

BAY OF PIGS: DEBATING POLICY OPTIONS

The Plan: Operation Zapata

Who: Cuban exiles

What: An invasion of Cuba in order to remove Fidel Castro from power

Where: Cuba

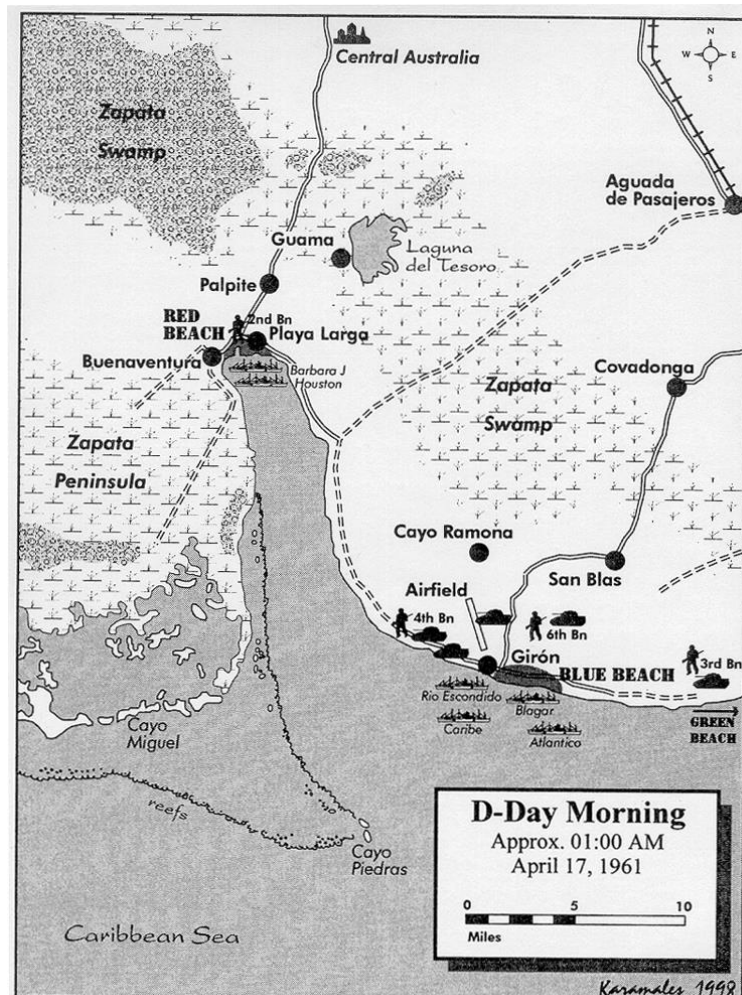
When: To Be Determined

How: Organize help from Cuban exiles from abroad; receive arms and training from the CIA; win the support of Cubans

Why: To oppose communism and prevent Castro from aligning with the Soviet Union

Task:

What should President Kennedy do about the situation in Cuba? You and your classmates will be helping the President make this decision. One of you will be representing President Kennedy, while the remainder of the class will assume the role of their advisers. Everyone (including the President) will be using primary source documents to help them identify the important factors/consequences the Kennedy administration must consider in order to make his decision.



PRESIDENT KENNEDY: *To Invade or Not to Invade?*

Factors/Consequences I must consider:

My Position on Castro (not the invasion):

My Position on the Soviets:

Questions I have for my advisors:

Arguments FOR invasion	Arguments AGAINST invasion

President John F. Kennedy on Cuba From the Election of 1960

September 2, 1960 - Portland, Maine:

I think he [Castro] should be condemned. I think he is a source of maximum danger.

September 21, 1960 - Nashville, Tennessee:

I am not satisfied to see a communist satellite ninety miles off the coast of Florida, eight minutes by jet. Those who say they will stand up to Khrushchev have not demonstrated any ability to stand up to Mr. Castro.

