

The Bay of Pigs: Lessons Learned

Topic: The Bay of Pigs Invasion

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject Area: US History after World War II – History and Government

Time Required: One class period

Goals/Rationale:

Students analyze President Kennedy’s April 20, 1961 speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in which he unapologetically frames the invasion as “useful lessons for us all to learn” with strong Cold War language. This analysis will help students better understand the Cold War context of the Bay of Pigs invasion, and evaluate how an effective speech can shift the focus from a failed action or policy towards a future goal.

Essential Question: How can a public official address a failed policy or action in a positive way?

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the US rationale for the Bay of Pigs invasion and the various ways the mission failed.
- Analyze the tone and content of JFK’s April 20, 1961 speech.
- Evaluate the methods JFK used in this speech to present the invasion in a more positive light.

Connection to Curricula (Standards):

National English Language Standards (NCTE)

1 - Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3- Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

6 - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

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National History Standards

US History, Era 9: Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s) Standard 2B: The student understands United States foreign policy in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Common Core Standards:

RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

RH.9-10.8: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

W.11-12.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

SL.9-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9-10.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Materials:

- Background reading on the Bay of Pigs invasion from the CIA website is attached and also accessible at: <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2016-featured-story-archive/the-bay-of-pigs-invasion.html>
- Kennedy's April 20, 1961 speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors. The reading copy of the speech is attached, and the transcript is accessible at: https://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/JFK-Speeches/American-Society-of-Newspaper-Editors_19610420.aspx
- A video of the speech is available at: <https://youtu.be/1wXf08-42x4>

Historical Background and Context

The Bay of Pigs invasion was the failed attempt by US-backed Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. President Eisenhower authorized the operation and it was subsequently approved by President Kennedy. On April 17, 1961, a 1,400-man invasion force of anti-Castro Cuban exiles, Brigade 2506, landed at the Bay of Pigs beach on the south coast of Cuba. Quickly overwhelmed by a counterattack of Castro's armed forces, the invasion force was crushed two days later. More than 100 men were killed, and nearly 1,100 were taken prisoner and held in Cuba for nearly two years. Instead of toppling the Castro regime, the invasion strengthened Castro's image with the Cuban people, solidified his alignment with the Soviet Union, and emboldened Premier Khrushchev in his belief that Kennedy was weak and inexperienced.

Publicly, President Kennedy took responsibility for the invasion's failure. "We intend to profit from this lesson," he said in his address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 20. In a news conference the following day, he noted "There's an old saying that victory has 100 fathers and defeat is an orphan... I'm the responsible officer of the Government..." Gallup polls taken the following week showed Kennedy had an 83% approval rating and 61% of Americans approved of his handling of the invasion.

Procedure

1. For homework, have students read the CIA web page "The Bay of Pigs Invasion" and answer the following questions:
 - Why did the US government begin planning to overthrow Fidel Castro in 1960?
 - What were some of the major mistakes made in the operation?
 - Based on this article, who do you think holds the most responsibility for the failed invasion? (It can be more than one person or group.)
2. In class, working in groups, ask students to share answers from their homework. Ask them to consider, if they were President Kennedy, how they might address the failed invasion in a public speech on April 20, three days after the initial invasion attempt. Have them list their main points. Discuss these points as a class.
3. As a class, model a close reading of the first five pages of President Kennedy's reading copy of his April 20th speech, answering the prompts below. You may want to show the students a video of the first part of the speech before they analyze the reading copy (watch from 1:30 to 6:00).
 - To whom is Kennedy addressing his remarks? (Newspaper editors? American public? Soviets? Cubans? World?)
 - Why do you think Kennedy emphasizes certain words in his reading copy of the speech?
 - What is the tone of the first part of the speech? (conciliatory, threatening, etc.?) Provide specific examples to support your conclusions.
 - How does Kennedy depict the invasion? (As a mainly Cuban effort, a US effort, or both?) Provide specific language to support your conclusions.
 - How does Kennedy characterize this invasion? [A failure? A success?] Provide specific language to support your conclusions.
4. Divide the class into small groups and have each group do a close reading of the remainder of the speech (pages 6-13 of the reading copy), practicing the skills they have demonstrated in step #3. You may want to show the students a video of the rest of the speech before they analyze the reading copy (watch from 6:00 to 14:15). Have students answer the following questions:

