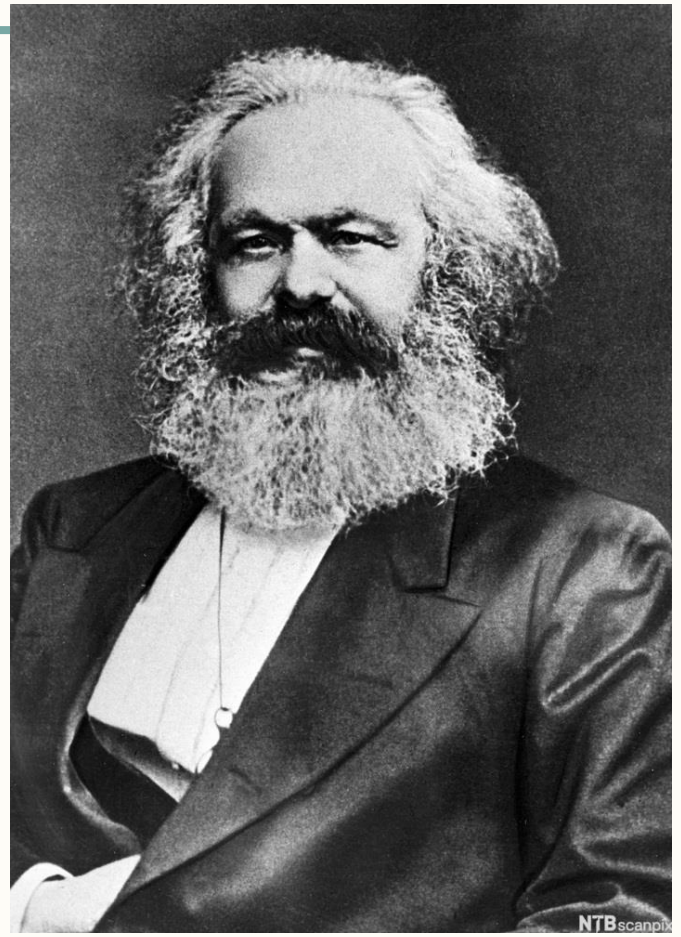
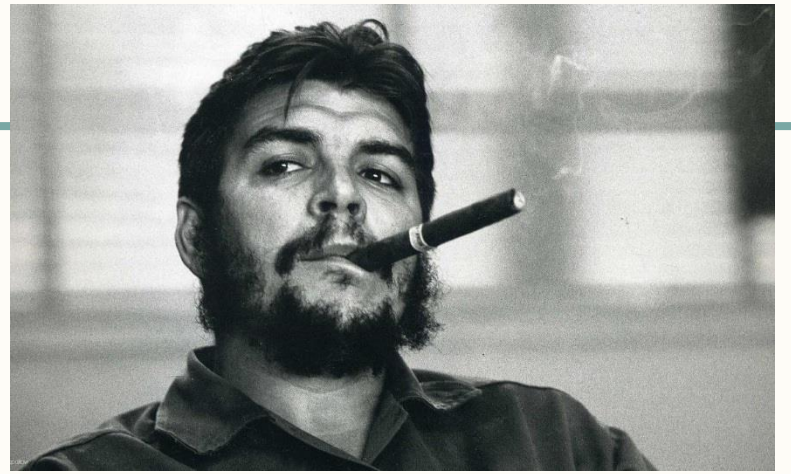
# The Cuban Revolution

# Marxism & Latin Americans

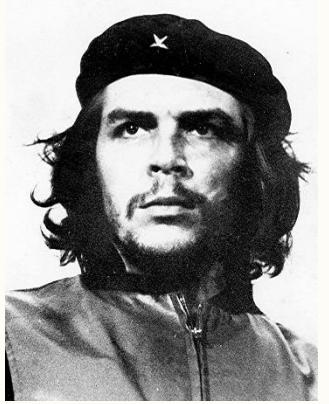
- Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Marxism
- Why was Marxism attractive to Latin Americans?
  - Anti-imperialist
  - Class conscious
  - Emphasis on social justice



