

here, too, the seeds were planted by Tracy Barnes for an attitudinal survey of "Cuban society" which could have (and should have) caused CIA planners to re-think the whole anti-Castro effort.\* 19/

A very similar briefing, with somewhat more emphasis on possible paramilitary action, was given to a high level group from DOD on 12 February 1960; and the agenda for the 17 February 1960 meeting of the Special Group, again emphasized that the Castro Government was dependent on sugar revenues for both continuation of popular domestic and hemispheric subversion programs.\*\* 20/ It was further suggested to the Special Group that dissidents within Cuba might also be stimulated to sabotage, with the ultimate result leading to Castro's ouster. 21/ The recommendation that the DCI made to the Special Group was as follows:

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\* This refers to the Lloyd Free Report, which is discussed subsequently in this Volume, see pp. 222-226.

\*\* The DOD representatives who were briefed were the Deputy Secretary, Mr. Douglas; Mr. John Irwin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; General Erskine; and General Lansdale.

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That CIA be authorized to initiate operational planning, including covert spotting and assessment of potential agents, for eventual sabotage of both Cuban and American-owned sugar mills. Should this course of action prove feasible and desirable, the operation would be designed to deny Castro as much as possible of the revenues anticipated from the 1960 sugar crop. 22/

Interestingly enough, although the briefing for DOD had placed considerable emphasis on paramilitary planning, apparently no mention of the subject was made to the Special Group.

On 17 February 1960 when Allen Dulles presented the sugar sabotage plan to the Special Group, he emphasized that he was not asking for permission to engage in action, only that he was looking for a Special Group approval. Mr. Irwin (Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs) noted that he and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Douglas were all for the plan; and the Group agreed to present the plan to the Secretary of State and to Gordon Gray so that the latter could get the President's reaction.

President Eisenhower was less than enthusiastic about the sugar sabotage plan, reportedly doubting that the loss of sugar revenues would impact on

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Castro's ability to continue to finance subversive activities in other Latin America areas. President Eisenhower also objected to the focus on economic sabotage, and he would not agree to the plan to identify assets specifically for sabotage operations against the sugar industry. Eisenhower was willing to support a program to identify assets for the sugar industry " and other things as well ... including even possibly things that might be drastic." In addition to identifying assets on a broad basis, the President also requested that a comprehensive covert action program be prepared by Mr. Dulles. This, it was suggested, should go to the Special Group; and if they approved the plans, then the President wanted to discuss them. In any event, action on the PM program would be delayed until Eisenhower returned from his upcoming Latin American visit and gave his specific approval.\* 23/

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\* The Minutes of the Special Group Meeting of 17 February 1960 also noted that

Mr. Joseph Scott of State also reported later that Mr. Herter had made exactly the same point.

This appears to have been one of the few instances where Department of State representatives indicated support for possible direct action programs rather than political solutions to the Cuban problem.

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Despite the rather positive doubts that the President had about the sugar sabotage activity, J. C. King charged ahead almost immediately following the Special Group Meeting of 17 February 1960. On 18 February, King and Milo Perkins had a detailed discussion concerning the disruptive effects which might result from interference with the Cuban sugar operation. Perkins was planning meetings with Ambassador Hill and Thomas ("Tommy the Cork") Corcoran, and King brought to Perkins's attention that Corcoran had been willing and able to provide valuable assistance to the Agency in the past. Later in the month, Col. King met with Thomas Mann, the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs (subsequently Assistant Secretary for American Republic Affairs) who reportedly was in favor of both reduced sugar quotas and direct sabotage of Cuban sugar mills. According to King, Secretary Mann also would support both cut backs in US oil companies deliveries to Cuba and actions which might cut back on US tourist trade with the island. 24/

Col. King also consulted with former Ambassador William Pawley, whom he asked to make arrangements for the publication of *Diario de la Marina* in Miami,

