



## The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-1963

By Michael R. Beschloss

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- Sales Rank: #352197 in Books
- Brand: HarperCollins
- Published on: 1991-06
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.50" h x 6.60" w x 2.30" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 816 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### **From Publishers Weekly**

During the years 1960-1963, the world came closer than at any time before or since to nuclear incineration. It was during this period too that the United States and the Soviet Union launched the greatest arms race in history. Beschloss here examines the tense, dynamic and very dangerous relationship between the superpower leaders, John Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, focusing largely on the 1961 summit conference regarding Berlin and the Cuban missile crisis of the following year. Drawing on newly declassified U.S. government sources and oral and written reminiscences by Soviet figures recently made available to Western scholars, Beschloss ( *Mayday* ) expands our knowledge and understanding of Soviet decision-making with material about Kremlin discussions during the Cuban crisis, behind-the-scenes maneuvers of Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet reaction to the Kennedy assassination and Khrushchev's fall from power in '64. An exciting and informative narrative that will appeal to a wide readership. Photos. 75,000 first printing; \$100,000 ad/promo; BOMC alternate; author tour.

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### **From Library Journal**

In the early 1960s, competition between the United States and the USSR produced resounding clashes over the future of Berlin and the appearance of Soviet missiles in Cuba. These confrontations brought on a more intense Cold War, a vigorous new arms race, and the world's closest approach to nuclear holocaust.

Benefiting from newly available primary sources, Beschloss has given us an enthralling, popularly written, and thoroughly documented chronicle of the times. The author of *Mayday: Eisenhower, Khrushchev, and the U-2 Affair* ( LJ 5/15/86) presents well-drawn portraits of major actors from heads of state to KGB agents and even verbatim transcripts of planning sessions within his detailed, chronological account of events.

Beschloss infuses his work with penetrating analysis, a compelling sense of drama, and insightful reevaluation of President Kennedy's performance. Highly recommended for academic, public, and high school libraries. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 2/1/91; BOMC selection.

*-James R. Kuhlman, Univ. of Georgia Lib., Athens*

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### **From Kirkus Reviews**

Especially apropos in the wake of the recent Gulf war--a superb diplomatic history that unfolds the near-fatal miscalculations made by the cool New Frontiersman and the mercurial Soviet in the most dangerous years of the cold war. As JFK took office, both he and Khrushchev hoped to lift American-Soviet diplomacy from its low after the U-2 affair. But the contentious Vienna summit, held only a few months after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, exacerbated their personality differences- -Kennedy misunderstanding the depth of the Communist's ideological fervor, and Khrushchev dismissing the American as a callow youth who could be intimidated.

Soon, they were lurching from one crisis to another--Laos, Vietnam, the Congo, and Berlin- -until the Cuban Missile Crisis shocked them into concluding the Limited Test Ban Treaty. Beschloss ( *Kennedy and Roosevelt*, 1980; *Mayday*, 1986; *Eisenhower: A Centennial Life in Pictures*, 1990) makes excellent use of newly declassified government documents, post-glasnost admissions by Soviet officials, and interviews with their American counterparts to reveal how the two leaders missed each other's signals because of preoccupation with domestic critics: Kennedy with right-wingers hinting he was no Eisenhower, Khrushchev with Chinese Communists and Kremlin hard-liners. Moreover, Beschloss plausibly explains previously inexplicable events (e.g., that JFK's exposure of Soviet nuclear inferiority pushed Khrushchev into redressing the balance of power by installing missiles in Cuba), while offering tantalizing speculations on other

mysteries (e.g., the assassination attempts against Fidel Castro). History as it ought to be written-- exhaustively researched, revelatory, graceful, and, despite our knowledge of the outcome, even thrilling. (Thirty-two pages of b&w photographs.) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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