# Ernesto “Che” Guevara (1928-1967)

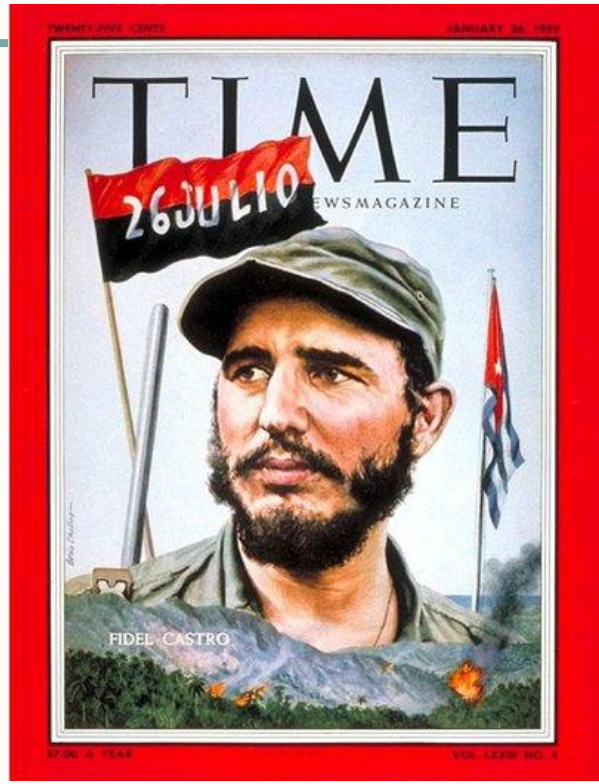


- Born middle-class, in Argentina
  - 1953 = completed medical studies
  - Traveled around South America
- 1953 = moved to Guatemala
  - 1954 = Arbenz overthrown; Che doubles down on Marxism and violent revolution
- 1956 = joined Castro’s 26th of July Movement
  - Served in Revolutionary Cuban gov’t
  - Grew disenchanted with the Soviet Union
- 1967 = executed while instigating revolution in Bolivia



