

- January 1, 1959: a young Cuban nationalist named **Fidel Castro** drove his guerilla army into Havana and overthrew **General Fulgencio Batista**, the nation's American-backed president.
- For the next two years, officials at the U.S. State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) attempted to remove Castro from power.
- President Kennedy had inherited a CIA plan to overthrow Fidel Castro
 - Use Cuban exiles trained in Guatemala armed with U.S. weapons
- April 1961: the CIA launched what its leaders believed would be the definitive strike: a full-scale invasion of Cuba by 1,200 to 1,400 American-trained anti-Castro Cubans to cause rebellion and remove Castro
- However, the invasion did not go well: The invaders were badly outnumbered by Castro's troops, and surrendered after less than 24 hours of fighting.

UNITED STATES
FLORIDA

Miami



Gulf of Mexico

103 miles

Havana

Atlantic Ocean

Viñales Valley

Pinar del Río

Cienfuegos

Trinidad

Bay of Pigs

CUBA



Caribbean Sea



- Many Cubans welcomed Fidel Castro's 1959 overthrow of the dictatorial President Fulgencio Batista
- The new order on the island just about 100 miles from the United States made American officials nervous.
- Batista had been a corrupt and repressive dictator, but he was considered to be pro-American and was an ally to U.S. companies.
 - At that time, American corporations and wealthy individuals owned almost half of Cuba's sugar plantations and the majority of its cattle ranches, mines and utilities.
 - Batista did little to restrict their operations. He was also reliably anti-communist.
- Castro, by contrast, disapproved of the approach that Americans took to their business and interests in Cuba.
- He believed it was time Cubans assumed more control of their nation.

- Castro was considered such a threat to American interests that secret American operatives tried to have him assassinated
- Castro immediately cut American business interests in Cuba
 - Sugar
 - Mining: Nickel, Copper, Iron Ore, Gold, Silver, Chromium (*for hardening steel and make stainless steel*), and Cobalt (*to make steel for jet engines and medical purposes, ie gamma rays and cancer treatment*)
- 1960: Castro established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union
 - U.S. responded by prohibiting the importation of Cuban sugar
 - Soviet Union saved Cuba's sugar production by agreeing to buy all Cuba's sugar
- 1961: United States severed diplomatic relations with Cuba
 - Focused on its invasion plan

- Kennedy believed the removal of Castro would show Russia, China and skeptical Americans that he was serious about winning the Cold War
 - Had to be done in a manner that would not be interpreted as an act of war by the Soviets
- Castro had learned of the planned invasion and easily defeated the invasion forces in less than 24 hours
 - 114 dead, 1,100 taken prisoner
- American involvement in the failed invasion caused a drop in U.S. prestige in the world



- Kennedy publicly took the blame for the failure
 - Privately blamed the military and the CIA
 - He fired CIA director, Allen Dulles
- *“I will splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter it into the wind.”*
–John F. Kennedy

