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Hicks file

13 November 1960

CONTACT REPORT

SUBJECT: Meeting with Marmel Ray and Walt Collins in the latter's apartment (110 West 120 Street, New York City) on 22 November, 1960.

PART TWO OF THREE

1. Note: This meeting had been called by me in order to discuss the existing situation at Puerto Rico concerning our failed relationship with the MRP. (See Memorandum For the Record dated 21 November 1960, OIR 12552, OUI 4556, and Collins' memorandum to C/M/L, 9 November, 1960; also see FACI 1774, 18 and 6 which states that Hunt obtained Varona's concurrence on 21 November to discuss the status of the PARD's controller.)

2. The meeting was started by me telling Ray that I had received a somewhat garbled message concerning a certain operation on the Isle of Pines. How serious an undertaking was this and what, practically, was involved? (Initially this question was posed pursuant to information by C/M/L, and in line with C/M/L/27'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 a [redacted] who could count on approximately 100 men to follow him. [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-astro activities--the second garrison was located at the Punta del Norte and was primarily a coast artillery installation. Ray did not refer to the name of the commanding officer.

(b) Quite separately from the above, Ray's people are in contact with a (Mrs) Padilla who is the [redacted] where Huber Katos is incarcerated. According to Ray's information, [redacted] says, Padilla may be of help in arranging the escape of Katos. A female courier who arrives in Puerto Rico on 21 December said that Katos seems to trust Padilla and was giving her his wife and son visit him at the prison--he okay to utilize Padilla in efforts designed to liberate Katos from prison.

(c) In considering the situation outlined in (a) and (b) above, Marmel Ray's military planners felt that a single operation could be carried out since the MRP planners believe that, in order to be freed and if the two garrisons believe that the MRP will defect, then other troops and a good part of the population of the Isle of Pines, under the name of the MRP, is ready to defect. However, the MRP also felt that the Isle of Pines was not...

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undoubtedly know that Smith was also the military adviser to the PRD; any shipments would undoubtedly carry the PRD label and in all likelihood ID-prepared, anti-Castro literature would accompany such shipments; pilots and planes utilized in such an undertaking were PRD assets and identified as such.

6. PR's reply to this was somewhat as follows: while the PRD thinks it controls these pilots, Bander 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 PRD is politically beholden to the PRD; it would simply indicate to the people inside Cuba that the MRP was utilizing all resources to obtain the equipment necessary to overthrow the regime. 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. (Comments: C/M/L 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/M/L and I felt that we did not have as yet sufficient data to make any commitments; C/M/L instructed me to advise Ray that:

(a) Either the MRP should submit a detailed plan which we would consider 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 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 Berguin to immediately contact Smith in Miami to work out a coordinated operational plan.)

8. At this point at the meeting, I felt that the time was ripe to make the \$2000 payment (by broker check) and to advise Ray that another \$7500 would be available to him via Juan Pardo, an FBI controller. I repeated what I had said previously about duplication and followed the approved lines contained in my 19 November 1960 memorandum to C/M/L. Ray and Chibas' reactions were not unexpected; they rejected this particular funding proposal. (Comments: for additional details and other items covered during this meeting see pages two and three, "Contact Report, 22 November, Meeting with Ray and Chibas.")

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GD:ash

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