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25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAY OF PIGS

The month of April should have been the occasion for a torrent of television, newspaper and magazine commemorations of the 25th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs. But somehow, the media didn't find this occasion newsworthy.

For a demonstration of how the media commemorate an anniversary when they want to teach us a lesson, just recall the weeks of editorials, analysis articles, and TV newscasts, specials, and docudramas dramatizing the last anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb.

The Bay of Pigs has very important lessons for all Americans. In April 1961, a brave band of 1,400 Cuban Freedom Fighters -- encouraged, financed and armed by the United States, and promised the sea and air support essential to their success -- landed on Cuban beaches at the Bay of Pigs.

Fidel Castro apparently had advance warning of the invasion and quickly closed in on the brave men. Without the promised American air and sea backup, nearly all the Freedom Fighters were killed or captured.

One person who did not forget the significance of this event was former-Ambassador now-Professor Jeane Kirkpatrick. She lectured during April on what the world would have been like if the Bay of Pigs had succeeded instead of failed.

Pre-Castro Cuba had the highest per capita income and one of the best constitutions in Latin America. Life in Castro's Cuba today is very different; it is marked by political repression, economic privation, and a denial of human rights.

Castro closed Catholic and private schools, co-opted the unions, expropriated private property, replaced the courts with block committees for surveillance and revolutionary tribunals, and abolished the free press. No wonder one out of nine Cubans fled their homeland.

The failure of the Bay of Pigs was not only a human rights and economic disaster for Cuba. It was and is a clear and present danger to U.S. security. The price we have paid in increased defense is truly so monumental that it dwarfs into insignificance any cost we

might have paid to have assured the success of those Cuban Freedom Fighters.

Within months after the Bay of Pigs debacle, Nikita Khrushchev started his plans to install offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba. That led to the nuclear face-off between the United States and the U.S.S.R. in October 1962, the closest our nation ever came to annihilation.

The militarization of Cuba and its exporting of revolution have been dramatic. Two-thirds of the Communist troops in the Third World are Cuban. They are stationed in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Algeria, the Congo, Ghana, Iraq, South Yemen, Mali, Syria, Libya, Nicaragua, and several other countries. Of course, Cubans WERE in Granada.

Five times as many Cuban troops are in Africa today as were in the entire pre-Castro Cuban army. If the Bay of Pigs invasion had succeeded, those Cuban men would today be working at civilian jobs in Cuba, living with their families.

Castro's Cuba trains and supports guerrillas and terrorists all over Latin America and the Third World. Some 20,000 students have graduated from Castro's training camps and provided the leadership for the Communist forces in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

The costs of failing to help the Cuban Freedom Fighters in 1961 have been tremendous. They range all the way from the cost of facing down the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, to the bloodshed all over Latin America during the last decade, to the costs of protecting our shipping coming through the Caribbean sea lanes and of protecting our space and military communications systems from being monitored by KGB agents stationed in Cuba.

Will we learn the lesson of the Bay of Pigs? Or, will we be like those who, failing to learn the lessons of history, are doomed to repeat its mistakes?

Mrs. Kirkpatrick has been warning in her speeches that "power is cumulative." In dollars and cents, we simply cannot afford a second Communist regime in the Western Hemisphere.

The fate of the Freedom Fighters in Nicaragua, known as the Contras, is now hanging in the balance. They are risking their lives, fortunes, families, and sacred honor for the cause of freedom against Communist control of their native country.

The Contras cannot win without U.S. aid. If we turn a deaf ear to their call, and thereby allow a second Communist regime in Central America to consolidate its armed power, every man, woman and child in the United States will pay a horrendous price.