

# ARMAGEDDONLETTERS.COM

## Praise for The Armageddon Letters

September 2012

“An innovative look at one of the most important crises of the twentieth century. Janet Lang and James Blight have devoted themselves for a quarter century to chronicling the hidden details of the Cuban Missile Crisis. This is a brilliant new addition to that work.” – **Errol Morris**, director of the Academy Award-winning 2004 film, *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*

“A brilliant reconstruction of the most dangerous days in history when thermonuclear war seemed all but inevitable. Based on a quarter century of research, you see the crisis not only from Washington, but also from Moscow and Havana. This book is filled with lessons that can help avert Armageddon in our times.” – **Bruce Riedel**, former U.S. security official and now senior fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution

“Jim Blight and Janet Lang demonstrate the inadequacies of analyzing the crisis in any of the traditional ways, and instead provide us with a sophisticated applied psychology that reads like a Stephen King horror novel, but is thoroughly and painstakingly grounded in the historical record. They have accomplished something never before attempted: channeling as exactly as the historical record allows the raw experience of the three leaders as they confronted a tangle of mutual misunderstandings that could have resulted in the destruction of the human race. The three interwoven narratives will shock you. They will also demonstrate that the ‘stability’ of mutual nuclear deterrence that we have come to take for granted is a shaky foundation indeed on which to ground humanity’s continuing existence.” – **Paul L. Wachtel**, distinguished professor of psychology, City College of New York, and the Graduate Center, City University of New York

“The portraits of President Kennedy, my father, Soviet Chairman Nikita Khrushchev, and Cuban leader Fidel Castro are intimate, totally believable and instructive. Based on decades of careful research, this is a work of sober history that reads like a horror novel with an almost miraculously lucky outcome. I could not put it down.” – **Sergei N. Khrushchev**, Brown University, author of many works on the life and career of his father, Nikita Khrushchev

“Manga meets the Missile Crisis in this compelling book. Through a creative mixture of illustrations, imagined conversations, historical analysis, and the actual letters written by Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro, Jim Blight and Janet Lang enable readers to intellectually understand and emotionally feel what happened in the dark days of October 1962.” – **Scott D. Sagan**, senior fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and the Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University

“*The Armageddon Letters* is a *tour de force* that brings the Cuban missile crisis harrowingly alive, and makes it relevant for our current time. Based on nearly 30 years of path breaking scholarship, it situates 43 well-chosen documents in both their historical and human context, and enables the reader to probe between the lines. Blight and Lang

also make clear that the genesis of the confrontation began long before October 1962, that the potentially catastrophic circumstances lasted for three agonizing weeks beyond the famous 13 days, and that Cuba's threat calculus and behavior had an effect on the both the crisis and its aftermath. They thus laudably return Cuba to the Cuban missile crisis story. *The Armageddon Letters* will deeply engage both students and general readers, because it uniquely focuses on the emotions of Kennedy, Khrushchev and Castro as they faced what each perceived to be no way out of an impending Armageddon. It will leave readers with the appropriate lessons they should derive from the missile crisis: we survived by luck, not skill; a similar crisis could well occur again; we must rely on empathy, not a false rationality, if we hope to avoid a future Armageddon.” – **Philip Brenner**, Professor of International Relations, American University

“Cuba's leader was ready to lead his country to nuclear incineration in October 1962. The world was literally on the eve of its end – Armageddon. Yet, you are reading this book. Armageddon did not happen. Statesmanship, strategy, and serendipity gave you this opportunity to learn from this dramatic crisis, which is admirably and lucidly re-told and portrayed in this book. You are thus afforded the chance to make sure our successors will be alive to read it and learn from it in decades to come.” – **Jorge I. Domínguez**, Professor of Government, Harvard University

### **About the Project**

The Armageddon Letters ([armageddonletters.com](http://armageddonletters.com)) is a transmedia project launched on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis. Using animated short films, social media and other multiplatform storytelling, in addition to a new academic book, it takes visitors behind the scenes during the October 1962 Cuban missile crisis that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. The book, *The Armageddon Letters: Kennedy, Khrushchev, Castro in the Cuban Missile Crisis*, was published by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers in September 2012.

### **Project Team**

The project is based at the Balsillie School of International Affairs at the University of Waterloo and is led by scholars and filmmakers involved in the Academy Award-winning documentary *The Fog of War* and the Golden Palm Award-winning *Virtual JFK*. Profs. James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, the project's co-leaders, are both faculty members at Balsillie and have authored or co-authored several books on the Cuban missile crisis. David A. Welch is Director of the Balsillie School, as well as a key project member and author or co-author of several books on the crisis. Project Producer/Creator Koji Masutani is a filmmaker at Balsillie and director of the award-winning *Virtual JFK*.

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