- Why does Kennedy emphasize certain words in his reading copy of the speech?
 - What is the tone of the second part of the speech? (conciliatory, threatening, etc.?)
 - What are the “lessons” that JFK says can be learned from the invasion?
 - How does he characterize the danger posed by a Communist Cuba? Provide specific examples from the speech.
 - How does Kennedy characterize the US commitment to containing the spread of Communism? Provide specific examples from the speech.
5. Bring the students together to debrief their analyses. Have them compare their initial thoughts about what they would have included in this speech with Kennedy’s actual address.

Assessment:

In a one- to two-page written essay, ask students to evaluate how this speech takes a failure of the Kennedy Administration and reframes it into a message of lessons learned, focusing on future US foreign policy. Looking back from our time, based on their knowledge of the events, do they think it was an effective speech or not? Why?

The Bay of Pigs Invasion

From the Central Intelligence Agency website:

<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2016-featured-story-archive/the-bay-of-pigs-invasion.html>

In 1961, more than a thousand Cuban exiles stormed the beaches at the Bay of Pigs, Cuba, intending to ignite an uprising that would overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. This week, we look back at the events that unfolded and at the key players whose covert performances played out for all the world to see.

Descent from the Mountains

In the 1950s, a young, charismatic Cuban nationalist named Fidel Castro led a guerrilla army against the forces of General Fulgencio Batista from a base camp deep within the Sierra Maestra Mountains, the largest mountain range in Cuba. Castro's goal was to overthrow Batista, the US-backed leader of Cuba.

After three years of guerrilla warfare, Castro and his ragtag army descended from the mountains and entered Havana on January 1, 1959, forcing Batista to flee the country. Castro took control of the Cuban Government's 30,000-man army and declared himself Prime Minister.

For nearly 50 years, Cuba had been America's playground and agricultural center. Many wealthy Americans lived in Cuba and had established thriving businesses there. In fact, a significant portion of Cuba's sugar plantations were owned by North Americans. With Castro's self-appointment to Prime Minister, that changed.

In February 1960, Cuba signed an agreement to buy oil from the Soviet Union. When the US-owned refineries in the country refused to process the oil, Castro seized the firms, and the US broke off diplomatic relations with the Cuban regime. To the chagrin of the Eisenhower administration, Castro established increasingly close ties with the Soviet Union while delivering fiery condemnations of the US.

The American-Cuban relationship deteriorated further when Castro established diplomatic relations with our Cold War rival, the Soviet Union. Castro and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev signed a series of pacts that resulted in large deliveries of economic and military aid in 1960. Within a year, Castro proclaimed himself a communist, formally allied his country with the Soviet Union, and seized remaining American and foreign-owned assets.

The establishment of a Communist state 90 miles off the coast of Florida raised obvious security concerns in Washington and did not sit well with President Eisenhower.

Eisenhower authorized the CIA to conduct a covert operation to rid the island of its self-appointed leader. The CIA formulated a plan to recruit Cuban exiles living in the Miami area. It would train and equip the exiles to infiltrate Cuba and start a revolution to ignite an uprising across the island and overthrow Castro.

At least that was the intended outcome.

Top US Government officials watched as their decisions led to an entirely different outcome: one that would leave a covert operation exposed, embarrass the new Kennedy administration, end the career of the longest serving Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles, and, ultimately, leave Fidel Castro in power for decades to come.

The Recruits

In April 1960, several CIA officers traveled to Miami, Florida. They were searching for members of the Frente Revolucionario Democrático (FRD), an active group of Cuban exiles who had fled Cuba when Castro took power. These revolutionaries were the ideal individuals to lead an uprising in Cuba, and the CIA, operating with a \$13 million budget, recruited 1,400 of them to form Brigade 2506.

