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about one-foot beneath the surface was discovered about 100 yards off the beach. Members of the UDT team were forced to fire on a jeep which approached their position. Three trucks promptly arrived carrying troops who engaged in a fire fight with Lynch and his party. Lynch called for fire support from the BLAGAR, which closed to 400 yards and drove all opposition from the beach in ten minutes of firing. Lynch then called for troops to land.

(2) Landing of Troops.

(a) Troops commenced landing at 0100. There was no opposition in the immediate beach area, but about one hundred militia were encountered in the town of Playa Giron immediately inland. Seventy of these were captured, and the remainder fled leaving their weapons behind. Troops continued to land without serious opposition.

(b) At daylight, a channel through the coral reef was located and marked, and LCU's began to land vehicles at 0600.

(3) Enemy Air Attacks. Enemy air attacks against the invasion force commenced at 0630 and continued all day. B-26, Sea Fury (and T-33 aircraft participated in the attacks, with no more than two aircraft appearing at any one time during the day. The BLAGAR shot down one Sea Fury and two B-26 (assisted in one of these kills by a friendly B-26).

(4) In view of the enemy air attacks, the Brigade Commander decided to land troops scheduled for Green Beach with the main body at Blue Beach, thus avoiding the danger of loss at sea. By 0825, all troops, vehicles and tanks were ashore at Blue Beach.

(5) Loss of RIO ESCONDIDO. This ship, with ten days reserve supplies on board was sunk by enemy air attack at 0930. All crew members were rescued.

(6) Enemy air attacks against the ships continued as they withdrew to the south.

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d. Operations at Red Beach.

(1) UDT Reconnaissance. Mr. Robertson, the C.I.A. operations officer with the LCI BARBARA J, led a UDT team to Red Beach shortly after 0100 on 17 April and marked the beach. The reconnaissance party silenced enemy automatic weapons fire coming from the left flank.

(2) Landing of Troops. Troops commenced landing without opposition, but encountered fifty militia immediately inland, forty of whom were captured. Several trucks which approached the beach within the first half hour were successfully attacked and driven off by gunfire from the BARBARA J. Captured militiamen offered to fight against Castro.

(3) Loss of the HOUSTON. The HOUSTON was hit by rockets from enemy aircraft at 0630, and beached on the west side of Cochinos Bay. One infantry company, less its weapons platoon, was still on board. These men, with the ship's crew, went ashore but never reached the Red Beach area.

(4) One enemy B-26 was shot down by machine gun fire from the UDT boat.

(5) Combat Action. At about 1000, about 500 to 600 militia attacked the Red Beach force from the north and were driven off with heavy casualties. Tanks accompanying this force were either destroyed or stopped by friendly aircraft. A tank and two ammunition trucks arrived from Blue Beach in time for action against the next attack at 1400 by an estimated 1,500 militia. These troops, who arrived in open trucks and semi-trailers, were ambushed by the Red Beach force, employing the tank, 57mm recoilless rifles, 3.5" rocket launchers, machine guns, and other available weapons. Enemy troops were caught by this fire before they could dismount, and friendly survivors have estimated that fifty percent of these enemy troops were killed or wounded. The next attack came in the evening and lasted all night. Five enemy tanks were knocked out by the Red Beach force during the night.

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(6) The BARBARA J was strafed by an enemy Sea Fury during the day, and two engines were disabled. A near miss with rockets opened her seams slightly and she began taking water.

(7) Retirement to Blue Beach. On the morning of D-1, the Red Beach force, being almost out of ammunition, retired in good order to Blue Beach, utilizing captured trucks, and took up positions in the Blue Beach perimeter. They were not pressed by the enemy during this retirement.

(8) Cooperation of Civilians. Forty civilians in the Red Beach area volunteered to assist the invasion force and were employed as truck drivers and laborers.

e. Airborne Landing. The airborne company landed in all but one of five scheduled drop zones at 0730. Light resistance was encountered. Little is known of further actions by the airborne company, except that the force which landed north of Blue Beach held positions successfully until D-2, the final day of the operation.

f. Continued Action at Blue Beach.

(1) Air Supply. During the night of 17/18 April one C-54 drop of ammunition was made at Red Beach and three C-54 drops at Blue Beach. Three C-54 drops were made at Blue Beach during the following night, but only two were received.

(2) Combat Action. Reports have indicated that the Blue Beach area was quiet during the morning of D-1, but the enemy attacked from west, north and east in the afternoon, employing tanks, artillery, and aircraft. The battle continued throughout the night of 18/19 April.

