted by Castro's defectors, which had attacked positions on the island previous to the Bay of Pigs landing— most people, including the members of the American press, unquestionably accepted the U-2 photographs as evidence of Khrushchev's treachery. The photographic “evidence,” however, was received abroad with mixed feelings.

Senior CIA officer Sherman Kent recorded in detail the story of how the U-2 photographs were brought to some American allies, and what their reactions were. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, for example, just spent a few seconds examining the photographs, and accepted the proof on belief. The Prime Minister's Private Secretary, however, “expressed serious concern about the reception any strong government statement in support of the U.S. decision would have *in the absence of incontrovertible proof of the missile buildup.*”⁵

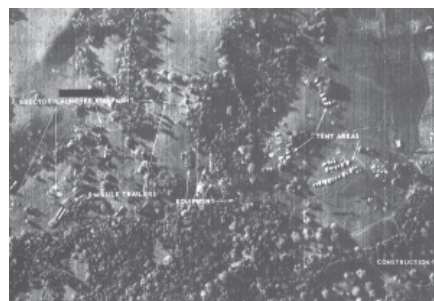
German Chancellor Adenauer accepted the photographic evidence, and apparently was impressed with it. General de Gaulle accepted President Kennedy's word initially on faith, though later he inspected the photographs in great detail, and was impressed with the quality of them. However, when the photographs were shown to French journalists, one of them, André Fontaine, an important senior writer for *Le Monde*, strongly expressed his doubts. Only circumstantial evidence he received later, not the photographs themselves, made him change his opinion. Canada's Prime Minister Diefenbaker questioned the credibility of the evidence of Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba.⁶

According to Kent, notwithstanding some of the viewers' past experience in looking at similar photographs, “All viewers, however, took on faith or on the say-so of the purveyors that the pictures were what they claimed to be: scenes from Cuba taken a few days past.”⁷

Nevertheless, beginning with Robert Kennedy's classic analysis of the Crisis, the acceptance of the U-2's photographs as hard evidence of the presence of Soviet strategic missiles deployed on Cuban soil has rarely been contested.⁸ CIA director John McCone reaffirmed the same line of total belief in a Top Secret post-mortem memorandum of 28 February 1963 to the President. According to McCone, aerial photography was “our best means to establish hard intelligence.”⁹



This is not a pipe. René Magritte, *The Treachery of Images*, 1929.



These are not missiles. U-2 Photo (USAF). San Cristóbal, Cuba, October 14, 1962.

But both Robert Kennedy and John McCone were dead wrong. As Magritte's picture *The Treachery of Images* masterly exemplifies, a picture of a missile is *not* a missile. A photograph of a UFO is *not* a UFO. Clint Eastwood is *not* Dirty Harry. Charlton Heston is *not* Moses. A picture, by itself alone, can hardly be accepted as "hard" evidence of anything.¹⁰ Linguist Alfred Korzybski masterly expressed it when he wrote, "The map is not the territory."¹¹ The fact is so obvious that no time should be wasted discussing it. It seems, however, that the very fact that it is so obvious—somebody said that the best way to hide something is by placing it in plain view—has precluded scholars from studying it in detail. Therefore, let's analyze the obvious.

A photograph is nothing more than a thin film of gelatine spread on top of a paper support. The gelatine has embedded in it very small grains of a light-sensitive substance. Once exposed to light, the grains suffer a chemical alteration. During the developing process with the right chemicals, some of the grains, in the form of very small dots, turn black, others remain white, and others take different gradations of gray. When observed by a trained individual, the dots, due to the integrating, holistic ability of the human mind, turn into a meaningful image.¹² This, both the material support and the mental image it creates, is what we call a photograph.

We are so used to dealing with photographs that most of the time we refer to them as if they were the real thing. A typical example is when a coworker pulls out of his wallet a photo of his family and says "this is my daughter, this is my wife, this is my dog, this is my house." Of course, what you see in the photograph are not the real things, just an *image* of the things.¹³

As nobody can smoke Magritte's pipe, no army can fire photographs of missiles against the enemy. Images appearing on photographs are not things, but *signs* of things. The inability to distinguish between a sign and the thing it signifies is one of the characteristics of primitive, magic thinking.¹⁴

Until relatively recent times the word semiotics appeared only in the field of medicine, in connection with the study of the symptoms of a particular disease. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century, however, that the Swiss linguist

Ferdinand de Saussure, and later the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, created the scientific foundations of the discipline we now know as semiotics.¹⁵

Saussure saw signs as twofold entities, showing a signifier and a signified (or *sign-vehicle* and *meaning*). To him, “the sign is implicitly regarded as a communication device taking place between two human beings intentionally aiming to communicate or to express something.”¹⁶ Peirce, however, saw signs as threefold entities. In articulating the foundation of the science of semiotics, he stated, “By semiosis I mean an action, an influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object and its interpretant.”¹⁷ To Peirce, the interpretant was the mental image created in the mind of an interpreter.

According to Peirce, a sign is “something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity.”¹⁸ As Italian semiotician Umberto Eco clearly puts it, “a sign can *stand for* something else to somebody only because this ‘standing-for’ relation is mediated by an interpretant.”¹⁹ The “something” can be anything: a material thing, a concept, an idea, a feeling; existing or non-existing, real or unreal.

Things are things. In some particular circumstances, however, a person can see (or hear, or smell, or touch) something and have similar impressions as if he were experiencing something different. Peirce called this process semiosis. To him, the process of semiosis is nothing but “a psychological event in the mind of a possible interpreter.”²⁰ From the point of view of semiotics, the work of the technicians at the NPIC is basically a semiotic process. Surveillance photographs, by themselves alone, have no meaning. They become signs—that is, pointers to other real-life things—in the minds of skilled photointerpreters, who carefully compare apparently meaningless forms and shadows against their previous experiences, looking for meaningful relationships.

As Claude Lévi-Strauss put it, the science of semiotics is concerned with the different procedures used to transform nature into culture. This is roughly equivalent to the process of transforming raw data into intelligence.

Missiles and Signs of Missiles

Beginning with the concept of sign, Peirce created trichotomies of concepts, which sometimes extended almost *ad-infinitum*. According to him every sign is either an index, an icon, or a symbol.²¹

An index is a type of sign showing some relationship, usually of cause and effect, or antecedent to consequent, between a sign and a thing. Dark clouds are a sign indicating an approaching storm; high fever is an indexical sign of disease; smog is an indexical sign of air pollution. To Robinson Crusoe, footprints in the sand were the first indication that somebody else beyond him inhabited the island.

An icon is a type of sign which shows a relationship of formal or topological similarity or likeness between the sign and an object. Maps, diagrams, pictures,²² and photographs are typical iconic signs. Usually, iconic signs stand for particular, specific things.

A symbol, however, is a type of sign which shows no physical, or visual, or any type of relationship between the sign and the thing it signifies. The relationship established in the mind of the interpreter is totally conventional and arbitrary, as the result of an explicit or implicit agreement among those who use the sign.²³ Language is the most extended system of symbols used by men to communicate ideas, though there are other important systems of symbols, like the ones used in mathematics, music, chemistry, etc.

