

Declassified Under Authority of the
Interagency Security Classification Appeals
Panel, E.O. 13526, sec. 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP Appeal No. 2014-032, doc. 1
Declassification Date: Jan. 3, 2022

~~SECRET~~

CS Historical Paper

No. 105

CLANDESTINE SERVICES HISTORY

RECORD OF PARAMILITARY ACTION
AGAINST THE CASTRO GOVERNMENT
OF CUBA

17 March 1960 - May 1961

Controlled by: WH Division
Date prepared: 5 May 1961
Written by : Colonel J. Hawkins,
USMC

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
SUMMARY	i
1. PURPOSE	1
2. ORGANIZATION WITHIN C.I.A. FOR COVERT ACTION AGAINST THE CASTRO GOVERNMENT . . .	1
3. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES AT HIGHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT FOR DETERMINATION OF POLICY GOVERNING THE PROJECT	3
4. EVOLUTION OF PARAMILITARY CONCEPTS	5
5. RESULTS OF THE INTERNAL RESISTANCE PROGRAM, September 1960 to April 1961	7
6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRIKE FORCE	9
7. PREPARATIONS FOR TACTICAL AIR OPERATIONS: .	11
8. SEA FORCES	13
9. EFFORT OF PARAMILITARY STAFF TO OBTAIN RESOLUTION OF MAJOR POLICY QUESTIONS - January 1961	14
10. THE PREFERRED PLAN (TRINIDAD)	16
11. POSITION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN REGARD TO THE TRINIDAD PLAN	19
12. REJECTION OF THE TRINIDAD PLAN	19
13. THE STUDY OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATE LANDING AREAS	20
14. THE AIR FORCE DEFECTION PLAN	21
15. THE DIVERSION PLAN	22
16. THE FINAL OPERATIONAL CONCEPT SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT	23
17. SUCCESSIVE DELAYS OF D-DAY	24

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

	<u>PAGE</u>
18. FORCES AVAILABLE FOR THE ZAPATA OPERATION	25
19. MAJOR FEATURES OF THE ZAPATA PLAN	26
20. EXECUTION OF THE OPERATION	31
21. AIR STRIKES ON D-2 (15 April 1961)	32
22. THE DIVERSION OPERATION	32
23. THE AMPHIBIOUS/AIRBORNE OPERATION AT ZAPATA	33
24. RESCUE OPERATIONS	40
25. INTELLIGENCE FACTORS	40
26. POLICY RESTRICTIONS WHICH LIMITED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS.	42
27. CONCLUSIONS	45
28. REFERENCE LIST	49
29. ENCLOSURES (Five)	

~~SECRET~~

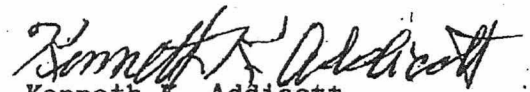
~~SECRET~~

HISTORIAN'S NOTE

This monograph is based upon and primarily consists of a Memorandum for the Record, entitled "Paramilitary Action Against the Castro Government of Cuba: Record of," May 5, 1961, prepared by Colonel J. Hawkins, U.S. Marine Corps, who was detailed to the Agency, and as such, served as Chief of the Paramilitary Staff Section of Branch 4, Western Hemisphere Division. In this capacity, he participated in the planning and execution of the ZAPATA Operation, more commonly known as the Bay of Pigs Operation.

Colonel Hawkins' paper records significant information concerning preparation for and execution of paramilitary operations against the Castro Government of Cuba and draws conclusions based upon this experience, which as a background and reference document, he hoped, would serve a useful purpose for the future.

Although not written at the request of the CS Historical Board, this paper meets the basic requirements of a historical paper and has been included in the Catalog of CS Histories, as a segment of the WH Division history.


