

Part VIII

Conclusions

This volume has traced the history of the CIA's official anti-Castro program from its inception in 1959 through the end of the Eisenhower administration in January of 1961. It emphasized that in the initial period when Castro's revolution was taking place, the Agency, reflecting the policies of the US Government, was caught betwixt and between -- to move *with* Castro or to move *against* Castro. Shortly following his takeover, it became clear that Castro had little or no intention -- nor apparently concern -- for establishing cordial relations with the "Colossus of the North." Instead, he turned to the Soviet Union and its allies for military, technical, and economic assistance. It became clear that a new philosophy was being introduced into the Caribbean basin and that this philosophy was directly contrary to the interests of the United States Government and to the governments of many of the Latin American nations, whether democratically governed or governed by dictatorships of the right.

As Castro's threats became more serious, and as increasing pressures were put on legitimate economic interests of the United States in Cuba, pressures within the United States Government led to a decision that Castro must go. With great concern about the impact any overt, anti-Castro activities by the United States Government would have on the United Nations and on the Organization of American States, it was decided that a covert plan of action would be adopted. This was the officially sanctioned program approved by President Eisenhower on 17 March of 1960. It broadly outlined the political, economic, propaganda, and paramilitary programs which would be implemented in an attempt to oust Fidel Castro. CIA was to be the principal action agent for the bulk of the program.

Once the official US position was announced, CIA made organizational plans to carry out the policy. A separate Task Force within the Western Hemisphere Division was established under the leadership of Jacob D. Esterline, on whose shoulder Col. J. C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division perched and peered. Initial concepts of the Central Intelligence Agency called for a propaganda program to be run out of a radio

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526 (JFK ACT)
NARA JA DATE 6/17/05

~~TOP SECRET~~

station based on Swan Island and by Agency financed radio operations out of Station WRUL in New York City. Strong support was to be provided for anti-Castro publications launched in the area of Miami. Paramilitary programs initially called for the training of cadres of communicators and paramilitary instructors who would go into Cuba and provide leadership and training for the numerous dissident elements that reportedly were ready to move against Castro.

Unfortunately, however, as the summer of 1960 drew to a close, it became apparent that Castro's military strength and training programs were sharply improving and that the initial plan to infiltrate small teams to organize the dissidents no longer was feasible. Consequently, the concept changed to one of a landing in force, the acquisition of a defensible base in Cuba from which a Provisional Government might call for assistance from the United States Government if the invaders themselves could not arouse sufficient support to force the overthrow of Castro.

This volume emphasized that following his decision in March 1960 that there should be an anti-Castro program, President Eisenhower remained quiescent on the

~~TOP SECRET~~

question of developments of the anti-Castro program until late in the fall, following the election of 1960 and the defeat of Mr. Nixon. At that time Mr. Eisenhower reinjected himself into the program and stimulated action to the point where some of CIA's planners hoped that -- in addition to the propaganda program which was already underway -- paramilitary operations might be initiated. Apparently this was feared by Castro, too, for in his famous TV broadcast on the Bay of Pigs he said:

When our country was in danger of direct aggression and mobilized itself, it waited for the [Kennedy] presidential inauguration thinking that this man [Kennedy] would do something different, because all in all, we didn't understand why a man who assumed the administration of the United States would want to bear the guilt of someone else's mistakes.* 1/

This was not to be, however, for aside from considerable emphasis on the propaganda activity, there was only limited support for sabotage activities prior to the

* Raul Roa, Castro's Foreign Minister charged that in the Eisenhower administration Vice President Nixon and General C. P. Cabell, ADCI, were two of the most vigorous proponents of direct action, with Cabell proposing air and naval protection for the invasion and, if necessary, use of US marines to hold the beachhead. 2/

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526 (FK ACT)
NARA)
DATE 4/11/05

~~TOP SECRET~~

end of Eisenhower's administration. There was considerable concern over the necessary formalities of diplomacy in order that the United States not be involved in investigations by either the UN or the OAS for its anti-Castro program.

Because it has been so widely publicized that ex-Vice President Richard Nixon was one of the principals in planning the Bay of Pigs Operation, this volume has attempted to put the role that Nixon played into the proper context*. It was the role of an interested senior officer in the Executive Branch, and by no stretch of the imagination could Nixon's role be construed to have had a major impact on the development of operational planning by the Central Intelligence Agency in its anti-Castro effort.

Similarly, because of the sensationalism which surrounded the Senate Select Committee's report on *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, including Fidel Castro and the implications that the Mafia plot was a part of the authorized planning for the Bay of Pigs Operation, thorough examination of the evidence was undertaken to determine if this allegation was supportable. It was not. The Mafia operation was run

~~TOP SECRET~~

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526(JFK ACT)
NARA JA DATE 6/17/05

~~TOP SECRET~~

aside from, apart from, and independent of the formal anti-Castro program which was undertaken by CIA. At most, four or five senior officials -- Allen Dulles, Richard Bissell, Shef Edwards, Bill Harvey, and possibly, Tracy Barnes -- probably were knowledgeable about the Mafia connection and Mr. Maheu.

In terms of Project JMATE itself, the few bits of information which indicate the possibility of assassination attempts against the Cuban leadership also fail to demonstrate any responsibility for their initiation on the part of WH/4. If anything, the evidence would indicate that WH/4's position was one of watchful waiting and wishful thinking that dissident Cubans would themselves eliminate the Castros and Che Guevara. The possibility, of course, that Agency-supplied weapons might be involved in such an attempt cannot be ruled out. 3/

Obviously it would be foolish to contend that those principally responsible for developing CIA's anti-Castro program would have objected to the assassination of Fidel Castro. On the other hand, this was not one of the basic concepts nor intentions of the official program of the Central Intelligence Agency.

- 295 -

~~TOP SECRET~~

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526 (JFK ACT)
NARA J A DATE 6/17/05