The Brigade was taken to Useppa Island, a private island off the coast of Florida that was secretly leased by the CIA.

Once there, they received training in weapons, infantry tactics, land navigation, amphibious assault tactics, team guerrilla operations, and paratrooping. Their instructors were from the Army Special Forces, Air Force, Air National Guard, and the CIA. Thirty-nine of the recruits were pilots who had flown in Cuba's military or as commercial pilots. The pilots were trained at an air training base in Guatemala.

Unbeknownst to the trainers, although likely suspected, sprinkled amongst the recruits were double-agents, working in tandem for Castro, sharing the intelligence that they collected on the upcoming invasion.

The Plan

For simplicity, the Bay of Pigs invasion plan can be broken down into three phases:

Phase One: Destroy as many of Castro's combat aircraft as possible so that when the Brigade invaded the beach, Castro's air force would have no retaliatory capabilities. To do this, pilots of Brigade 2506 planned to bomb three of Castro's air force bases. The cover story for these bombings was simple. Pilots in the Brigade would pose as pilots in the Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria (FAR), Castro's Air Force. Allegedly, they would become disgruntled, take their aircrafts, shoot up their own air force bases, and then fly to the US to defect. This first airstrike was supposed to take place two days prior to the invasion (phase three).

Phase Two: Destroy any remaining combat planes in Castro's fleet that weren't taken out during phase one. Pilots in Brigade 2506 planned to drop bombs on Castro's air force bases in the morning hours prior to the main invasion (phase three) to destroy any remaining combat planes in Castro's fleet. This would ensure the Brigade members invading the beach would not have to contend with Castro's aircraft dropping bombs and firing mercilessly on them from above during the actual invasion.

Phase Three: The invasion. The Brigade would invade Cuba by sea and air. Some members would invade Cuba on the beaches of Trinidad; others would parachute in farther inland. The Brigade pilots would fly air cover missions over the beach. The old colonial city of Trinidad was chosen as the invasion site because it offered many significant features. It was an anti-Castro town with existing counter-revolutionary groups. It had good port facilities. The beachhead was easily defensible and, should the Brigade need to execute their escape plan, the Escambray Mountains were there to offer solitude.

Location, Location, Location

As the number of days till the invasion shortened, Kennedy's concern that the operation would not remain covert grew. He was adamant the hand of the US Government remain hidden at all costs. Kennedy thought changing the invasion site from Trinidad would make future deniability of US involvement more plausible, so he gave the CIA four days to come up with a new one.

And so, a month before the operation was set to get underway, the landing location changed from Trinidad to the Bay of Pigs.

This presented an array of problems, namely, the Bay of Pigs was one of Castro's favorite fishing holes. He knew the land like the back of his hand. He vacationed there frequently and invested in the Cuban peasants surrounding the bay, garnering their loyalty and admiration.

Additionally, the Escambray Mountains, the designated escape site, was 50 miles away through hostile territory. The bay was also far from large groups of civilians, a necessary commodity for instigating an uprising, which may be a moot point, as the bay was surrounded by the largest swamp in Cuba, making it physically impossible for any Cubans wanting to join the revolt to actually do so.

The Operation Begins

Phase One, April 15: Early on the morning of April 15, phase one was deployed. Six Cuban-piloted B-26 bombers struck two airfields, three military bases, and Antonio Maceo Airport in an attempt to destroy the Cuban air force. Their planes had been refurbished to match those of the FAR; each equipped with bombs, rockets and machine guns.

About 90 minutes later a "defecting" pilot, a member of Brigade 2506, took off in his American-made getaway plane, also disguised as a FAR aircraft. His plane, however, received extra attention. Dirt was rubbed on the markings to make it look worn. A phony flight log was in the cockpit along with various other items typically found in Cuban military aircraft. Finally, because a defector shooting up his own base would most likely encounter resistance, his plane was shot full of bullet holes.

