Cold War

Cuba Becomes Communist
Cuba Goes Communist

- The most serious Cold War conflict in the Western Hemisphere involved Latin American island nation of Cuba
- Just 90 miles off the coast of Florida
Fidel Castro

- Organized an armed rebellion against the corrupt dictator who then ruled Cuba
Fidel Castro

- By 1959, Fidel Castro had led his guerilla army to victory and set about transforming the country.
Fidel Castro

- This transformation is known as the Cuban Revolution

- Castro sought support from the Soviet Union
Cuban Revolution

- Castro:
  - Nationalized businesses
  - Put most land under government control

- Castro severely restricted Cubans’ political freedom
  - Critics were jailed or silenced
  - Hundreds of thousands fled to Florida
Kennedy and Castro

- The United States attempted to bring down the communist regime next door.

- In 1961, President Kennedy supported an invasion attempt by U.S.-trained Cuban exiles.
Test Failed – The Bay of Pigs

- March of 1960 – Ike gave CIA permission to train Cuban exiles for an invasion of their homeland. Kennedy inherits program and allows it to continue

- April of 1961 they get a green light
Test Failed – The Bay of Pigs

- The Cuban attackers expected a homegrown wave of support once they landed at the Bay.

- Instead they were met by 25,000 Cuban troops backed by Soviet tanks and air support.
Test Failed – Bay of Pigs

- Kennedy accepted responsibility for the fiasco while privately questioning the CIA/Pentagon leadership

- Pays 53 million to Cuba *medical supplies/food to get the surviving exiles home
Test Failed – Bay of Pigs

- Kennedy has eggs on his face, but promises exiles in US that one day they would make it back to a free Cuba and swears to resist all communist aggression.
Now what??? The Berlin Crisis!!

- Following the Berlin Blockade/Airlift almost 20% of East Germany’s population fled West
  - Advertised communists failure
  - Trashed East Germany’s economy

- Khrushchev tells US to get out of West Berlin – Kennedy says noooooooooo....
Berlin

- Khrushchev “I want peace. But, if you want war, that is your problem.”

- Kennedy comes home and announces Berlin to be “the greatest test of Western courage and will”
Berlin

- August 1961 East German troops begin unloading concrete posts and rolls of barbed wire

- Construction of the Berlin Wall was underway
Berlin

- Positive: “Crisis averted”
- Negative: The wall and armed guards ended free movement
Berlin

- Most noted and hated symbol of communist oppression