

availability to the United States of bases and base rights in Latin America that are considered vital to the security of the United States. 37/

An additional aspect of the basic national security policy for Latin America which Gordon Gray was being encouraged to promote with the National Security Council on 10 March 1960 recommended that:

In the event of an imminent or actual Communist seizure of control from within, take all feasible measure[s] to thwart it, including military action if finally required and appropriate to cope with the situation.* 38/

Following Gordon Gray's briefing of the National Security Council on 10 March 1960, President Eisenhower approved the following rather innocuous actions:

1. Every effort should be made to influence the other members of the Organization of American States to recognize the dangers involved in the Cuban situation and support action with respect to them.

* Mr. Gray also was advised to play both sides of the street for with reference to the disruptive efforts of non-Communist groups, the position he was being urged to promote was the following:

The United States should be prepared, if required to protect US interests, to take similar actions against subversion or armed rebellion by non-Communist elements hostile to US interests.

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2. The responsible Departments and Agencies should keep current plans to deal promptly with likely contingencies which might develop with respect to Cuba, especially those involving the safety of US citizens in the Guantanamo Base.

3. The developments with regard to the situation in Cuba should be reviewed by the Council each meeting, for the immediate future. 39/

Subsequent to the NSC meeting of 10 March 1960,

Gordon Gray informed the President that the Special Group had set aside a 2-hour session on 14 March "to discuss the whole range of assets and possibilities in Cuba." 40/ Prior to the 14 March meeting, Messrs.

Bissell and King received a somewhat strange memorandum from Allen W. Dulles offering "some suggestions as to possible added 'starters' for our Cuban paper; use your own judgment as to adding them." 41/ Among these starters was Dulles's suggestion that the International Transport Union somehow be induced to refuse to load "dangerous" munitions intended for Cuba and then Dulles made the following rather unusual suggestion:*

* In addition to the International Transport Union, Dulles also suggested that an attempt be made to induce Cuban laborers to resist unloading explosives that were sent to Cuba, but as he himself pointed out, Castro probably would use the Cuban Army should the dockworkers refuse to do the unloading.

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Stress point that while the dynamism is running out of the Marxist-Leninist revolution in Russia, it still remains in China. This explains ChiCom special interest in supporting the Cuban revolution and expanding it, with the ultimate aim of facilitating mass emigration of Chinese to the Latin American continent to meet their over-population problem. (This may be premature, but there may be something to it.) 42/

As promised by Gordon Gray, the Special Group Meeting of 14 March 1960 focused exclusively on the Cuban problem, and Mr. Dulles presented the members with the paper entitled "General Covert Action Plan for Cuba." Much of the ground was already familiar to the participants, but the memorandum of the meeting reflects a number of items worth review. Even though Dulles's paper placed heavy emphasis on the propaganda needs, even greater emphasis was urged for covert and overt propaganda activities, not only through WRUL, the commercial broadcasting operation, but also through the efforts of USIA's programs for Latin America -- programs which apparently had been sharply curtailed in the recent past. The question of location for the Agency's covert broadcasting activity was again raised and discussed, the question being whether it should be somewhere in the Florida

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keys, in some Caribbean country, or elsewhere.

Somewhat more attention was focused on the paramilitary plans during this discussion than had occurred before, and Mr. Gray was particularly concerned by the Agency estimate that: "it appears no large scale paramilitary effort (other than wholly overt) will be feasible in less than 8 months"; and he wondered if a crash program was feasible to speed up the training program. 43/ The questions of economic sanctions, OAS and individual Latin American country involvement, the choice of the proper Cuban exiles to represent the government in exile, and the question of a budget -- the \$900,000 for fiscal 1960 and the \$1.6-1.7 million for 1961 were also the subjects of discussion.

One additional subject of discussion at this Special Group meeting as recorded by Col. J. C. King was:

What would be the effect on the Cuban scene if Fidel and Raul Castro and Che Guevara[etc] should disappear simultaneously. 44/

In the reported context of the discussion it is not believed that the term "disappear" was a euphemism for assassination, but rather referred to the ouster of

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Castro's government from political power. The paragraph which had raised the question then continued:

Admiral Burke said that the only organized group within Cuba today were[sc] the Communists, and there was therefore the danger that they might move into control. Mr. Dulles felt that this might not be disadvantageous because it would facilitate a multilateral action by OAS. Colonel King said that there were few leaders capable of taking over so far identified. One possibility was Nunez Jimenez, the head of the Agricutural Reform Program. No other names were widely enough known to be mentioned.*

