Part 3- Cold War in Cuba

Cuban Revolution

In the final days of 1958, ragged rebels began the process of driving out forces loyal to Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. By New Year’s Day, the nation was theirs, and Fidel Castro, Ché Guevara, Raúl Castro, Camilo Cienfuegos and their companions rode triumphantly into Havana and history.

Castro was an unknown factor in 1959; he would not "come out of the closet" as a communist until later. Communist Cuba would be a thorn in the side of the United States for decades, triggering international incidents such as the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The United States imposed a trade embargo in 1962 which led to years of hardship for the Cuban people.

Bay of Pigs

In 1961 Cuban exiles, armed and trained by the American CIA, invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. President John F. Kennedy refused to supply the rebels with air support to carry out their attack, and their invasion effort failed.

Cuban Missile Crisis

After Bay of Pigs invasion, the Soviet Union installed nuclear missiles in Cuba. After U-2 flights Kennedy ordered a naval blockade of Cuba on October 22 until the Soviet Union removed its missiles. On October 28, the Soviets agreed to remove the missiles, defusing one of the most dangerous confrontations of the Cold War. In exchange for the Soviets removing their missiles, the United States agreed to stop trying to overthrow Castro and to remove American missiles in Turkey.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY (April 12, 1961): First, I want to say that there will not be, under any conditions, an intervention in Cuba by the United States Armed Forces. 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.
"We went eyeball-to-eyeball with the Russians, and the other man blinked!"

Nikita Khrushchev (Soviet leader) and American President John F. Kennedy