Semiosis is just a mental process, and there are no physical ties whatsoever between something and its sign. Therefore, signs can be decoded differently by different people or by the same people under different circumstances. Moreover, something can act as an icon while, at the same time, acting as an index and a symbol. The American flag on top of my town's city hall is an object made out of red, white and blue pieces of cloth sewn together. An American flag on an American embassy abroad is an index that the building is owned by the U.S. government. A photograph of that particular American flag is an iconic sign of the particular flag it depicts. But the American flag also symbolizes all what America stands for. As such, it is the ultimate symbol of the American nation.

The famous photograph showing the footprints of an American astronaut on the moon's soil is an iconic sign depicting an indexical sign. With the passage of time, however, the photograph became a symbol (symbolic sign) of the advances of American space technology. The fact shows an important characteristic of signs: they are polysemic; they are always open to multiple interpretations.

Most studies about the Cuban missile crisis repeat the extended opinion that the U-2 photographs were the hard, irrefutable evidence provided by the photointerpreters at the NPIC as the ultimate, uncontrovertible proof that the Soviets had secretly deployed strategic missile bases in Cuba. But, as we have seen above, in order to become meaningful information, photographs need to be decoded (interpreted) by an interpreter.

Being a subjective process, however, semiosis is full of pitfalls. There is always the risk of erroneous interpretation, by which a sign is interpreted as something totally different from what the creator of the sign originally intended to communicate. The process is known as aberrant decoding.²⁴ In the case of the U-2 photographs, the NPIC photointerpreters incorrectly decoded the objects appearing in them as strategic missiles, instead of *images* of strategic missiles.²⁵ But accepting the images of missiles as the ultimate proof of the presence of strategic missiles in Cuba was a big jump of their imagination, as well as a semantic mistake. A more truthful interpretation of the things whose images appeared in the U-2's photographs would have been to describe them as "objects whose photographic image highly resemble the auxiliary equipment used in Soviet strategic missile bases." But the photointerpreters at the NPIC confused the images of the objects they saw in the photographs with the actual missiles.²⁶ Afterwards, like mesmerized children, the media and the scholarly community have blindly followed the

pied piper of photographic evidence. But, as in Magritte's painting, a picture of a missile is not a missile.

With the advent of the new surveillance technologies pioneered with the U-2 plane and now extensively used by imaging satellites, there has been a growing trend in the U.S. intelligence community to rely more and more on imaging intelligence and less and less on agents in the field (HUMINT).²⁷ But, as any intelligence specialist can testify, photography alone, though a very useful surveillance component, should never be accepted as hard evidence. Photographs, at best, are just indicators pointing to a possibility which has to be physically confirmed by other means, preferably by trained, qualified agents working in the field.

Moreover, even disregarding the fact that photographs can be faked and doctored,²⁸ nothing is so misleading as a photograph. According to the information available to this day, the photographic evidence of Soviet strategic missiles on Cuban soil was never confirmed by American agents working in the field. The highly quoted report of a qualified agent who saw something "bigger, much bigger" than anything the Americans had in Germany,²⁹ omitted the important fact that what he actually saw was a canvas-covered object resembling a strategic missile. Actually, the missiles were never touched, smelled, or weighed. Their metal, electronic components, and fuel were never tested; the radiation from their nuclear warheads was never recorded; their heat signature was never verified.

According to philosopher Robert Nozick, the main criteria for considering a fact objective is that it is invariant under certain transformations, and he gives three characteristics that mark a fact as objective:

First, "an objective fact is accessible from different angles. Access to it can be repeated by the same sense (sight, touch, etc.), at different times; it can be repeated by different senses of the same observers. Different laboratories can replicate the phenomenon." Second, "there is or can be intersubjective agreement about it." Third, objective facts hold "independently of people's beliefs, desires, hopes, and observations or measurements."³⁰

One of the golden rules of intelligence work is to treat with caution all information not independently corroborated or supported by reliable documentary or physical evidence.³¹ Yet, recently declassified Soviet documents, and questionable oral reports from Soviet officials who allegedly participated directly in the event, have lately been accepted as sufficient evidence of the presence of strategic missiles and their nuclear warheads in Cuba in 1962. But one can hardly accept as hard evidence non-corroborated, non-evaluated information coming from a former adversary who has yet to prove he has turned into a friend.³² Even if some day this becomes accepted practice in the historian's profession, I can assure my readers that it will never be adopted in the intelligence field.

Photographs are just information, and information is not true intelligence until it has been thoroughly validated. As a rule, most counterintelligence analysts

believe that only information that has been secretly taken from an opponent and turned over is *bona fide* intelligence. But, if the opponent had intended it to be turned over, it is automatically considered disinformation.

One of the principles of espionage work is that what is really important is not that you know, but that your opponent doesn't know that you know. As Sherman Kent pointed out, once the U-2 brought (what seemed to be) photographs of strategic missiles in Cuba, the main thing was to keep it secret. "Until the President was ready to act, the Russians must not know that we knew their secret."³³

The fact that the Soviets had been so clumsy, failing to properly camouflage their missiles, surprised the American intelligence community. As it happens most of the time, however, American scholars found plausible explanations *a posteriori* for the Soviets' behavior. These explanations ranged from flawed bureaucratic standard operating procedures to political-military disagreements, and pure and simple carelessness. Nevertheless, still today the fact constitutes one of the most unexplainable Soviet "mistakes" during the crisis.

Probably one of the most known explanations was the one offered by Graham T. Allison. According to him, the failure to camouflage the missiles had a simple answer: bureaucratic procedures in the Soviet Army. Before the crisis, missile sites had never been camouflaged in the Soviet Union, so, the construction crews at the sites in Cuba did what they were used to do; building missile sites according to the installation manuals, because somebody forgot to retrain them before they were sent to work in Cuba.³⁴

But, given the strict operational procedures of the Soviet Army, Allison's explanation seems a bit too simplistic to be credible. First of all, the personnel assigned to do the job of building the missile sites were not common soldiers, but specially trained personnel. Secondly, even without disregarding the bureaucratic procedures common to all armies, it is a naive assumption to suppose that the Soviets could have made this type of gross mistake, particularly if they were trying to deploy the missiles in Cuba using deception and stealth, as the U.S. official version of the event claimed. Of course, this is only a variation of the "the Russians are stupid" argument. This may also explain why the Soviet soldiers involved in Operation Anadyr (code name for the operation) were supplied with skis and cold weather gear and clothing before traveling to Cuba. But now we know that this was not because of an error, but part of the *maskirovka* procedures designed to disguise the operation.³⁵

According to U.S. intelligence sources, missile sites had never been camouflaged in the Soviet Union. However, after Gary Power's U-2 was shot down, the flow of information about Soviet missiles almost stopped completely. Aside from the fact that, being in the so-called "denied areas," where no *in situ* verification by agents in the field was possible, we don't know if the U-2 photos never detected camouflaged sites because the camouflage was so effective it avoided the missiles from being detected. Also, there is the possibility that most of the missile sites photographed by the U2s on Soviet territory had actually been decoys.

One can safely surmise that, after the U-2 incident and the discovery of the high quality of its surveillance cameras, the Soviet Missile Forces would have

changed their procedures and would have camouflaged their missile sites. Furthermore, Soviet military literature strongly emphasizes the importance of surprise (*udivlenie*) and deception (*loz'n*) in modern warfare. Among it, the literature on camouflage (*maskirovka*), is particularly abundant.³⁶ The Russian tradition of using camouflage to mislead goes back to the times of Grigori Aleksandrovich Potemkin. Consequently, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, if the Soviet personnel in charge of installing the missiles failed to camouflage them, it was not because they were stupid, but because they were specifically ordered to do so.

