

Key factors behind the Cuban Missile Crisis

The Monroe Doctrine

The Monroe Doctrine from 1823 saw the US place itself as protector of South and Central America from outside interference, establishing their 'sphere of influence'.

Domino Theory

Domino theory thought that if one country became communist then it would also develop in neighbouring countries. If Cuba was communist, it might spread to Latin America affecting the US's interests.

Nuclear Positioning

Khrushchev's decision to place nuclear weapons on Cuba could be seen as an attempt to counteract NATO's Jupiter missiles in Turkey, as they were a similar distance from the USSR as Cuba was to the US.

Trade Embargo

As the USA moved away from trade with Cuba, Castro formed a stronger trading relationship with the USSR. When the US refused to trade for sugar, Cuba nationalised all US businesses.

Khrushchev's Domestic Position

Khrushchev was losing support having alienated hard-line Stalinists, and there was a lack of confidence in his ability to promote communism globally as relations between the USSR and China began to deteriorate.

Bay of Pigs Invasion

Cuban exiles backed and trained by the US invaded at the southern 'Bay of Pigs' but due to a lack of US air support and poor planning this failed. After this failure, they continued attempts to remove Castro, including covertly attacking Cuban industry and carrying out assassinations on members of Castro's government.