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and also "to raise at least a portion of the money, which would be needed for this operation." In addition to Pawley, King also contacted Henry Holland in New York City, suggesting that Holland raise money, through Cuban exile Justo Carrillo, to help pay for the propaganda efforts of New York radio station WRUL. King agreed that Holland could tell prospective donors that the "money was going to be used on behalf of non-Batista groups who were going to make a serious effort to remove Fidel Castro." 25/

In addition to J. C. King's high level contacts, Jake Esterline and Mr. Dulles had a meeting with Abbott Washburn, Deputy Director of the US Information Agency who had requested a briefing on the current state of activities in Cuba -- Washburn was concerned lest there be a conflict of interests between USIA and the CIA's ongoing effort in the area. Washburn presented the Agency with a copy of some proposals which the State Department had approved for implementation by USIA in Cuba. USIA's pitch would be that the long-standing friendship between Cuba and the United States was being endangered by the infiltration of Communists and Communist ideology

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into Cuba -- at the same time not denying that the US was sympathetic to the need for a change in Cuba. The Director and Mr. Esterline agreed that it would be advisable for Mr. Washburn, who was planning to visit Cuba, to meet [ 3 ], COS Havana, and outline the USIA program for [ 3 ] benefit.\* 26/

As the propaganda activities were being pushed forward, as plans were being made for training Cuban exiles, and as the possibilities of sabotage, PM action, and other measures against Castro were being contemplated, a cautionary memorandum apparently was drafted by one of the individuals most closely concerned with the potential anti-Castro operations.

The memorandum, undated and unsigned, reviewed the anti-Arbenz operation in Guatemala in light of what was being planned for Project JMATE. It noted some of the similarities or differences with respect to the removal of Jacobo Arbenz in contrast to the possibilities of removing Fidel Castro; and in light of the ultimate tragedy at the Bay of Pigs, some of the

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\* One result of the meeting with Washburn was a decision to turn over a planned USIA anti-Castro cartoon effort to CIA.

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key points made in this memorandum are worth repeating -- even though it is not known who read the piece. Among other things, for example, the author of the memorandum stressed "the unique coincidence of favorable factors" with reference to Guatemala and suggested that it was unlikely that any of these would operate with reference to Project JMATE.

It was noted that the Guatemalan leadership was "unusually inept"; that "Communist support for Arbenz came from the local Communist Party, which was immature, badly led, and generally weak"; and, that "we had unbelievable luck." 27/ The memorandum also noted that there were a number of circumstances which would not recur during the course of the anti-Castro activity. Specifically pointing out that where Arbenz was a weak leader, Castro was obviously a strong leader; that Castillo Armas was a Guatemalan leader of high character and standing, but no one of similar stature had surfaced in Cuba to oppose Castro; and that in Guatemala Arbenz had made no changes in the armed forces of Guatemala, and when the crisis came, he could not depend on his army. Castro, on the other hand had eliminated the Batista influence, and filled

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the key military positions with his own followers and "introduced a system of intense ideological indoctrination." Furthermore, the unknown author pointed out that while Moscow's interest in Guatemala was comparatively mild -- the Soviet Ambassador to Mexico City was the nearest Soviet official available to the Arbenz Government -- in Cuba, the heavy economic and propaganda support from both Moscow and Peiping were a matter of record. 28/

The memorandum closed by pointing to three areas where the writer claimed that tactical -- not strategic -- errors were being made. It stated that the blunt propaganda attacks on Castro were forging all anti-US elements in Cuba into a united front and US efforts should be attempting to drive a wedge between Castro, as a victim of international Communism, and the Communists both Cuban and foreign. Secondly, it was pointed out that the propaganda broadcast out of US commercial radio stations, even if the time were legitimately being purchased by Cuban exile groups, would be a "kiss of death" for anyone who tried to deny US intervention in Cuban affairs. In part related to the propaganda activities, the planned use

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of US business groups as a cover for the Agency's support of the Cuban opposition, particularly the use of US business as a funding mechanism, was also hazardous in the eyes of the author of the memorandum under study. If the author was correct in assuming that this cover would not withstand careful scrutiny, it would mean that the anti-American contingents would have additional ammunition to use against the US.