December 15, 1958, in Puerto Rico:

I realize that it will always be a cardinal tenet of American foreign policy not to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations-and this is particularly true in Latin America. I realize that we cannot force out any duly constituted government, however repugnant its methods or views may be-particularly when we have no guarantee that its successors in the long run will be a real improvement... For there is little question that should any Latin country be driven by repression into the arms of the communists, our attitude of nonintervention would change overnight.

Strategy of Peace - January 1, 1960:

Whether Castro would have taken a more rational course after his victory had the United States Government not backed the dictator Batista so long and so uncritically, and had it given the fiery young rebel a warmer welcome in his hour of triumph, especially on his trip to this country, we cannot be sure.

October 6, 1960 - Cincinnati, Ohio:

But Castro is not just another Latin American dictator-a petty tyrant bent merely on personal power and gain. His ambitions extend far beyond his own shores.

October 15, 1960 - Johnstown, Pennsylvania:

The first thing we have to do is let the Cuban people know our determination that they will someday again be free. We did not make clear to the Cubans our devotion to freedom during the brutal regime of the Batista dictatorship-and we are not making our position any clearer under the Castro dictatorship... Secondly, we must end the harassment, which this government has carried on, of liberty-loving anti-Castro forces in Cuba and other lands. While we cannot violate international law, we must recognize that these exiles and rebels represent the real voice of Cuba and should not be constantly handicapped by our Immigration and Justice Department Authorities. Third, we must let Mr. Castro know that we do not intend to be pushed around any longer and in particular do not intend to be pushed out of our naval base at Guantanamo...

From News Conferences (1961)

News Conference Number 1, (January 25, 1961) State Department Auditorium, Washington, D. C .

QUESTION: Under what conditions would you consider reopening diplomatic relations with Cuba, and are you considering such a step now?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, to take the last part first, we are not considering such a step, at the present time. I may say that the United States is interested, and I think that this Administration is extremely interested, in movements in Latin America and Central America, and the Caribbean, which provide a better life for the people. And if American interests may be damaged by those movements, or revolutions, or whatever term you want to use, we feel that this should be a matter that should be negotiated. What we are, of course, concerned about is when these movements are seized by external forces and directed not to the improving the welfare of the people involved, but towards imposing an ideology which is alien to this hemisphere. That is a matter of concern, particularly when that intervention takes the form of military support which threatens the security and the peace of the Western Hemisphere. Now, I am hopeful that governments will be established throughout all of Latin America, and governments which are established -- and I think nearly all of them do share the same view -- that we have to provide in this hemisphere a better life for the people involved, that we are interested in that, that we are concerned about it, that American policy will be directed towards that end. But we are also concerned that in the name of that peaceful revolution, when it is seized by aliens for their purposes, it is very difficult for the United States to carry on happy relations with those countries. So in answer to your question, we have no plan at present to resume diplomatic relations with Cuba, because of the factors which are involved on that island. . . .

News Conference Number 3, (February 8, 1961) State Department Auditorium, Washington, D.C.

QUESTION: Mr. President, on Monday, Mr. Rusk said that the United States was prepared to take cooperative action with the other American Republics to end tyranny, he said, against either the left or the right. Is it contemplated that we shall ask the other American states to join with us in some steps on the Cuban problem?

THE PRESIDENT: Cuba, and the problem of tyranny throughout all of Latin America, is a matter which is of course of special concern to [the] Inter-Departmental group; and they have not concluded their analysis as yet.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Castro is reported to have built a new radio station, one of the largest in the Hemisphere, which will begin operations within a few months to broadcast pro-Castro propaganda throughout Latin America. Is there anything we can do, or plan to do, to counter this?

THE PRESIDENT: We are giving the matter of Cuba and its export of its revolution throughout Latin America high priority. I could not state what actions will be taken yet until [the State Department officials] have concluded their deliberations, which are now going ahead very intensively. . . .

News Conference Number 9, (April 12, 1961) State Department Auditorium, Washington, D.C.

