



How can something so
beautiful nearly bring an
end to the world?

Cuban Missile Crisis



As the story goes...

The Berlin crisis, even with the wall being built seems to have been solved, with neither side particularly 'winning'.

Relations between USA and USSR are ok? Good? Bad?...

Well, they are about to get a whole lot worse as we travel to Cuba...



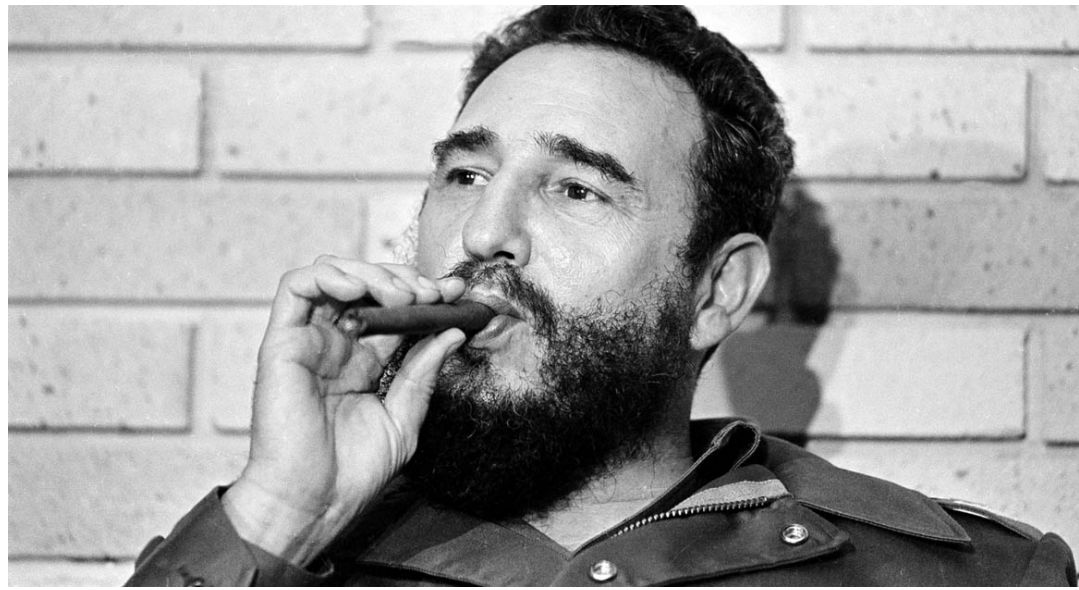
What was the Cuban Revolution?

Fidel Castro:

- Castro led a group of revolutionaries, along with Che Guevara which toppled the unpopular pro-American government of Batista

Why?

- American businesses had invested heavily in Cuba and much of the land was owned by Americans
- Cuba was a popular holiday location for Americans
- Cuban oil, electricity, phone networks and railways were controlled by USA
- USA invested in Cuba's biggest export, Sugar



Castro, Cuba's new leader did not want his country's economy being controlled by USA



Following the revolution there were three main areas of tension



Early 1959:

American government reluctantly recognised the new government but refused to provide economic aid. By 1960, Eisenhower had banned the import of sugar, threatening to bankrupt Cuba. By 1961, all trade had been banned

May 1959:

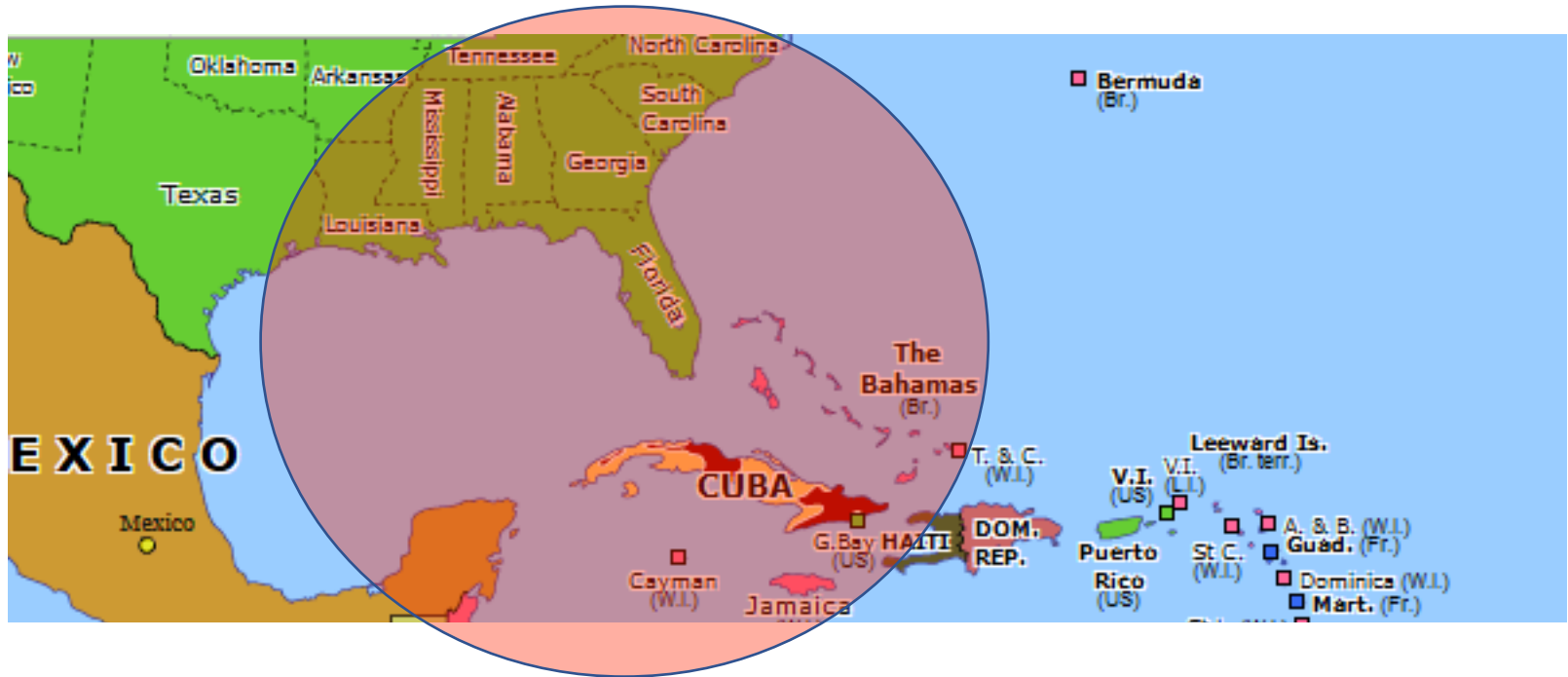
Cuban government took over all land in Cuba, it paid the previous owners compensation but the USA didn't recognise this scheme. Castro took the land anyway