(3) Attempt to Land Supplies. Orders were issued from Headquarters for ammunition and supplies to be offloaded from the transports CARIBE and ATLANTICO into the three LCU which were to be escorted to the beach during the night of 18/19 April. The LCU's were not able to rendezvous with these transports until the evening of 18 April. The LCU's were loaded and the run to the beach was commenced, but the BLAGAR

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reported that due to the slow speed of the LCU's, the craft could not arrive at the beach until after daylight. Enemy fighters by this time were over the beach continuously during daylight hours, and it was considered a certainty that the craft would be sunk before they could reach the beach to unload. Accordingly, the mission was cancelled by Headquarters, and instructions for air supply during the night were issued to the air base in Nicaragua.

(4) Evacuation Attempt. A message was sent to the Brigade Commander on 18 April stating that ships and craft would be moved to Blue Beach to evacuate troops that night if he so recommended. He replied that he would never be evacuated. At 1300 on 19 April, the two LCI and three LCU headed for the beach, in accordance with orders from Headquarters, to evacuate troops, but the convoy reversed course upon learning that the beachhead had fallen.

(5) Final Day of Battle (19 April). The enemy continued to press Blue Beach from three sides with tanks, infantry and artillery during the day. In the morning, a counter attack was launched to the west along the coastal road by about 90 men and two tanks. The tanks returned later in damaged condition, but the infantry force was not heard from again. In the course of the day's battle, ammunition supplies were exhausted, and at about 1600 in the afternoon organized resistance ceased. Survivors have stated that the lines did not collapse until all ammunition was expended.

g. Summary of Friendly Air Action.

(1) D-Day.

(a) Eleven B-26 were phased over the beachhead for close support and interdiction during the day. These aircraft attacked ground targets, sank a patrol escort ship (3 inch gun) near the Isle of Pines, and one aircraft attacked the airfield at Cienfuegos. Only three of these eleven aircraft returned to base. Four were shot down, while the remaining four landed at other friendly bases. Some of these four aircraft, and all the crews, were returned to base late the next day.

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(b) Four new B-26 arrived at Nicaragua from the United States that night. During the night, three B-26 were launched against the San Antonio airfield where D-Day photography had revealed the opposing aircraft were based. This mission was unsuccessful due to haze and poor visibility.

(2) D-1.

(a) Five aircraft flew missions over the beachhead during the morning and attacked ground targets.

(b) In the afternoon, a highly successful attack was launched by six aircraft (two flown by Americans) against a 20-mile-long truck and tank column approaching Blue Beach from the west. Several tanks and about twenty large troop-laden lorries were destroyed by napalm, bombs, rockets and machine gun fire. (It is noteworthy that an enemy report intercepted on this date indicated that he had already suffered 1,800 casualties, mostly from air attack.)

(c) This column was attacked again during the night by six B-26.

(d) Four additional new aircraft reached the base in Nicaragua during the night.

(3) D-2.

(a) Five aircraft (four with American crews) were sent in early morning sorties over the beachhead. Three, including two piloted by Americans, were shot down by T-33's. Additional sorties were flown during the morning as aircraft could be readied.

(4) It is estimated that only three enemy T-33 and two Sea Furies were left in action after D-Day. These fighters were sufficient, however, to keep almost continuous cover over the beachhead, making it almost suicidal to attempt operations in the area with B-26 aircraft, which were virtually helpless against fighter attack.

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(5) It seems reasonable to conclude that the attacks on military airfields originally programmed for 0540 on D-Day, but which had to be cancelled, would have had an excellent chance of eliminating Castro's offensive air capability or of reducing it to ineffectiveness. If this had been done, friendly B-26 operations could have been maintained over the beachhead area and the approaches thereto continuously during the day, and ships could have unloaded the supplies needed to sustain the Brigade. This could have turned the tide of battle, since Castro's road-bound truck columns proved highly vulnerable when friendly B-26 were able to locate them, and the Brigade, itself, was not defeated until its ammunition supplies were exhausted.

24. RESCUE OPERATIONS. Mr. Robertson and Mr. Lynch, with five Cuban UDT men, operated from United States destroyers for several days after collapse of the beachhead and rescued twenty-six survivors from the coastal area west of Cochinob Bay.