QUESTION: Mr. President, has a decision been reached on how far this country would be willing to go in helping an anti-Castro uprising or invasion in Cuba? And what could you say with respect to recent developments as far as the anti-Castro movements in Cuba are concerned?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first I want to say that there will not be, under any conditions, be an intervention in Cuba by United States armed forces, and this government will do everything it possibly can, and I think it can meet its responsibilities, to make sure that there are no Americans involved in any actions inside Cuba. Secondly, the Justice Department's recent indictment of Mr. Masferrer, of Florida, on the grounds that he was plotting an invasion of Cuba, from Florida, in order to establish a Batista-like regime, should indicate the feelings of this country towards those who wish to reestablish that kind of administration inside Cuba. Third, we do not intend to take any action with respect to the property or other economic interests which American citizens formerly held in Cuba, other than formal and normal negotiations with a free and independent Cuba. The basic issue in Cuba is not one between the United States and Cuba; it is between the Cubans themselves. And I intend to see that we adhere to that principle. And as I understand it, this Administration's attitude is so understood and shared by the anti-Castro exiles from Cuba in this country.

QUESTION: Mr. President, could you give us your views, sir, about the Soviet achievement of putting a man in orbit, and what it would mean to our space program as such?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is a most impressive scientific accomplishment, and also I think that we, all of us, as members of the race, have the greatest admiration for the Russian who participated in this extraordinary feat. I have already sent congratulations to Mr. Khrushchev, and I sent congratulations to the man who was involved. I indicated that the task force which we set up on space, way back last January -- January 12th -- indicated that because of the Soviet progress in the field of boosters, where they have been ahead of us, that we expected that they would be first in space, in orbiting a man in space. And of course, that has taken part. We are carrying out our program, and we expect to hope to make progress in this area this year ourselves.

QUESTION: Mr. President, your white paper last year -- last week, referred in very diplomatic language to the takeover by communism in Cuba. Is it your view that Fidel Castro is personally a Communist?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, he has indicated his admiration on many occasions for the Communist revolution. He has appointed a great many Communists to high positions. A great many of those, I think in the white paper -- well, rather, the state paper -- he indicated that two-thirds of those who had been members of his first government had fled Cuba, people who had a strong feeling for the revolution, but who did not propose to see it come under the domination of the Communists. So that I would not want to characterize Mr. Castro, except to say that by his own words he has indicated his hostility to democratic rule in this hemisphere, to democratic liberal leaders in many of the countries of the hemisphere who are attempting to improve the life of their people, and has associated himself most intimately with the Sino-Soviet bloc, and has indicated his desire to spread the influence of that bloc throughout this hemisphere.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS: *To Invade or Not to Invade?*

My assigned role/primary source document:

Factors/consequences the President must consider (*Rank in order of importance from most important to least important*):

My position regarding the invasion: **DO NOT INVADE**

Arguments for my position:

Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State (Bowles) to
Secretary of State Rusk, March 31, 1961

On Tuesday, April 4th, a meeting will be held at the White House at which a decision will be reached on the Cuban adventure.

During your absence I have had an opportunity to become better acquainted with the proposal, and I find it profoundly disturbing. . .

In considerable degree, my concern stems from a deep personal conviction that our national interests are poorly served by a covert operation of this kind at a time when our new President is effectively appealing to world opinion on the basis of high principle.

Even in our imperfect world, the differences which distinguish us from the Russians are of vital importance. This is true not only in a moral sense but in the practical effect of these differences on our capacity to rally the non-Communist world in behalf of our traditional democratic objectives.

In saying this, I do not overlook the ruthless nature of the struggle in which we are involved, nor do I ignore the need on occasion for action which is expedient and distasteful. Yet I cannot persuade myself that means can be wholly divorced from ends -- even within the context of the Cold War.

Against this background, let me suggest several points which I earnestly hope will be fully taken into account in reaching the final decision.

