The Effects of Fidel Castro and the Bay of Pigs Invasion on Government Reforms

Author

Institution

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Abstract

The paper will dissect the effects of the reign of Fidel Castro as well as the Bay of Pigs invasion on government reforms around the world. The first section of the paper will evaluate the nature of Communism in Cuba and the relationship between Cuba and the United States. It is evident that the Americans were anti-communists, thereby planning the invasion to overthrow Fidel Castro’s government and introduce their ideological system. Secondly, the essay will explore the Bay of Pigs invasion in details. Some of the outstanding features that can be identified from the invasion include its poor planning and groupthink in the United States administration. Not only did the Bay of Pigs invasion strengthen the Castro’s administration ideologies but it deepened the relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union. The invasion gave Castro a solid reason to commit fully to Communism ideologies. From the assessments, some of the effects of the rule of Castro and Bay of Pigs invasion on government reforms across the world included comprehensive planning, strict execution of the reforms, and the inclusion of relevant organizations in decision-making, and observing confidentiality.

**The Initial State of Cuba under Castro and Its Relationship with the United States**

In the 1950s, the Cuban society had indistinct class structures. For instance, there was little differentiation regarding color among the Cubans as compared to other Latin American countries. Most of the working class in Cuba, as well as their unions, strived to thrive even though they depended on military wage demands and not politics. Moreover, the civil service sector experienced continued growth as the government extended their areas of jurisdiction. A majority of government positions helped in different sectors that were directly linked to civil servants and the working class. As a result, Cuba had expanded its middle class because several white collar jobs had been created. Most of the middle class in Cuba were associated with the American presence both economically and culturally. For the longest time, the Cuban society was perceived to be homogenous because of its size, common language, and insignificant division among the people. However, the perceived tranquillity gradually started to change as smaller conflicts began to surface. While focusing mainly on politics, the major agenda was the issue of nationalism as well as the diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States (Jervis, 2017). These were problems that naturally led to ambivalence because of two reasons. For instance, there was a strong feeling of dislike towards the American domination on Cuba. Secondly, the Cubans were afraid of the consequences or wrath they would face from the Americans in case they attempted to challenge them.

**The Bay of Pigs Invasion of 1961**

In 1961, barely a year after Fidel Castro had overthrown Fulgencio Batista and assumed power as the president, the United States government and a group of Cuban exiles unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the Communist government. The United States was focused on dethroning the Cuban president by all means necessary and creating a non-communist government. Then the US President Dwight Eisenhower cut off all the diplomatic relations with Cuba and utilized the resources of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to train the devoted Cuban exiles. The Cuban exiles commonly known as Brigade 2506 were trained and financially supported by the United States government. However, it was President Eisenhower’s successor J.F. Kennedy who approved the invasion plan, which was to be a top secret as he banned any association of the invasion with the United States.

In April 1961, an estimated number of 1,500 Cuban exiles armed with the different type of missiles arrived at Playa Giron and Playa Larga, which were two Cuban beaches located on the Southern coast at a place known as the Bay of Pigs (Bahia de Cochinos). The initial plans of Brigade 2506 were to advance deeper into the Cuban territory and persuade people to join the anti-Castro regime. Later on, they would gain a massive block to overthrow the government and establish a non-communist government. However, this would not be the planned outcome. The Bay of Pigs was very swampy than they expected, which made it challenging for them to build campsites and further penetrate into the interiors. On the other hand, Fidel Castro had prepared his army, which outnumbered the Brigade 2506. The unexpected ambush on their air support and beachheads cost them several lives. Furthermore, they faced a lack of weaponry, shelter, food, and water, which increased their failures.

After only two days of the arrival of the Cuban-US army into the Pigs Bay, over one thousand of their men were captured, more than one hundred died, and the rest escaped to become part of the native guerrilla groups. To date, Castro’s administration has never revealed the exact number of casualties during the invasion. It is important to note that the defeat of Brigade 2506 under the leadership of the United States government initiated a massive division among the political opponents of Cuba. The outcome of these changes included strengthening Castro’s regime and instilling fear in any government that would attempt to intervene. For the next one year and eight months, the captured prisoners still stayed in Cuba while the United States government negotiated for their release. In 1962 after successful negotiations, Fidel Castro agreed to release a section of prisoners in exchange for food and medical supplies.

**Consequences**

The failed invasion by the US government is often perceived to be one of the most embarrassing moments in their history of attacks. According to Kornbluh (1998), not only did the CIA and the government plan poorly but they were also caught up in lies. Moreover, the Pigs Bay invasion strengthened the Castro’s administration ideologies as well as deepening the relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union. The invasion gave Castro a solid reason to commit fully to Communism ideologies. However, it should be noted that long-term repercussions of the unsuccessful invasion were more destructive and dangerous to the security of the United States and its international relations. For instance, the Cuban exiles who survived captures and who were captured were left in a hostile environment. Secondly, it is ironical that the contingencies that were to be avoided turned out to be practical (Voss, 2011).

A section of government reforms was affected by the rule of Castro and the Bay of Pigs invasion. It is evident that the main players that were affected included Cuba, the United States, and the Soviet Union. However, different governments used the Bay of Pigs scenario as a referral point when planning invasions, coups, and attacks. First, governments, especially that of the United States, were cautious on trusting their plans. From the invasion, we see that the CIA was too confident in their plans that they failed to admit any potential weaknesses. The CIA director tried to copy Anzio landing in Italy without identifying the flaws of the operation.

Secondly, different reforms by the government that have been established have been strictly followed. Commitments to these reforms have been fundamental. One of the lessons learnt from the Bay of Pigs invasion is committing to a task. President J.F. Kennedy withdrawn air support and refused to have naval support not knowing that it would be more destructive.

Furthermore, different government reforms currently pass through various relevant organizations for evaluation and approval before they are implemented. For instance, in the attack, the Bay of Pigs invasion reminded the President that other stakeholders such as the Senate were crucial in decision making (Burke, 2009; Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010; Snyder et al., 2002 ). President J.F. Kennedy was mainly concentrated on the CIA and Joint Chiefs of Staff for advice, which blindsides him on reviewing better options. On the other hand, different governments have learnt that particular reforms need to be top secret to increase their chances of success. One of the major reasons for the failure of the invasion was indiscretion. Fidel Castro and his army had heard rumors of the invasion, and they prepared for the attacks. One successful operation in the history of the United States was the capturing and killing of Osama Bin Laden and his associates. The CIA and the Obama administration worked in confidentiality in that case. The rest of the world would only learn of the mission after it was over.

**Conclusion**

Almost every part of Cuba practiced Communism as required by Fidel Castro. A majority of the middle class mainly identified with the Americans culturally and economically, which attracted attention from the American government. The attempt to ban Communism and overthrow Fidel Castro through the Bay of Pigs invasion was a major disaster due to poor planning as well as execution. It was a major lesson learnt by the United States to establish reforms and execute different security operations under top secret label.

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