Introduction

The Threat of Communism. Click *Next* to begin.

Cuba and the Bay of Pigs

While Kennedy was making promises to advance America in technology and improve the civil rights issues in the country, communism was still spreading. In 1959, Fidel Castro became the prime minister of Cuba and led a revolutionary movement that overthrew the existing dictatorship. Castro's movement formed the Communist Party of Cuba.

The Bay of Pigs Invasion

Facing communism close to home was an extreme threat to the United States. It was the goal of President Kennedy to remove Fidel Castro from power, using 1,400 CIA-trained Cuban exiles. In April 1961, the exiles infiltrated the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. The exiles were overrun, captured, and killed by Castro's army. The Bay of Pigs invasion was a complete failure.

Berlin Wall

A few months after the Bay of Pigs invasion, Kennedy confronted the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, to discuss a situation affecting Berlin, Germany. East Germans were dissatisfied with life in the communist system, and were fleeing to the West. To stop the exodus, Khrushchev recommended that East Germany close off access between East and West Berlin. The Berlin Wall was constructed soon after the meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev, and remained in place until 1989.

Cuban Missile Crisis

In October 1962, surveillance photographs revealed that the Soviet Union had stationed nuclear missiles in Cuba. This caused great fear in the United States. If the missiles were fired from Cuba at the United States, there would be very little time for the United States to react. This situation made the United States' policy of massive retaliation difficult to follow, and was unacceptable to the United States. The entire country was on alert, and tensions everywhere were extremely high.

Fearing a nuclear war, and trying to prevent the Soviet Union from sending more weapons into Cuba, Kennedy ordered a naval blockade around the island as Soviet ships approached it. The United States Navy stopped Soviet ships from getting to Cuba. The world was on the brink of nuclear war for several days after the start of the blockade.

Eventually a deal was reached. Khrushchev agreed to dismantle the Soviet missiles in Cuba if the United States would not invade Cuba, and would remove its missiles from countries bordering the Soviet Union. This agreement effectively ended the event known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Conclusion

You have completed your exploration of the Threat of Communism. Click ***Replay*** to restart the interactivity or click ***Exit*** to close the interactivity.