The lack of adequate camouflage to hide the missiles from American observation is such a gross mistake that author Anatol Rappoport concluded that it was part of a Soviet plan by which the missile sites were meant to be discovered by American spy planes.³⁷ During the height of the crisis, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that "the authorities here almost all accepted one key assumption: that Mr. Khrushchev must have assumed that his Cuban sites would soon be discovered." The report also added that, according to one authority who had studied the photographic evidence, "The Russians seem almost to have gone out of their way to call attention to them."³⁸

Similarly, the Cubans were aware of the quality of American air surveillance technology. In 1961, *Life* magazine published a report about the anti-Castro guerrillas fighting in the Escambray mountains. Some of the photographs illustrating the article had been taken by the U-2s. On several occasions Castro asked the Soviets to give him SAMs, and let his people operate them, but the Russians were reluctant. Although most of the Cubans assigned to the SAM bases were engineering students from the University of Havana, the Soviets only allowed them to operate the radars.

To the evidence offered above of the Soviets' willingness to let the missiles be discovered, I can add some of my own. As a Cuban Army officer during the crisis I was assigned to headquarters and sent on inspection visits to several military units to assess their combat morale and battle readiness. One of these visits was to the Isle of Pines, where I visited a unit, deployed in an area close to the Siguanea peninsula, not far from a Soviet missile base located on the top of a nearby hill, close to the coast. The Cuban soldiers had aptly nicknamed the base "*el circo soviético*," (the Soviet Circus), because of the canvas tarpaulins surrounding it. But the most interesting detail is that, though the tarpaulins precluded observers from seeing the base from the ground, the base itself remained uncovered on top and in plain view of American spy planes. So, it seems that, though the Soviets apparently were eager to allow long-distance detection, they didn't want any short-range observation of the missiles by the Cubans.

In another inspection, I visited a Cuban Air Force base at San Antonio de los Baños, south of Havana. The visit occurred after president Kennedy had alerted the American public about the presence of missile bases in Cuba. Low-level American reconnaissance flights had begun, and Castro had ordered the antiaircraft batteries under his command to fire at American planes.

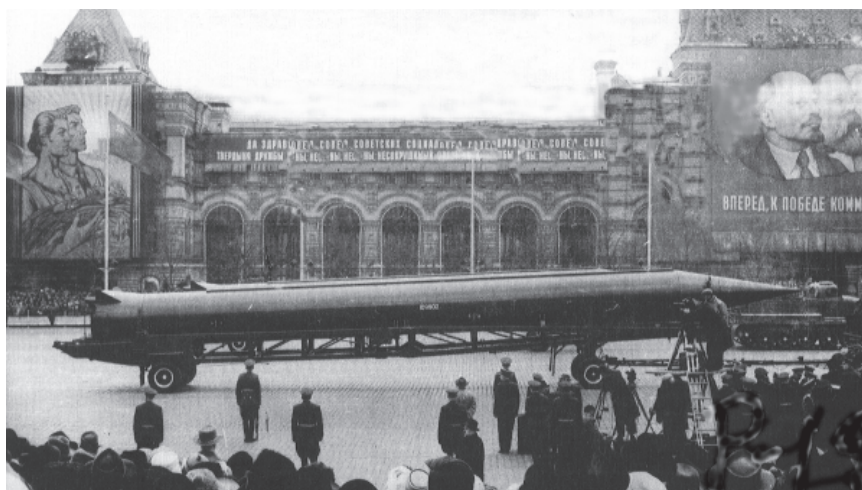
Once at the base, we drove our jeep to the runway, where I saw in the distance several MiG fighter planes, which looked to me like MiG 15 or 17 models, lying

like sitting ducks on the apron. On close inspection, however, we discovered that the planes were clumsy dummies made out of wood, cardboard and painted canvas. An officer at the base told us that the real planes were well protected and camouflaged.

As we were talking to other officers at the end of the runway, the anti-aircraft batteries received a phone call alerting them that American planes had entered Cuban airspace, and one of them was flying in our direction. A few minutes later, what seemed to me like a RF-101 Voodoo reconnaissance aircraft overflew us at treetop level, too fast for the inexperienced boys³⁹ manning the four-barreled anti-aircraft guns to open fire.

Though the dummies on the runway were perhaps good enough to fool the high-flying U-2s, they were too clumsily made to fool low-flying reconnaissance planes. The fact, however, that the Soviets had used decoy planes (and probably other types of decoys) in Cuba during the Crisis has never been mentioned in any of the U.S. declassified documents pertaining to the Crisis. Also, it is difficult to believe, to say the least, that Soviet *maskirovka* had worked so well on other aspects of the Cuban operation, but failed on the most important part of it: covering the strategic missile bases from prying American eyes. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that the missiles deployed in Cuba, like the ones Khrushchev was displaying in Moscow's Red Square parades, were a *ruse de guerre*; nothing but empty dummies.⁴⁰

It is known that, after Gary Powers' U-2 was shot down in May, 1960, the Soviets hurriedly began building dummy SAM silos. Dummy tanks, guns, and other types of war matériel were regularly deployed to confuse the sky spies.⁴¹ According to some sources, as late as 1960, even some units of the newly created Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces were not getting real missiles, but dummies.⁴²



This *not* a missile! This is a *photograph* of a Soviet MRBM, Sandal SS-4, like the ones Khrushchev sent to Cuba. Given the fact, however, that the Soviets would not run the risk of parading a real missile with its nuclear warhead and its highly unstable liquid propellant through Moscow's streets, this may not even be a photograph of a missile, but a symbol of Grigori Potemkin's motherland.

Camouflage in warfare can be used either passively, to conceal from the enemy the true thing, or actively, to mislead the enemy into accepting a false one. From the point of view of semiotics, camouflage is intentional false encoding with the purpose of deceiving the decoder. Furthermore, in semiotic terms, camouflage can be defined as the art of confusing the enemy to make him believe that a sign of a thing is the thing itself, that is, to induce the enemy into magical thinking.

Strategic Missiles as Symbols

The successful launching in 1957 of the first man-made earth satellite, the *Sputnik* soon became a symbol of Soviet technological success. After that, the U.S.S.R. passed through a brief period of national pride and faith in a better future. Khrushchev's poorly chosen phrase "We will bury you," was most likely not intended as a threat to the West, but as an assertion of his confidence that, sometime in the near future, socialism, under the guidance of the Soviet Union, would replace decadent capitalism.

Though the Soviet Union had expressed support for the new revolutionary phenomenon developing 90 miles from American shores, it had been mostly rhetorical. Then, on July 9, 1960, Khrushchev told the U. S. to keep its hands off Cuba, backing his words with the famous threat of the Soviet nuclear missiles: "*Figuratively speaking*, in case of need, Soviet artillerymen can support the Cuban people with their rocket fire if the aggressive forces in the Pentagon dare to launch an intervention against Cuba."⁴³

The precise nature of the Soviet military commitment to Cuba on Khrushchev's speech of July 9 was later to be questioned, and the Soviets themselves immediately moved to de-emphasize Khrushchev's promise of "figurative" (symbolic) rocket support of Cuba.⁴⁴

Just three days after Khrushchev made the symbolic offer of rocket support to Cuba, he backpedalled and said, "We don't need bases in Cuba. We have bases in the Soviet Union, and we can hit anything from here."⁴⁵ A week later, on July 16, *TASS* published an authoritative statement entitled "The Monroe Doctrine Ended Long Ago and Can No Longer Help the Imperialist Colonizer." But, a careful reading between the lines evidenced that in the event of an armed intervention against Cuba the only thing the Soviet Union was going to offer was its strong support. No mention was made of the symbolic missiles, which had suddenly disappeared from the picture as if they never existed.

