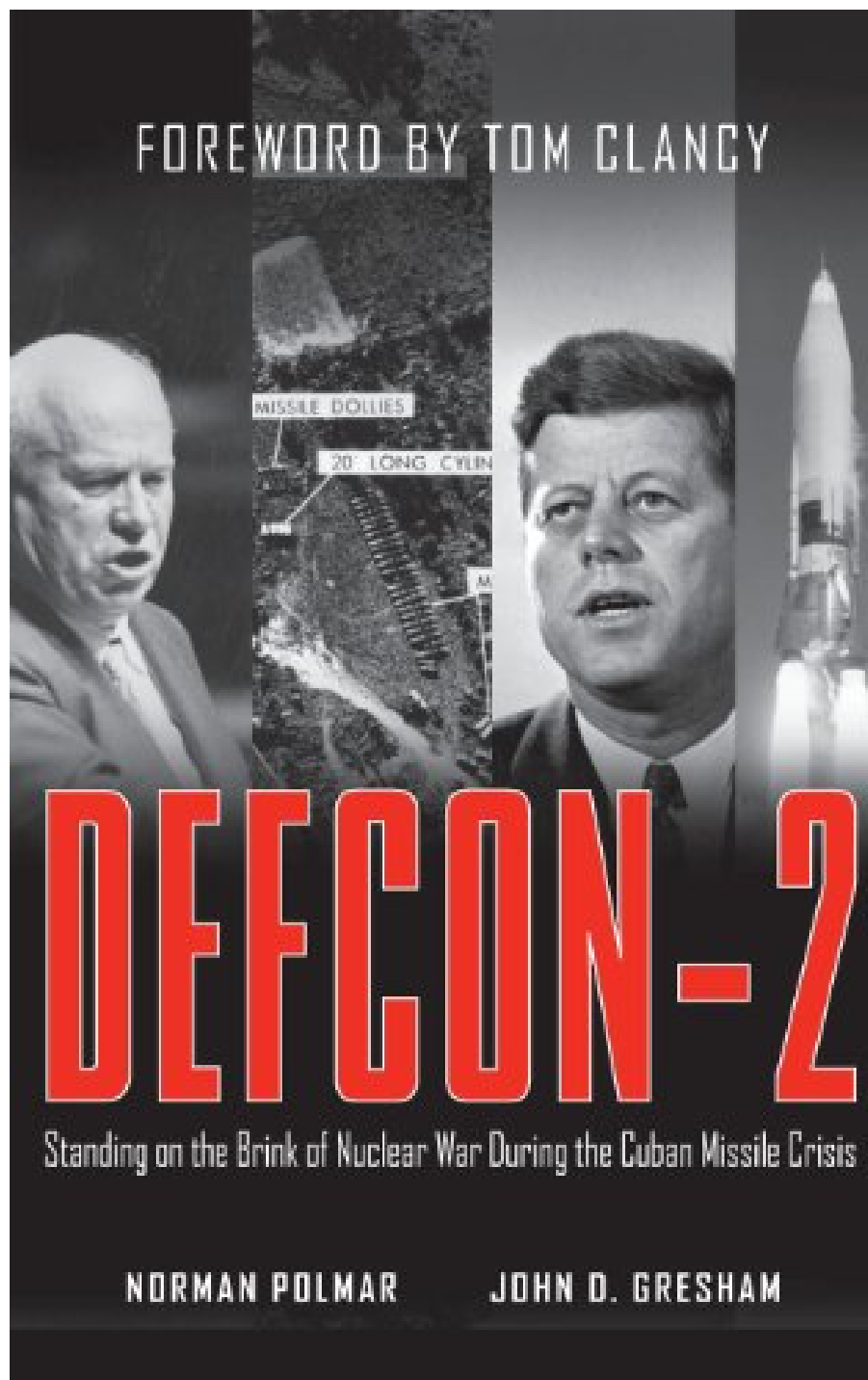


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MISSILE CRISIS BY NORMAN POLMAR,
JOHN D. GRESHAM**



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The closest we've ever come to the end of the world