1. In sponsoring the Cuban operation, for instance, we would be deliberately violating the fundamental obligations we assumed in the Act of Bogota establishing the Organization of American States. The Act provides: "No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements. "No State may use or encourage the use of coercive measures of an economic or political character in order to force the sovereign will of another State and obtain from it advantages of any kind. "The territory of a State is inviolable; it may not be the object, even temporarily, of military occupation or of other measures of force taken by another State, directly or indirectly, on any grounds whatever"

More generally, the United States is the leading force in and substantial beneficiary of a network of treaties and alliances stretching around the world. That these treaty obligations should be recognized as binding in law and conscience is the condition not only of a lawful and orderly world, but of the mobilization of our own power. We cannot expect the benefits of this regime of treaties if we are unwilling to accept the limitations it imposes upon our freedom to act.

2. Those most familiar with the Cuban operation seem to agree that as the venture is now planned, the chances of success are not greater than one out of three. This makes it a highly risky operation. If it fails, Castro's prestige and strength will be greatly enhanced. The one way we can reduce the risk is by a sharply increased commitment of direct American support.
3. Under the very best of circumstances, I believe this operation will have a much more adverse effect on world opinion than most people contemplate. It is admitted that there will be riots and a new wave of anti-Americanism throughout Latin America. It is also assumed that there will be many who quietly wish us well and, if the operation succeeds, will heave a sigh of relief. Moreover, even if the reaction in Latin America is less damaging than we expect, I believe that in Europe, Asia, and Africa, the reaction against the United States will be angry and the fresh, favorable image of the Kennedy Administration will be correspondingly dimmed. . .
4. A pertinent question, of course, is what will happen in Cuba if this operation is cancelled and we limit ourselves to small and scattered operations? There is the possibility that the Castro effort will be a failure without any further intervention from us. It is not easy to create a viable Communist state on an island, totally dependent upon open sea lanes, with a large population, and inadequate resources. As Castro applies more and more pressure, the spirit of rebellion is likely to grow.
5. It appears more likely that Castro will succeed in solidifying his political position. Although this would be sharply contrary to our national interest, it does not mean that we would be impotent to deal with him.

If the Soviets should attempt to provide Castro with substantially larger amounts of arms, including naval vessels, we have the power to throw a blockade around Cuba and to extend it, if necessary, to petroleum supplies. This could bring the Cuban economy to a grinding halt within a few months. Technically, this would be an act of war. However, I believe we would find it vastly easier to live with direct action of this kind in the face of what we could fairly describe as an open Soviet move to establish Cuba as a military base than with the covert operation now under consideration.

6. Another possibility is that Castro, once he has created sufficient military power, will move against a neighboring area, such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, or perhaps into Central America. If this occurs, we can move to block him with whatever force is required, presumably through the Organization of American States and with the full support of the people in Latin America and elsewhere. . . . I believe it would be a grave mistake for us to jeopardize the favorable position we have steadily developed in most of the non-Communist world by the responsible and restrained policies which are now associated with the President by embarking on a major covert adventure with such very heavy built-in risks. I realize that this operation has been put together over a period of months. A great deal of time and money has been put into it, and many able and dedicated people have become emotionally involved in its success. We should not, however, proceed with this adventure simply because we are wound up and cannot stop. . .

US AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION: *To Invade or Not to Invade?*

My assigned role/primary source document:

Factors/consequences the President must consider (*Rank in order of importance from most important to least important*):

My position regarding the invasion: **AMBIGUOUS**

Arguments for my position:

Telegram from U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewellyn E. Thompson to the Department of State

The American ambassador to the Soviet Union provides Washington with an account of a meeting between himself and Nikita S. Khrushchev in which the Russian leader reveals his awareness of [the CIA plan for] using Cuban exiles to oust Castro. . . .