The "defector's" destination was the Miami International Airport. He radioed a "may day" distress signal from off the coast of Florida and informed US authorities that he was defecting from the Cuban Air Force, having engine trouble, and requested permission to land. Upon landing, he was taken into custody by US Customs and Immigration and Naturalization.

Reciting his cover story, he explained that he was defecting from Cuba, but before doing so had attacked his own air base and that two colleagues had also defected and had attacked other Cuban air bases.

Damage assessments of the airstrikes vary, but it is believed that 80 percent of Castro's combat aircraft were disabled. Assuming Castro had an inventory of as many as 30 combat aircraft, that left six functioning aircraft available at his disposal on the day of the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Castro vehemently denied that the attacks on his airfields had been by rebellious members of the FAR and immediately blamed the US. He also quickly concluded that these strikes were an indication of something larger brewing. He preemptively rounded up thousands of potential dissidents and herded them into theatres, stadiums and military bases to squelch the possibility of a spontaneous uprising to overthrow his regime.

Following Castro's orders, Raul Roa, the Cuban Foreign Minister, called an emergency session of the United Nations Political and Security Committee in New York on the afternoon of April 15. The session was attended by US Ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson.

Stevenson held up pictures of the planes as he adamantly stated the US had nothing to do with the airstrikes. He insisted that the attacks were conducted by defectors from Castro's own air force. The pictures, however, proved to be the unraveling of the cover story.

On close inspection, one could make out a metal nose on the plane flown by the defector; FAR aircraft noses were plastic. Ambassador Stevenson, who was unaware of the covert operation, was furious when the truth was revealed.

Cancel the Strikes!

Phase Two, April 16: This was bad news for President Kennedy whose number one priority was hiding the hand of the US Government, which was becoming more exposed as the operation proceeded. Lying to the UN had serious consequences and a second strike would put the United States in an awkward position internationally. Political considerations trumped the military importance of a "D-Day" air strike.

Late in the evening of April 16, Kennedy made the decision to cancel the air strikes set to destroy the remaining fleet of Cuban bombers. The decision was so last minute that the Brigade pilots were sitting on the runway, taxied in position for takeoff when they were told to stand down.

Ironically, however, the air support scheduled to provide cover to the invading Brigade on the beach could proceed as planned. This last minute cancellation forced leadership to work furiously through the midnight hours, reworking and revising their plans, racing the sun as it climbed into a cloudless sky the morning of April 17, 1961: D-Day.

Bay of Pigs Invasion

Phase Three, April 17: The Bay of Pigs invasion began with the launch of eight pairs of aircraft flown by Brigade pilots over the Bay of Pigs. But, like all else, that number too had been scaled back at the last minute, which left large patches of time when no aircraft would be providing air support for the invading Brigade.

The FAR had read the remnants of the April 15 strikes like tea leaves and correctly predicted a second attack. This time, they were prepared.

As the sun's orange rays stretched across the Caribbean Sea, the members of Brigade 2506 prepared to return home. Not as citizens, not as vacationers, but as invaders. As their vessels drew ever nearer to shore, they saw their island as never before: not as a warm, welcoming place, but as a hostile, yet, strangely familiar territory.

They had been training for this moment, anticipating it and envisioning it for the past year. Now it was upon them. This was their opportunity to make a difference in the country in which they had lived, the country which they had loved, the country from which they had fled. This was their chance to turn the tide.

Yet, it was an ocean tide and unforeseen coral reefs that made it increasingly difficult for the Brigade to even reach the shore. Most of the men lost their weapons and equipment to the turquoise waters.

Once ashore, they were met instantly by Cuban armed forces who outnumbered them. The salvaged and undamaged Cuban planes that had survived the April 15 strikes, the very planes that should have been destroyed that morning had Kennedy not canceled the planned strike, were now flying overhead wreaking mayhem on the Brigade.

The invasion did not go as planned, and the exiles soon found themselves outgunned, outmanned, outnumbered and outplanned by Castro's troops.

