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28 June 1965

CONTACT REPORT

Meetings of 22 June 1965 at Hotel Roosevelt and 23 June 1965 at the Tudor Room of the Hotel Commodore

Participants: Carlos TEPEDINO, ⁰³(Harry Webster) and Harold F. Swenson

(All the information reported below is from TEPEDINO)

A. PRQ-1 form filled out by Carlos. See attached original. (Copies being made for 201)

B. Involvement in political activity or revolutionary or counter-revolutionary activity

1. Carlos has never been active in politics and voted only once in his life - for a candidate of the Authentic Party. However, he has been active in revolutionary and counter-revolutionary activities since 1952. During the year 1952-53 he began conspiring against BATISTA acting as an accommodation addressee for Jose Antonio ECHEVARRIA (now deceased) and close associates of ECHEVARRIA, including Rolando CUBELAS. Others involved with Carlos in the anti-BATISTA activities included Ricardo MIDAN Rivas (who had been a Senator in the Prio government and a Minister in the Grau government and who now resides in Miami), Sergio MEJIAS (who had been both Senator and Minister during the Prio government, a representative during the Grau government and who is now the Mayor of Matanzas), Diego Vicente TEJERA (now in Santo Domingo where he is trying to start a fishing business and where he is a close friend of IMBERT), Marcelino "Marzo" ARTIME (no relation to Manuel ARTIME), Fernando CORTINA (now a prisoner in Cuba), Daniel VASQUEZ (a Cuban air force pilot now residing in Miami), and Carlos PRIO Soccoras (former President of Cuba). During this same period, he came to know Jose VENEGAS Valdespino, known as "El Chino"; but Carlos never was friendly with VENEGAS knowing him only as an associate of Rolando CUBELAS in student activities. Carlos' friendship with Rolando resulted from their being introduced by Antonio ECHEVARRIA.

2. In addition to serving as an accommodation addressee for the revolutionaries who were plotting against BATISTA, Carlos used his business premises to hide people fleeing from the BATISTA police and to hide arms for the revolutionaries. He also contributed funds to the revolutionary cause.

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3. During the revolutionary activity against BATISTA, ECHEVARRIA and CUBELAS had as much or more prestige than Fidel CASTRO but after BATISTA fled from Cuba, Fidel CASTRO maneuvered himself into control of all of Cuba to the detriment of other revolutionary leaders. CUBELAS accepted CASTRO's leadership at first but became disenchanted as CASTRO turned towards communism and as CASTRO neglected the other revolutionary leaders who had struggled against BATISTA. As the result of CASTRO's attitudes and actions, many of the old revolutionaries became counter-revolutionaries. Some fled the country and some began working against the CASTRO regime in the same way as they had worked against BATISTA. The activities of Rolando CUBELAS and those close to him, including Carlos, are covered in a separate paragraph below.

C. Connection with the Agency

4. About 1957 Carlos and a Cuban businessman named Ricardo RIVON were approached by a Czech who said that he wished to invest a substantial sum of money in Cuba and who promised quick and substantial profits if RIVON and Carlos would join in his activities. Although Carlos no longer remembers the name of the Czech, he believes the Agency would have a record of it. Carlos was suspicious of the Czech and suggested that RIVON discuss the Czech's offer with the U.S. Embassy. It was because of this that Carlos came to meet [redacted] the individual who listened to RIVON when the latter went to the Embassy. [Stewart] requested that Carlos and RIVON maintain contact with the Czech who was believed to be connected with intelligence activities.

5. The close ⁰⁶ association with [redacted] ⁰⁶ continued and in about November 1959 [redacted] requested Carlos to go to Mexico to obtain information about a Soviet exhibition. [redacted] offered to pay the expenses of Carlos but Carlos, who was prosperous, refused to accept any funds. He did attend the exhibition, became a member of the Cuban commission which arranged for the transfer of the Soviet exhibition to Cuba, and was able to obtain detailed information which [redacted] appeared to consider valuable. About August 1960, Rolando CUBELAS and Carlos were invited to a leftist student conference in Switzerland. By this time, Carlos had become friendly with both [redacted] and with a colleague of [redacted] named Art Avignone. ⁰⁶ Carlos accepted requirements which he believes were levied by Avignone rather than by [redacted] and once again was offered funds so that he could fulfill these ⁰⁶ requirements in Switzerland. Again Carlos refused to accept money but agreed enthusiastically to do all that he could for the United States. Carlos was given a contact plan so that he could report to an unidentified American in Switzerland, but although Carlos carried out the arrangements, the American never appeared.