Turning to Cuba he [Khrushchev] could not agree with our policy there. Each country should be free to choose its social system. They [the Soviets] did not agree, for example, with Yugoslav internal policies but this did not prevent them from having good relations with that country. He said President had indicated that financial aid would be given to aid in overthrow of present Cuban Govt [Castro]. Bands of émigrés [Cuban exiles] had been formed and threats made against Cuban Govt. He said Soviet Govt would openly support Cuban Govt and would give them economic aid. He pointed out Soviet Union had no based in Cuba and only base there belonged to US [Guantanamo]. He then went on to question our policy of having bases all around the Soviet Union. . . .

Reverting again to Cuba he asked why we did not establish diplomatic relations with the country and try to resolve our problems with it peacefully. He made clear Cubans had not put him up to this but he was merely speaking his own mind. . . .

I went on to say that I thought what bothered us particularly about Cuba was its use as a base for attempts on overthrow of other Latin American govts. When he disputed this I said I had heard Cuban pilots were being trained in Czechoslovakia in flying jet planes. Cuba would never be able [to] attack US and therefore these presumably were designed for use against other Latin American countries.

I said we had been most patient with Castro. In first place we had cut off supply of arms to Batista and although there had been differences of opinion in US about Castro we had been fully prepared [to] accept his govt. However, he had made most violent statements against us and had confiscated our assets there without compensation and finally had insisted on reducing our Embassy to handful of people.

We had tried to be patient but he had given us no choice. Khrushchev replied Castro said we were using Embassy to harbor spies and Castro was not Communist. He said he had not heard of any training of jet pilots but if he were Castro he would buy jet planes since these were necessary to prevents arms being dropped to counter-revolutionaries from planes flying from US. He thought that in one case we had even admitted this. I said we had taken strict steps to prevent such activities although there had I believed been one case in which a plane had gotten through. In concluding, Khrushchev said we should continue to be patient and should try to improve our relations with Cuba. . . .

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA): *To Invade or Not to Invade?*

My assigned role/primary source document:

Factors/consequences the President must consider (*Rank in order of importance from most important to least important*):

My position regarding the invasion: **INVADE CUBA**

Arguments for my position:

Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency,
Washington, January 19, 1961 (Planning an invasion of Cuba)

. . .At this point, Mr. Merchant noted that two distinctions should be made regarding possible Latin American support for action against Castro. First a distinction should be drawn between the attitudes of governments and the attitudes of peoples within Latin American countries. A second distinction should be made with regard to the difference between what governments would be willing to support publicly and what they would be willing to support only privately.

With reference to the distinction between governmental and public attitudes, the Secretary asked Mr. Mann whether we might be in some rather tight situations in a number of countries of the hemisphere if Moscow pushed the button, i.e., with respect to pro-Castro movements in a number of countries. Mr. Mann said this would definitely be the case and mentioned Venezuela and Colombia as examples. . .

The Secretary next asked at what point did we begin to consider that Castro had gone beyond the watershed in Cuba, adding that it seemed clear there was little hope now. Mr. Mann indicated it was difficult to name a specific point. There were a number of things that Castro had done that led to the conclusion that he had crossed the watershed [crossed the line]. One early action on his part was his initiative in seeking ties with the Sino-Soviet bloc [Chinese-Soviet bloc], which he had undertaken before we had acted on sugar quotas.

Mr. Mann then listed other actions on Castro's part such as expropriation [nationalization] of land, setting up militia, etc. He summarized by saying that history may indicate that Cuba had been one of the most rapidly communized states—faster even than those in Eastern Europe. He pointed out that Castro has complete control, something totally different from the situation in the traditional dictatorship in Latin America. The Secretary then called on General Lemnitzer to review the military situation in Cuba. After having emphasized the extreme sensitivity of some of the information he was about to give, General Lemnitzer estimated that the Revolutionary Army had 32,000, the Revolutionary Nation Police 9,000, the Militia over 200,000. He said that Cuba was an armed camp. They had received more than 30,000 tons of arms and equipment over the past five or six months. This buildup had made a decided change in the U.S. contingency plans to deal with it. He said there was no evidence of jet aircraft, missiles, or nuclear weapons; on the other hand, about 100 Cuban pilots were being trained in jet aircraft in Czechoslovakia. Their return to Cuba would add a new dimension to the problem.