The memorandum suggested that many of these risks could be eliminated if propaganda activities were moved to Third countries and if fund raising activities were run out of Latin America or Western Europe. 29/

Based on the language, the familiarity with the Guatemala activity and the nature of the critique, it is probable that Tracy Barnes wrote the memorandum in question. The memorandum may have been prompted in part by the increasing attention which the OCB and the Cabinet had been giving to fire bomb attacks on the Cuban cane fields by light aircraft flying out of the United States. The Agency fully supported General Quesada's effort to put an end to such flights.\* 30/

\* Quesada was Director of the Federal Aviation Agency.

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From 2 March 1960, when the Director briefed Vice President Nixon on Agency activities in Cuba and the state of Cuban affairs, until 17 March 1960, when President Eisenhower formally approved the covert anti-Castro plan, CIA personnel most closely involved in the anti-Castro effort were fully immersed in the efforts to define -- and refine -- a US policy which would be acceptable to President Eisenhower. In the course of this two week period, they were engaged in efforts to satisfy the 5412 Group, the National Security Council, and themselves that they had developed a viable program which would lead to the downfall and ouster of Fidel Castro and his principal cohorts, Che Guevara and Raul Castro, and the elimination of Communism from the island of Cuba and, in effect, from the Western Hemisphere.

During this period of evolution of national policy, WH/4 held its first official meeting as a branch on 9 March 1960. J. C. King and Jake Esterline were in charge of the meeting and outlined the general nature of the programs that were going to be put into operation (propaganda activity, PM training, commo training) and they emphasized the need for cooperation

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and support from all of the offices that were represented at the meeting, including, among others, the Office of Training, the Office of Communications, the Comptroller's Office, the DDS, DPD, the PP Staff, Personnel (particularly the Military Personnel Division), and the Office of Security. At this initial meeting, Jake Esterline mentioned that Bob Reynolds, Deputy Chief, WH/4, Dave Phillips, Propaganda Officer, Phil Toomey, Political and Psychological Strategist, [ 3 ], the Economist, and Ed Stanulus, his Plans and Ops Officer, would be the principals who would be in contact with other Agency elements which would be called on for support. In addition, Esterline also noted that liaison channels would be established with other elements of the US Government, particularly with the Office of Special Operations of the Department of Defense. 31/

It was during the period between 8-17 March 1960 that the previously mentioned covert anti-Castro program which Allen Dulles had agreed (on 17 February 1960) to provide to the Special Group evolved. Among those in the Agency having a direct hand in preparing a suitable paper for the Director's presentation, were

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C. Tracy Barnes, Richard Bissell, Dick Helms, Jake Esterline, J. C. King, and Tom Parrott, among others. Those who figured most prominently among the Special Group representatives at this time were Livingston Merchant, Department of State; John Irwin, Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Department of Defense; Admiral Burke, Chief, Naval Operations; and Gordon Gray, the President's National Security Adviser. Other than the more than a dozen memorandums and drafts and other papers related to the development of the policy paper, perhaps a note from Richard Helms to C. Tracy Barnes on 8 March 1960 best illustrates the seriousness with which the Agency approached the task of writing a paper for the Director. Mr. Helms's note to Mr. Barnes read as follows:

Tom Parrott gave me for security late this afternoon the attached paper for the 5412 Group outlining the proposed covert action program against Fidel Castro. After reading it, I asked Tom to defer consideration of Cuba until next week since I feel that this document needs re-drafting whether it is used by the Director for an oral briefing or handed to the designated representatives for their enlightenment.