Castro's first priority was sinking the ships that invaded Cuban waters.

The *USS Houston*, an American troop and supply vessel, was damaged by several FAR rockets, its captain then intentionally beached it on the western side of the bay. The FAR also machine gunned the two landing craft and other supply vessels that had brought the Brigade into the Bay of Pigs. They hit the *USS Rio Escondido*, which was loaded with aviation fuel, causing a terrific explosion before it sank like a stone.

Meanwhile, the paratroopers dropped in. One set missed their target and lost most of their equipment, and two other men were injured when their static line cable broke. A portion of the equipment that was airdropped sank in the swamps.

The Brigade did have some successes. Several paratroopers hit their targets and were able to hold their positions and block roads for two days. The Brigade pilots providing air cover support successfully destroyed tanks and other armor and halted an advancement of Cuban militia cadets.

Neither side made any significant advances as the invasion and fighting continued into the third day.

The Situation Falters:

The deteriorating operation convinced President Kennedy to authorize six unmarked fighter jets from the aircraft carrier *USS Essex* to provide combat air patrol for the Brigade's aircraft for one hour on April 19. But not without strict limitations; they could not instigate air combat or attack ground targets. Limitations, however, wasn't the biggest problem: timing was.

Somewhere, among the last minute changes and cables going back and forth, there was a miscommunication. As the six jets sat on deck awaiting their scheduled departure time, the Brigade's aircraft flew over them an hour ahead of schedule. The jets immediately launched after them, but they were unable to reach the invasion area in time to protect the Brigade's aircraft.

Brigade 2506's pleas for air and naval support were refused at the highest US Government levels, although several CIA contract pilots dropped munitions and supplies, resulting in the deaths of four of them: Pete Ray, Leo Baker, Riley Shamburger, and Wade Gray.

Kennedy refused to authorize any extension beyond the hour granted. To this day, there has been no resolution as to what caused this discrepancy in timing.

Without direct air support—no artillery and no weapons—and completely outnumbered by Castro's forces, members of the Brigade either surrendered or returned to the turquoise water from which they had come.

Two American destroyers attempted to move into the Bay of Pigs to evacuate these members, but gunfire from Cuban forces made that impossible.

In the following days, US entities continued to monitor the waters surrounding the bay in search of survivors, with only a handful being rescued. A few members of the Brigade managed to escape and went into hiding, but soon surrendered due to a lack of food and water. When all was said and done, more than seventy-five percent of Brigade 2506 ended up in Cuban prisons.

The President of a great democracy such as ours, and the editors of great newspapers such as yours, owe a common obligation to the people: an obligation to present the facts, to present them with candor, and to present them in perspective. It is with that obligation in mind that I have decided in the last 24 hours to discuss briefly at this time the recent events in Cuba.

On that unhappy island, as in so many other arenas of the contest for freedom, the news has grown worse instead of better. I have emphasized before that this was a struggle of Cuban patriots against a Cuban dictator. While we could not be expected to hide our

sympathies, we made it repeatedly clear that the armed forces of this country would not intervene in any way.

Any unilateral American intervention, in the absence of an external attack upon ourselves or an ally, would have been contrary to our traditions and to our international obligations. But let the record show that our restraint is not inexhaustible. Should it ever appear that the inter-American doctrine of non-interference merely conceals or excuses a policy of non-action -- if the nations of this hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration -- then I want it clearly understood that this government will not hesitate in meeting its primary

obligations, which are to the security of our own Nation.

Should that time ever come, we do not intend to be lectured on "intervention" by those whose character was stamped for all time on the bloody streets of Budapest. Nor would we expect or accept the same outcome which this small band of gallant Cuban refugees must have known they were chancing, determined as they were against heavy odds to pursue their courageous attempt to regain their Island's freedom.

But Cuba is not an island unto itself; and our concern is not ended by mere expressions of non-intervention and regret. This is not the first time in either ancient or recent history that a

small band of freedom fighters has engaged the armor of totalitarianism.