Other discussion, notwithstanding, the focus of Mr. Dulles's recommendations on 14 March 1960 was that the Central Intelligence Agency should be authorized to take a number of steps which were specifically related to the development of the guerrilla capacity of the anti-Castro groups, both within and without Cuba. The Agency should be responsible for broadening its contacts with such groups and attempting to unify

* This comment and one made five days earlier (9 March 1960) by J. C. King that "unless Fidel and Raul Castro and Che Guevara could be eliminated in one package -- which is highly unlikely -- this operation can be a long drawn-out affair and the present government will only be overthrown by the use of force" were discussed (BP. 93, 114-116) in SSC report on *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, and it is apparent from the recollections of the participants in the meetings that assassination was not the issue in these two instances.

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them to direct their efforts against Castro. The DCI proposed that CIA should take the lead in assisting these groups to develop friendships among various of the Latin American Governments which were skeptical of Castro and that the Agency should be responsible for identifying and training -- in facilities in the United States or elsewhere -- those who would be the leaders of the Cuban guerrilla warfare groups. At the conclusion of the 14 March meeting, it was agreed that the Agency would revise the paper on the basis of the discussions and plan to present it to President Eisenhower later in the week. 45/

As part of the effort to improve the paper on the proposed anti-Castro operations, the Agency prepared additional backup material which could be cranked into the version which would eventually go to the President. On 14 and 15 March, the records reveal copies of two drafts of such a paper, one of which was labeled as "revised version, done by [C. Tracy] Barnes, evening 14 Mar," which went into more detail on both the political opposition to Castro and on the propaganda activities that were being mounted against Castro. These papers also noted that paramilitary

activity would "take the longest to become a usable asset." 46/ The most important difference between these papers and the covert action plan presented by Dulles was that the Financial Annex showed a sharp, upward increase in the anticipated costs for FY '61 -- from \$1.6-1.7 million to \$3.5 million -- with the heaviest increment coming in terms of the proposed paramilitary operation. The sum for PM operations was revised from an estimated \$500,000 in Dulles's 14 March presentation to a total of \$1.3 million for that same year.

From the time Allen Dulles enunciated the covert action plan (14 March) until President Eisenhower approved it (17 March), there was an interesting bit of bi-play between the National Security Council and the Special Group 5412. One of the principal concerns of the National Security Council was the proper US response should the Cubans try to intervene or interfere with operations of the Naval base at Guantanamo Bay, including a possible takeover of the Base. On 16 March 1960, after Gordon Gray had been fully apprised of the proposed plan for covert action submitted by Allen Dulles, Gray was the recipient of a briefing

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note from a member of his own Staff, Samuel E. Belk, for the planned National Security Council meeting of 17 March which again focused exclusively on the situation at Guantanamo Bay. It appears as though Mr. Belk, even though he was a member of the NSC Staff was completely in the dark as to the planning that had already been undertaken with regard to Castro's ouster. At a time when the President had already indicated that proposals for economic action or direct sabotage of the Cuban sugar industry were less than what he desired, Mr. Belk, for whatever reason, suggested again that with the new sugar legislation, perhaps Castro could be straightened out. In addition, Belk suggested a plan which was "unconventional and radical" -- having President Eisenhower send a message directly to Castro telling him that he was concerned over the deterioration of relations between the two countries and suggesting that Castro have private conversations with an emissary whom the President would personally designate.

Staffer Belk believed that this was a "can't lose" situation for the US. If Castro refused to meet with Eisenhower's representative, then he would

be condemned throughout Latin America. The US on the other hand would receive the blessings of the OAS and the UN for its efforts. If Castro did agree to meet with the President's representative, then relations between the US and Cuba probably would be improved. 47/ Mr. Belk's suggestions apparently never went beyond Mr. Gray.

At 1430 hours on 17 March 1960, Mr. Dulles presented his covert action plan to a combined meeting of the National Security Council and the principals of the Special Group. In attendance with the President were Vice President Nixon, Secretary Herter, Mr. Merchant, Mr. Rubottom, Secretary of Treasury Anderson, Secretary Irwin, Admiral Burke, Richard Bissell, Colonel King, Gordon Gray, Major John Eisenhower, and General A. J. Goodpaster. Based on General Goodpaster's report on the meeting:

The President said that he knows of no better plan for dealing with this situation. The great problem is leakage and breach of security. Everyone must be prepared to swear that he has not heard of it. He said we should limit American contacts with the groups involved to two or three people, getting Cubans to do most of what must be done ... He understood that the effort will be to undermine Castro's position and prestige ...

