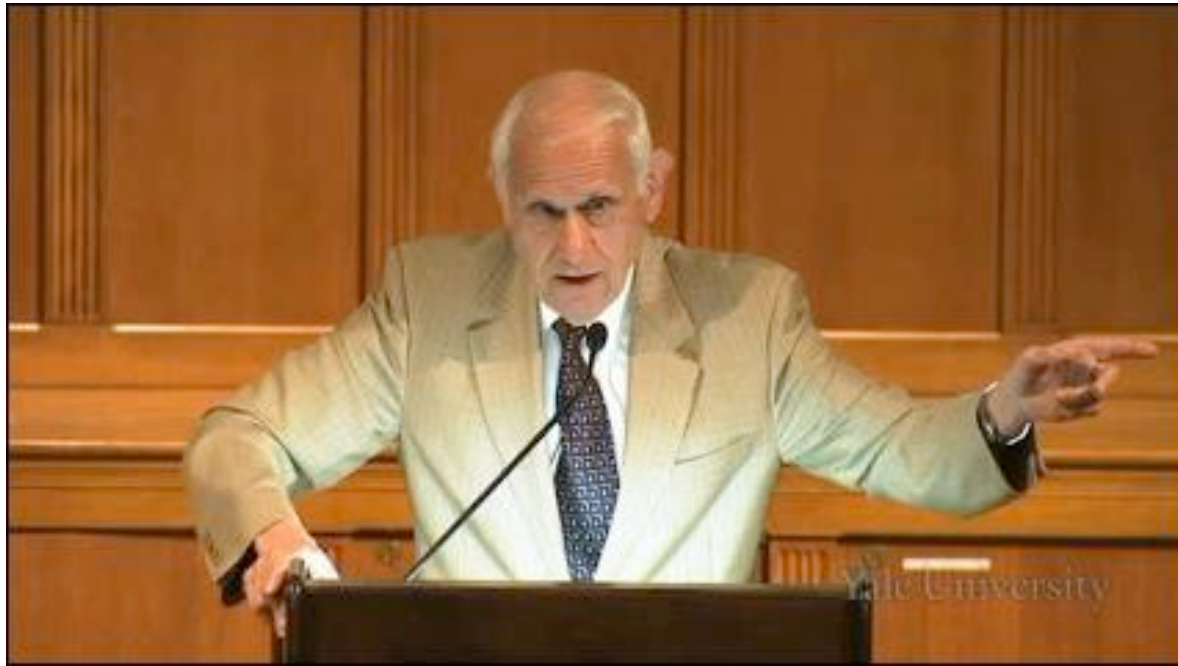




# **Origins of the Cuban Missile Crisis**

# Kagan's Thesis

“It is not enough for the state that wishes to maintain peace and the status quo to have superior power. The [Cuban Missile] Crisis came because the more powerful state also had a leader who failed to convince his opponent of his will to use its power for that purpose” (548).



# Background

- 1/1/1959 – Castro deposes **Fulgencio Batista**
  - Still speculation as to whether he was Communist (452)
- Feb. 1960 – USSR forges diplomatic ties w/ Castro
  - July – CUB seizes oil refineries b/c they refused to refine USSR crude
    - US responds by suspending sugar quota, which was 80% of Cuban exports to US → By October, CUB sells sugar to USSR & confiscates nearly \$1B USD invested in CUB →
- US implements trade embargo
- **KAGAN**: CUB traded one economic subordination for another (453)



# Response

- Ike invokes Monroe Doctrine → NK says it's dead
  - Ike threatens missile strikes if CUB is violated
  - By Sept. 1960, USSR arms arrive in CUB
  - **KAGAN**: NK takes opportunity to reject US hegemony in region; akin to putting nukes in HUN 1956 (454)



# Nikita, Why Cuba? (455-56)

- NK is adventuresome & wanted to see Communism spread around the world
- Opportunity prevented itself
- US had allies & bases close to USSR. Their turn.
- KAGAN: NK was a “true believer” & he was genuinely impressed w/ Castro (456)



“What can I say, I’m a pretty impressive guy” – Fidel



# Bay of Pigs Timeline

- March 1960 – Ike begins training exiles on CIA advice to overthrow Castro
- 1961 – JFK elected & has to live up to campaign rhetoric against Communism he may not have believed in (Arthur Schlesinger qtd. in Kagan 460)
  - Might break up his “**Alliance for Progress**” in LAm.
  - Afraid USSR might seize Berlin, lead to war, or break up NATO



- 4/14/1961 – Air strikes begin → so ineffective, US denies involvement
- 4/17 – **Bay of Pigs Invasion** → exiles pinned on beach
- 4/18 – NK responds by hinting at doing something big in Berlin
  - Ike chastises JFK: NK provoked by indecision, not action. He's bluffing and afraid (464)
- 4/19 – JFK gives a speech sounding like he wants to invade CUB someday → didn't want to sound like a “paper tiger” (465)
  - KAGAN: JFK is all profile, and no courage (466)



“What a terrible idea.”  
– JFK & Castro  
(w/ different inflection)



# Vienna Summit (June 1961)

- NK on coexistence: “Democracies had no right to intervene in Communist world, which communists had every right in intervene in democratic world” (Schlesinger 468)
- NK went “berserk” according to JFK
  - JFK concedes “balance in US/Sino-Soviet relations” (470);  
KAGAN: Not true.
- **Results:** cease-fire over Laos, no test ban treaty, Kennedy too inflexible on Berlin (Beschloss qtd. in Kagan 473)
  - JFK thinks NK a bully, NK thinks JFK weak (475-476)
  - Basically a draw (Sorensen 475)



“It’s going to be a cold winter” – JFK

