

Cuban Missile Crisis and Revolution

1956: Castro lands in eastern Cuba from Mexico and takes to the Sierra Maestra mountains where, aided by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, he wages a guerrilla war.

1958: The US withdraws military aid to Batista.

1959: Castro leads a 9,000-strong guerrilla army into Havana, forcing Batista to flee. Castro becomes prime minister.

April 1959: Castro meets US Vice President Richard Nixon on an unofficial visit to Washington. Nixon afterwards wrote that the US had no choice but to try to "orient" the leftist leader in the "right direction".

1960: All US businesses in Cuba are nationalised without compensation; US breaks off diplomatic relations with Havana and imposes a trade embargo in response to Castro's reforms.

August 16, 1960: The U.S. plans to assassinate Fidel Castro by poisoning a box of Castro's favorite cigars.

August 28, 1960: The United States imposes a trade embargo against Cuba.

1961: US backs an abortive invasion by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs; Castro proclaims Cuba a communist state and begins to ally it with the USSR.

1961: The CIA begins to make plans to assassinate Castro as part of Operation Mongoose. At least five plans to kill the Cuban leader were drawn up between 1961 and 1963.

1962: Cuban missile crisis ignites when, fearing a US invasion, Castro agrees to allow the USSR to deploy nuclear missiles on the island. The US released photos of Soviet nuclear missile silos in Cuba - triggering a crisis which took the two superpowers to the brink of nuclear war.

It was subsequently resolved when the USSR agreed to remove the missiles in return for the withdrawal of

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