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At this time Carlos' step-father sent a message to Switzerland warning Carlos that he should not return to Cuba. After the student congress in Switzerland Carlos therefore went to the United States. He decided to reside in the U.S. but in order to arrange for a resident visa, he had to leave the country. Accordingly, about February 1961, Carlos went to Mexico to request a resident visa from the United States Consul. At that time he saw [redacted] in Mexico and introduced Rolando CUBELAS, also in Mexico at that time, to [redacted] (Carlos had been trying to introduce CUBELAS to the Americans for some time and had once made tentative arrangements to introduce [redacted] and CUBELAS in Cuba but these previous arrangements fell through at the last minute. Accordingly, the first contact between CUBELAS and the Americans took place in Mexico about February 1961.) Carlos came to the U.S. with a resident visa about March 1961 and has resided in the U.S. from that time until the present, although he has travelled frequently to other countries in connection with his jewelry business. When no Agency representatives contacted Carlos in the U.S. for several months, he assumed that the Agency had lost interest in him and no longer wished to make use of his services. Some time later, individuals representing the FBI contacted Carlos by telephone and wished to meet him, but Carlos preferred not to begin any new association and said that he was not interested in any further contacts concerning Cuban matters. These phone calls from the FBI resulted from the suggestions made by [redacted] who has cooperated closely with the FBI at Miami.

6. Carlos resumed⁰³ his contact with the Agency when he was approached by [redacted] (under pseudonym), with whom he made a trip to Helsinki where he introduced [redacted] to [redacted] Rolando. There were other meetings involving Carlos, [redacted] and CUBELAS at Stockholm, Copenhagen and Paris. At Paris, Rolando met [redacted] in addition to [redacted]

D. Plans and Contacts of Rolando CUBELAS

7. During the time when Carlos was in Europe and when he saw⁰³ CUBELAS there, at times alone and at times with [redacted] or [redacted] CUBELAS outlined to Carlos plans for a coup in Cuba. These plans concerning which Carlos has informed the Agency in detail in talks with [redacted] or with Mr. Sanchez (under pseudonym) involved the assassination of Fidel CASTRO. From that time until the present Carlos has tried to serve as an intermediary between Rolando CUBELAS and the Agency. The last time that Carlos saw Rolando in person was in Madrid about March 1965 but Carlos did talk to Rolando again, also in March 1965, by telephone when Rolando was transitting Gander en route back to Cuba.

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8. Rolando, in order to carry out his plan for a coup in Cuba, has had to make a number of persons knowledgeable to a greater or lesser extent. Those people who now are in Cuba and who are aware of the plans of Rolando include the following: Cdte Ramon GUIN (who has become quite nervous and who is drinking heavily), Cdte (Inu) NIEVES (whom Rolando considers absolutely reliable and a key figure in the plan and who now is in charge of the port of Havana), a Captain whose name Carlos has furnished to the Agency but whose name he cannot recall, who now is an artillery chief), a MIG pilot (who had served with Rolando during the fighting against BATISTA), [redacted] (whose knowledge is dangerous because he is a coward who now hesitates to bear any responsibility in carrying out the plan), Luis SOTO (who now is rector of Habana University), Marcelino "Marzo" ARTIME (an old revolutionary who is thoroughly reliable and who is a close friend of Carlos), an individual whose name Carlos does not recall but who is an uncle by marriage of Tony CASTEL (whom Carlos considers to be a worthless person), and at least six or seven others whose names Carlos does not know.

