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14 September 1962

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
Department of the Army
Attn: ISR

FROM: Interagency Source Register

SUBJECT: PANEQUE Batista, Victor (SD-10237)
aka: PANEQUE y Batista, Victor Manuel
DIEGO Paneque, Major
Commandant DIEGO (war name)

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1. Reference is made to the request dated 6 August 1962, subject as above, whose name you desired checked against the files of this office. The files contain the following information concerning the subject of your request.

2. Information provided by an untested source on 15 September 1960 indicated that Victor Manuel PANEQUE Batista (war name Commandante DIEGO) was about 5'6" tall, weighed about 180 pounds, and had a solid muscular build, light complexion, sandy hair and grey eyes. Subject was a friendly, simple, but apparently very shrewd and determined individual of boundless energy. Subject was born in Holguin, Oriente Province, Cuba, on 22 September 1918. His formal education was short. From 1934 until 1942 Subject worked as a farm-hand together with his father. In 1942 Subject had four months of military training at Escuela Militar, Managua, Cuba, and then served two years as an infantry private at the Military Base, Managua, Province of Havana, Cuba. Released from military service in October 1944, he found employment as a waiter and bartender in various bar-rooms in Holguin. He worked in this field until 13 October 1956, the last five years of this period as a bartender in the Cabaret Casana Club, Holguin. While still employed at this Club, Subject joined the 26th July Movement of Fidel CASTRO, and was appointed chief of all clandestine activity against the BATISTA regime for the Northern Coast of Oriente Province. Subject was arrested by the police of Bayamo, Oriente

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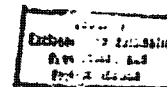
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Province, sentenced to one year in prison by the Tribunal of Santiago de Cuba for conspiracy against the BATISTA regime. He served his sentence and was released on 22 November 1957. Subject was arrested the following day by the Marina de Guerra of Balabano, Havana Province, but released again four days later. On 27 November 1957 he was appointed by the Castro organization, "Jefe de Accion" (Political action, sabotage and violent assaults) for the Province of Las Villas. In this capacity, Subject organized a "Front" on the North Coast of Las Villas, called Columna No. 1 Marcelo Salado. "Columna No. 1" operated in the Sierra Baburanao (North Coast of Las Villas) until beginning of October 1958, when Che GUEVARA and Camilo CIENFUEGOS with their columns entered the province. In October 1958, Subject was "Jefe de Accion" for the Provinces of Pinar del Rio, Havana and Matanzas. In this capacity, Subject organized Rebel Army units in the mountain areas of Pinar del Rio, the Central area of Matanzas and the area East of Havana. This operation lasted two months (November and December 1959). From 1 to 15 January 1959, Subject's Headquarters was located at the Sports Palace of Havana and when Fidel CASTRO entered the City, Subject turned over full control of the city to his leader. On 15 January 1959, Subject was appointed Chief of the Revolutionary Army 5th Military District of Havana. He held this post for 22 days. Then (beginning of March 1959) he was made "Jefe del Orden Publico en el Estado Mayor del Ejercito Rebelde" (Chief of Public Order in the General Staff of the Rebel Army). In April 1959, Fidel CASTRO appointed Subject to the post of Chief of the Rural Police for the entire national territory. He was given full authority to set up and organize military schools for training of a modern rural police force. Subject proposed to Fidel CASTRO the idea of organizing the Cuban Rural Police on the pattern of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In July 1959, Subject established the first Rural Police Training School at the Finca San Jacinto in Bahia Honda, Province of Pinar del Rio. Subject stated that none of the instructors had been associated with the Communist Party of Cuba. Subject held the posts of Chief of Public Order and concurrently Chief of the Rural Police from beginning of April 1959 until 9 November 1959. However, toward the end of October 1959, Fidel CASTRO, thoroughly disillusioned with the anti-communist political attitude demonstrated by staff and students of the Bahia Honda Rural Police training school, dissolved it, assigned the staff teaching jobs at Peasant Militia schools and transferred the students to Rebel Army units from which they had been detached. This decision was preceded by numerous violent arguments between Subject and Fidel CASTRO and convinced Subject that CASTRO was following the Communist

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line. On 9 November 1959, Subject was removed from his post as Chief of Public Order and Chief of Rural Police. He was given a "comision de servicio" and appointed Administrator General of the "Compania Inter-Americana", a truck transport enterprise covering about 70% of all Cuban truck transport requirements. Subject held this position until 29 August 1960. On 1 September 1960 this enterprise was dissolved and a new one, called "Hulleres Nacionales" set up in its place. Subject was made General Administrator of this enterprise. In spite of his prominent position, Subject decided to leave his country and go to the United States. He escaped by a small boat and was picked up by an American Tanker after drifting for fourteen hours. He gave no explanation for his sudden decision except to say that he did not agree with the Communist trend of Cuban politics. Subject claimed to be the leader of Movimiento Insurreccional de Recuperacion (MIR - Insurrection Movement for the Recovery of the Revolution) in Cuba. This Movement allegedly was founded in Las Villas Province by Doctor Orlando BORSCH (BOSCH) and Subject in 1959. At the beginning of September 1960 it joined the Alianza de Liberacion which was organized in the United States by Doctor Luis CONTE Aguerro with Subject's assistance.

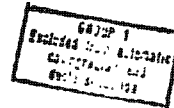
3. According to a report dated 21 September 1960, from a fairly reliable source, Subject tried to give the impression that he was against the CASTRO government but in reality was a Cuban government agent.

4. According to a report dated 6 October 1960 prepared by another office of this agency, members of the Student group at the University of Havana reported the presence in Miami of two CASTRO "Plants" said to be Departamento Investigativo del Ejercito Revolucionario (DIER) agents. One of these was Subject. The information in this report came from a United States national with business contacts in the Latin American areas.

5. An unvaluated report dated 13 March 1962, indicated that Subject was the organizer of a hunger strike group and was the first speaker at a rally to urge the United States to give arms to exiled Cubans. He advised the audience that the "Hunger Strike to Death" had taken place to show the President of the United States, that Cubans were willing to die in exile if their right to defend Cuba from Communism was denied.

6. For additional information concerning Subject, you are referred to:

- a. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau File No. 105-92197.



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- b. Department of State Incoming Telegram from Havana No. 1604, dated 6 October 1960 (No additional documentation available).
 - c. Immigration and Naturalization Service (No additional documentation available).
 - d. Department of the Army message from USARMA, Havana, Cuba NR: C-212, dated 3 September 1960, and USARMA, Havana, Cuba NR: C-218, dated 13 September 1960.
 - e. Office of Naval Intelligence.
 - f. Washington Post newspaper, Sunday issue dated 12 June 1960, magazine section "Parade", article titled "Soldier of Fortune".
 - g. Washington Post newspaper, Sunday issue dated 10 May 1961, magazine section "Parade", article titled "We Will Finish the Job".
7. The Interagency Source Register indicates that there is no current operational interest in Subject.
8. Para. 7 confirms telecon of 7 August 1962 between Miss and Mrs. Taylor of your office.

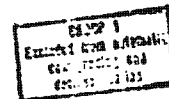
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RID/CE: JMA/NH/pho

Based on: 201-266382*

cc: CI/Liaison

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