

plete" Soviet support in "maintaining Cuban independence against unprovoked aggression".

It was not until the next year, however, that the Soviets bit the bullet and agreed to buy 2.7 million tons of Cuban sugar. It is significant that this decision followed a pledge by China to buy one million tons. It should be seen therefore, at least in part, as a product of Sino-Soviet competition for influence over revolutionary forces in the Third World, a competition which was being waged by the Soviet regime largely to defend its legitimacy both internally and within the broader "anti-imperialism movement".

The momentum of events brought a formal rupture of Cuban-US relations in January 1961 and the Bay of Pigs invasion in April of the same year. The Soviets reacted, somewhat belatedly, to the invasion by threatening to provide Castro with all necessary assistance to repel the aggression, but the incursion was easily repulsed by the Cubans themselves. This was partly as a result of prior Soviet arms transfers, and partly because of President Kennedy's unwillingness to back the invasion force once it got into trouble.

Kennedy's indecisiveness over the Bay of Pigs affair, his poor performance at the Vienna Summit in June 1961, and the US acceptance of the construction of the Berlin Wall in August created the impression in the eyes of the Soviet leadership that the United States was unwilling to assume significant risks in defence of its interests in the Third World and elsewhere. In the terms used above in section II, the basic strategic constraint on Soviet activism in the Third World had weakened. Moreover, the incentives to adventurism were strong at the time, given Khrushchev's now considerable domestic difficulties and the mounting Chinese assault on Soviet revolutionary credentials. Finally, Khrushchev had badly misjudged the impact of his boasting about Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities. The US response at the turn of the decade was to mount the Minuteman and Polaris programmes, with the result that by 1962 the Soviets found themselves falling seriously behind in the strategic nuclear competition with the United States. Although the Soviets had postponed substantial investment in strategic capabilities, they had pushed forward with the development and production of medium- and intermediate-range missiles. One way to redress the growing imbalance at the intercontinental level was to find a missile deployment area from which these shorter-range systems could attain targets in the United States. Thus, strategic considerations reinforced those stemming from domestic