

The background of the slide features a large American flag on the left side, waving. On the right side, there is a view of the United States Capitol dome, partially obscured by the flag's stripes. The overall color palette is dominated by the red, white, and blue of the flag, with a blue gradient at the bottom.

Leadership Skills for Engaging Differences Constructively: Lessons from the Cuban Missile Crisis

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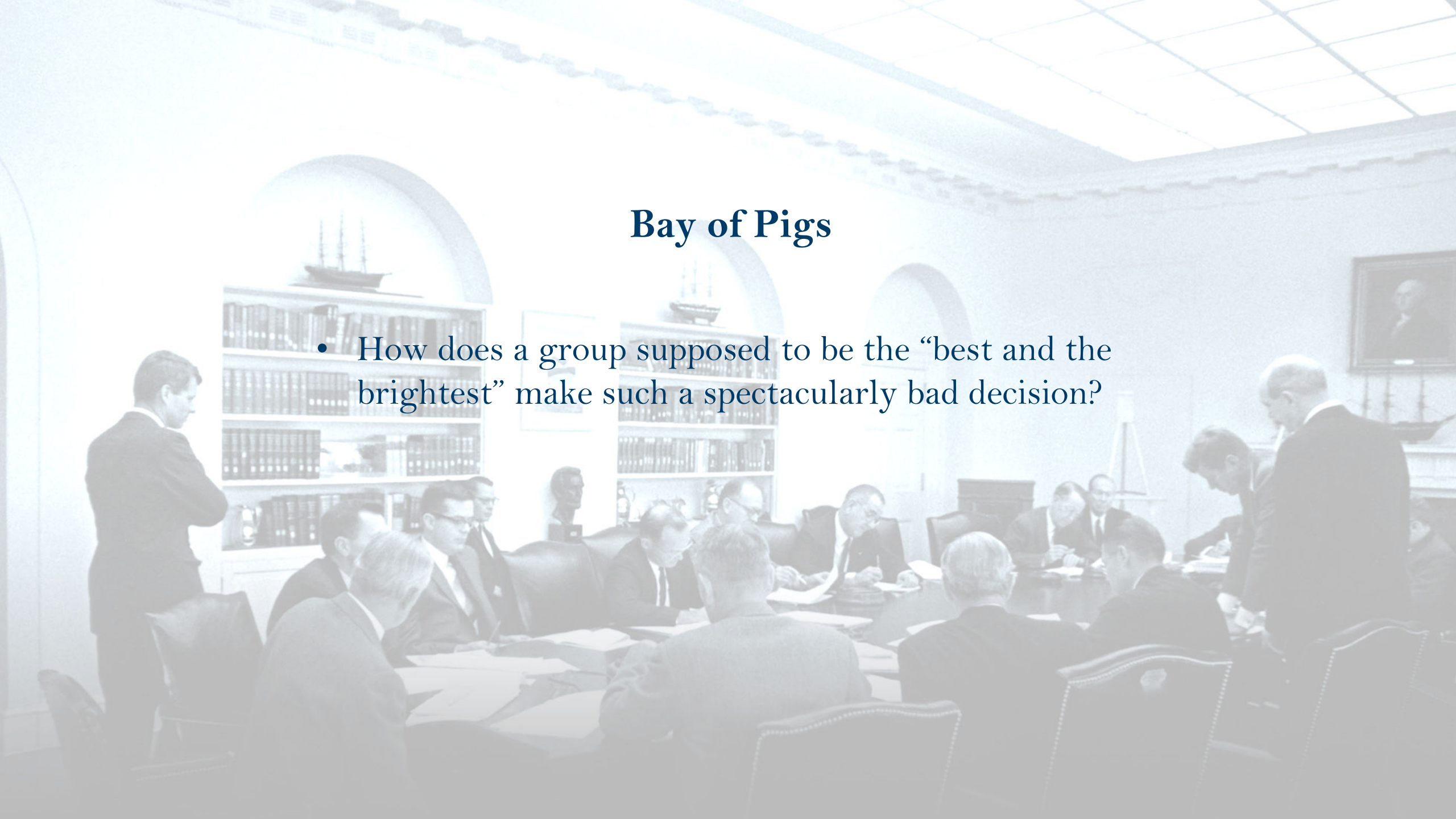