After Khrushchev's symbolic *faux pas* about the missiles, Castro made several efforts to force him further into a strong commitment, but Khrushchev ignored the Cuban leader's initiatives. Rumor ran that when the two leaders met in New York in September, 1960, Khrushchev told Castro to stop making references to Soviet missile support.⁴⁶

Khrushchev pounding his shoe on his desk at the General Assembly was perhaps a symbolic, but ambiguous statement of support for Fidel. But the Cuban

leader wanted more than symbols. That same month Castro sent Carlos Franqui, editor of *Revolución*, to Moscow on the pretext of interviewing Khrushchev, to find out how the Soviet leader could pass from figurative, symbolic language to direct statements. Franqui spent several hours in the Kremlin going over the subject with Khrushchev, but the most he obtained from the shrewd Soviet leader was a Solomonic statement, which was interpreted in contradictory fashion by the press services of the United States and the rest of the world.⁴⁷ Apparently Khrushchev had second thoughts about the responsibilities he had assumed with regard to Cuba. There are indications that he finally got tired of Castro's schemes and diplomatically told the Cuban leader to quit rattling the Soviet missiles against the United States.

It seems that, finally, Castro got it, because during a long speech on November 8, he told the Cubans to forget the idea that they were protected by Soviet nuclear missiles.⁴⁸ *Hoy*, the newspaper of the old pro-Soviet Cuban communist party, came to the rescue and denied that Khrushchev had told Castro to stop mentioning the Soviet missiles.⁴⁹ But *The New York Times* confirmed on November 19, that the Soviet leader had told Castro to moderate his violent attacks upon the United States, and in particular to stop rattling the Soviet nuclear missiles.

Premier Khrushchev used to complain about the American nuclear missiles deployed by some NATO countries around the Soviet borders. But the missiles the U.S. had deployed in Europe were no less symbolic than the ones Khrushchev had promised Castro. As Michael Mandelbaum rightly observed, "Tactical nuclear weapons became symbols of the American resolve to carry out its commitments to its NATO partners."⁵⁰ Another scholar has pointed out that, though the use of nuclear weapons has military value, "its symbolic political value can easily outweigh its military significance."⁵¹

In a private conversation with his British friend David Ormsby-Gore, Kennedy told him that the missiles in Turkey were "more or less useless."⁵² They had been left there, however, because of their symbolic value. The phasing out of the American missiles in Turkey had been under consideration long before the crisis.⁵³ In any case, the Kennedy administration had decided the previous year to remove them because they were obsolete, clumsy liquid-fuel rockets. The American plan was to replace them with missile-bearing Polaris submarines stationed in the Mediterranean. Among the precautions which Kennedy took during the crisis to avoid a costly mistake by subordinates ignoring orders, was the bizarre fact that he reportedly ordered the removal of the fuses and warheads from the Jupiter missiles in Turkey, probably with the intention of making them fully symbolic.

In his life as a Russian leader, Khrushchev was to show that he was deeply addicted to the calculated risk, especially if it implied no real risk at all. Though not a trained semiotician, Khrushchev knew perfectly well the cardinal difference between a symbolic missile and a real one, and that the manipulation of symbols was a lot less riskier than the manipulation of things — particularly when the things in question were tipped with nuclear warheads.

We may safely surmise that, fully aware of the strong force of symbols, Khrushchev had realized that a dummy missile had the same symbolic value than a real one. As a matter of fact, symbolic missiles have the same deterrent power (and provocation power, for that matter) as the real ones, but without all of their inherent risks.⁵⁴

The Treachery of Intelligence Images

According to Umberto Eco,

Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands in for it. Thus *semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie*.⁵⁵

Intelligence, espionage, and particularly counterintelligence, are semiotic activities *par excellence*; they deal mostly with all types of deception, and deception has always been an important component of the intelligence profession since its early days. I will use a relatively recent example to illustrate the point.

During World War II, the British intelligence services carried out an enormous disinformation exercise code-named Fortitude, as a part of a major deception operation code-named Bodyguard. The main goal of operation Fortitude was to fool the Germans about the place selected by the Allied armies for their coming invasion. Fortitude was extremely successful in creating a notional⁵⁶ American invasion force, the First U.S. Army Group (FUSAG), under the command of Lt. Gen George Patton, which, according to German intelligence reports, was ready to land at Pas de Calais. More than 19 German divisions, including several armored ones, waited patiently for an attack that never materialized, while the invading forces secured their positions at Normandy, the true place of the invasion. The main mistake of the German Abwehr and other intelligence services was that they apparently believed that aerial photographs were hard evidence.

German reconnaissance planes brought back to Berlin load after load of photographs showing two large Allied armies, one in Scotland, getting ready to invade Norway, and another getting ready for the assault on Pas de Calais. The aerial photographs depicted large concentrations of men, tanks, trucks, cannons, and all types of matériel associated with an invasion force.⁵⁷ What the Germans didn't know was that some of the tanks and trucks were inflatable rubber replicas, and the rest of the matériel was made out of plywood, cardboard and canvas. Some of the "cannons" hiding under camouflage nets consisted of an oil drum turned on its side with a telegraph pole resting on its top. Having in mind the quality of the photographic technology available at the time, the British intelligence was careful not to allow low flying planes to photograph the "armies," while high altitude

German reconnaissance flights were allowed to do their jobs unmolested.

In the case of the German intelligence, however, there are some alleviating circumstances which somehow explain their failure: the photographic illusion was supported by corroborating reports from their agents in the field. But the Germans ignored that the British intelligence services had managed to capture most of the German agents, “turning” some of them to feed controlled disinformation to the German intelligence.⁵⁸ At the end of the war, most German intelligence officers still believed that the invasion by the two large Allied armies never materialized only because of a late change of plans.

An interesting detail about the behavior of the American side during the Cuban missile crisis is that only three members of the U.S. government initially expressed doubts about the true existence of Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba: McGeorge Bundy,⁵⁹ General Maxwell Taylor and Deputy Secretary of State George Ball.⁶⁰ But, significantly, none of them were directly linked to the American intelligence services. On the other hand, no mention is made in the available literature of the Cuban missile crisis about any concern expressed by members of the American intelligence community about the possibility of Soviet deception, nor about what tradecraft tests were to evaluate the authenticity of the information they relied upon to reach the conclusion that the Soviets were deploying strategic missiles in Cuba.⁶¹

According to the CIA’s internal tradecraft notes, a way to counter enemy deception is “to show increased respect for the deceiver’s ability to manipulate perceptions and judgments by compromising collection systems and planting disinformation.”⁶² It seems, however, that during the Cuban missile crisis the NPIC analysts, ignoring all CIA’s standard tradecraft practices, demonstrated a total lack of respect for the Soviets’ disinformation abilities.