Kenneth K. Addicott
Executive Secretary
CS Historical Board

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~SUMMARY

Colonel J. Hawkins, U.S. Marine Corps, has furnished in his Memorandum for the Record an account of the preparation for, the planning and execution of the paramilitary operations against the Castro Government of Cuba in 1961. The period covered is the latter part of the Eisenhower Administration and the first six months of President Kennedy's term. Basically, the theme is the paramilitary story and is intended to cover only these facets of the operation. It documents the events leading up to, during and following the Bay of Pigs Operation of April 16, 17, 18 and 19, 1961.

In recounting the facts, policies are reviewed on which the Task Force Headquarters, organized within the Western Hemisphere Division of the Clandestine Services of CIA, based its plan for action. The Task Force contained staff sections for planning and supervision of activities in the intelligence, counterintelligence, propaganda, political, logistical, and paramilitary fields. The need for liaison with the Department of State and the Department of Defense was apparent from the beginning. It had been determined early in the Eisenhower Administration that the highest levels of government would determine policy governing the Cuba project; thus, constant liaison should have been mandatory. CIA was represented on the Special Group (5412), which reported to the President,

~~SECRET~~

and it was to this Group that CIA presented operational matters for policy resolution.

No machinery existed for coordinating the project related work of governmental departments and agencies, other than through the Special Group, during most of the life of the project. There was never a formal Task Force arrangement which included representation of all departments and agencies which were or should have been concerned, such as the CIA, Department of State, Department of Defense, U.S. Information Agency, and the Department of Commerce. Instead, the project was the endeavor of CIA in liaison with other departments.

Intelligence information and estimates had indicated substantial resistance within Cuba to the Castro regime. Agents had reported the development of a widespread underground organization extending from Havana into all the Provinces. Obviously, if the efforts of these disaffected Cuban leaders, with their followers and other sympathetic individuals in the country had been successful, the effort would have been unnecessary. Realizing that it was not effective, and to circumvent Castro's plan to crush the guerrilla movement, action was begun in November 1960 to organize a strike force, the paramilitary part of which, for tactical reasons was divided into air and sea force operations.

~~SECRET~~

This strike force would now begin to recruit, organize, equip and train a larger ground force than the contingency force which was originally contemplated. The bulk of the attached paper describes in a wealth of detail the training camps (based in the U.S. and in friendly third countries) and support programs necessary for the ultimate implementation of the operation.

In a considered evaluation of the operation and in his capacity as Chief of the Paramilitary Staff of Cuba Project, Colonel Hawkins sets forth a series of conclusions, and presents realistic recommendations for future planning based upon his experiences which were often frustrating. He points out in a disenchanted fashion, more in sorrow than in anger, that experience indicates that political restrictions upon military measures may result in destroying the effectiveness of such efforts. The end result is political embarrassment coupled with military failure and loss of prestige in the world. If political considerations are such as to prohibit the application of those military steps required to achieve the objective, then such military operations should not be undertaken.

[iii]

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

5 May 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Paramilitary Action Against the Castro Government
of Cuba; Record of

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this memorandum is to record significant information concerning preparation for and execution of paramilitary operations against the Castro Government of Cuba, and to draw conclusions based upon this experience which, it is hoped, may be useful for the future.

2. ORGANIZATION WITHIN C.I.A. FOR COVERT ACTION AGAINST THE CASTRO GOVERNMENT.

a. For purposes of this action, a task force headquarters was organized within the Western Hemisphere Division of the Clandestine Services of the Central Intelligence Agency. This task force contained staff sections for planning and

/supervision of activities

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-2-

supervision of activities in the intelligence, counter-intelligence, propaganda, political, logistical and paramilitary fields. The undersigned served as Chief of the Paramilitary Staff Section. The line of command within C.I.A. Headquarters for control of the Cuban operation was from the Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Allen Dulles, to the Deputy Director (Plans), Mr. Richard M. Bissell, to the Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, Mr. J. C. King, to the Chief of the Task Force, Mr. Jacob D. Esterline.

b. The Task Force Headquarters did not include an integral air staff section, although air activity was a continuing and essential requirement throughout the operation. The Air Staff, with its headquarters in a separate building remote from Task Force Headquarters, was responsible directly to the Deputy Director (Plans), although in October, 1960, the Chief of the Air Section, in addition to his other duties, was placed under the direction of the Task Force Chief for matters concerning the project.

c. Major field activities as finally established included:

(1) A forward operating base at Miami, Florida, with a satellite communications center for relay of communications between Headquarters and the field and facilities in the Florida Keys for launching boat operations to Cuba. Recruiting was handled by the Miami Base.

