

Foreword

This is the third volume of the Official History of the Bay of Pigs Operation and it focuses on the problems of establishing a policy for the United States Government as Fidel Castro and his cohorts came to power in Cuba.* The policy decided on by the US Government in March 1960 called for the displacement of Fidel Castro, and it was by no means a unilateral decision promoted by the Central Intelligence Agency -- although it is demonstrable that the Agency was far more perceptive than the policy making bodies in recognizing the threat to the Western Hemisphere posed by Castro's communist affiliation. Because the policy makers feared censure by the United Nations and/or the Organization of American States, the myth of "plausible deniability" was the caveat that determined the CIA would be the principal implementing arm for the anti-Castro effort. From inception to termination,

* The preceding volumes were:

- I - Air Operations
- II - Participation in the Conduct of Foreign Policy.

"deniability" would be the albatross around the necks of Agency planners; and from D-Day minus 2, (i.e., 15 April 1961) it became the strangling cord insuring the failure of the effort at the Bay of Pigs.

This volume describes the Agency's organization designed to accomplish the assigned task; and it records the interaction between the Agency and other government components (State and the military in particular), between the Agency and the White House, and among various CIA components as the program evolved. The relationships were sometimes less than harmonious. Particular attention is focused on the roles played by both President Eisenhower who authorized the anti-Castro program and Vice President Nixon who has been charged time and again -- unjustifiably as the record reveals -- with being the mastermind behind the operation.

Emphasis also is focused on the drastic change in the concept of the operation between the spring and fall of 1960. From April's plans for the infiltration into Cuba of small teams of Agency trained specialists in communications, sabotage, and paramilitary operations to provide training and guidance

to anti-Castro dissidents, November's plans called for an amphibious landing with armor and combat air support to establish a lodgement on Cuba soil from which a provisional government (approved ^{by State} and ^{controlled} sponsored by CIA) could issue its clarion calls for US, UN, or OAS intervention.

Encompassed in this volume are the records of the policy level meetings which considered such items as funding the operation, possible use of US personnel in combat roles, the use of US bases for training or for operations, types of direct action programs (e.g., propaganda drops vs sabotage), and the host of other problems related to Castro's overthrow. It also makes clear that various US corporate interests played an active (sometimes overactive) role in support of the anti-Castro efforts of the Government.

This volume also examines official records in light of the allegations of the Senate Select Committee's investigations that the assassination plans being developed by the Mafia were a fundamental part of the official US Government program to overthrow Fidel Castro. There is no basis in fact for this change.

Finally, the reader of this volume should gain some insights to the character of various of the principal actors -- Agency and non-Agency -- who were involved most closely with the Government's anti-Castro policy during the period from its inception through the close of the Eisenhower administration. Not all of these impressions are flattering; but the author, who was in no way associated with the operation or the Directorate of Plans (now Operations), hopes that the presentation of the evidence has been as free from bias as possible.

Again the author wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the other two members of the CIA History Staff, Mrs. Eulalie Hammond and Mrs. Sharon Bond, to the completion of this volume. Without their unfailing willingness to perform either the substantive research or the grimly mechanical tasks required in preparing a volume such as this, the task could have been interminable.

For any errors of fact or questionable interpretations, the author alone is responsible.

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