

Bush Threat of World War III: Cuban Missile Crisis Redux

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During the course of an October 17, 2007 press conference, President Bush Jr. terrorized the entire world with the threat of World War III if he could not work his illegal will upon Iran . Then Russian President Vladimir Putin responded in kind by likewise terrorizing the entire world with the prospect of yet another Cuban Missile Crisis if he did not get his way on the provocative anti-ballistic missile (A.B.M.) systems that the Bush Jr. administration plans to locate in Poland and the Czech Republic. These American A.B.M.s in Europe will constitute a necessary adjunct to the longstanding U.S. plan of launching a strategic nuclear first-strike against the former Soviet Union, now reincarnated as the Russian Federation . Seemingly effective U.S. A.B.M. systems will be required to take out the miniscule Russian strategic nuclear retaliatory forces that might survive a U.S. first-strike.

What really matters here are the perceptions: Namely, the Neo-Cons in the Bush Jr. administration believe that with the deployment of a facially successful strategic nuclear first-strike capability necessarily including A.B.M.s, the U.S. government could ultimately compel nuclear-armed Russia or China or both to do its bidding during a geopolitical crisis (e.g., over Iran or Cuba again). The classic case in point here was the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis when the Soviet government knew that the United States wielded both strategic nuclear and conventional area military superiority, so it capitulated. American international political scientists have almost unanimously applauded this existential nuclear brinksmanship inflicted upon humanity by The Best and the Brightest (1972) of the Kennedy administration as a most salutary example of aggressive “compellence” as opposed to allegedly defensive “deterrence.”

Under the auspices of the Bush Jr. Neo-Cons, the U.S. government is breaking out of a publicly proclaimed strategic nuclear “deterrence” posture and moving into adopting a strategic nuclear “compellence” strategy with respect to nuclear-armed Russia and China , let alone the rest of the world. The Bush Jr. Neo-Cons calculate that henceforth the United States government will be able to compel even strategically-nuclear-armed adversaries like Russia or China or both to back down in a crisis, or otherwise to do its will, or at least to do nothing to stop it from attaining its geopolitical objectives. But see Stanley Kubrick’s Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964).

By contrast, it was the terror of my own personal imminent nuclear annihilation during the Cuban Missile Crisis that first sparked my interest in studying international relations and U.S. foreign policy as a young boy of 12: “I can do a better job than this!” Unfortunately, my generation of Americans has not. But the next generation must pick up the torch and fight

for the very survival of humanity and our shared planet earth.

Professor Francis A. Boyle is the author of "The Criminality of Nuclear Deterrence" (Clarity Press: 2002).

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