The fact that the American intelligence community apparently accepted the U-2 photos as hard evidence of the presence of missiles in Cuba could be interpreted as an indication not only of a gross violation of elementary intelligence practices but also of a high degree of incompetence. A simple evaluation of the information provided by the U-2 photos following the established procedures operating in the American intelligence services would have shown an appraisal close to a C5, that is, reliability of the source=C (fairly reliable), accuracy of information=5 (improbable) (see Appendix 1). The problem I have with reaching the logical conclusion expressed above is that, first, I have a high opinion of the professionalism of American intelligence officers, and, secondly, that one of the axioms in the profession is that, in the field of intelligence and espionage, things are never what they seem to be.

Moreover, it seems that not all members of the American intelligence community accepted the U-2 photographs as hard evidence. Ten years after the crisis, in an article which appeared in *Studies in Intelligence*, a classified publication whose circulation was restricted to CIA officers and made available to the public only a

few years ago, Sherman Kent affirms that, though he didn't know about any Ex Comm members who had doubts about the credibility of the U-2 photographs, he knew about a few very important officers at the Agency who did.⁶³

Therefore, I have come to believe that, in the particular case of the unproved, but blindly accepted belief that the Soviets deployed strategic missiles and their nuclear warheads in Cuba in 1962, there is more than meets the eye. I base my doubts not only on a hunch, but on two facts. The first is that the U.S. didn't force an *in situ* inspection of the Soviet ships leaving Cuba—probably the only way to verify beyond any reasonable doubt that the missiles had actually been in Cuba and were now on their way back to the Soviet Union.⁶⁴ The second one is that, though a high number of American documents relating to the missile crisis—a great part of them dealing with anecdotal information about the *opinions* of the participants—have been declassified and made available to scholars, almost all signals intelligence (SIGINT), including communications, electronic and nuclear radiation intelligence (NUCINT), is still kept classified and held under a tight lid.

Gen. William Y. Smith, who was a Major and an assistant to Gen. Maxwell Taylor in the White House at the time, has reported a very interesting detail. While reviewing message traffic from U.S. intelligence sources on Soviet military activity, Gen. Smith discovered a report about a U.S. Navy ship which apparently had picked up suspicious levels of radioactivity emitted by a Soviet freighter, the *Poltava*. He suggested to Gen. Taylor that he ask Admiral Anderson if the emanations meant the ship was carrying nuclear warheads. At the next Joint Chief's meeting, Taylor posed the question to Anderson, who replied, somewhat embarrassed, that he had not seen the message. Later that morning, Anderson's office informed Smith that the report had little significance, that Smith had misread it.⁶⁵

It makes sense to believe, therefore, that at the time the U.S. had the means to detect radiation from nuclear warheads leaving Cuba, without having to board the Soviet ships. But, again, no mention has been made of this important fact in any of the declassified documents on the Cuban missile crisis. Also, Admiral Anderson's behavior, as described by Gen. Smith, is strange, to say the least, because, contrary to Admiral Anderson's claims, that report was extremely significant.

There is a serious misconception which has become the gospel of many leftist and liberal American journalists: The CIA, like the gang that couldn't shoot straight, is inept and incompetent.⁶⁶ But you cannot take at face value everything you read or hear about how inept and stupid the CIA is.⁶⁷ The problem is that everything one ever hears about the CIA are its failures, but the very nature of intelligence work precludes them from announcing their successes. (This, added to the fact that one must take with extreme caution any intelligence services' claims about their successes or failures.) Thus, I think that, in the handling of the Cuban missile crisis, the CIA was not incompetent, but just deceitful—which, in the case of an intelligence service is not a criticism, but a compliment.

If this sounds too close to a conspiracy theory, I have to confess that I don't have a problem with that. At any rate, intelligence, espionage, and counterintelligence, ultimately are just key elements of a conspiracy to fool, confuse and eventually defeat the enemy.

A Logical Conclusion

My assertion that the presence of Soviet strategic missiles and their nuclear warheads in Cuba in 1962 is yet to be proved, is not a speculative, unsubstantiated hypothesis, but an uncontrovertible fact. Moreover, there is evidence showing that the photointerpreters at the NPIC used flawed methodological analyses in an effort to prove the existence of strategic nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962.

Intelligence services could exist only by dealing in hard knowledge. Until now, however, the alleged evidence provided to substantiate the claims that the Soviets deployed strategic nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962 is so flimsy that it makes it irrelevant.⁶⁸ As scientists like to say: extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof. In this case, the extraordinary proof has yet to appear. Up to this day, these claims seem to be more the product of theoretical, or perhaps ideological, considerations than direct observation.

In the case of seminal, but controversial events like the USS *Maine* explosion in Havana's bay, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and the Cuban missile crisis, just to mention a few, history has been manipulated through the suppression of data that challenges the prevailing interpretations. Moreover, it seems that the operant behavior for most scholars has been that if the facts do not agree with their theories, then such facts must be simply ignored.

What is simply amazing is that most of the American academic community, which firmly dismisses as nonsense UFOs, ESP, and astrology, accepted as models of scholarly research early studies of the Cuban missile crisis based almost entirely on highly questionable information provided by an administration that felt pride in its "management" of the news. The second generation of scholars is making a similar mistake, now based on questionable information coming from the Cuban and Russian governments, which are known for going way beyond mere news management in their total control of information. Scholars of the Cuban missile crisis should have treated the information coming from such unreliable sources with at least the same skepticism they reserve for claims of UFO abductions.

In the late 1960s, Neal D. Houghton said that recent American foreign policy had been so poorly conceived and so dangerous that it was unworthy of the dominant intellectual support it had received. Too much of what has been passing for political science scholarship, he added, has been little more than footnoted rationalizations and huckstering of that policy.⁶⁹ Most of the recent American scholarly studies about the Cuban missile crisis are evident proof that Houghton's observation is still valid. In a field that prides itself for detached analysis and intellectualism, dogma and extra-academic interests run rampant.

Despite all the U.S. photographic “hard” evidence (which constitutes no evidence at all); the assertions made by alleged participants in the Crisis (whose credibility is highly questionable); and the Soviet documentary evidence recently uncovered (which has not been corroborated by independently checked, unfriendly sources), the presence of Soviet strategic missiles and their nuclear warheads in Cuba in 1962 is, to this moment, just a figment of some people’s imagination; a cargo cult which, like a malignant *meme*,⁷⁰ has become part of the American belief system. But, as Blight, Allyn, and Welch have rightly pointed out, “deeply rooted beliefs die hard.”⁷¹

Notes

1 The word that there were Soviet missile sites in Cuba was so widespread that *Time* ran an article on September 21 showing a map of Cuba clustered with Soviet ground-to-air missiles, mainly in the Western part of the island, west and south of Havana.

2 The quote is from Raymond L. Garthoff, “U.S. Intelligence in the Cuban Missile Crisis,” in James G. Blight and David A Welch, eds., *Intelligence and the Cuban missile crisis* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), p. 23.

Like the majority of the people, the President and his close advisors most likely were convinced that “seeing is believing.” But, actually, seeing should never be used as a basis for believing, because many things we see every day are misleading, or not real, or outright false. From watching magicians we know how easily one can be misled by visual images. See, Arthur Asa Berger, *Seeing is Believing: An Introduction to Visual Communication* (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1989), pp. 15, 17.

