Thirteen Days

Over the next few class periods we will watch *Thirteen Days*, the re-enacted story of the Cuban Missile Crisis from the White House Perspective. The movie shows how President Kennedy and his team of advisors resolved the crisis of Soviet missiles in Cuba in October 1962. As you watch, take note of the officials involved and the different perspectives.

Cast of Characters

Kenny O’Donnell: Special Assistant to the President (Chief of Staff)

Robert “Bobby” Kennedy: Attorney General

McGeorge “Mac” Bundy: National Security Advisor

Dean Rusk: Secretary of State

Robert “Bob” McNamara: Secretary of Defense

Ted Sorenson: Chief Counsel and Speechwriter

General Max Taylor: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Curtis LeMay: Chief of Staff Air Force

Dean Acheson: Former Secretary of State

Pierre Salinger: White House Press Secretary

John McCone: CIA Director

Adlai Stevenson: US Ambassador to the United Naitons

John Scali: ABC-TV News Reporter

Characters Not Shown:

Walter Lippmann: Influential Columnist of *New York Herald-Tribune*

Nikkita Krushev: Premier of USSR

*Answer the following questions on your own paper to eventually hand in.*

Questions:

1. Describe at least 3 different presidential roles JFK played in the movie. Give the role and the scene/action for each.
2. After finding Soviet Missiles in Cuba, what considerations did the US/President Kennedy have to make en route to any actions? What options did the president have?
3. How did the Cabinet and military advisors help the president reach a decision? How influential was his brother Bobby Kennedy and assistant Kenny O’Donnell?
4. Who first suggested a trade, taking US Missiles out of Turkey if the Soviets took their missiles out of Cuba? What was the reaction?
5. Why did the president decided to quarantine Cuba?
6. Why did the President go against the advice of so many of his advisors? How did the military chiefs differ from the Kennedys?
7. How was collective security at play in this film?
8. Pick a character/official and explain the president’s relationship to/interaction with that character. (Chief of Staff, Press Secretary, JCS Chairman, VP).
9. What roles did other institutions play, the Congress, the press, the United Nations, etc.?
10. Why was this conflict concluded with an executive order instead of a treaty?