(2) A base at the former Opa Locka Naval Air Station, which was used for storage of arms and munitions and for originating "black" passenger flights to Guatemala with Cuban recruits.

(3) An infantry training base and an air base in Southwestern Guatemala.

(4) An air and staging base at Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

(5) Air facilities at Eglin Air Force Base for logistical flights to Guatemala and Nicaragua.

(6) A training base at Belle Chase Naval Ammunition Depot, New Orleans (used briefly in March and April, 1961).

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-3-

(7) A small maritime training base at Vieques, Puerto Rico.

d. The Chief of the Task Force did not exercise command over field activities, and had authority to release cables concerning operational matters to the Forward Operating Base in Miami only. Cables and other directives to the field were normally released at the level of Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, while some directives dealing with major policy questions were released at the still higher level of the Deputy Director (Plans). The Chief of the Air Section was authorized to release air operational cables to any field activity, and in that sense had greater authority than the Task Force Chief, himself.

e. An additional echelon of command and control was interposed between Headquarters and field activities in foreign countries in that the C.I.A. Chief of Station in each country retained, in accordance with normal practice, the responsibility for all C.I.A. activity within that country, including in particular, the responsibility for liaison with the host government. Communications personnel and facilities were provided by the C.I.A. Office of Communications, under the Deputy Director (Support), one of the three major subdivisions of C.I.A. Headquarters. The Deputy Director (Support) also provided logistical support for the operation.

f. The Paramilitary Staff Section of the Task Force included subdivisions for intelligence, logistics, maritime operations, internal resistance operations and military operations. The table of organization provided a staff of 37 officers, but the average strength was about 24 of whom 6 were military. The undersigned, as chief of this staff section, had no command authority nor authority to release cables or other directives to the field.

3. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES AT HIGHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT FOR DETERMINATION OF POLICY GOVERNING THE PROJECT.

a. The Special Group (5412).

(1) During the administration of President Eisenhower, this Group normally met once a week to consider matters concerning covert activity in various parts of the

~~SECRET~~

world, including Cuba. Principal members of this Group were the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Mr. Gray; the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Douglas; the Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Dulles; and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Merchant. The Department of Defense was represented for a time during the life of the Cuban project by the Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Mr. Erwin. Other representatives of Departments and Agencies concerned met from time to time with the Group. Mr. Thomas Mann, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, attended on occasion when Cuba was to be discussed.

(2) It was to this Group that policy matters concerning Cuban operations were submitted by the C.I.A. for resolution during the previous administration.

(3) In regard to the Cuban project, the Special Group proved to be a slow and indecisive vehicle for determination of policy. It did not have authority itself to make important policy decisions, nor did it have a formalized procedure for reaching an agreed Group position on any given question. Disagreement by one member of the Group could prevent approval of a proposed action. Proceedings were verbal, and no master record of minutes was kept. Instead, each Department or Agency kept its own minutes as desired, and sometimes there were misunderstandings later as to just what had been said or agreed upon at previous meetings. No written, signed policy directives were ever forthcoming after Group meetings for guidance of the Cuban project within C.I.A. In fact, throughout the life of the project there were no written policy directives approved at the national level to guide the project other than the original policy paper approved by the President on 17 March 1960, which was general in content.

b. Liaison with Department of Defense. The point of contact for C.I.A. within the Department of Defense for Cuban matters was the Office of Special Operations until 4 January 1961. At that time, a special committee headed by Brigadier General D. W. Gray, U. S. Army, was established within the Joint Staff for purpose of liaison with C.I.A. in regard to the Cuba project.

c. Coordination of Governmental Departments and Agencies. No machinery existed for this purpose, other than the Special Group, during most of the life of the project, although for a time during the previous administration

~~SECRET~~

-5-

Ambassador Willauer was appointed by the President to serve as a coordinator of the Department of State and the C.I.A. There was never a formal task force arrangement including representation of all Departments and Agencies which were or should have been concerned, such as the C.I.A., Department of State, Department of Defense, U. S. Information Agency, and the Department of Commerce. Instead, the project was a more or less exclusive endeavor of C.I.A., in liaison with other Departments.

d. Policy Determination During the Present Administration.