3 Though most alleged sightings coming from Cuban exiles located the missiles in the western part of the island, U-2 planes had concentrated their efforts on spying in the *eastern* part of Cuba. It was not until October 9, 1962, that the interagency Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) gave authorization to fly over the Western part of Cuba.

4 When U.S. Ambassador Stevenson displayed the photographs of what he claimed were Soviet strategic missile sites in Cuba at the U.N. Security Council meeting in October 25, Soviet Ambassador Zorin countered that the photographs were a fake. Evidence indicates that Zorin, like most Soviet diplomats, was left out of the loop by his own government about the events developing in Cuba. Therefore, his doubts about the credibility of the photographs most likely were not faked.

5 Sherman Kent, “The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Presenting the Evidence Abroad,” *Studies in Intelligence*, Spring 1972. (Emphasis added.)

6 Kent, “The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.”

7 Kent, “The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.”

8 The only exceptions I am aware of, are my own “El Gran Engaño,” a series of 6 articles in Spanish published in New York’s *El Diario-La Prensa*, on October 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, and 27, 1982, and Ralph Epperson, *The Unseen Hand* (Tucson: Publius Press, 1985), 120-121; and Ralph Epperson’s “Russia Has Wooden Missiles!,” a two hour videotape of a lecture he gave in 1988.

It seems, however, that some time after the crisis James Jesus Angleton had his own doubts about the strange things in the U-2 photos. Perhaps suspecting Russian foul play, he asked to see all the documents prepared by the NPIC during the crisis. Unfortunately, the results of his study—if he ever did one—were never published. See Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, p. 563. Brugioni mentions that most people at CIA regarded Angleton as eccentric and paranoid. It is easy to understand why Angleton came to be so hated by some of his CIA colleagues.

9 McCone memo in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency History Staff, 1992), note 6, p. 374.

10 In an interesting article enigmatically titled “DC Power and Cooling Towers,” Henry Rubenstein shows how high tech aerial photography, though a valuable means of detection of enemy activity, requires the support of other means of collection and analysis to become true intelligence. See H. Bradford Westerfield, ed., *Inside CIA’s Private World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 3-26. Rubenstein’s article originally appeared in CIA’s internal publication *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 16, no. 3 (Fall 1972), and was classified “Secret.” Rubenstein’s article appeared in 1972, ten years after the Cuban missile crisis, and it is safe to assume that during these years the quality of aerial surveillance advanced considerably. Still, the inability of photographs, by themselves alone, to serve as a source of true intelligence, persists.

11 *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* (1933). The following story is further proof of the validity of Korzybski’s extensively quoted dictum.

General George Lee Butler, commander of U.S. Strategic Command from 1990 to 1994, was the man responsible for developing the whole strategy for nuclear war with the U.S.S.R. In that capacity he had carefully studied the Soviet Union at a level of detail matched by only a few others in the West. He had studied the footage of the military parades at the Red Square, pored over thousands of satellite surveillance photos, and scrutinized the deployments of Soviet missiles and other armaments. His mental image of the Soviet Union was a fearsome superpower with a highly developed military machine capable of using the most advanced sophisticated military technology. But then, he had the opportunity of visiting the Soviet Union for the first time. His first surprise was the uneven, pockmarked runway at Sheremetievo airport, which from the air resembled an open field. The taxiways were still covered with snow from a storm two days earlier, and dozens of the runway lights were broken. As he rode into downtown Moscow he noticed that the streets were ragged and most of the big buildings lacked paint and were crumbling. After poring over thousands of satellite photos and thirty years worth

of classified reports, Butler had expected to find a modern, advanced country. What he found let him realize that what he had been watching all these years was actually a caricature. See R. Jeffrey Smith, "The Dissenter," *Washington Post Magazine*, December 7, 1997, pp. 18-20.

12 As members of technologically advanced cultures—or so we believe—we are so used to decoding photographic images that we fail to recognize that this is not an inborn or intuitive process, but a learned one. Some anthropologists have recorded the impressions of members of primitive tribes after they have been shown a photograph for the first time in their lives. Usually they have taken the puzzling object from the hands of the person conducting the experiment, smelled it, looked for something on its back, and returned the photograph without being able to decode the meaning of the small dots appearing on its surface.

In the early 1960s, the Cuban Institute of Cinema (ICAIC) produced a documentary film, *Por primera vez* (For the First Time), which records the impressions of farmers in the Sierra Maestra mountains after they saw the projection of a film for the very first time in their lives. The farmer's comments about their impressions are quite revealing, not too different from the anthropologists' experiments described above.

13 It seems, however, that NPIC Director Arthur Lundahl didn't have a clear distinction between things and their photographic images. During a briefing at the White House on Thursday, October 18, in which he presented some of the U-2 photographs, he kept referring to pictures as if they were the real objects they represent. See, i.e., "There are two pads, here—and here. They are separated by 750 feet. There's a control bunker with cable scars going up into small buildings inboard for each of the pads." Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikov, eds. *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 123.

14 In his monumental work *The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer analyzed the main principle on which magic is based. Basically magic operates on the principle that similar objects share the same properties. According to this, there is no difference between an object and its photograph. Science, on the contrary, operates on the opposite principle, which is best expressed in Einstein's Principle of Locality.

15 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris: Payot, 1916). Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-1958).

16 Saussure's quote in Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 15.

17 Peirce, *Collected Papers*, p. 484.

18 Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Vol. II, p. 228.

19 Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 15.

20 Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 15.

21 Peirce's theories were further advanced by some of his followers, particularly Charles Morris in his "Foundations of the Theory of Signs" *International*

Encyclopaedia of Unified Science 1-2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938); *Signs, Language and Behavior* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946); and *Writings on the General Theory of Signs* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971). Though Peirce's original trichotomy of signs has been improved, modified, and contested (See works by Umberto Eco, Thomas A. Sebeok, and others), it is still a good introduction for the beginning semiotician.

22 Not all pictures, however, are iconic signs. Contrary to common belief, most of the small pictures appearing on the Macintosh interface are actually *symbols*, not icons.

23 For example, after the emergence of Nazism, the swastika became to many people in the Western culture a symbol of war, hatred and evil. For many centuries, however, the swastika has been a symbol of peace, love, and good luck for many people around the world, including some American Indians.

24 The concept of aberrant decoding was introduced by Umberto Eco in "Lignes d'une recherche sémiologique sur le message télévisuel," a paper written in 1968 and later published in his *Recherches sur les systèmes signifiants* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973). For humorous examples of aberrant decoding see Daniel Meyerowitz, "Symbol Game," *Whole Earth Review*, Spring 1994, pp. 48-49.

25 Actually, it seems that they never saw missiles on Cuban soil, but "canvas covered" objects and other things which in similar U-2 photos taken over Soviet territory were seemingly related to strategic missile bases.

26 In an interview for the "Secrets of War" a documentary series produced by The Documedia Group in Los Angeles, CA, Dino A. Brugioni, of the NPIC, stated: "Okay, this is the picture that started the Cuban Missile Crisis. This is when we found uh, the missiles in Cuba, and if you look close[ly] you can see it's annotated that we not only have the missiles, and uh, but we also have the erectors [are] in place. And this is the photograph that was shown to President Kennedy that began the Cuban Missile Crisis." See Transcript of interview #S3181 conducted late in 1997 with Mr. Brugioni for "SECRETS OF WAR," <http://www.secretsofwar.com/experts/brugioni4.html>. But, as I will show below, Brugioni and the photo-interpreters at the NPIC actually never found any missiles in Cuba.