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The President told Mr. Dulles he thought he [Dulles] should go ahead with the plan and the operations. He and the other agencies involved should take account of all likely Cuban reactions and prepare the actions that we would take in response to these ... The President said he would like some groundwork laid with the OAS to let the Latin American countries know that if the Cubans were to start to attack our people in Cuba we would be obliged to take action ...

The President said that at the next meeting, he would want to know what is the sequence of events by which we see the situation developing -- specifically what actions are we to take. He said our hand should not show in anything that is done. In the meantime State should be working on what we can do in and out of the OAS ... Essentially, the job is to get the OAS to support us. 48/

During the course of this meeting, Secretary of the Treasury Anderson exhibited great concern over the welfare of the US firms which had investments in Cuba; and he was pushing for US intervention to protect these private property rights. The President, however, cut him rather short on this. Vice President Nixon, too, indicated some concern with the American business interests in Cuba; and suggested that steps might be taken to cut off the flow of new capital investment by US firms in Cuba, terminating private

businesses already there, and reducing American tourism.* 49/

President Eisenhower's approval of the 17 March 1960 covert action program against the Castro regime thus set US policy. Briefly restated, the four major courses of action called for the formation of an anti-Communist exile political opposition located outside of Cuba which would be the focal point for all of the anti-Castro elements, provision for a powerful propaganda offensive against the island, perfection of a covert intelligence-in-action network organization within Cuba, and the development of a paramilitary force outside Cuba, with the necessary logistical support for covert military operations on the island.**

* Col. King prepared a memorandum on the same meeting, but, strangely enough, failed to include a list of the participants. The fact that the President, Vice President, and Secretary of State were in attendance could not be known from King's memo alone. 50/ Not in attendance at this meeting was Jake Esterline, Chief, WH/4. This was one of numerous instances where higher level personnel -- in this instance, the DCI, Col. King, and Esterline would seem to have been an equally legitimate participant.

** Even as President Eisenhower was approving the anti-Castro effort a Special National Intelligence Estimate was in process and would state that Castro was not "demonstrably under the domination or control of the international Communist movement." (SNIE 85-60, 22 March 1960, p. 3. S.)

It is particularly important in light of changes which were subsequently made in the covert action plan to note the language of the approved policy with reference to the paramilitary operation:

Initially, a cadre of leaders will be recruited after careful screening and trained as paramilitary instructors. In a second phase, a number of paramilitary cadres will be trained at secure locations outside of the US so as to be available for immediate deployment into Cuba to organize, train, and lead resistance forces recruited there, both before and after the establishment of one or more active centers of resistance.

At no point in this Presidentially-approved plan for covert action by the Agency is there any hint of invasion. The paramilitary activity was clearly to be in the context of guerrilla warfare with leadership and training to the dissident activities inside Cuba being provided by Cubans trained by United States technicians.* Finally, with reference to the approved

* Colonel Jack Hawkins (USMC) who was Chief, WH/4/PM correctly noted in his memorandum for record of PM operations for Project JMATE that:

The only approved, written policy governing paramilitary action against Cuba is contained in paragraph 2d of the Policy Paper approved by the President on 17 March 1960. " (Emphasis added by author.) 51/

plan, the overall budget for the remainder of FY '60, and FY '61 of \$4.4 million was approved with the caveat that should there be cost overruns, these could be drawn up from the Agency's reserve for contingencies.*

* A copy of the approved Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime is given as Appendix B. (Appendix B, page 300). The reader is also urged to examine Appendix C, a set of correspondence between the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh Burke, and Livingston Merchant, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs. (Appendix C page 311.) Admiral Burke apparently had become extremely agitated about the rise of Castro to power in Cuba; and on 26 February of 1960, he had forwarded a paper on US action in Cuba, to both Secretary Merchant and also to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Irwin, in which the Navy's senior officer took it upon himself to examine the various options available to the United States to reassert itself in the Western Hemisphere vis-a-vis the growth of Communist power represented by Castro. Admiral Burke outlined a series of options that were available to the United States, such as multilateral action through the OAS, unilateral overt action by the US, or covert unilateral action by the US.