25. INTELLIGENCE FACTORS.

a. The ultimate success of strike operations against Cuba in causing the overthrow of Castro depended upon the precipitation by these operations of large-scale uprisings among the people of Cuba and widespread revolt within the ranks of Castro's armed forces. The invasion force was never intended to overthrow Castro by itself, and no representations were ever made by the Central Intelligence Agency that the force had such a potential.

b. There was much evidence from available intelligence sources, including agent reports and debriefing of persons recently coming out of Cuba, to indicate that the country was ripe for revolt. An analysis of actual and potential anti-Castro resistance in Cuba made by the Paramilitary Staff in March 1961 is contained in enclosure (4). After this was written, reliable intelligence was received indicating that the entire Cuban Navy was plotting a revolt, which was to take place at about the same time as the planned invasion.

c. The low estimate by the Paramilitary Staff of the fighting qualities and potential of Castro's militia was

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based upon accurate knowledge of militia performance against guerrilla forces in the Escambray Mountains over a period of six months. Some of the guerrilla leaders from the Escambray were exfiltrated and debriefed by the Central Intelligence Agency after resistance in these mountains collapsed. There can be no question of the fact that the militia performed very poorly in the Escambray, and demonstrated low morale, lack of efficiency and a marked reluctance to close in decisive combat even with small, poorly armed guerrilla forces. The guerrilla forces in the Escambray were reduced by seige, which cut off food supplies, and not by direct combat.

d. The military proficiency demonstrated by the militia at Zapata indicated that great progress had been made in integrating Bloc equipment and in the training of Castro's hard-core Communist followers during the early months of 1961. There was also reason to suspect that militia operations were being directed by European military personnel. The tactics employed were Communist-style, and enemy voice transmissions in a strange tongue, not Spanish, were intercepted by the Brigade. Intelligence indicates that these "elite" militia forces suffered extremely heavy casualties during the three days of fighting, and they were not able to overcome the Brigade until the latter was out of ammunition as a result of our inability to supply the force against the opposition of Castro's five remaining fighter aircraft. It would seem reasonable to conclude that if the Castro Air Force had been eliminated at the beginning so that uninterrupted unloading of supplies could proceed at the beach and our B-26 aircraft could operate effectively, the Brigade would have had an excellent chance of breaking the hard-core militia, which obviously was what Castro used in the battle. Casualties in the number being experienced by the militia (estimated 3,000 to 4,000) could not have been sustained more than a few more days without collapse. The breaking of the hard-core militia would probably have been the signal for revolt of the Rebel Army and remaining elements of the militia, who were known to be of dubious loyalty to Castro. In this regard, it is significant that the 150 militia prisoners captured by the Brigade offered to fight against Castro, and the majority of able-bodied male civilians in the invasion area did likewise. It is also

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significant that no known Rebel Army units participated in the battle, indicating Castro's lack of faith in their loyalty. It is also significant that Castro's Navy did nothing of importance against the invasion force.

e. The theory that uprisings and revolt would be triggered did not receive an adequate test in the operation. Agents throughout Cuba were warned shortly before the invasion to make all preparations for action, but the exact invasion area and timing could not be revealed to them in view of the known propensity of all Cubans to tell secrets. There was also a possibility that one or more agents would, unknown to us, be doubled (controlled by the enemy). It would not be reasonable to expect revolts to develop within a period of two or three days which turned out to be the extent of life of the invasion force, nor could revolt be expected until the invasion force had demonstrated that it had a good chance of enduring on Cuban soil. There is conclusive evidence that Castro feared revolt in the fact that he promptly arrested 30,000 persons throughout Cuba. One C.I.A. agent reported that 2,500 men had requested arms from him immediately after the invasion took place, but the invasion did not last long enough to permit supply of arms.

26. POLICY RESTRICTIONS WHICH LIMITED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS.

a. The most significant policy restrictions which hampered the preparation for and conduct of effective paramilitary operations are listed below.

(1) The restriction prohibiting use of bases in the United States for training paramilitary forces. (Adequate training base could not be obtained in other countries.)

(2) The restriction prohibiting use of an air base in the United States for logistical overflights in support of guerrilla forces and of the strike force when landed. (The Guatemalan base was the only base available for several months, until Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, was put into use shortly before

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the invasion in April 1961. Both were too distant from the target for effective, large-scale logistical flights with the aircraft available (C-54 and C-46). Missions could have been far more efficiently flown and supported from the United States, with fewer logistical problems, and possibly with less publicity than that which resulted from Guatemalan operations.)