In *Eyeball to Eyeball: The Inside Story of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Random House, 1991), a book whose only purpose seems to have been the aggrandizing of himself and his bosses at the NPIC, Brugioni devotes a couple of paragraphs to describe Soviet *maskirovka* and deception, (pp. 89-90). Unfortunately, however, it seems that he learned about *maskirovka* too late in his career, because nothing of what he wrote in his book was applied by him during the missile crisis.

27 HUMINT, ELINT, IMINT, etc., are actually misnomers, because all these activities actually deal with data collection, and data is not true intelligence. The product of these activities sometimes is called "raw intelligence," but this is also a misnomer. Raw intelligence is a contradiction in terms. Intelligence is the sum of the conclusions based on raw data after it has been processed and evaluated by qualified intelligence analysts. Therefore, intelligence is a very elaborate product

of the human intellect. As such, it is a very well cooked product, with nothing raw in it.

28 See Servando González, “De William Randolph Hearst a Adobe Photoshop: ¿Adónde fue a parar la realidad fotográfica?,” *Lateral* (Barcelona), Año V No. 47 (November 1998), p. 12; also Kenneth Brower, “Photography in the Age of Falsification,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1998, pp. 92-111. By the way, the photo of a missile parading through the Red Square I used in the cover of this book has been doctored. The original picture shows two missiles. I removed one of the missiles using Adobe Photoshop. I purposely did it in a clumsy way to avoid disguising the fact that the photo has been doctored.

See also, Dino A. Brugioni, *Photo Fakery: The History and Techniques of Photographic Deception and Manipulation* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's, 1999). Brugioni devotes several pages (116-121) to visual deception in warfare. Unfortunately, it seems that Brugioni learned the use of decoys in warfare too late in his career, because during the Cuban missile crisis he never mentioned the possibility that the canvas-covered object appearing in the U-2 photos may have been decoys.

29 Philippe L. Thyraud de Vosjoli, *Lamia* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), p. 296

30 Colin McGinn, “An Ardent Fallibilist,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 27, 2002, p. 39. McGinn's article is a review of Robert Nozick's book *Invariances: The Structure of the Objective World* (Harvard: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2002). In order to provide some theoretical justification for their gross mistake, the photointerpreters at the NPIC and their supporters created a posteriori the so-called “triangulation theory.” According to it, the NPIC photointerpreters were so confident about their belief that the Soviets had deployed strategic missiles in Cuba because they had three different types of information which have confirmed their judgement. But, as professor Nozick rightly affirms, in order to be considered objective, a fact has to be confirmed by different people, using different senses, at different times.

According to the proponents of the triangulation theory, the three alleged angles of the triangle are: 1, the U-2 photos of canvas-covered objects on Cuban soil resembled the ancillary equipment used in strategic missile sites, which, 2, were known thanks to U-2 and Corona satellite photos of SS-4 and SS-5 sites in the Soviet Union, and, 3, further confirmed by the operating manuals and blueprints of their installations provided by Penkovsky. But the triangulation theory is fallacious. In the first place, U-2 photos of Cuba and the Soviet Union, and the Corona satellite photos, are just variations of the same sense, photography. Therefore the “triangulation” is actually a biangulation. But the strong doubts about Penkovsky's bona fides, added to gross violations of the most elementary rules of tradecraft in his handling, indicate that the information he provided is not reliable. Consequently, the triangulation theory is not even a biangulation, and it has no value at all. (Thanks to Professor Brian Latell for reminding me of the triangulation

theory in a personal communication in which he criticized an early draft of this chapter.)

31 One of the ways intelligence analysts may use to counter deception is basing their conclusions “on *reliable* all source information.” See Central Intelligence Agency, *A Compendium of Tradecraft Notes*, Volume I, Washington D.C., February 1997, Note 10, Tradecraft and Counterintelligence. It seems, however, that, contrary to some people’s claims, the intelligence provided by the NPIC analysts was based on unreliable, single-source information —namely, only the photographs taken by the U-2s.

32 Moreover, intelligence officers believe that there is no such thing as a friendly intelligence service. Israel is a traditional American friend, yet, one of its agents, Jonathan Pollard, is in an American prison convicted of espionage. In November, 1996, after the dissolution of the “evil empire,” Harold Nicholson, a former CIA chief of station, was charged with treason when it was discovered that he had been recruited by the Russian intelligence services to spy on the U.S. See, “Update - Spy Catching,” Jim Lehrer’s *Online Newshour* (November 19, 1996), http://www.pbs.org/newshour/96/fed_agencies/spy-11-19.html.

33 “The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Presenting the Photographic Evidence Abroad,” *Studies in Intelligence*, Spring 1972.

34 Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, Co., 1971), pp. 110-111.

35 Anatoli Gribkov and William Smith, *Operation ANADYR: U.S. and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Edition q, Inc, 1994), p. 15.

36 See, i. e., M. I. Tolochkov, *Maskirovka na Voine* (Moscow: Izdatelsvo DOSAAF, 1958); Col. Iu. “Maskirovka -delovazhoe,” *Voennyl Vestnik* 12 (1979); Gen. V. S. Popov, *Vnezapnost’ i neozhidannost’ v istorii voin* (Moscow: Voenno Izdatelsvo Ministersva Oborony SSSR, 1955); A. A. Bulator and V. G. Prozorov, *Takticheskaya vnezapnost’* (Moscow: Voenno Izdatelsvo Ministersva Oborony SSSR, 1965); M. M. Kirian, “Vnezapnost’,” *Sovetskaya Voennaia Entsiklopedia*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Voenno Izdatelsvo Ministersva Oborony SSSR, 1976); V. A. Efimov and S. G. Chemashentsev, “Maskirovka,” *Sovetskaya Voennaia Entsiklopedia*, Vol. 5 (Moscow: Voenno Izdatelsvo Ministersva Oborony SSSR, 1976). See also David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War* (London: Frank Cass, 1989).

37 *The Big Two: Soviet-American Perception of Foreign Policy* (New York: Pegasus, 1971), p. 183.

38 *The Wall Street Journal*, October 24, 1962.

39 I vividly remember that the soldiers manning the antiaircraft guns were very young.

40 See Mark Lloyd, *The Art of Military Deception* (London, Leo Cooper, 1997), p. 122.

41 Lloyd, *The Art of Military Deception*, p. 123. In *Russia Has Wooden Missiles!*, a provoking video of a conference given by A. Ralph Epperson in 1988, he mentions, among other interesting facts, that , on November 17, 1985, he interviewed Abraham

Shifrin, ex-chief advisor for the Soviet Ministry of Defense, at the time a Russian emigré living in Israel. Shifrin told him that he had heard from other Russian Jews that most ICMB silos in the forests of Krasnoyarski Kai and other places were faked. Such silos had been deliberately camouflaged less carefully, so that they would not be missed by the American surveillance planes and satellites. Shifrin is not the only who heard such rumors. Georgi Arbatov, of the U.S.-Canada Institute in Moscow, mentioned having heard that the Soviets had “phony missile launch sites” and inflatable dummies of submarines. See, Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, p. 372. There are reasons for believing that the rumors were true. During WWII the Soviets built a huge factory hidden in the Ural mountains, solely dedicated to the production of all types of military dummies and decoys.