I think you will agree with me that the paper is poorly drafted and needs considerable pointing up in various

places. I do not disagree with the listed recommendations in paragraph 6, but I do feel that the backup material in paragraphs 2 and 3 needs recasting. For example, the reference to a "short-wave radio station patterned after Radio Free Europe", is no way, in my opinion, to describe what we have in mind. Also the paragraph on covert economic action is not sufficiently precise and raises more questions than it answers. There are other points, but there is no sense in belaboring them in this note to you.

May I ask that you take this matter in hand and advise WH how to put it in suitable shape for use by the Director with the 5412 Group next week. 32/

In the paper to which Mr. Helms referred the problem facing the US was stated rather simply as follows:

To replace the present Government of Cuba, headed by Fidel Castro, with one that will be acceptable to the United States; and to cause this change to occur in such a manner that anti-US repercussions are not induced in Latin America. 33/

Throughout the discussion of the Agency's role in the anti-Castro activity, there was a tremendous concern that there be no "anti-US repercussions," not only in Latin America per se, but particularly among the Latin American representatives in the Organization of American States and in the United Nations. The constant quest for plausible deniability would

become the holiest of grails -- constantly, and unsuccessfully, to be sought throughout the course of the operation by Agency planners.

The proposed paper for the Special Group (the paper which Mr. Helms found somewhat lacking) emphasized those areas highlighted in previous Special Group sessions -- anti-Castro propaganda, disruptions of the Cuban economy, including large scale sabotage operations, and the development of instructor cadres to provide both communications and PM training cadres to resistance groups already extant in Cuba.

Interesting, too, is the fact that at this early stage of US planning mention was made of the offer from the Guatemalan Government of a training site for the PM cadres, or "action groups" as they were called. A financial annex included in the proposals for the Special Group indicated the need for \$900,000 for the remainder of FY 1960 and \$1.6 million for FY 1961.\* 34/

\* Apparently Mr. Helms failed to read the financial annex carefully enough, for the estimated requirement for fiscal 1961 which is shown as \$1.6 million, was either a typographical error, or a mistake in addition -- the sum of the parts shown for FY '61 is \$1.7 million. It also was noted that for the remainder of FY '60, the Agency reserve funds would have to be drawn on to meet these "non-program requirements."

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As the paper was being prepared for Special Group consideration, J. C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division had forwarded a memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence, providing him with additional information for use during the Special Group discussions; and the transmittal to the DCI recorded that this paper had been used to brief Mr. Nixon on 2 March 1960. King's memorandum covered much the same ground as the paper which went to the Special Group, but contained considerably more detail about the activities of the Castro Government which were directly aimed at overthrowing the legitimate governments and replacing them with Communist oriented governments. Col. King's paper also revealed that both Guatemala and Nicaragua -- the only two governments in Latin America which were to throw their full support behind the Agency's anti-Castro activity -- had made offers at this time for both radio time for anti-Castro broadcasts and, also, for training facilities for anti-Castro groups which the Agency might wish to sponsor. 35/

Despite President Eisenhower's previous objections to the over-emphasis on plans to sabotage Cuba's

sugar industry, King's paper did reflect considerable emphasis on disruption of that economic sector.

Another item which Col. King saw fit to include in his memorandum was the following:

We have available, a drug, which, if placed in Castro's food, would make him behave in such an irrational manner that a public appearance could have very damaging results to him.\* 36/

Even as the Special Group was planning its sessions on the anti-Castro program, so, too, was the National Security Council being geared up for discussions of the same situation. Again, there was great concern over the question of possible loss of prestige should the US act independently of the international organizations. There also was interest in protecting US business and in the protection of US lives, and the question of viability of the Guantanamo Base was of considerable concern to the President's National Security adviser, Gordon Gray. The policy that Gray was advised to recommend to the National Security Council regarding US bases stated:

Take action as necessary, including military action, to insure the continued

\* For comments on this subject see Part VII of this volume.