During the present Administration, policy questions concerning the Cuba project were considered directly by the President himself in meetings which normally included, among others, the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

4. EVOLUTION OF PARAMILITARY CONCEPTS.

a. 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. This paragraph is quoted as follows:

"d. Preparations have already been made for the development of an adequate paramilitary force outside of Cuba, together with mechanisms for the necessary logistic support of covert military operations on the Island. 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 U. S. 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. The creation of this capability will require a minimum of six months and probably closer to eight. In the meanwhile, a limited air capability for resupply and for infiltration and exfiltration already exists under C.I.A. control and can be rather easily expanded if and when the situation required. Within two months it is hoped to parallel this with a small air resupply capability under deep cover as a commercial operation in another country."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-6-

b. Early concepts for paramilitary action to implement this approved policy involved:

(1) The recruitment, organization and training of a number of Cuban paramilitary agent teams. These teams were to include radio operators and personnel for the development and direction of intelligence, sabotage, propaganda, political and guerrilla activity within the target country.

(2) The introduction of these agent teams into the target country by clandestine or legal means.

(3) The development within the target country, through the medium of agents, of a large scale resistance movement, including sabotage, propaganda, political, and guerrilla activity.

(4) The organization and training of a Cuban air transport unit for use in supply overflights and other air operations.

(5) The supply of military arms and equipment to guerrilla and other resistance organizations by air drop or maritime delivery.

(6) The organization and training of a Cuban tactical air force equipped with B-26 light bombers.

c. Action was undertaken immediately to implement all of the above plans. Consideration was also given to the possibility of forming a small infantry force (200 to 300 men) for contingency employment in conjunction with other paramilitary operations.

d. During the period June through October, 1960, as the Soviet Bloc poured over 40,000 tons of military equipment into Cuba and Castro organized and equipped large forces of militia and established an effective Communist-style security system, the paramilitary staff studied the possibility of organizing an assault force of greater strength than the small contingency force previously planned. It was contemplated that

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-7-

this force would be landed in Cuba after effective resistance activity, including active guerrilla forces, had been developed. It should be noted that the guerrilla forces were operating successfully in the Escambray Mountains during this period. It was visualized that the landing of the assault force, after widespread resistance activity had been created, would, precipitate general uprisings and widespread defection among Castro's armed forces which could contribute materially to his overthrow.

e. The concept for employment of the force in an amphibious/airborne assault was discussed at meetings of the Special Group during November and December. The Group took no definite position on ultimate employment of such a force but did not oppose its continued development for possible employment. President Eisenhower was briefed on the concept in late November by C.I.A. representatives. The President indicated that he desired vigorous continuation of all activities then in progress by all Departments concerned.

5. RESULTS OF THE INTERNAL RESISTANCE PROGRAM, SEPTEMBER 1960 to APRIL 1961.

a. Introduction of Paramilitary Agents. Seventy trained paramilitary agents, including nineteen radio operators, were introduced into the target country. Seventeen radio operators succeeded in establishing communication circuits with C.I.A. Headquarters, although a number were later captured or lost their equipment.

b. Air Supply Operations. These operations were not successful. Of 27 missions attempted only 4 achieved desired results. The Cuban pilots demonstrated early that they did not have the required capabilities for this kind of operation. A request for authority to use American contract pilots for these missions was denied by the Special Group, although authority to hire pilots for possible eventual use was granted.