42 See Viktor Suvorov (pseud.) *Inside the Soviet Army* (New York: Berkley Books, 1983), p. 69. For unknown reasons, the American intelligence services have apparently ignored the important place deception plays in warfare, particularly strategic deception.

In the mid-1980s, however, Kenneth de Graffenreid, the National Security Council staffer on intelligence specialized in counterintelligence, turned his attention to CCD (Camouflage, Concealment and Deception), a new-fad hypothesis which focused in the Soviets’ efforts to deceive. De Graffenreid wanted to study the possibility that some of the data collected by American technical means, particularly satellite imagery and communications intercepts, could have been part of a vast Soviet hoax. He argued that it was logical that the Soviets had conducted deception operations, but the U.S. had never uncovered one. Therefore, he concluded, it was important to examine the possibility that some larger, successful deception may have been under way and had been missed. See, Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* (New York: Pocket Books, 1987), p. 219. Not surprisingly, de Graffenreid made a lot of enemies in the intelligence community, among them Bobby Ray Inman, the National Security Agency director.

43 *Pravda*, July 10, 1960. Translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, August 10, 1960, p. 5 (emphasis added).

44 See, Ronald R. Pope, *Soviet Foreign Affairs Specialists: An Evaluation of their Direct and Indirect Impact on Soviet Foreign Policy Decision-Making Based on their Analysis of Cuba, 1958-1961, and Chile, 1969-1973*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1975, pp. 64-65, 111-112.

45 Quoted in Alexander Werth, *Russia Under Khrushchev* (New York: Fawcett, 1961), p. 319.

46 Robert D. Crassweller, *Cuba and the U.S.* (Headline Series) (New York: Foreign Policy Association, October 1971), p. 23.

47 See Carlos Franqui, *Family Portrait with Fidel* (New York: Random House, 1984), p. 185.

48 *The New York Times*, November 19, 1960, p. 1.

49 *NYT*, November 23, 1960, p. 11.

50 *The Nuclear Question: The United States and Nuclear Weapons, 1946-1976* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 105.

51 Paul Bracken, *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 92. The perception of missiles as phallic symbols is evidenced in the title of Helen Caldicott's book *Missile Envy* (New York: Bantam, 1986).

52 Sir David Ormsby-Gore to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, October 23, 1962, Public Records Office, Kew, England, quoted in Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), p. 236.

53 Secretary of State McNamara testified that the program to remove the obsolete Thor and Jupiter missiles dated from early 1961. See *Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964, Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 88 Congress, 1st Session* (Washington D.C., 1963), Part I, p. 57.

54 Castro himself discovered some years later that Che Guevara's symbol was more useful and less risky than the real Che.

55 Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 7.

56 In the lingo of intelligence and espionage, the word notional is used to design things that only exist in your opponent's mind. A notional mole, for example, is sometimes more useful than a real one. The main advantage over the real one is that the notional mole is impossible to discover for the very reason that it does not exist. Some people have speculated that Angleton's search for a Soviet mole inside the KGB, which eventually cost him his career and almost destroyed the CIA, was actually a wild goose chase after a notional one. See Ron Rosenbaum, "The Shadow of the Mole," *Harper's*, October, 1983.

57 See Seymour Reit, *Masquerade: The Amazing Camouflage Deceptions of World War II* (New York: Signet, 1978; also Martin Young and Robbie Stamp, *Trojan Horses: Deception Operations in the Second World War* (London: Mandarin, 1991).

58 The whole story is told in detail in Sefton Delmer, *The Counterfeit Spy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

59 On October 16, Bundy briefly raised the issue of whether the Soviet leaders were bluffing about the nuclear warheads. See Marc Trachtenberg, ed. "White House Tapes and Minutes of the Cuban Missile Crisis: Ex Comm Meetings, October 1962," *International Security*, 10/1 (Summer 1985), note 13, p. 178.

60 At a morning Ex Comm meeting on 17 October, Gen. Taylor and George Ball expressed some doubts about the missiles and wondered if they might be a Soviet deception to provoke the U.S. into some sort of action. Their speculation was quickly rejected by the majority of the Ex Comm members. See MacCone's notes on the morning Ex Comm meeting of 17 October in Mary S. McAuliffe, ed., *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency History Staff, 1992), note 6, p. 159.

61 The need for tradecraft tests to evaluate the authenticity of information is expressed in Central Intelligence Agency, *A Compendium of Tradecraft Notes*, Volume I, Washington D.C., February 1997, Note 10, Tradecraft and Counterintelligence.

62 See Central Intelligence Agency, *A Compendium of Tradecraft Notes*, Volume I, Washington D.C., February 1997, Note 10, Tradecraft and Counterintelligence.

63 "The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Presenting the Photographic Evidence Abroad," *Studies in Intelligence*, Spring 1972.

64 Amazingly, the American military who had boarded and inspected the *Marucla*, a cargo ship bound to Cuba which they positively knew was carrying no military matériel, abstained themselves to board and inspect the Soviet ships who allegedly were bringing the missiles and their warheads back to the Soviet Union. Another mystery to add to the long list of mysteries surrounding the Cuban missile crisis.

On the other hand, one can only imagine the scenario of an American search team boarding a Soviet ship only to find out that the missiles and their warheads were actually decoys. The U.S. would have instantly become the laughing stock of the whole world.

65 See Anatoli Gribkov and William Smith, *Operation Anadyr* (Chicago: Edition q, 1994), pp. 139-40.

66 See, i. e., Edward G. Shirley, "Can't anybody Here Play This Game?," *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1998, pp. 45-61.

67 Recently declassified articles from CIA's secretive publication *Studies in Intelligence* show an extremely high level of scholarly work and competence. Even more surprising, they show an unexpected freedom of opinion and criticism of the Agency's own operation. For a collection of recently declassified articles originally appeared in *Studies in Intelligence*, see, H. Bradford Westerfield, *Inside CIA's Private World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Other declassified articles are available on-line at the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

68 I am not mentioning here the claims that Soviet officers in Cuba in 1962 had been authorized to use tactical nuclear weapons at their discretion, without direct orders from the Kremlin. Even if a mountain of declassified Soviet documents were provided as proof (not a single one, to this moment), one has to be very gullible not to laugh in the face of anybody making such a far-fetched claim.

69 Neal D. Houghton, ed., *Struggle Against History* (New York: Clarion, 1968).

70 "Meme" (pronounced to rhyme with "gene") is a neologism, coined by analogy to "gene," by zoologist Richard Dawkins in his book *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). Dawkins defines a meme as a replicating information pattern that uses minds to get itself copies into other minds, in a viruslike fashion.

The meme is the basic unit of replication and selection in the ideosphere. According to Dawkins, memes, like viruses of the mind, float about in the soup of human culture where they grow, replicate, mutate, compete, or become extinct. As Nazism and Marxism have shown, however, a meme doesn't need to be true to be powerful.

71 James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, "Kramer VS. Kramer: Or, How Can You Have Revisionism in the Absence of Orthodoxy?" *Cold War International History Bulletin* No. 3 (Fall 1993), p. 41.