It is not the first time that communist tanks have rolled over gallant men and women fighting to redeem the independence of their homeland. Nor is it by any means the final episode in the eternal struggle of liberty against tyranny, anywhere on the face of the globe, including Cuba itself.

Mr. Castro has said that these were mercenaries. According to press reports, the final message to be relayed from the refugee forces on the island came from the rebel commander, when asked if he wished to be evacuated. His answer was: "I will never leave this country." That is not the reply of a mercenary.

He has gone now to join in the mountains countless other guerrilla fighters, who are equally determined that the dedication of those who gave their lives shall not be forgotten, and that Cuba must not be abandoned to the communists....And we do not intend to abandon it either.

The Cuban people have not yet spoken their final piece -- and I have no doubt that they will continue to speak up ^{and the Revolutionary Council, led by the Cardenas} for a free and independent Cuba.

^{MEANWHILE,}
We will not accept Mr. Castro's attempts to blame this nation for the hatred with which his one-time supporters now regard his repression. But there are from this sobering episode useful lessons for all to learn. Some may still be obscure; and await further information. Some are clear today.

First, it is clear that the forces of communism are not to be underestimated, in Cuba or anywhere in the world. The advantages of a police state -- its use of mass terror and arrests to prevent the

spread of free dissent -- cannot be overlooked by those who expect the fall of every fanatic tyrant. If the self-discipline of the free mind cannot match the iron discipline of the mailed fist -- in economic, political, scientific and all other kinds of struggles as well as military -- then the peril to freedom will continue to rise.

Secondly, it is clear that this nation, in concert with all the free nations of this Hemisphere, must take an even closer and more realistic look at the menace of external communist intervention and domination in Cuba. The American people are not complacent about Iron Curtain tanks and planes less than 90 miles from our shores.

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But a nation of Cuba's size is less a threat to our survival than it is a base for subverting the survival of other free nations throughout the Americas. It is not primarily our interest or our security but theirs which is now in ever greater peril. It is for their sake that we must show our will.

The evidence is clear -- and the hour is late. We and our Latin friends will have to face the fact that we cannot postpone any longer the real issue of survival itself. On that issue, unlike perhaps some others, there can be no middle ground. Together we must build a Hemisphere where freedom can flourish; and where any free nation under outside attack can be assured that all our resources

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stand ready to respond to ^{ANY} a request for assistance.

Third and finally, it is clearer than ever that we face a relentless struggle, in every corner of the globe, that goes far beyond the clash of armies or even nuclear armaments. The armies are there, and in large number. The nuclear armaments are there. But they serve primarily as the shield behind which subversion, infiltration and a host of other tactics can steadily advance, picking off vulnerable areas one by one in situations which do not permit our own armed intervention.

Power is the hall-mark of this offensive -- power and discipline and deceit. The legitimate discontent of yearning peoples is exploited. The legitimate trappings of self-

determination are employed. But once in power, all talk of discontent is repressed -- all self-determination disappears -- and the promise of a revolution of hope is betrayed, as in Cuba, into a reign of terror. Those who ^{in instructions} staged automatic "riots" in the streets of free nations, over the effort of ^{a small group of young} Cubans to regain their freedom, should recall the long roll-call of refugees who cannot now go back -- to Hungary, or to North Korea, or to North Viet Nam, or to East Germany, or to Poland, or to any of the other lands from which a steady stream of refugees pours forth, in eloquent testimony to the cruel oppression now holding sway in their homelands.

We dare not fail to see the

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insidious nature of this new and deeper struggle. We dare not fail to grasp the new concepts, the new tools, the new sense of urgency we will need to combat it. And we dare not fail to realize that ~~it is~~ this struggle ~~which~~ is taking place every day, without ~~arms or~~ fanfare, in thousands of villages and markets and classrooms all over the globe.