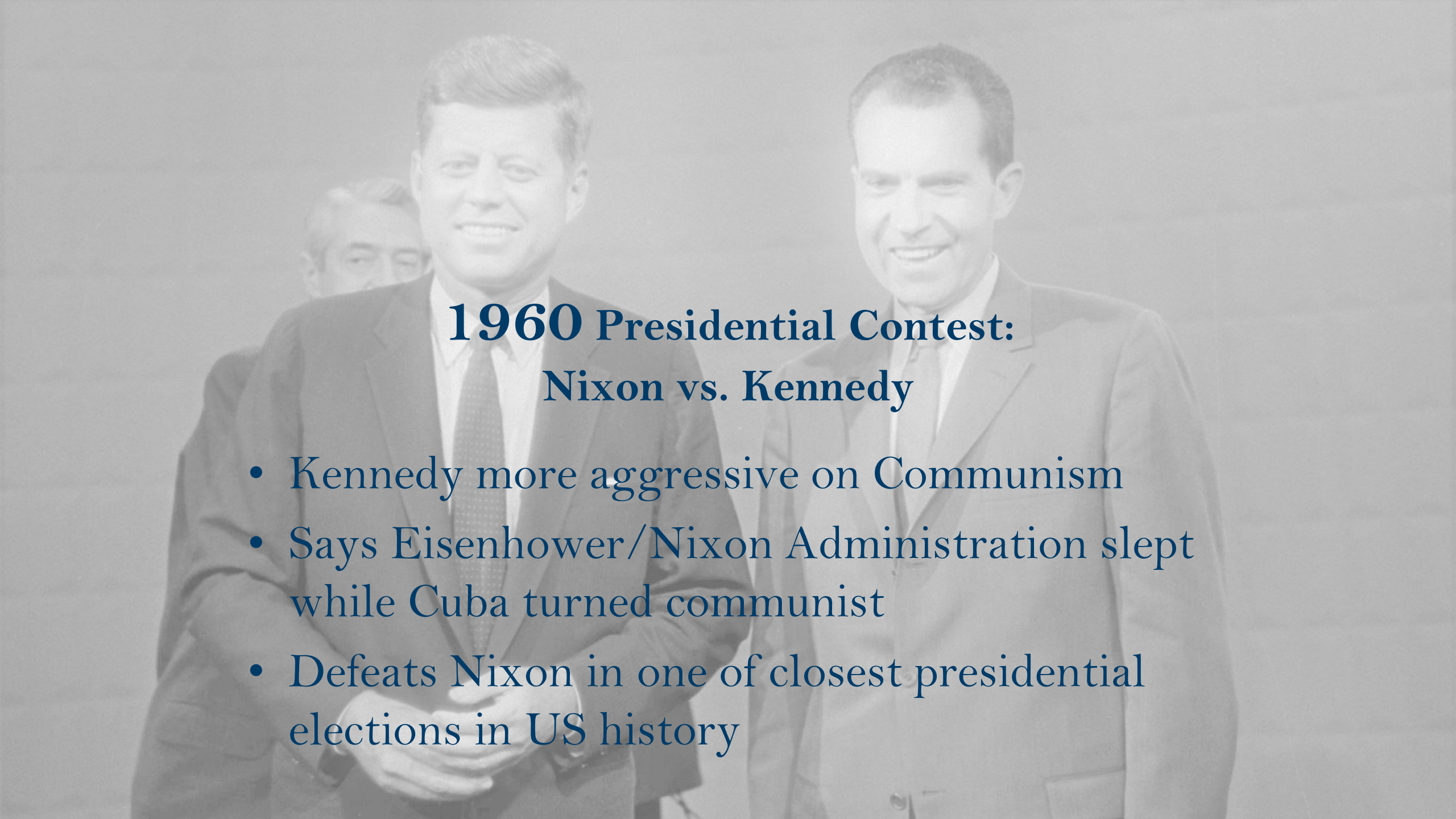
The Kennedy Administration & Cuba: Lessons in Commonsense Leadership

- How *not* to lead: The Bay of Pigs disaster
- How *to*: The Cuban Missile Crisis triumph

Bay of Pigs

- How does a group supposed to be the “best and the brightest” make such a spectacularly bad decision?





1960 Presidential Contest: Nixon vs. Kennedy

- Kennedy more aggressive on Communism
- Says Eisenhower/Nixon Administration slept while Cuba turned communist
- Defeats Nixon in one of closest presidential elections in US history

Bay of Pigs Plan

- Before the campaign, Eisenhower Administration developed a plan to get Castro out
- Support an incursion by 1,400 Cuban dissidents
- They'll inspire Cubans to overthrow Castro
- Eisenhower shares the plan with Kennedy immediately after election