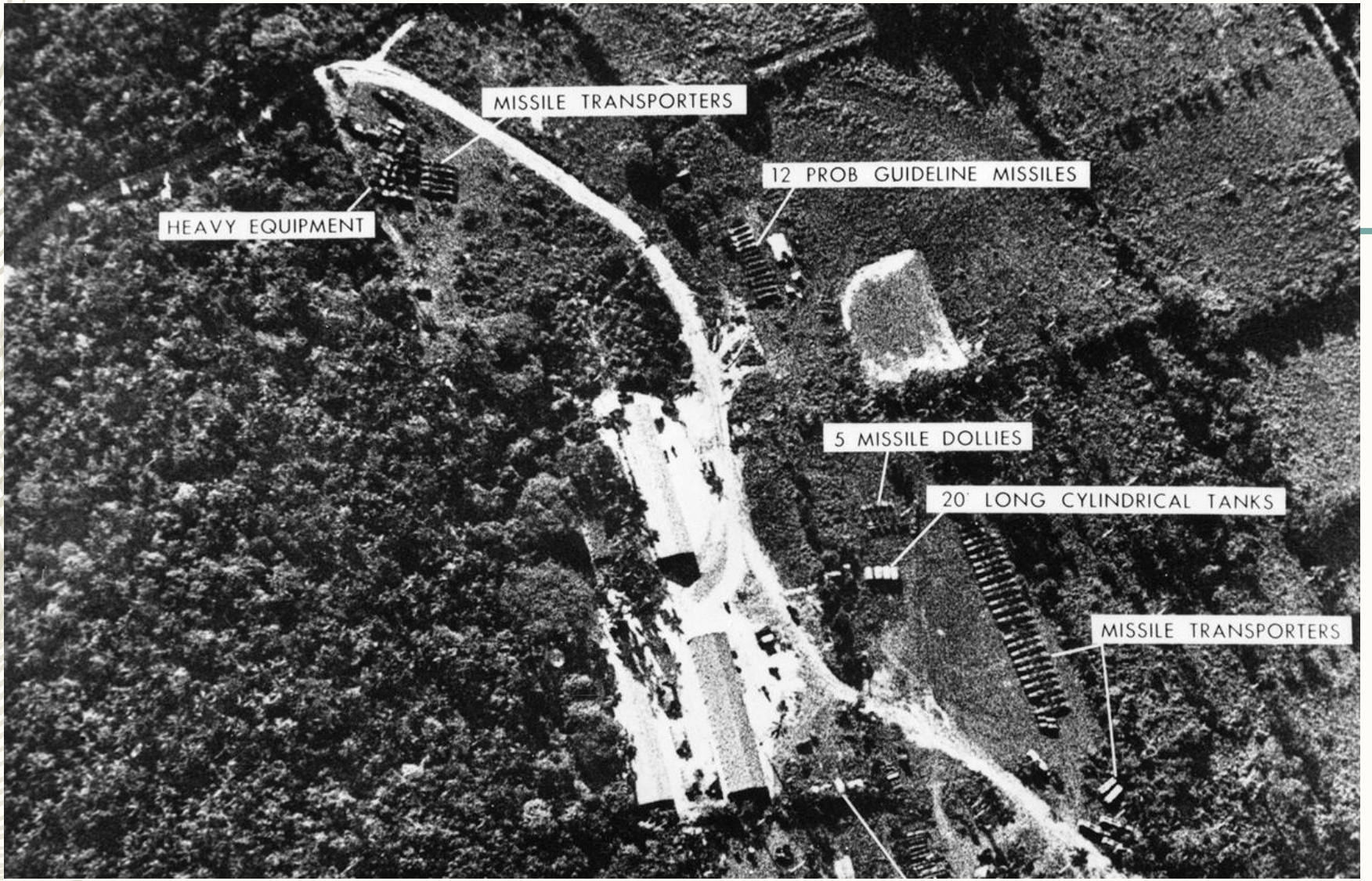
# Fidel Castro & the Cuban Revolution

- Some context . . .
- 1940s & 1950s = ruled by Fulgencio Batista (1901-1973)
- Fidel Castro (1926-2016) and the opposition
- 26 July 1953 = Castro attempted to overthrow Batista
  - Failed, badly; Castro exiled to Mexico
- 1956 = Castro attempted to overthrow Batista again
  - Failed, but revolutionaries went into hiding/recruiting
- 1958 = Batista fled
- 2 January 1959 = Castro and the revolutionaries take over
- April 1961 = “Bay of Pigs” invasion (failure)



# The Cuban Missile Crisis

- 1962 = Cuba gets nukes from the Soviet Union
- October 1962 = US spy planes see the nukes


MISSILE TRANSPORTERS
12 PROB GUIDELINE MISSILES
HEAVY EQUIPMENT
5 MISSILE DOLLIES
20' LONG CYLINDRICAL TANKS
MISSILE TRANSPORTERS