(3) The restriction prohibiting use of American contract pilots for aerial supply of guerrilla forces. (Cuban pilots demonstrated at an early date their inability to perform these missions. American pilots, on the other hand, have proved their ability in this field in many areas of the world, working with a variety of indigenous forces. The failure to supply guerrilla organizations was a critical failure in the overall operation.)

(4) The restriction prohibiting use of a base in the United States for tactical air operations in support of the amphibious landing. (About nine hours were required to turn around a B-26 for a second mission over the target from Nicaragua, and pilots were physically unable to fly more than one mission per day. In the actual operation, numerous aircraft were forced to land in the United States or British territory due to fuel shortage, and were out of action during the critical period. From a base in Florida, the number of sorties flown could have been doubled or tripled, and fighter aircraft could have been used to protect the bombers. Location of bases in third countries also complicated security and logistical problems and increased the likelihood that use of the bases would be denied soon after commencement of operations.)

(5) The restriction prohibiting use of American contract pilots for tactical air operations. (Authority was granted to hire American pilots, but not to use them. Some American pilots were thrown into the amphibious operation during the second and third days as an emergency measure. Use of adequate numbers of highly skilled, combat-experienced American pilots in the initial air operations could have spelled the difference between success and failure.)

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(6) The restriction preventing use of more effective tactical aircraft than the B-26 bomber.

(7) The restrictions preventing the full application of the tactical air power available. (The preferred plan presented by the Paramilitary Staff called for full-scale air attacks by all available aircraft on military airfields, as well as against tank, artillery and truck parks, commencing at dawn of D-1 and involving another maximum effort at dusk and continuation of full-scale operations on D-Day and thereafter. Pressure by the Department of State against the use of tactical air resulted in the watering down of this plan. See paragraphs 11, 12 and 14. The initial air strike on D-2 was made against three airfields only, and only eight of the fifteen available bombers were permitted to participate.

(An initial full-scale raid by all fifteen of the available bombers would certainly have had a much greater destructive effect than the raid by eight aircraft, and might have eliminated Castro's tactical air force at one blow.

(Restrictions on the employment of napalm also reduced the effectiveness of operations. Use of this weapon against concentrated aircraft, tanks, artillery, and trucks clearly visible in up-to-date aerial photographs could have been a decisive factor. For example, one photograph revealed a concentrated tank park with 36 tanks and a truck park with 150 trucks. Napalm could have eliminated these, as well as other tank, truck, and artillery parks revealed by other available photography. By limiting the number of aircraft in the initial surprise strike, and leaving these important targets untouched, Castro was given the opportunity to disperse these concentrations.

(Cancellations at the last moment, while the troops were already off the beaches preparing to land, of the air attacks planned for 0540 on D-Day against Castro's remaining tactical aircraft, doomed the operation to failure. See paragraph 23b.

(Restrictions which prevented the full application of available airpower in accordance with sound

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tactical principles must be regarded as primarily responsible for failure of the amphibious operation.)

b. The Department of State was the principal advocate of the restrictions listed above. The rationale of these self-imposed restrictions rested upon what proved to be an unrealistic requirement, impossible of fulfillment under the circumstances, to conduct operations in such a way as to be non-attributable to the United States, or, at least, plausibly deniable. In the interest of non-attributability, the requirement for operational effectiveness was so completely subordinated that the end result was "too little, too late", and the United States had to bear publicly the responsibility for a failure rather than the responsibility for a success. The price paid by the United States in terms of public clamor by our enemies was high enough to have covered the cost of additional measures that could have been taken to ensure success. It seemed to this writer through the many months of this effort, that the United States was trying to achieve a very important objective at a very small cost to itself, while it would have been in the national interest to act more boldly and openly and accept more risks as might be necessary to ensure that every needed measure would be taken to win the objective, which had to be won, and still must be won, and soon, if all Latin America is not to be lost to Communism.

27. CONCLUSIONS. The following conclusions are based upon my experiences of the past eight months as Chief of the Paramilitary Staff of the Central Intelligence Agency Cuba Project:

a. The Government and the people of the United States are not yet psychologically conditioned to participate in the cold war with resort to the harsh, rigorous, and often dangerous and painful measures which must be taken in order to win. Our history and tradition have conditioned us for all-out war or all-out peace, and the resort to war-like measures in any situation short of all-out war is repugnant to the American mentality. In order to win the cold war, this inhibition must be overcome.