February 1960:

Castro had begun appointing communists to his government already but in February, he made a deal with Khrushchev. USSR would buy Cuban sugar and provide economic aid to Cuba. USSR would also, secretly, provide arms to Cuba.

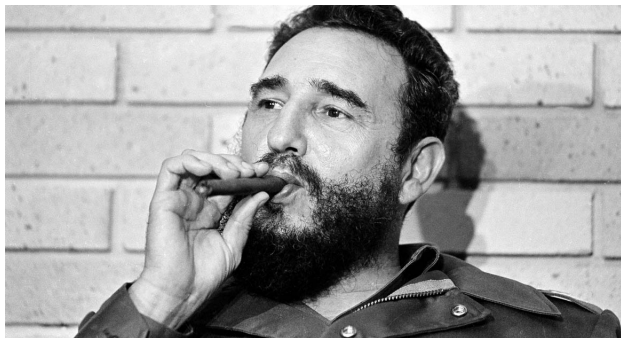
USA broke off ALL diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Which of these do you think is the biggest source of tension and why?



What is Cuba in here? (A key term from earlier in the course)...

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE



By 1960, it was clear that Castro had firmly moved to the support and influence of Khrushchev and the Soviet Union



This was massive for Khrushchev who was coming under some pressure at home. To influence a country so close to USA, was vital!

I'm really not happy at all about this relationship growing just 145 km from US soil! Our ban on trade has just made it worse, Castro has made his deal with Khrushchev.

We're gonna have to do something about it...



USA action 1: **Bay of Pigs invasion**

New President, JFK did not want a Communist ally so close to America. The CIA had come up with a plan.

- Cuban exiles (Cubans who had left Cuba) could be trained to launch an invasion and overthrow Castro.
- Using Cuban exiles would make it look like a Cuban counter-revolution, so the USA could claim to not have been involved!



15 April 1961: US planes bombed part of the Cuban airforce
16 April 1961: Planned second wave of US bombings called off
17 April 1961: 1400 Cuban exiles landed at the 'Bay of Pigs'
19 April 1961: Fighting ended with 1100 exiles captured and 100 dead



What happened at the 'Bay of Pigs'?

- Was a total disaster and failure
- Volunteers had very little military experience and were no match for the Cuban revolutionary army
- Because they were trying to present it as a Cuban attack, JFK could not send support
- Castro had found out about the invasion plans and had 20,000 soldiers ready and waiting to fight off the 1400!
- USA wrongly assumed most Cubans would support the counter-revolution, many were happy with Castro



Castro (and Khrushchev) took great delight in showing off images of the failed attack as well as showing the US involvement, making this a public humiliation for the USA.

Impact (consequences) of the failed Bay of Pigs:

- Castro had been losing support in Cuba due to the difficult economic situation following US trade embargo, but this attack united the Cubans and Latin America against USA, as it looked like USA was trying to do the very thing it had accused USSR of, building empires and taking control of independent countries.
- Kennedy was embarrassed and vowed to remove Castro
- US involvement pushed Cuba closer to USSR, particularly as Khrushchev had said this showed the strength of Communism
- At the end of 1961, Castro announced his conversion to Communism!
- Khrushchev had placed combat units and advisors in Cuba, he saw this as the beginnings of spreading Communism to Latin America
- **September 1961:** Khrushchev was also concerned about the US missile bases in Italy and Turkey, so he said he was placing his missiles there to even the balance of power and to “defend Cuba from another US attack”
- Kennedy told Khrushchev that he could not allow USSR to use Cuba as a base to threaten the USA. Khrushchev said he had no intention of doing so...



Next...

The Cuban Missile Crisis...