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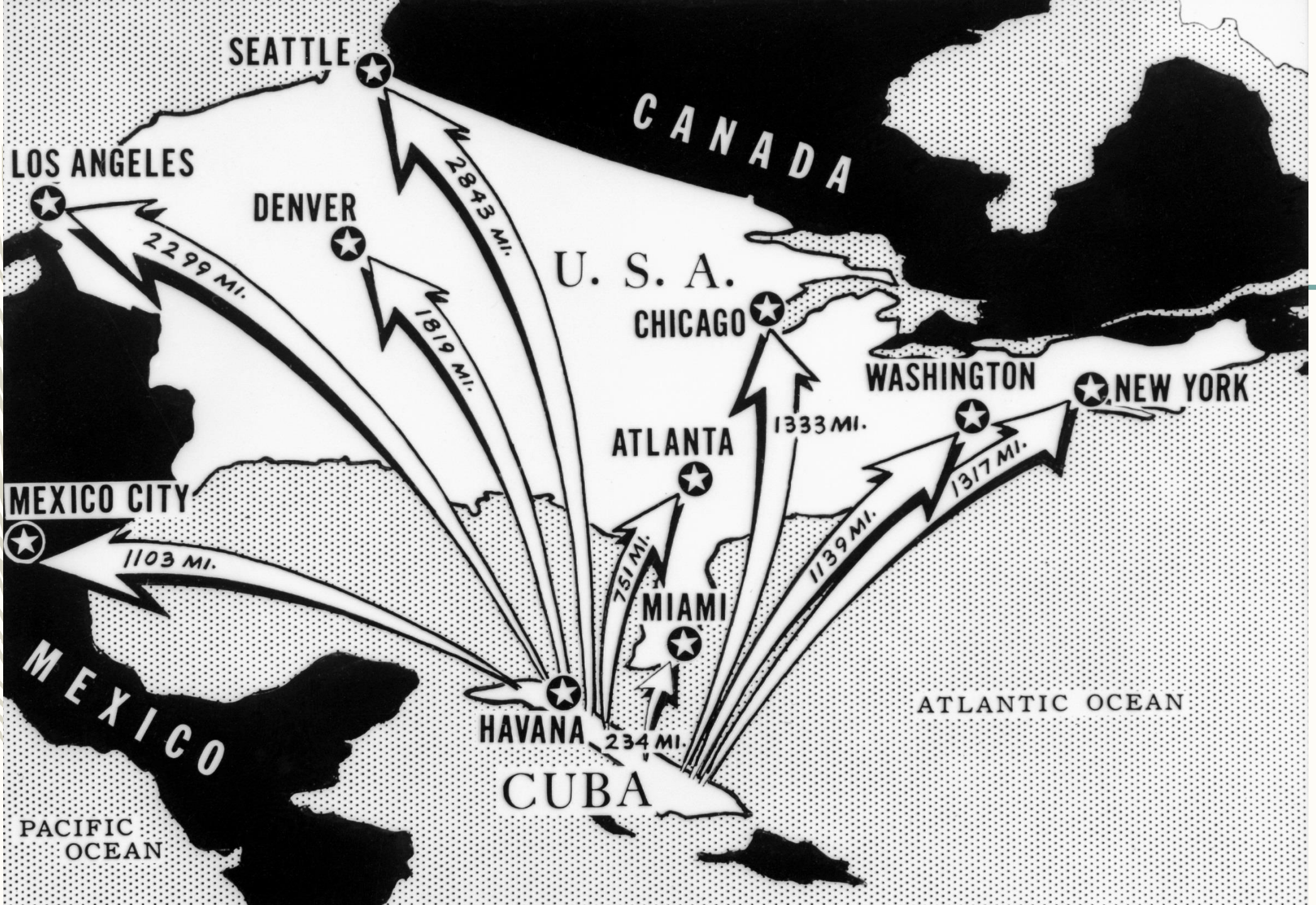
- US response?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1317 MI.
1139 MI.
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1103 MI.
751 MI.
MIAMI
MEXICO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
HAVANA
234 MI.
CUBA
PACIFIC
OCEAN

# The Cuban Missile Crisis

- 1962 = Cuba gets nukes from the Soviet Union
- October 1962 = US spy planes see the nukes
- US response?
  - Possible plans?
  - Tense 13 days . . .
- Eventually, a deal: US pulls nukes away from USSR, USSR pulls nukes out of Cuba
- 1962 onward = Cuba under US embargo

# Living in Communist Cuba

- 1959-1975 = gov't dependent on charismatic leadership and mass mobilization
- 1975 onward = Cuban Communist Party more centralized, institutionalized
- Since 1986 = more emphasis on young people, women, Afro-Cubans
- After 1959 Revolution, many radical reforms
- Persistent poverty
  - BUT: clean water, electricity . . .
- One-party state and political repression