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b. In a cold war paramilitary operation, there is a basic conflict of interest between considerations of military effectiveness on the one hand and political considerations on the other. Since in the cold war national survival does not seem to be immediately at issue (although this writer would deem that it is), political considerations tend to dominate, with the result that military measures are progressively restricted and subordinated. Experiences of the past few years indicate that political restrictions on military measures may result in destroying the effectiveness of the latter, and the end result is political embarrassment coupled with military failure and loss of prestige in the world.

c. Paramilitary operations cannot be effectively conducted on a ration-card basis. Therefore, if political considerations are such as to prohibit the application of all military measures required to achieve the objective, then military operations should not be undertaken.

d. Civilian officials of the Government should not attempt to prescribe the tactics of military or paramilitary operations.

e. For an effort of the kind made against Cuba, detailed policy guidance, in writing, is required from the national level. A national plan should be written at the outset, setting forth the responsibilities and tasks of every Department and Agency concerned. An organization must be provided for directing and coordinating the actions by all Departments and Agencies in the economic, political, psychological and military fields.

f. In pursuing an operation of the kind conducted against Cuba, governmental machinery must be established for prompt, decisive resolution of policy questions as they arise.

g. Paramilitary operations of any appreciable size cannot be conducted on a completely covert basis, and the requirement for non-attributability introduces tremendous complications in the accomplishment of what would otherwise be simple tasks. Since paramilitary operations on an increasing

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scale will probably be required as we face years of cold war in the future, the United States should be prepared to operate more boldly and overtly in this field, as do our enemies of the Sino-Soviet Bloc.

g. The Central Intelligence Agency does not have required organization, equipment, procedures, bases, facilities nor staff for the planning and conduct of paramilitary operations. It cannot conduct such operations without relying heavily upon the Department of Defense for personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and other support.

i. Primary responsibility for all paramilitary matters, including the organization, equipping, training, operational employment and support of indigenous guerrilla forces, should be assigned to the Department of Defense, which has vast human and material resources and proper organization and procedures for accomplishment of these functions.

j. All military operations of any kind, including those of a paramilitary nature, should be under the direction and control of the Unified Commander in whose area the operations are to take place. It would be advisable to form a special task force within the Unified Command, with representation from Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and C.I.A. as required, for conduct of paramilitary operations.

k. Within the Department of Defense, the responsibility for ground paramilitary matters should be assigned to the Army Special Forces, since these forces are especially trained and organized for such missions.

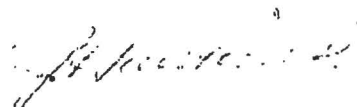
l. It would be advisable for all members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to attend meetings with the President and Cabinet Officers at which any military matters are to be discussed. It cannot be expected that any single military officer can advise adequately on all the technical aspects of air, sea, and ground warfare. The Cuban operation was essentially a seaborne invasion. Such operations are a specialty of the Navy and Marine Corps. Therefore, the Chief

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of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, if present at all meetings, would have been able to contribute invaluable advice at the proper time.

m. A Communist-style police state is now firmly entrenched in Cuba, which will not be overthrown by means short of overt application of elements of United States military power. Further efforts to develop armed internal resistance, or to organize Cuban exile forces, should not be made except in connection with a planned overt intervention by United States forces.



J. HAWKINS
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps

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28. REFERENCE LIST

- (a) JCS Memo 57-61 of 3 February 1961, to Secretary of Defense; Subject: Military Evaluation of the C.I.A. Paramilitary Plan, Cuba.
- (b) JCS Memo 146-61 of 10 March 1961, to Secretary of Defense; Subject: Evaluation of C.I.A. Cuban Volunteer Task Force.
- (c) JCS Memo 166-61 of 15 March 1961, to Secretary of Defense; Subject: Evaluation of Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts of C.I.A. Paramilitary Plan, Cuba.

NOTE: Above references are not available for attachment to this paper. If the reader desires to read these attachments, approval must be obtained from the following:

Colonel M. R. Olson, USMC
Executive Officer, SACS
Room 1 E 9629
Pentagon
Code 11-5-3051

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1. Copy of Colonel Hawkins Memo of 4 January 1961 to Chief; WH/4; Subject: Policy Decisions Requested for Conduct of Strike Operations Against Cuba
2. TRINIDAD (Concept of Operation)
3. Appendix 1 (Target List) to Annex E (Tactical Air Support) to Operation Plan, ZAPATA
4. Anti-Castro Resistance in Cuba: Actual and Potential, dated March 16, 1961
5. "Cuba: The Record Set Straight", Charles J. V. Murphy, Fortune Magazine, September 1961, pp. 92-237

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ENCLOSURE 1

4 January 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, WH/4

SUBJECT: Policy Decisions Required for Conduct
of Strike Operations Against Government
of Cuba1. Purpose:

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the current status of our preparations for the conduct of amphibious/airborne and tactical air operations against the Government of Cuba and to set forth certain requirements for policy decisions which must be reached and implemented if these operations are to be carried out.