With respect to Guantanamo, the General identified the critical problem for us as being the water supply. In response to a question from the Secretary he said there was no evidence of a buildup of Cuban forces around Guantanamo. He also indicated that very precise rules of engagement had been worked out for our aircraft in the area of Cuba. Educational materials were developed through the Teaching American History in Maryland Program, a partnership between Baltimore County Public Schools and the Center for History Education at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. These included hot pursuit into Cuban airspace. The Secretary then asked whether the Cubans had any air-strike capability against Miami. The General replied they didn't have much now but when the pilots now

training in Czechoslovakia return and if jet aircraft became available for them this would change the picture.

The Secretary asked what was the estimated strength of resistance in Cuba at the present time and Mr. Dulles said that he thought we could count on about 1,000, who were somewhat scattered. The Secretary then asked whether we have a capability to establish a going resistance movement without use of U.S. forces. Mr. Dulles said this would necessarily depend on how many came over to the dissident side. He said that our present Cuban force in training would reach 700 to 800. He then went on to mention the difficult problem of keeping them in Guatemala. At the best, we had six weeks to two months left before something would have to be done about them. . .

He said that at the moment what he needed was policy guidance on the following matter

- (1) continuance of training,
- (2) introduction of small teams into Cuba with sabotage and communications capability, and
- (3) drops of food and supplies to dissidents now in Cuba.

Mr. Barnes added that guidance was also needed on infiltrating political leaders into Cuba. Secretary McNamara asked what size Cuban forces was considered necessary to buildup enough strength to overthrow Castro. Mr. Dulles said he thought that our presently planned Cuban force could probably hold a beachhead long enough for us to recognize a provisional government and aid that government openly.

Secretary McNamara then asked whether the estimate was that time was strengthening or weakening us. Mr. Dulles replied that it was now weakening us. This could change if people in Cuba got hungry, but this might be a long time off. Food was still being sent to Cuba from the United States. General Lemnitzer interjected to say that Castro's popularity might be going down but his grip was getting tighter daily. Mr. Bowles asked whether we knew of any cliques in the Castro hierarchy. Mr. Dulles said we didn't think there were any; that it now seemed to be down to the hard core. Mr. Bowles recalled the division between Trotsky and Stalin [former Soviet leaders]. Mr. Dulles replied that they didn't see any such division in the Cuban picture. He said he believed the Castro regime had plans to export Castro's communism; that they already have power among the people in the Caribbean countries and elsewhere, particularly in Venezuela and Colombia.

The Secretary then commented on the enormous implications of putting U.S. forces ashore in Cuba and said we should consider everything short of this, including rough stuff, before doing so. He said he felt we might be confronted by serious uprisings all over Latin America if U.S. forces were to go in, not to mention the temptation that the commitment of such forces in Cuba would provide elsewhere in the world. In this connection he again mentioned the possibility of a physical base on the Isle of Pines for a provisional government which we could recognize. This he thought would be powerful step forward. What we needed was a "fig leaf."

A Cuban provisional government on the Isle of Pines, for example, could send Soviet ships carrying supplies to Castro with less danger than would be the case with direct involvement of U.S. forces.

The Secretary then asked Mr. Dulles if he could say offhand how much money the Cuban operation had cost to date. Mr. Dulles said that it had cost about \$6 million last year and \$28 million was earmarked for the first six months of 1961. The Secretary asked him whether he could use a quarter of a billion dollars. . .

The Secretary also mentioned that we should inquire into the possible usefulness of a pacific blockade with a carefully and publicly define demission. In elaboration the mentioned the possibility of “making some international law.” Should we, for example, announce that the introduction of jet aircraft into this hemisphere by the Bloc would be regarded as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. It would then be the Bloc’s responsibility if they chose to “escalate” in the face of such an announcement.