Leaning heavily on both the Monroe Doctrine and Article 5 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Rio de Janeiro Treaty of 1947) Burke made a series of recommendations covering the same ground -- propaganda, organization of the anti-Castro exiles who were in the US, or direct US military intervention -- which had already been considered at high levels and were already familiar to both Secretaries Merchant and Irwin. On 10 March 1960, Merchant replied to Burke's memorandum noting "a marked degree of similarity in the suggestions of the Navy and of our people here concerning the need to reverse the trend in Cuba and the methods which are best calculated to achieve

(footnote continued on following page)

With reference to his action of 17 March 1960,
President Eisenhower subsequently wrote:

"this result." Merchant then went on to review the bidding that had already been done, particularly in the Special Group, on the question of how to handle Castro, emphasizing, of course, that State was very much concerned that precipitate action against Castro's government would work, if not immediately, certainly in the long run, to the detriment of the United States, particularly in its relations to the other governments of Latin America.

Whether the response did not satisfy Admiral Burke or whether he sincerely believed that the Navy, more than any other US Agency, should be principally responsible for setting US policy toward Cuba is not known. In any event, on 16 March 1960, he forwarded another set of proposals for US action in Cuba to both Gordon Gray, the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and to Allen W. Dulles. Burke's comments on the transmittal sheets to these two individuals are interesting. To National Security Adviser Gray he wrote:

Dear Gordon: Enclosed is my copy of a memorandum on U.S. Action in Cuba which may be of interest to you. Sincerely yours,
Arleigh Burke.

To the Director of Central Intelligence he wrote:

Dear Allen: Enclosed is a memorandum my Staff prepared containing some suggestions which might be useful to you in your work. Naturally, I do not agree with quite all the comments contained in the memorandum but I know that you will forgive the impatient young lad for his desire to make sure no opportunity is left uncovered. Warm regards. Sincerely,
Arleigh Burke.

Why one of the recipients was cautioned about "the impatient young lad" and the other was not is something (footnote continued on following page)

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On March 17, 1960, less than two weeks after my return from Puerto Rico, I ordered the Central Intelligence Agency to begin to organize the training of Cuban exiles, mainly in Guatemala, against the possible future day when they might return to their homeland. More specific planning was not possible because the Cubans living in exile had made no move to select from among their numbers, a

of a mystery. Certainly the proposals by one J. E. Pond, Jr., reflect at least, Pond's youth and immaturity. For among other things in his memorandum, Mr. Pond suggested that the Navy: "Accept Mr. Merchant's offer in his letter of March 10 to Admiral Burke of a complete briefing of State Department activities vis-a-vis the Cuban situation in an effort to prod State to move faster." Or, with reference to action that the State Department should take, he suggested: "Brief all individuals and groups of U.S. nationals going to Latin America on the Kommunist [sic] threat in Cuba for further dissemination to host country personnel." Two items which had not appeared in other of the papers related to the evolution of US policy to oust Castro which were introduced by Mr. Pond, were that the IADB (Inter-American Defense Board) become involved in the anti-Castro effort -- an exceedingly naive suggestion considering that the members of this group were far from unanimous in condemning the Castro Revolution. And the second unique contribution of this paper which Admiral Burke saw fit to forward to two very senior members of the Executive Branch, was the spelling throughout the paper of Communist with a "K". These last proposals that Admiral Burke had forwarded to the Director of Central Intelligence ended up in the files of Chief, Western Hemisphere Division. The memorandum having been sent down from Mr. Bissell's office, with the following notation to Col. King:

Admiral Burke sent this over to the Director on the afternoon of 17 March, and the latter handed [it] to me. I do not believe it requires a reply, but pass it to you for any value it may have.

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leader whom we could recognize as the head of a government in exile. * 52/

* In preparing this comment, the former President apparently had to call on his own memory, on the memory of Gen. Goodpaster, and the memory of Gordon Gray. Based on his own recollections Eisenhower said that neither his own nor Goodpaster's records contained anything about the 17 March 1960 meeting. Similarly, Gordon Gray wrote to Eisenhower:

You may recall that not so very long after I became your Special Assistant, in a meeting you had with Allen Dulles and me you gave instructions that activities of the so-called "Special Group" should not be recorded in any place except the files of the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. You did not wish that there be other copies. It was for this reason that I did not seek a copy of the March 17th paper for my files, nor did I make notes at that meeting.

Subsequent to March 17th, I began to make memoranda of every meeting on that particular subject because I had a hunch that someday these might be important, and I intended to put them in your hands at the appropriate time, understanding, of course, that you might wish to have them destroyed. Incidentally, there were no carbons or other copies made of these memoranda. By not making copies, and by planning to put the documents in your own hands for whatever disposition you wished to make of them, I sort of rationalized my violation of your instructions about not making such memoranda. I hope I need not assure you that it was not my practice to violate your instructions and this is the only instance of such that I can recall. 53/

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