2. Concept:

As a basis for the policy requirements to be presented below, it would appear appropriate to review briefly the concept of the strike operations contemplated and outline the objectives which these operations are designed to accomplish.

The concept envisages the seizure of a small lodgement on Cuban soil by an all-Cuban amphibious/airborne force of about 750 men. The landings in Cuba will be preceded by a tactical air preparation, beginning at dawn of D-1 Day. The primary purpose of the air preparation will be to destroy or neutralize all Cuban military aircraft and naval vessels constituting a threat to the invasion force. When this task is accomplished, attacks will then be directed against other military targets, including artillery parks, tank parks, military vehicles, supply dumps, etc. Close air support will be provided to the invasion force on D-Day and thereafter as long as the force is engaged in combat. The primary targets during this time will be opposing military formations in the field. Particular efforts will be made to interdict opposing troop movements against the lodgement.

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The initial mission of the invasion force will be to seize and defend a small area, which under ideal conditions will include an airfield and access to the sea for logistic support. Plans must provide, however, for the eventuality that the force will be driven into a tight defensive formation which will preclude supply by sea or control of an airfield. Under such circumstances supply would have to be provided entirely by air drop. The primary objective of the force will be to survive and maintain its integrity on Cuban soil. There will be no early attempt to break out of the lodgement for further offensive operations unless and until there is a general uprising against the Castro regime or overt military intervention by United States forces has taken place.

It is expected that these operations will precipitate a general uprising throughout Cuba and cause the revolt of large segments of the Cuban Army and Militia. The lodgement, it is hoped, will serve as a rallying point for the thousands who are ready for overt resistance to Castro but who hesitate to act until they can feel some assurances of success. A general revolt in Cuba, if one is successfully triggered by our operations, may serve to topple the Castro regime within a period of weeks.

If matters do not eventuate as predicted above, the lodgement established by our force can be used as the site for establishment of a provisional government which can be recognized by the United States, and hopefully by other American states, and given overt military assistance. The way will then be paved for United States military intervention aimed at pacification of Cuba, and this will result in the prompt overthrow of the Castro Government.

While this paper is directed to the subject of strike operations, it should not be presumed that other paramilitary programs will be suspended or abandoned. These are being intensified and accelerated. They include the supply by air and sea of guerrilla elements in Cuba, the conduct of sabotage operations, the introduction of specially trained paramilitary teams, and the expansion of our agent networks throughout the island.

3. Status of Forces:

a. Air. The Project tactical air force includes ten B-26 aircraft currently based in Guatemala and at Eglin Air Force Base. However, there are only five Cuban B-26 pilots

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available at this time who are considered to be of high technical competence. Six additional Cuban pilots are available, but their proficiency is questionable.

It is planned that seven C-54 and four C-46 transports will be available for strike operations. Here again, the number of qualified Cuban crews is insufficient. There is one qualified C-54 crew on hand at this time, and three C-46 crews.

Aviation ordnance for conduct of strike operations is yet to be positioned at the strike base in Nicaragua. Necessary construction and repairs at this base are now scheduled to commence, and there appears to be no obstacle to placing this facility in a state of readiness in time for operations as planned.

Conclusions:

- (1) The number of qualified Cuban B-26 crews available is inadequate for conduct of strike operations.
- (2) The number of qualified Cuban transport crews is grossly inadequate for supply operations which will be required in support of the invasion force and other friendly forces which are expected to join or operate in conjunction with it in many parts of Cuba. It is anticipated that multiple sorties will be required on a daily basis.

b. Maritime. Amphibious craft for the operation, including three LCU's and four LCVP's are now at Vieques, Puerto Rico, where Cuban crew training is progressing satisfactorily. These craft with their crews will soon be ready for operations.

The BARBARA J (LCI), now enroute to the United States from Puerto Rico, requires repairs which may take up to two weeks for completion. Its sister ship, the BLAGAR, is outfitting in Miami, and its crew is being assembled. It is expected that both vessels will be fully operational by mid-January at the latest.