The message of Cuba, of Laos, of the rising din of communist voices in Asia and Latin America -- these messages are all the same. The complacent, the self-indulgent, the soft societies are to be swept away with the debris of history. Only the strong, only the industrious, only the visionary can survive.

No greater task faces this nation

or this Administration. No other challenge is more deserving of our every effort and energy. Too long we have fixed our eyes on traditional military needs, on armies prepared to cross borders or missiles poised for flight. Now it should be clear that this is no longer enough -- that our security may be lost without the firing of a single missile or the crossing of a single border.

We intend to profit from this lesson. We intend to reexamine and reorient our forces, our tactics and our institutions. We intend to intensify our efforts for a struggle in many ways more difficult than war.

For I am convinced that we possess all the necessary resources, and all the skill, and all the added

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strength that comes from belief in the freedom of man. And I am equally convinced, that history will record the fact, that this bitter struggle reached its climax in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Let me then make clear, as your President, that I am determined upon our system's survival and success, regardless of the cost and regardless of the peril.

Teacher Answer Key – The Bay of Pigs: Lessons Learned

Homework, CIA web page: “The Bay of Pigs Invasion”

<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2016-featured-story-archive/the-bay-of-pigs-invasion.html>

- Why did the US government begin planning to overthrow Fidel Castro in 1960?

The Eisenhower Administration was concerned about the establishment of a Communist state, formally allied with the Soviet Union, just 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

- What were some of the major mistakes made in the operation?
 - a. Some of the recruits were spies for Castro.*
 - b. President Kennedy requested a change of invasion location a few days prior to the event. The new location was an area well-known by Castro with no easy escape routes and poorly placed for instigating an uprising against the regime.*
 - c. At the UN, Adlai Stevenson presented pictures to prove that the US had nothing to do with airstrikes on Cuba, but the photos of one of the planes showed that the aircraft he said was Cuban could not have been.*
 - d. Concerned about revealing US involvement in the invasion, Kennedy cancelled the second set of airstrikes meant to destroy the rest of Cuba’s bombers. Additionally, he scaled back the number of aircraft providing air support for the invading Brigade.*
 - e. The ocean tide and coral reefs impacted Brigade members trying to reach beach – most men lost their weapons and equipment.*
 - f. Kennedy authorized six fighter jets to aid the Brigade on April 19, but through miscommunication, the timing of their flight was one hour off and they were unable to reach the invasion area in time to protect the men.*
- Based on this article, who do you think holds the most responsibility for the failed invasion? (It can be more than one person or group.)

Kennedy – Changing location of invasion late in the process, cancelling airstrikes.

CIA – Not vetting recruits to weed out spies; providing a revised invasion plan with unrealistic expectations and so many possible ways to fail.

Military – Missed timing of six fighter jets.

Classroom Analysis of Kennedy Speech

Reading Copy: Pages 1-5

- To whom is Kennedy addressing his remarks? (Newspaper editors? American public? Soviets? Cubans? World?)

Though the President acknowledges the audience of newspapers editors in the room, he seems to be speaking to all Americans, Latin Americans, the Soviets, and other countries around the globe:

- *“Should it ever appear that the inter-American doctrine of non-interference merely conceals or excuses a policy of nonaction—if the nations of this Hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration—then I want it clearly understood that this Government will not hesitate in meeting its primary obligations which are to the security of our nation!”*
- *“To Soviets: “We do not intend to be lectured on ‘intervention’ by those whose characters was stamped for all time on the bloody streets of Budapest!”*
- *“Nor is it by any means the final episode in the eternal struggle of liberty against tyranny, anywhere on the face of the globe, including Cuba itself.”*
- Why do you think Kennedy emphasizes certain words in his reading copy of the speech?
 - *Page 1: Underlining “Cuban”—emphasizing that this was a Cuban effort, not an American one.*
 - *Page 2: Underlining “non-interference” and “non-action”—emphasizing that the US will take action, if deemed necessary*
 - *Page 4: Underlining “final” – emphasizing that the struggle against Communism will continue.*
 - *Page 5: Underlining “not” and “We do not intend to abandon it either!” – emphasizing that this episode does not mean that we have given up on overthrowing Castro.*
- What is the tone of the first part of the speech? (conciliatory, threatening, etc.?) Provide specific examples to support your conclusions.
 - *Descriptive words that might be used: strong, resolute, unapologetic, angry.*
- How does Kennedy depict the invasion? (As mainly a Cuban effort, a US effort, or both?) Provide specific language to support your conclusions.