c. Sea Supply Operations. These operations achieved considerable success. Boats plying between Miami and Cuba delivered over 40 tons of military arms, explosives and equipment, and infiltrated/exfiltrated a large number of personnel. Some of the arms delivered were used for partially equipping a 400 man guerrilla force which operated for a considerable

~~SECRET~~

time in the Escambray Mountains of Las Villas Province. Much of the sabotage activity conducted in Havana and elsewhere was performed with materials supplied in this manner.

d. Development of Guerrilla Activity. Agents introduced into Cuba succeeded in developing a widespread underground organization extending from Havana into all of the Provinces. However, there was no truly effective guerrilla activity anywhere in Cuba except in the Escambray Mountains, where an estimated 600 to 1,000 ill-equipped guerrilla troops, organized in bands of from 50 to 200, operated successfully for over six months. C.I.A. never succeeded in establishing a direct radio link with any of these forces, although some communications with them were accomplished by radio to Havana and thence by courier. A C.I.A. trained coordinator for action in the Escambray entered Cuba clandestinely and succeeded in reaching the guerrilla area, but he was promptly captured and executed. Other small guerrilla units operated at times in Provinces of Pinar del Rio and Oriente, but they achieved no significant results. Agents reported large numbers of unarmed men in all provinces who were willing to participate in guerrilla activity if armed. The failure to make large-scale delivery of arms to these groups by aerial supply was a critical failure in the overall operation.

e. Sabotage.

(1) Sabotage activity during the period October 1960 to 15 April 1961 included the following:

(a) Approximately 300,000 tons of sugar cane destroyed in 800 separate fires.

(b) Approximately 150 other fires, including the burning of 42 tobacco warehouses, 2 paper plants, 1 sugar refinery, 2 dairies, 4 stores, 21 Communist homes.

(c) Approximately 110 bombings, including Communist Party offices, Havana power station, 2 stores, railroad terminal, bus terminal, militia barracks, railroad train.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-9-

(d) Approximately 200 nuisance bombs in Havana Province.

(e) Derailment of 6 trains, destruction of a microwave cable and station, and destruction of numerous power transformers.

(f) A commando-type raid launched from the sea against Santiago which put the refinery out of action for about one week.

(2) These sabotage activities had considerable psychological value but accomplished no significant results otherwise.

f. Communist-Style Security Measures. As time went on, the police-state security measures imposed by Castro became increasingly effective, and agents and other resistance elements were hard pressed to survive. Many were captured, including three of the most important leaders under C.I.A. control. By stationing large numbers of militia and police throughout the country, by imposing curfews, by utilizing block wardens and security check points, and by seizing control of real estate in the cities through the Urban Reform Law, Castro was able to restrict the movements and activities of resistance elements to a crippling extent.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRIKE FORCE.

a. Action was begun on 4 November 1960, to recruit, organize, equip, and train a larger ground force than the small 200 to 300 man contingency force originally contemplated. It was planned at that time that this force would reach a strength of about 1,500 men. As this "Strike Force", as it came to be known, was developed over the ensuing months, many difficulties were encountered as a result of slowness in recruiting, political bickering among Cuban exile groups, lack of adequate training facilities and personnel, uncertainties with regard to whether Guatemala could continue to be used as a base, and lack of approved national policy on such questions as to what size force was desired, where and how it was to be trained, and whether such a force was actually ever to be employed. Some of the major problems encountered are described briefly below.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

- 10 -

b. Base for Training.

(1) The base available in Guatemala consisted of a small shelf of land on the side of a volcano barely large enough for comfortable accommodation of 200 men. Camp facilities were non-existent until the Cubans themselves, under American direction, threw up a few rude wooden buildings. As the population of the camp increased, living conditions became intolerably crowded, posing a serious morale problem among the troops and threatening the health of all. The **only** approach to the camp was over a narrow dirt road which wound its way up the mountainsides. In the dry season, the trip to the camp from the air base at Retalhuleu required about two hours by truck. In the rainy season, the road washed out frequently and became impassable to wheeled vehicles, while the camp itself was literally engulfed in the clouds. In the autumn of 1960, supplies had to be hauled up the mountain with tractors. There were no areas for infantry maneuver, but weapons could be fired at the camp site. Mortars were set up in the company street and fired over the buildings of the camp into impact areas on adjacent ridges.

