President presided and the meeting was attended by the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury, the Director of the Office of Civil & Defense Mobilization, the Acting Attorney General, a representative of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, among others, Messrs. Bissell, King, Esterline, and McMahan of the Central Intelligence Agency.* 17/

A great deal of the briefing was devoted to the FRD and its leadership -- their policies, their background, and the internal difficulties and bickering. The propaganda picture also was discussed, with particular emphasis again on radio broadcasts from Swan Island. Gen. Cabell stated that the paramilitary plan was to develop a force of 500 men who would be divided into 25 20-man teams. The teams would go into Cuba to organize and to train indigenous dissident groups. Cabell emphasized that the implementation of the paramilitary program depended on the existence

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* Knight McMahan was on the Staff of the Deputy Director for Intelligence -- that component of the Central Intelligence Agency which, according to some of the "authorities" on the Bay of Pigs, was presumably uninformed and unaware of the Agency's anti-Castro program.

of viable dissident forces which "have not emerged in strength."

The ADCI also mentioned the plans to create an anti-Castro air force, but his comments about this air force (even at this time) were very much in error. According to General Cabell:

> Some trained Cuban fliers are currently available and we hope soon to have access to additional numbers. "Sterile" aircraft for their use have been mothballed by the Department of Defense and earmarked for CIA use. These craft can be made available in a matter of hours. 18/

As reported in an earlier volume of this history, neither the aircraft nor trained Cuban pilots would be available for missions against Castro's Cuba until late in the fall of 1960.*

In the NSC briefing, Cabell also made some interesting comments about the resistance that might be encountered in an attempt to oust Castro, emphasizing that intelligence reports had indicated that Cuba might organize "a 'foreign legion' comprised of highly trained regular military personnel, drawn from Communist nations, mainly the eastern satellites. Should this eventuality occur it would seriously affect the

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* See Volume I of the Official History of the Bay of Pigs Operation, *Air Operations*.

probable success of any purely clandestine paramilitary operations." Cabell then introduced a suggestion which would be heard right up to the time that the invasion fleet was being boarded -- that "volunteers" be acquired for the anti-Castro forces, such volunteers to be drawn from US Special Forces.* 18a/

As the presiding officer at the special National Security Council meeting, Vice President Nixon raised a number of questions with the Department of State representatives concerning support that the Organization of American States would likely give to this country's anti-Castro efforts; and he also posed a series of questions concerning the economic pressures that the United States might put on Cuba. The questions concerned sugar, oil, and tariffs in particular; and the Vice President urged that "strong, positive action [be taken] to avoid becoming labeled "Uncle Sucker." 19/

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* No such volunteers were permitted in the case of the ground forces, but in the last two days of the Bay of Pigs Operation such volunteers were accepted for combat air operations. See Volume I of this History, *Air Operations*.

On 1 July 1960, Jake Esterline received an interesting telephone call from General Cushman, containing two messages from the Vice President. First, Mr. Nixon was interested to know if there were any obstacles that the Agency was encountering vis-a-vis other agencies in support of JMATE; and if there were, the Vice President indicated that he personally would help to resolve such problems. The second request

> was a bit more sticky. Gen. Cushman said that the Vice President has commissioned him to keep Mr. William Pawley happy and, in connection with this, he has also been instructed to keep Mr. Pawley briefed on how things are moving. General Cushman said he realized that this is much against our desire, as concerns Mr. Pawley, but the fact remains that he [Pawley] is a "big fat political cat" and, as such, the Vice President cannot completely ignore him. 20/

Esterline allowed that he understood the General's problem and suggested that with a few hours advance warning the Agency would provide the Vice President, or the General, with such briefing materials as necessary for any given meeting with Mr. Pawley -- after first clearing the paper with the appropriate agency officials and within the security regulations that applied to Mr. Pawley. Esterline indicated in his

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memorandum that he immediately informed the Deputy Director for Plans, and the Assistant Deputy Director for Plans, Mr. Bissell and Mr. Barnes, respectively, about the call from General Cushman.*

Jake Esterline apparently took the Vice President's offer to help CIA with difficulties it might have with other agencies to heart. In a memorandum from C. Tracy Barnes, concerning a more effective commercial cover for Radio Swan, it appears, from Barnes's response, that Esterline must have suggested that the services of Vice President Nixon be engaged to resolve a difficulty between the Agency and the FCC over the use of commercial advertising to make

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* The following interesting comments also appeared in Esterline's memorandum on the conversation with General Cushman:

> This information [regarding Cushman's telephone call] could not be given to Col. King, as he had just departed on a three-day trip. This memorandum will be available to Col. King, however, upon his return Wednesday, 6 July.