A Cuban effort:

 - *“I have emphasized before that this was a struggle of Cuban patriots against a Cuban dictator. While we could not be expected to hide our sympathies, we made it repeatedly clear that the armed forces of this country would not intervene in any way.”*
 - *“Any unilateral American intervention, in the absence of an external attack upon ourselves or an ally, would have been contrary to our traditions and to our international obligations.”*
 - *“Nor would we expect or accept the same outcome which this small band of gallant Cuban refugees must have known they were chancing, determined as they were against heavy odds to pursue their courageous attempts to regain their island’s freedom.”*

- How does Kennedy characterize this invasion? [A failure? A success?] Provide specific language to support your conclusions.
Kennedy indicates this is a failure, but expresses the idea that though a battle may have been lost, the war has not been lost:
 - *“On that unhappy island... the news has grown worse instead of better.”*
 - *“Cuba is not an island unto itself: and our concern is not ended by mere expressions of nonintervention or regret...”*
 - *“Nor is it by any means the final episode in the eternal struggle of liberty against tyranny, anywhere on the face of the globe, including Cuba itself.”*

Classroom Analysis of Kennedy Speech **Reading Copy: Pages 6-13**

- Why does Kennedy emphasize certain words in his reading copy of the speech?
 - *Page 6: “this” – emphasizing that our nation is not responsible for the desire of Cuban refugees to overthrow Castro.*
 - *Page 8: “our” and “theirs - emphasizing that this is really not about US security alone, but the freedom of other Latin American countries.*
 - *Page 8: “all our resources” – emphasizing that we will deal with strength against Communists.*
 - *Page 9: added words: “a small group of young” Cubans– emphasizing the heroic nature of the Brigade.*
 - *Page 13: “regardless” - once again, pointing to the strength with which we will deal with future threats.*
- What is the tone of the second part of the speech? (conciliatory, threatening, etc.?)
Descriptive word that might be used: strong, resolute, threatening
 - *“The American people are not complacent about Iron Curtain tanks and planes less than 90 miles from their shore...It is for their sake as well as our own that we must show our will.”*
 - *“Let me make it clear as the President of the United States that I am determined upon our system’s survival and success, regardless of the cost and regardless of the peril.”*
- What are the “lessons” that JFK says can be learned from the invasion?
 - *The forces of Communism are strong.*
 - *We must be concerned about and vigilant against the spread of Communism from Cuba to other Latin American countries.*
 - *Communist ideology can be attractive to poorer nations and it can sweep them up--even without military intervention--so we must continue to show these nations the value of freedom and democracy.*
- How does he characterize the danger posed by a Communist Cuba? Provide specific examples from the speech.

- *“...a nation of Cuba's size is less a threat to our survival than it is a base for subverting the survival of other free nations throughout the hemisphere. It is not primarily our interest or our security but theirs which is now, today, in the greater peril. It is for their sake as well as our own that we must show our will... We and our Latin friends will have to face the fact that we cannot postpone any longer the real issue of survival of freedom in this hemisphere itself.”*
- *Kennedy refers to the Castro regime’s policies as a “reign of terror.”*
- How does Kennedy characterize the US commitment to containing the spread of Communism? Provide specific examples from the speech.
 - *Combatting the spread of communism is a struggle for survival. “No other challenge is more deserving of our every effort and energy.”*
 - *“...history will record the fact that this bitter struggle reached its climax in the late 1950's and the early 1960's. Let me then make clear as the President of the United States that I am determined upon our system's survival and success, regardless of the cost and regardless of the peril.”*