(2) It appeared for a time in late 1960 that even this inadequate base would be lost, as the Department of State advanced the opinion that the presence of these activities in Guatemala would undermine the government of President Ydigoras and perhaps cause his overthrow. While the State Department urged withdrawal from Guatemala, it offered no alternative as to where the troops could be relocated. The possibility of using remote, unoccupied military facilities in the United States were raised, but this idea was opposed by the Department of State and was not approved by the Special Group. For a while, consideration was given to moving the troops to the C.I.A. base at Saipan, but this idea was abandoned on the valid grounds that the project would be delayed and logistical problems magnified. It was finally decided to remain in Guatemala, since this appeared to be the only possible solution.

c. Instructor Personnel. The only qualified instructor personnel available for training at the infantry training base consisted of four CIA civilian employees until November, 1960, when two Army officers and one non-commissioned officer from the Project Paramilitary Staff at Headquarters were sent to

~~SECRET~~

-11-

Guatemala as a stop-gap measure pending assignment of Army Special Forces training teams. These teams had been requested by the Paramilitary Staff on 28 October 1960, but there were long delays while policy governing this question was established, and it was 12 January 1961 before the 38 Special Forces personnel reached Guatemala. It would have been impossible for C.I.A. to train the Strike Force without the assistance of these Army personnel.

d. Logistical Support for Training. Most of the materials used for support of the infantry training base, including weapons, equipment and training ammunition, had to be lifted to Guatemala by air. This was a great logistical problem, considering the number of aircraft available and distances involved. Shortages of equipment and ammunition sometimes hampered training.

e. Recruiting.

(1) Recruiting in Miami was very slow until the end of 1960, as a result primarily of political maneuvering among the members of the Frente Revolucionario Democrático (FRD), the political front for the project. Each member of the FRD desired to accept only recruits loyal to his own political group, and all members of the FRD objected to recruitment of any former Cuban soldier who had served during the regime of Batista. Thus, personnel with previous military experience were for the most part denied to our use. All recruiting stopped for about four weeks during the confusion of an abortive revolution in Guatemala in November. There was continuing uncertainty as to whether sufficient recruits could ever be obtained to form a Strike Force of even minimal size until early January 1961, when 500 men had been obtained and recruits began arriving at a more rapid rate as a result of action taken to break the Cuban exile political barriers, which were delaying recruitment.

7. PREPARATIONS FOR TACTICAL AIR OPERATIONS.

a. Selection of Aircraft. The decision was reached to use the B-26 light bomber prior to the time when the undersigned joined the project on 1 September 1960. Aircraft of

~~SECRET~~

-12-

this type had been distributed to various foreign countries, including some in Latin America, and would, therefore, satisfy the requirement for non-attributability insofar as the United States was concerned. The Navy AD-6 was considered for a time as being superior to the B-26 for project purposes, but these aircraft had not been placed in the hands of Latin American governments and, therefore, could not meet the non-attributability requirement.

b. Tactical Air Base Problem.

(1) The air base constructed by C.I.A. at Retalhuleu, Guatemala, was at too great a distance from Cuba (750 miles from the central part of the Island) to serve for tactical air operations employing B-26 aircraft. The possibility of using a tactical air base in Mexico or in the Bahamas was explored with negative results. For a time, the President of Mexico indicated a willingness to permit use of the air field at Cozumel for limited staging operations over a 48 hour period. This was, of course, unsatisfactory for project purposes. The British were understandably reluctant to permit use of their territory for origination of tactical air strikes in connection with a United States-supported venture when the United States itself was unwilling to make similar use of its own territory.

