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23 November 1960

CONTACT REPORT

SUBJECT: Meeting with Manuel Ray and Raul Chibas in the latter's apartment (30 West 60th Street, New York City) on 22 November, 1960.

PART ONE OF THREE

1. Note: this meeting had been called by me in order to implement the decisions reached at Headquarters concerning our future relationships with the MRP. (See Memoranda For The Record dated 21 November 1950, DIR 12532, JST 24500, and C/WH/PA's memorandum to C/WH/4, 9 November, 1960; also see MASH 1774, IE 45816 which states that Hunt obtained Yarons's concurrence on 21 November to finance the MRP via the FRO's controller.)

2. The meeting was started by me telling Ray that I had received a somewhat garbled message concerning a certain operation in the Isle of Pines. How serious an undertaking was this and what, precisely, was involved? (Comment: this question was posed pursuant to instruction by C/WH/4 and in line with C/WH/4/PA's memorandum to me.) Ray informed me as follows:

(a) There are two garrisons stationed at the Isle of Pines with whom his organization has contact. One garrison is commanded by [redacted] who could count on approximately 750 men to follow him when and if [redacted] decides to break away from Castro. [redacted] also has approximately 50 trustworthy officials under his command (whether these officers were military or civilian Ray did not know) which were ready to assist in anti-Castro activities--the second garrison was located at the Punta Del Este and was primarily a coast artillery installation. Ray did not recall the name of its commanding officer.

(b) Quite separately from the above, Ray's people are in contact with a (fmr) [redacted] who is the commander of the prison where Huber Matos is incarcerated. According to reliable information, Ray says [redacted] may be of help in arranging the escape of Matos. A female courier who arrived in Miami on 21 November said that Matos seems to trust [redacted] and has given--via his wife who can visit him at the prison--consent to utilize [redacted] in efforts designed to liberate Matos from prison.

(c) In considering the situation outlined in (a) and (b) above, Manuel Ray's military planners felt that one single operation should be forged: since the MRP planners believe that, if Huber Matos can be freed and if the two garrisons mentioned in paragraph 2(a) above will defect, then other troops and a good part of the population in the Isle of Pines, known by the name Chino, is undoubtedly loyal to Castro. Furthermore, the MRP feels that the Isle of Pines area under

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consideration can probably not be held by them for any length of time unless certain segments of Castro's air force can be neutralized either prior or during the coup. The MRPs are not so much concerned about Castro's ground force; according to Ray there are only three roads or passes leading into the Isla de Pinos sea marsh land. These roads, the MRPs feel, can be easily enough controlled by them. As matters now stand, the general concept of the operation would be for [redacted] to capture and neutralize Cline. The [redacted] would form a column of approximately 40 men and drive to the Matos prison area—an ostensibly routine trip which has been performed in the past a number of times in order to get supplies for [redacted] garrison. Matos would be freed with the help of [redacted] at time and almost simultaneously with his liberation the [redacted] and Punta Del Este garrisons would move and occupy tactical and, perhaps, also strategic locations.

(d) The reason that 27 November was set as the target date was that both [redacted] and C. [redacted] are due for rotation in the very near future. Furthermore, the MRP planners think, a Sunday is the best day to mount such an operation.

3. After the above exposition Ray asked for the following assistance:

- (a) Our support to and/or advice on how to neutralize Castro's air force,
- (b) Intelligence data concerning coastal mining and air fields,
- (c) Delivery of anti-air craft artillery and continuing re-supply for anti-Castro rebels after the operation has begun, and
- (d) Maps prepared by the Aerial Service Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (?)

4. Without making any commitments on the above request I asked whether or not Ray had proper communication facilities at his disposal and whether or not his people inside were able to receive, handle, and use any supplies which might come their way. I also asked what specific types of weapons the MRP planners were thinking of and what kind of assistance re-supply would be needed for arms now already in the hands of anti-Castro Cubans in that area. It became clear that Ray did not have the answers to these questions which he felt should be referred for further discussion to the "technical level," i.e., Colonel Barquin and [redacted].

5. At this point of the conversation I began with the implementation of the Headquarters decisions reached in regards to the Bender group's support of the MRP. I said that I wanted to repeat comments I had made previously to Chibas, Esteves, Barquin, and Ray; namely, that the Bender group could not afford any duplication of anti-Castro efforts, that an administrative and supply machinery had been established for quite some time, and that this machinery, i.e., the Frente Revolucionario Democrático, would have to be utilized to the fullest in operations of this sort. Ray

undoubtedly knew [redacted] was also the military advisor to the FRD; any shipments would undoubtedly carry the FRD label and in all likelihood FRD-prepared, anti-Castro literature would accompany such shipments; plans and pilots utilized in such an undertaking were FRD assets and identified as such.

6. Ray's reply to this was somewhat as follows: while the FRD thinks it controls these pilots I, Bender, should at least realize that the pilots who were working formerly for Cubana Air Lines really belonged to the MRP. In any case he, Ray, and the MRP would accept the proposed arrangement because it would not imply that the MRP is politically beholden to the FRD; it would simply indicate to the people inside Cuba that the MRP was utilizing all resources to obtain the equipment necessary to overthrow Castro. Naturally he was not enthusiastic about this formula but he could live and cope with it.

7. I told Ray that I would have to get in touch with our military people in order to find out whether or not we now had sufficient data on hand on which to base a decision. (Comment: C/MH/h was briefed telephonically by me on the foregoing and on additional aspects of this meeting which are reported in part two of this Contact Report. C/MH/h and I felt that we did not have as yet sufficient data to make any commitments; C/MH/h instructed me to advise Ray that:

(a) Either the MRP should submit a detailed plan which we would consider and on the basis of which we would then decide whether to be of assistance or not or;

(b) The MRP could go it alone, and ask us for some assistance after the operation has been launched and we would make our decision then on the basis of existing circumstances.

Above was transmitted to Ray who indicated that the MRP did not desire to go it alone and that he would instruct Barquin to immediately contact [Smith] in Miami to work out a coordinated operational plan.)

8. At this point of the meeting I felt that the time was ripe to make the \$2500 payment (by Bender check) and to advise Ray that another \$7500 would be made available to him via Juan Paula, the FRD comptroller. I repeated what I had said previously about duplication and followed the approved lines contained in my 19 November 1960 memorandum to C/MH/h. Ray's and Chibas' reactions were not unexpected: they rejected this particular funding proposal. (Comments: for additional details and other items covered during this meeting see parts two and three, "Contact Report, 22 November, Meeting with Ray and Chibas.")

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[initials]

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