In view of the difficulty and delay encountered in purchasing, outfitting and readying for sea the two LCI's, the decision has been reached to purchase no more major vessels,

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but to charter them instead. The motor ship, RIO ESCONDIDO (converted LCT) will be chartered this week and one additional steam ship, somewhat larger, will be chartered early in February. Both ships belong to a Panamanian Corporation controlled by the GARCIA family of Cuba, who are actively cooperating with this Project. These two ships will provide sufficient lift for troops and supplies in the invasion operation.

Conclusion:

Maritime assets required will be available in ample time for strike operations in late February.

c. Ground. There are approximately 500 Cuban personnel now in training in Guatemala. Results being achieved in the FRD recruiting drive now underway in Miami indicate that extraordinary measures may be required if the ranks of the Assault Brigade are to be filled to its planned strength of 750 by mid-January. Special recruiting teams comprised of members of the Assault Brigade are being brought to Miami to assist in recruiting efforts in that city and possibly in other countries, notably Mexico and Venezuela. All recruits should be available by mid-January to allow at least four to six weeks of training prior to commitment.

The Assault Brigade has been formed into its basic organization (a quadrangular infantry battalion, including four rifle companies, and a weapons company). Training is proceeding to the extent possible with the limited number of military instructors available. This force cannot be adequately trained for combat unless additional military trainers are provided.

Conclusions:

(1) It is probable that the Assault Brigade can reach its planned strength of 750 prior to commitment, but it is possible that upwards of 100 of these men will be recruited too late for adequate training.

(2) Unless U. S. Army Special Forces training teams as requested are sent promptly to Guatemala, the Assault Brigade cannot be readied for combat by late February as planned and desired.

(3) The Assault Brigade should not be committed to action until it has received at least four and preferably six

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weeks of training under supervision of the U. S. Army teams. This means that the latter half of February is the earliest satisfactory time for the strike operation.

4. Major Policy Questions Requiring Resolution:

In order that planning and preparation for the strike operation may proceed in an orderly manner and correct positioning of hundreds of tons of supplies and equipment can be effected, a number of firm decisions concerning major questions of policy are required. These are discussed below.

a. The Concept Itself.

Discussion. The question of whether the incoming administration of President-elect Kennedy will concur in the conduct of the strike operations outlined above needs to be resolved at the earliest possible time. If these operations are not to be conducted, then preparations for them should cease forthwith in order to avoid the needless waste of great human effort and many millions of dollars. Recruitment of additional Cuban personnel should be stopped, for every new recruit who is not employed in operations as intended presents an additional problem of eventual disposition.

Recommendation. That the Director of Central Intelligence attempt to determine the position of the President-Elect and his Secretary of State-Designate in regard to this question as soon as possible.

b. Timing of the Operation.

If Army Special Forces training teams are made available and dispatched to Guatemala by mid-January, the Assault Brigade can achieve acceptable readiness for combat during the latter half of February, 1961. All other required preparations can be made by that same time. The operation should be launched during this period. Any delay beyond 1 March, 1961, would be inadvisable for the following reasons:

(1) It is doubtful that Cuban forces can be maintained at our Guatemalan training base beyond 1 March 1961. Pressure upon the Government of Guatemala may become unmanageable if Cuban ground troops are not removed by that date.

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(2) Cuban trainees cannot be held in training for much longer. Many have been in the camp for months under most austere and restrictive conditions. They are becoming restive and if not committed to action soon there will probably be a general lowering of morale. Large-scale desertions could occur with attendant possibilities of surfacing the entire program.

(3) While the support of the Castro Government by the Cuban populace is deteriorating rapidly and time is working in our favor in that sense, it is working to our disadvantage in a military sense. Cuban jet pilots are being trained in Czechoslovakia and the appearance of modern radar throughout Cuba indicates a strong possibility that Castro may soon have an all-weather jet intercept capability. His ground forces have received vast quantities of military equipment from the Bloc countries, including medium and heavy tanks, field artillery, heavy mortars and anti-aircraft artillery. Bloc technicians are training his forces in the use of this formidable equipment. Undoubtedly, within the near future Castro's hard core of loyal armed forces will achieve technical proficiency in the use of available modern weapons.

(4) Castro is making rapid progress in establishing a Communist-style police state which will be difficult to unseat by any means short of overt intervention by U. S. military forces.

Recommendation. That the strike operation be conducted in the latter half of February, and not later than 1 March 1961.

c. Air Strikes.