(2) In October 1960, a C.I.A. delegation consulted with President Somoza of Nicaragua, who agreed to assist the project in any feasible way providing he received assurance from proper governmental authority that he would be supported politically by the United States if the question of Nicaraguan participation should ever be brought up for consideration by the Organization of American States or the United Nations. Such assurance was never given to the knowledge of the undersigned, but President Somoza nevertheless permitted development and use of Puerto Cabezas as an air and staging base.

(3) The use of facilities in Nicaragua was not looked upon with favor by the Department of State for political reasons, and for some months there was doubt as to whether the base would actually be used. Preparations at the base continued, however, and it was ready for use when the strike operations were launched in April 1961.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-13-

(4) The air base at Puerto Cabezas was within 500 miles of central Cuba, within marginal striking range for the B-26 aircraft.

c. Tactical Pilots. By the end of December 1960, ten B-26 aircraft were available to the project. This number was later increased to fifteen on recommendation of the Paramilitary Staff. Five Cuban B-26 pilots were considered proficient by this time, and six others were in training but had not reached a state of acceptable proficiency. The undersigned expressed reservations in writing in January 1961, concerning the ability and motivation of the Cuban tactical pilots to accomplish what would be required and recommended use of American contract pilots in addition to the Cubans. This recommendation was considered by the Special Group, which authorized the hiring of American pilots but reserved the question of their actual employment for later decision.

d. Air Crew Training. Adequate U. S. Air Force personnel were available early in the life of the project for training Cuban B-26 as well as transport pilots. About 150 Air Force personnel were involved in the project, performing such duties as training, maintenance, air base management, logistical ferry work, etc.

8. SEA FORCES.

a. The acquisition of ships and craft for execution of the amphibious operation proved to be one of the most difficult problems encountered. How this problem was solved is described briefly in following paragraphs.

b. Landing Craft. Four LCVP and three LCU, reconditioned by the Navy, 50X1 [redacted], and C.I.A. personnel were trained at Little Creek, Virginia, in their use. The Navy moved these craft to Vieques, Puerto Rico, where the C.I.A. operators trained Cuban crews. Utilizing a landing ship dock, the Navy was to deliver the landing craft, pre-loaded with vehicles and supplies to the objective area for the amphibious operation.

c. Transports. For acquisition of transports for troops and supplies, two possible courses of action were considered:

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-14-

(1) To purchase ships outright and recruit Cuban crews for them, or

(2) To charter ships.

d. As an initial experiment with the first course, two LCI's were bought and refitted through a ship broker in Miami, and mixed crews, including American contract masters and key officers along with Cuban crewmen, were placed on board. The use of American personnel in this capacity required approval of the Special Group. As a result of the inordinate delays and difficulties experienced in readying these two ships for sea, the idea of acquiring more ships in this manner was abandoned.

e. The way was opened to pursue the second course through contact by a member of the Paramilitary Staff with Mr. Eduardo Garcia, a Cuban national who, with his father and brother, owned a shipping company incorporated in Panama. Mr. Garcia agreed to charter any or all of the six ships owned by his company for project purposes. Five Garcia ships were eventually chartered for the operation, including two 1,500 ton motor vessels and three 2,000 ton steamships. The civilian crews of these merchant ships were for the most part Cuban or Spanish. Mr. Garcia made adjustments of all crews, dismissing members who did not wish to participate in the operation or were suspected of being Castro sympathizers and replacing these with Cubans recruited in Miami. Prior to execution of the operation, each of these ships was furnished with six 19 foot aluminum boats with outboard motors for use as auxiliary landing craft.

f. Later, two additional ships were chartered from the United Fruit Company for follow-up delivery of supplies and equipment after the assault phase.

9. EFFORT OF PARAMILITARY STAFF TO OBTAIN RESOLUTION OF MAJOR POLICY QUESTIONS - JANUARY 1961.

a. By the end of 1960, the development of land, sea and air forces for the amphibious/airborne assault had proceeded to an extent which permitted firm planning for conduct of the operation. The Paramilitary Staff by this time had developed

~~SECRET~~