Contrary to the opinions of many who have suggested that Col. J. C. King was read out of the anti-Castro operation, this memorandum would indicate that, in fact, extreme care was being taken to make sure that J. C. King was read into the act.

Swan appear more legitimate. Barnes, however, took exception and recommended that the US Government should consider overt sponsorship of the Swan broadcasts.* 21/

It was also in July 1960 that Vice President Nixon's office, principally through the person of General Cushman, first indicated an interest in the activities of one Mario Garcia Kohly Antiga. Garcia was a Cuban exile who claimed to have extensive backing both within the Cuban community in Miami and among dissidents inside Cuba. At one point he claimed that he could raise a force of 2,000 men in the Miami area and 10,000 men inside of Cuba -- if he were given proper financial support for training and equipping these men. Garcia's name first came before the Agency in mid-June 1960 following a meeting he had with a Cuban exile who was an Agency contact. During this

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* Whether the FCC was chastened by Mr. Nixon or whether a determination was made concerning the increased use of commercial advertising for Radio Swan is left in doubt. But Barnes's suggestion of official USG participation in Swan was rejected. A note from Esterline on the official routing slip from Barnes forwarding this memorandum read: "I believe Mr. Bissell reversed this position?" To this query King noted "Yes" on the buck slip.

initial meeting Garcia claimed that he had large stores of military equipment in Spain, that he had additional promises of assistance from General Franco, and that he had contacts in the White House who had given him the "go ahead" for an invasion of Cuba!

Word of Garcia apparently got to the FBI, to General Cabell, and apparently to the Office of Vice President Nixon. In any event, on 9 July 1960 Jake Esterline met with Mr. Marshall Diggs, a Washington lawyer and Garcia's sponsor, where he was told of Garcia's grandiose plans to overthrow Castro. In a follow-up meeting in Diggs's office on 11 July, Mr. Phillip Toomey, WH/4/Prop met with Garcia, Cameron Pulley, and two reputed underwater demolitions experts. Garcia went into his act about how his force could overthrow the Castro Government, assuming that he could get some financial assistance for training and equipping the troops. Mr. Pulley proceeded to tell Mr. Toomey that Garcia's project was part of a program that was being promoted by former Senator Owen Brewster for the entire Caribbean area -- apparently a program designed to eliminate all the bad guys. Following another meeting on 13 July and after

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listening to Garcia denounce the FRD leaders as Communists -- as well as being unimpressed by his credentials -- on 15 July 1960, Marshall Diggs was informed that the Agency had no interest in supporting Mr. Garcia. On 20 July 1960, Chief, JMATE met with General Cushman to tell him that a full study had been made of the representatives of Señor Garcia; and as a result, the DCI probably would get in touch with Mr. Diggs and/or Senator Brewster and explain to them "the wisdom of their desisting from pushing Garcia as an outstanding Cuban military leader."

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The subject dragged on, however; and at one point Mr. Pulley, who with Mr. Diggs and ex-Senator Brewster, was a strong supporter of Mr. Nixon, indicated that the administration's policies with regard to Cuba might hurt the Vice President in the upcoming election. Moreover Pulley also is reported to have indicated that a congressional investigation of the anti-Castro plan was possible. The Director of Central Intelligence was advised on 26 September that because of Garcia's threats to expose everything he had learned about possible Agency involvement in the anti-Castro effort, including the Cuban exile

organization in the United States, that the time had come for Diggs and Pulley to be asked "to forego their efforts on behalf of Mario Garcia Kohly Antiga." This recommendation was approved by General C. P. Cabell on 13 October 1960.* 22/

Insofar as the available records show, the contacts between Vice President Nixon's office, and the

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* More nonsense from Mario Garcia Kohly Antiga would surface again in the summer of 1961 following Castro's offer to free the Bay of Pigs prisoners in return for US tractors when Garcia bounced up with another proposal for the planned escape of the prisoners -- providing, of course, that he be given a bundle of bucks.