The question has been raised in some quarters as to whether the amphibious/airborne operation could not be mounted without tactical air preparation or support or with minimum air support. It is axiomatic in amphibious operations that control of air and sea in the objective area is absolutely required. The Cuban Air Force and naval vessels capable of opposing our landing must be knocked out or neutralized before our amphibious shipping makes its final run into the beach. If this is not done, we will be courting disaster. Also, since our invasion force is very small in comparison to forces which may be thrown against it, we must compensate for numerical inferiority by effective tactical air support not only during the landing but thereafter as long as the force remains in combat. It is

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essential that opposing military targets such as artillery parks, tank parks, supply dumps, military convoys and troops in the field be brought under effective and continuing air attack. Psychological considerations also make such attacks essential. The spectacular aspects of air operations will go far toward producing the uprising in Cuba that we seek.

Recommendations.

- (1) That the air preparation commence not later than dawn of D minus 1 Day.
- (2) That any move to curtail the number of aircraft to be employed from those available be firmly resisted.
- (3) That the operation be abandoned if policy does not provide for use of adequate tactical air support.

d. Use of American Contract Pilots.

The paragraph above outlines the requirement for precise and effective air strikes, while an earlier paragraph points up the shortage of qualified Cuban pilots. It is very questionable that the limited number of Cuban B-26 pilots available to us can produce the desired results unless augmented by highly skillful American contract pilots to serve as section and flight leaders in attacks against the more critical targets. The Cuban pilots are inexperienced in war and of limited technical competence in navigation and gunnery. There is reason also to suspect that they may lack the motivation to take the stern measures required against targets in their own country. It is considered that the success of the operation will be jeopardized unless a few American contract B-26 pilots are employed.

With regard to logistical air operations, the shortage of Cuban crews has already been mentioned. There is no prospect of producing sufficient Cuban C-54 crews to man the seven C-54 aircraft to be used in the operation. Our experience to date with the Cuban transport crews has left much to be desired. It is concluded that the only satisfactory solution to the problem of air logistical support of the strike force and other forces joining it will be to employ a number of American contract crews.

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Recommendation.

That policy approval be obtained for use of American contract crews for tactical and transport aircraft in augmentation of the inadequate number of Cuban crews available.

e. Use of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

The airfield at Puerto Cabezas is essential for conduct of the strike operation unless a base is made available in the United States. Our air base in Guatemala is 800 miles from central Cuba--too distant for B-26 operations and for air supply operations of the magnitude required, using the C-46 and C-54 aircraft. Puerto Cabezas is only 500 miles from central Cuba--acceptable, although too distant to be completely desirable, for B-26 and transport operations.

Puerto Cabezas will also serve as the staging area for loading assault troops into transports much more satisfactorily than Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, which is exposed to hostile observation and lacks security. It is planned that troops will be flown in increments from Guatemala to Puerto Cabezas, placed in covered trucks, loaded over the docks at night into amphibious shipping, which will then immediately retire to sea.

Conclusion:

The strike operation cannot be conducted unless the Puerto Cabezas air facility is available for our use, or unless an air base in the United States is made available.

Recommendation.

That firm policy be obtained for use of Puerto Cabezas as an air strike base and staging area.

f. Use of U. S. Air Base for Logistical Flights.

An air base in southern Florida would be roughly twice as close to central Cuba as Puerto Cabezas. This means that the logistical capability of our limited number of transport aircraft would be almost doubled if operated from Florida rather than Puerto Cabezas. Logistical support of the strike

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force in the target would be much more certain and efficient if flown from Florida.

There is also a possibility that once the strike operations commence, conditions would develop which would force us out of the Nicaraguan air base. Without some flexibility of operational capability including an additional logistical support air base with pre-positioned supplies in the United States, we could conceivably be confronted with a situation wherein the Assault Brigade would be left entirely without logistical air support. Supply by sea cannot be relied upon, for the Brigade may be driven by superior forces from the beach area. Such a situation could lead to complete defeat of the Brigade and failure of the mission.

It seems obvious that the only real estate which the United States can, without question, continue to employ once the operation commences is its own soil. Therefore, an air base for logistical support should be provided in the United States. This will offer the possibility of continued, flexible operations, if one or both of our bases in Guatemala and/or Nicaragua are lost to our use.

Recommendation.

That policy be established to permit use of an air base in southern Florida (preferably Opa Locka which is now available to us and has storage facilities for supplies) for logistical support flights to Cuba.

J. Hawkins
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Chief, WH/4/PM

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