



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on April 24, 2020

Remembering the Bay of Pigs Betrayal

By April 17, 1961, after less than a week of action, 1,400 invaders at Cuba's Bay of Pigs had been defeated and Fidel Castro had become the new David able to slay the mighty Goliath to his north. Castro's unexpected victory assured the world that no U.S.-backed effort would likely succeed against communism. But the entire incident was a carefully planned betrayal and none of its planners were sufficiently held accountable for what they had arranged.



This author's memory of that monstrous betrayal has just been stirred by the *New York Times* placement of a reminder for some — or an introduction for many — of the stunning 1961 defeat for the United States. It appeared in the Page Two spot chosen for a daily report headlined "On This Day in History." The particular choice appearing on April 21 of this year devoted a mere five lines to inform readers that the 1961 Bay of Pigs incursion "had failed in Cuba" with a resulting "disastrous loss of prestige" and a heavy blow to "Yankee Imperialism." That was obviously all anyone was supposed to recall or learn about the headline-grabbing 1961 incident.

There was no mention — not even a hint — that the ill-fated invasion was designed to fail from the start thereby elevating Castro to hero status. Nor was there any suggestion that what had occurred was precisely what had been planned by pro-communist State Department and CIA operatives in Washington. Some of the details about what actually happened do need airing even six decades later. So we accept that challenge and provide never-denied facts taken mostly from the late John Stormer's 1964 book *None Dare Call It Treason*.

The Bay of Pigs volunteers were the 1,400 invaders of their own homeland trained in Central America for an operation planned and financed by the U.S. State Department and the CIA. They were Cuban patriots who were extremely anxious to recover their nation from its newly installed communist leader. They believed to a man that their effort would be supported by U.S. military might. At least, that's what they were repeatedly told while preparing for the invasion. But the very opposite of what they were assured would occur turned into an unexpected victory for Castro and a huge black eye for the United States.

President Kennedy, in office only a few months, had approved the entire plan he was shown by State Department and CIA personnel. A key element of its success depended on U.S. military support from the air. Therefore, aircraft carriers had already been positioned offshore ready to send planes to destroy Castro's tanks and scatter his forces. More air support from B-26 bombers stationed at bases close to Cuba were ready to aid in the assault by dropping bombs where needed. The planned action couldn't fail to be anything but a success. But President Kennedy called off the key air support at the last moment. And that decision turned a certain victory into an ignominious defeat.

Not only did the cancellation of air vital support guarantee failure, the ground troops who landed at the Bay of Pigs found themselves unable to use their weapons. According to a report later issued by the 82nd Congress, the CIA had armed the invaders with small arms weapons requiring 30 different types



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of ammunition. The weapons given them had been acquired from second-hand merchandisers so as to avoid tying the United States to the operation, a ruse that likely fooled next to no one. And a Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) report later verified that, while the invaders had hand weapons, the ammunition they were given did not match their guns which made them useless.

In addition, promises that the invaders would be met by anti-Castro underground forces within Cuba (there were close to 100 such groups) weren't kept because the appropriate individuals in Cuba were never notified in time to have their forces join in the effort. Also, CIA personnel within the United States made sure that leaders of some of the underground enemies of Castro in Cuba were not alerted by U.S.-based allies that the invasion was underway.

In just a few days, Castro became communism's new bright star. His seeming ability to repel forces assembled by the "ever so mighty U.S." boosted communist leaders all over the globe. To them, the United States was no longer the nation that might protect others from communist subversion and conquest. After all, a much smaller and poorly equipped communist-led few in Cuba, only 90 miles away from its supposedly mighty neighbor, had routed the powerful United States.

It didn't take long for the Soviet Union to place nuclear bomb-equipped missiles in Castro's Cuba. Or so the world was told. And immediately, leaders of other Western Hemisphere nations began looking to Castro as a new leader with whom they should align.

Did the U.S. Congress clean out the State Department and the CIA to keep anything like the Bay of Pigs fiasco from being repeated elsewhere? The answer is no. Soon, subversives high in the U.S. government would arrange to send American forces into a place few had ever previously heard of. That place was Vietnam. And the war our military was sent to fight in that distant land was, after suffering many thousands of casualties, finally lost due to new types of self-defeating mismanagement.

The *New York Times* will likely remind readers of the Vietnam defeat with a similar posting of a few lines in its daily "On This Day in History" section. It will surely be as misleading as what just appeared about the Bay of Pigs invasion.

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