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Spy-satellite and aerial-reconnaissance photos reveal that one of the United States's bitterest enemies may be acquiring weapons of mass destruction and the means to use them against the American homeland. Administration officials refuse to accept intelligence professionals' interpretation of these images and order an end to spy missions over the offending nation. More than a month later, after vicious infighting, the president orders the spy missions to resume. The new photos reveal an array of ballistic missiles, capable of carrying nuclear warheads and striking deep within U.S. territory. It appears that the missiles will be fully operational within one week.

This is not a plot setup for a suspense novel; it is the true story of the most terrifying moment in the 45-year Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union: the Cuban Missile Crisis. DEFCON-2 tells this tale as it has never been told before—from both sides, with the help of hundreds of recently declassified U.S. and Soviet documents, as well as interviews with numerous former spies, military figures, and government officials who speak out here for the first time.

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From Publishers Weekly

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8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 - nearly nuclear war

By Eric Hobart

The authors of this fine book have provided us with an insightful and comprehensive look at how the world was nearly subjected to the catastrophic events of a global thermonuclear war.

Rather than simply providing us with a simple chronology or details of the individual events making up the crisis, Normal Polmar & John Gresham have combined to provide us with a solid explanatory volume of how this crisis nearly devolved into something akin to the end of the world as it was then known.

Providing details based on interviews from participants in the crisis and on recently declassified documents, Polmar & Gresham provide us with details not before seen, but critical in understanding the crisis.

The book does not simply explain the crisis from either the American or the Soviet side, but instead looks at it from three different viewpoints - the Americans, the Soviets, and the Cubans (primarily Fidel Castro). This makes for an enlightening & very useful study of this critical period in Cold War history.

I especially enjoyed the final chapter of the book - the lessons learned from Operation Anadyr (the Soviet code name for the installation of nuclear weapons in Cuba). I thought that the analysis presented in this chapter tied all of the previously written history together into a nice package. I would highly recommend this book to anyone looking for a solid explanation of the Missile Crisis and just how close we really did come to global destruction.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Scary, Very Scary - We Were Lucky

By John Matlock

During the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis I was living in Boston. One day I was flying somewhere and while taxiing out to the runway I noticed several B-47 jet bombers, their wings bent down with fuel, and armed guards with dogs walking around them. I realized that this was pretty serious.

From time to time since then more information has come out about what was really happening. And in very recent times de-classification of materials from the time and open discussion with some the people involved make it clear that this was a much more serious incident that we thought at the time.

For instance there were some 40,000 Russian soldiers on the island that we didn't know about. These soldiers were armed with short range nuclear missiles. They had the authority to use them if the U.S. invaded. A few nukes set off in the midst of an invasion fleet would have made a real mess.

Some of the intelligence reports of the time were real good. Some of them were otherwise. Admidst the bluster and the threatening, cooler heads prevailed and nuclear was was avoided. Never again would the two superpowers come so close. Maybe the truth of this flight was enough to make the leaders of both powers back down.

This is the most complete, the most detailed report of what happened. It is a scary book.

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

An Incredible Account That Awoke Old Memories

By Dwight Zimmerman

I was in the third grade when the events recounted in DEFCON-2 happened. So, I remember the air raid drills of ducking under my desk, and of the sirens, and television announcements, and the many shelter signs that appeared on buildings. Norman Polmar and John Gresham have done a tremendous service in presenting this account of the events that happened behind closed doors, and on the field. This is a benchmark work that pulls you in and places you in the meeting rooms, the cockpits, on the decks, and on the ground. It is a frightening story because they reveal just how close we actually came to nuclear war. The courage displayed by the political leaders on both sides for NOT going to war is thoroughly presented. This is a must read book for anyone who is interested in knowing how governments make decisions in moments of extreme crisis.

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