In fact, the hand of Garcia reached from beyond the grave to touch on the BOP operation. On 2 August 1976, almost a year after Garcia's death, the *Washington Star* carried a UPI dispatch saying that Rep. Thomas N. Downing (D., Va.) had affidavits claiming that:

> In return for support of the invasion [of Cuba] from Mario G. Kohly, a popular right-wing leader who was exiled from Cuba, then Vice President Nixon agreed in October 1960 to order the CIA to arrest the leftist leaders and turn them over to Kohly for "elimination" after Premier Fidel Castro was thrown out of office.

The affidavits reportedly came from a former CIA contract agent and Mario G. Kohly, Jr., son of the would-be invasion leader. These materials were supposed to have some bearing on House of Representatives's investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy; but there is no indication that they were given any credence. 23/

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Central Intelligence Agency -- except for the Garcia case -- for all practical purposes ended by August 1960.*

The only other significant involvement between the Vice President and the Central Intelligence Agency, prior to the change of administration on 20 January 1961, concerned a briefing of the Democratic candidates for President and Vice President of the United States, prior to the 1960 election. On 23 July 1960, following the Democratic convention, Allen Dulles briefed Sen. John Kennedy, and on 28 July Senator Lyndon Johnson. In his memorandum to President Eisenhower, who had directed that Dulles give these briefings, the DCI reported that in the two hour period for each briefing he had covered US relations with the Soviet Union, developments in the Berlin situation, in the

* Whether this reflects the concentration of the Vice President's activities on the upcoming November election, whether the principal contacts came to be maintained between Col. J. C. King and Nixon's office -- with the consequent reference memoranda being included in J. C. King's files, which have disappeared from the sight of God and man -- or whether, in fact, this is an accurate reflection of the limited contacts, the author cannot confirm. His inclination is to believe that the contacts probably were as limited as described above.

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Congo, and in Cuba. Kennedy was briefed again on 19 September 1960, and again the briefing touched on relations with the Soviet Union and on the trouble spots in the world, including Cuba. The White House was informed of this briefing prior to the event; and subsequent to the briefing of Kennedy, Mr. Dulles reported on the meeting to both Jerry Morgan of the White House Staff and also to Brigadier General Andrew Goodpaster, Staff Secretary to the President. 24/

The exact nature of the briefings that Dulles gave to Kennedy on Cuba is of particular historical importance in terms of the election of 1960. In the last of the famous TV debates between candidates Nixon and Kennedy, Mr. Kennedy, in the course of condemning the Castro regime and suggesting that the United States take stronger action against Castro, made the statement that:

> We must attempt to strengthen the non-Batista democratic anti-Castro forces in exile, and in Cuba itself, who offer eventual hope of overthrowing Castro. Thus far, these fighters for freedom have had virtually no support from our Government. 25/

Based on his knowledge and interest in supporting the anti-Castro program that had been authorized by

President Eisenhower in March 1960, Nixon was put in a Catch-22 situation; for as he said:

> President Eisenhower had instructed Allen Dulles, head of the CIA, to brief the Democratic candidate on all operations, including Top Secret operations. I knew that Kennedy had already received two briefings from Dulles. I immediately had a member of my staff call the White House on the security line to ask if these briefings covered Cuba. A member of the White House Staff indicated they had. (Several months after the election, Allen Dulles was to state that his briefing of Kennedy had included Cuba but not the training program for Cuban exiles.) At the time of the debate, however, and after checking with the White House, I had to proceed with the assumption that Kennedy had been briefed on the secret program.
>
> I was faced with the heads-he-wins, tails-I-lose proposition. If in the TV debate I were to reveal the existence of the training program and point out that I had been one of its strongest advocates, I would pull the rug out from under Kennedy's position. But if I did so, the project would be doomed, and also the lives of the brave men, both inside and outside of Cuba, who were receiving training and assistance.
>
> I had only one choice: to protect the security of the program, I had to oppose Kennedy on his position of advocating that the United States openly aid anti-Castro forces inside and outside Cuba. 26/