Majority in Kennedy Administration Oppose

For

CIA
Dir Dulles
Dep Dir Bissell

Justice
Atty Gen RFK

Against

JCS
Brig Gen Gray

WH
Spec Asst
Schlessinger

State
Under Sec
Bowles

Sen For Rel
Chair Fulbright



Kennedy Decides to Execute

- Those opposed didn't fully share their honest views
- Six critical assumptions go unchallenged
 - Overwhelming evidence that each was not true
- JFK green lights thinking a majority support

Colossal Failure





Colossal Failure

- With 200,000 troops and substantial air support at his disposal, Castro totally victorious after just three days
- Kills 114 insurgent troops, captures the other 1,300

LIFE

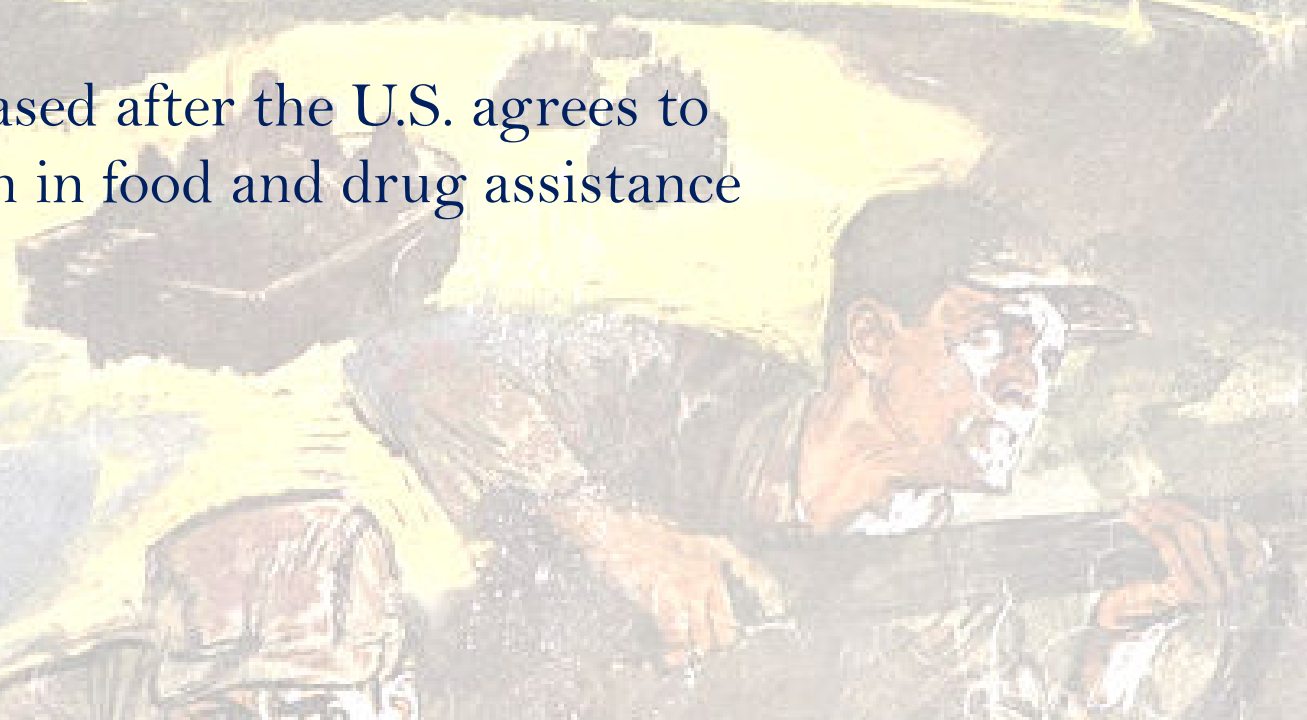
RAW UNTOLD TRUTH
BY MEN WHO FOUGHT

Bay of Pigs

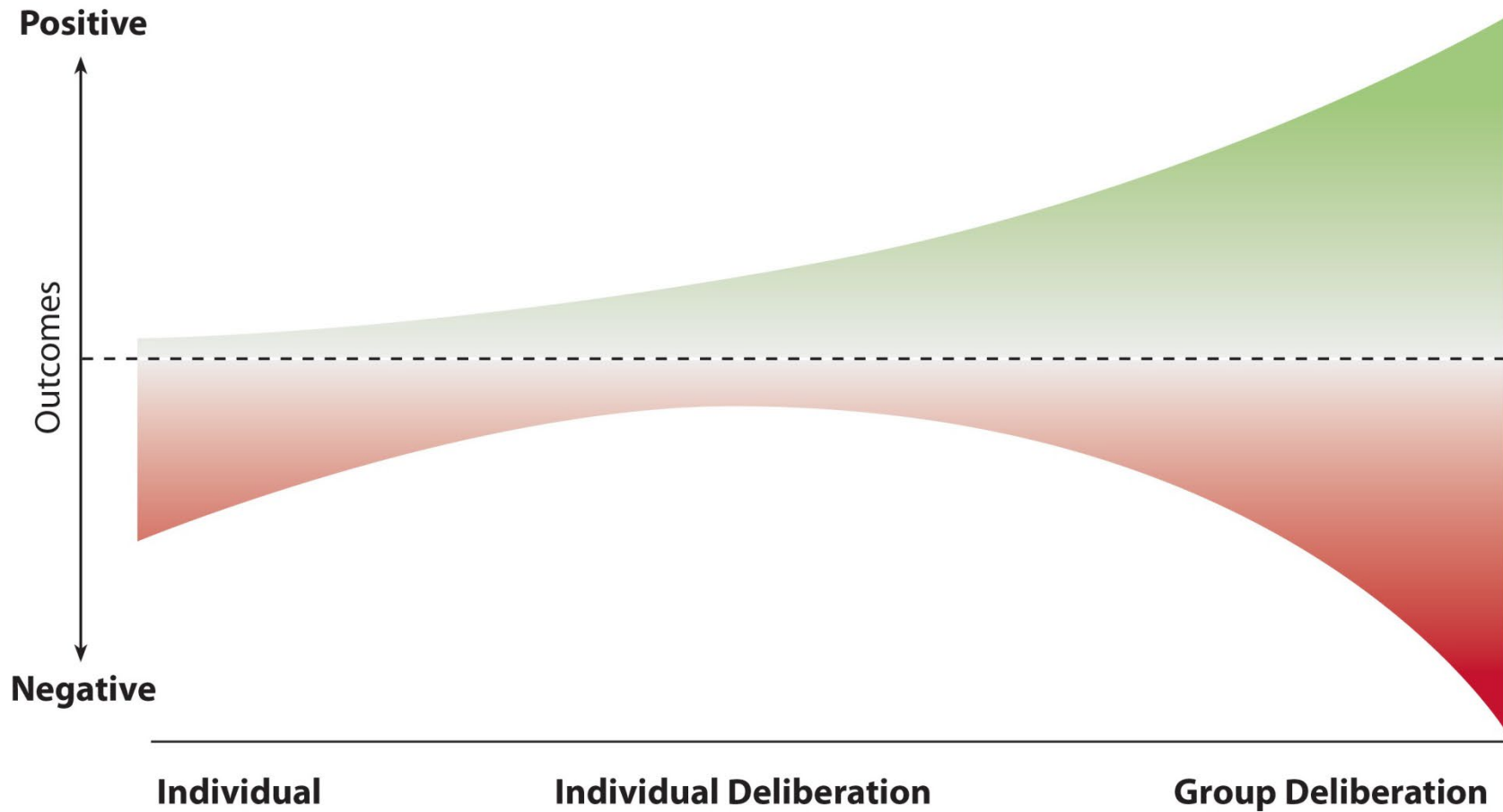
Colossal Failure

- The 1,300 are released after the U.S. agrees to provide \$53 million in food and drug assistance

**Heartbreaking Price
They Paid for
U.S. Miscalculations**



Implications of Individual vs. Group Decisions





Commonsense Sweet Spot

Consider contrasting
perspectives:

- Honestly
- Seriously
- Respectfully



Sweet Spot Eludes Us Because of Twin Challenges

Stampede
into a False
Consensus

Differences
Escalate into
Interpersonal
Contention

The Stampede Effect

Collective judgment usually more extreme than average judgment of the individuals involved

- Go along to get along
- Don't challenge assumptions
- Insufficiently data-driven
- Narrow the solution set prematurely
- More likely the stronger the relationship and cohesion among the individuals

Causes of Interpersonal Contention

- Biases lead us to

You have a
different view



...because you're
dumb or immoral

Leadership Skills for Finding the Sweet Spot: Civil Discourse Best Practices

- **Avoid Stampedes**
 - Invite & encourage contrasting perspectives
 - Create a culture in which expressing a dissenting view is seen as a friendly act
 - Make sure all relevant voices are heard
 - Check assumptions
 - Ask assumption-probing questions
 - Be data-driven
- **Avoid Interpersonal Contention**
 - Listen for understanding—try to find the merit in an opposing view
 - Ask follow up questions about contrasting positions and perspectives
 - The why questions: What interests does your position serve?
 - Make it obvious that you understand their perspective whether or not you agree with it



Cuban Missile Crisis

- Oct. 16, 1962: U2 photos of Soviets installing nuclear missiles