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It is interesting to observe that Nixon became more philosophical about the impact of the final TV

debate with regard to the outcome of the 1960 election as time passed. In 1964 he would write "Most observers agree that our positions on the Cuban issue could well have been the decisive factor [in the outcome of the election]." But in his recent memoirs he expressed doubt that any single factor in such a close election could really have changed the outcome.* 27/

Following the TV debate in which Kennedy had raised the issue of assistance for Cuba, Nixon quickly lashed back at Kennedy. The result of the introduction of the Cuban issue into the late stages of the

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* In an interesting conversation with Fawn M. Brodie who is writing a Nixon biography, the author of this history, in response to Brodie's concern about the fact that Nixon knowingly lied to the American public, emphasized that plausible deniability was of real concern at the time of the TV debate. He also emphasized the Catch-22 aspect of the situation as explained by Nixon. The author also suggested to Mrs. Brodie that it seemed equally valid to infer that perhaps Kennedy had been leaked detailed information about the anti-Castro program and that he used this device to put Nixon in a corner during the TV debate. Arthur Schlesinger, of course, claimed that the Kennedy comments "were no more than a rhetorical flourish. Neither Kennedy nor his staff knew about the secret Cuban Army in Guatemala." 28/

election campaign, struck sensitive nerves within the Agency; and on 26 October 1960, General Cabell met with Gordon Gray, President Eisenhower's National Security Adviser, indicating that the discussion and debate about Cuban issues were touching on areas which, in the end, might be damaging to the nation's interest. On 27 October at the Special Group meeting, Mr. Gray reported that he had talked to "certain Nixon people in the White House" in an attempt to enlist their support to bring such discussions to an end. 29/

It was not until 18 November 1960 that President-elect John F. Kennedy was fully briefed by Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, and the Deputy Director for Plans, Richard Bissell, on the extent of the anti-Castro activities being plannèd by the United States Government. 30/ Mr. Nixon's misconception of the extent of the briefing that Kennedy had received in the pre-election period was not finally clarified however, until 20 March 1962 when Allen Dulles addressed a memorandum to John A. McCone, his successor as Director of Central Intelligence, stating as follows:

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I have read the portions of Mr. Nixon's book with regard to the intelligence briefings which he understood Senator Kennedy had been given by me with respect to Cuba during the campaign. I have also seen the White House statement issued today on this subject.

There has been here, I believe, an honest misunderstanding. This was probably due to the nature of the message Mr. Nixon writes he received as to these briefings. The Cuban situation was, of course, dealt with in the briefings I gave to Senator Kennedy. The last briefing I gave him was over a month before the debate in which the issue arose.

My briefings were intelligence briefings on the world situation. They did not cover our own Government's plans or programs for action -- overt or covert. 31/

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As previously noted, however, by 1964, if not earlier, Mr. Nixon had accepted the fact that he had made an error in assuming that Kennedy had received a more detailed briefing than in fact he truly had.

By way of concluding this segment on Richard Nixon's involvement in the Bay of Pigs activity, it should be clear that by no stretch of the imagination was Nixon "the architect of the Bay of Pigs."* 32/

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* A statement made to DCI Stansfield Turner by Fawn Brodie who attributed it to Tom Braden, an old CIA man, in a TV documentary on the CIA made by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

It is equally clear that Mr. Nixon, principally through his aide, General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., was fully read into the plans that were being developed by the Central Intelligence Agency for the ouster of Fidel Castro. This interest was especially strong in the period from the winter of 1960 through the late summer of 1960. It also should be apparent to the reader that while some of the Vice President's interest -- particularly in his insistence on placating William Pawley, especially in giving undue attention to Pawley's concerns that the Agency-sponsored Cuban-exile organization was being taken over by the pro-Communist groups -- was politically motivated, his basic concern was the fear of the establishment of a communist government in the Western Hemisphere. Certainly his constant interest and offers to provide help for the Agency in its relations to other branches of the US Government fall into the latter, rather than the former, category. The unanswerable question, of course, is whether Cuban Communism would play such a large role in international

affairs in 1979, particularly in the third world countries, if Richard Nixon had been elected President in 1960.*

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* Indicative of the more forceful role that Nixon would have had the US play was the comment that he reportedly made to William Pawley several weeks before the 1960 election, when Nixon indicated that he favored breaking relations with Cuba -- at that time -- recognizing a Government-in-exile, and then assisting that Government in its efforts to oust Castro. 33/