9. In addition to these individuals who are aware of the details of Rolando's plot, there are others whose support CUBELAS believes he can count on once action is taken but who have not been made aware of the plot (so far as Carlos knows) up to the present time. These include the following: Cdte Efigenio ALMEIJEIRAS or ALMEJEIRAS, Cdte Juan ALMEIDA Bosque, Raul DIAZ Arguelles, a Cdte who is known as "Julio El Grande", a Lieutenant whose first name is Guillermo and who acts as Rolando's chauffeur, Pepin NARANJO (whom Carlos considers a coward), about 20 or 30 officers in the armed forces whom Rolando knows well but whose names are not known to Carlos, Faure CHOMON (whom Rolando considers a communist at present but whom Rolando expects to support a coup for personal benefit), and finally a number of people in Las Villas.

10. Other individuals who are aware of the plans of Rolando CUBELAS and who have played some part in the plotting up to the present time include Carlos Jose "El Mago" ROBRENO, Alberto "El Loco" BLANCO, BERNAL, Manolo REY, Manuel ARTIME, GALLARETA, Miguel Cuco de Leon, Rafael QUINTERO, Luis TRASANCOS and Angel Luis FERNANDEZ.

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11. The whole plot against Fidel CASTRO could be discovered by the Cuban security service because of the many individuals who are aware of it and because some of them are irresponsible. Particularly disconcerting to Carlos is a report which he received on 23 June that "El Loco" BLANCO now is being questioned by the Cuban security service. Carlos learned this through a telephone call made by DE LEON. DE LEON said that the mother of "El Loco", who resides in Miami, had just received a letter from her sister in Havana with the foregoing news. The letter said that "El Loco" is not in jail and has been able to visit relatives but that he must appear for questioning throughout the day and is not allowed to sleep at home. (Carlos suggests that the Agency endeavor through its contacts in Miami to get a copy of the letter and to warn the mother of "El Loco" that she should not talk to anyone about it.)

E. Miscellaneous comments of Carlos concerning people involved in the CUBELAS plot

12. (In addition to the comments which already have been reflected in previous paragraphs, Carlos made others which are reflected here.) "El Mago" ROBRENO is a thoroughly irresponsible man whom Ramiro VALDEZ, Minister of Interior, forced to leave Cuba because ROBRENO had caused so much trouble for the Cuban authorities. ROBRENO is a drunkard and woman chaser who wants to live an easy life but who is not willing to work and never has worked throughout his life. Despite these admitted defects, ROBRENO admires and is loyal to Rolando CUBELAS. CUBELAS considers that ROBRENO, insofar as their own relations are concerned, will do anything which he is told. Rolando told Carlos that he could trust ROBRENO insofar as the plot is concerned but that Carlos should not give any money to ROBRENO because money would merely facilitate ROBRENO's getting into more trouble. Last week, about 17 June so far as Carlos can recall, ROBRENO telephoned collect from Madrid and asked Carlos for funds. The conversation was brief and it was difficult for Carlos to understand because of noise and interruptions during the call. It appeared that the primary reason for the call was simply to ask for money. ROBRENO said that he was penniless. He also said that everything appeared to be fine and asked if Carlos had any news. Carlos said that he had nothing to report and that he himself did not have any cash available but that he would probably make a trip to Spain in about a week and would talk to ROBRENO then. In fact, Carlos has no intention of going to Spain in the near future and told ROBRENO the foregoing merely to get rid of him.

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13. "El Loco" BLANCO is a strange person who well deserves the nickname. He secured his release from military service in the U.S. by pretending to be crazier than he really is. Although he is unreliable and unpredictable, he is absolutely loyal to Rolando CUBELAS and is trusted completely by Rolando insofar as the plot is concerned. "El Loco" was trained by Cuban intelligence in Cuba before he left for Spain. The trainer, whose name Carlos does not recall, gave the training in El Vedado. There is no question about the connection of "El Loco" with Cuban intelligence and it is considered strange that the Agency did not display more interest in making use of this connection. Among other things, "El Loco" knew the identity of a Cuban intelligence agent who was working in a camp run by Manuel ARTIME. "El Loco" has said that he told ARTIME and also people from the Agency about this individual but that nothing was done.

14. Jose VENEGAS Valdespino, who has been Vice-President of the International Students Union, had been stationed in Prague but returned to Cuba last year. While VENEGAS was en route to Cuba he passed through Barcelona, Madrid and Paris at all of which places he talked to Carlos. As indicated previously in this memorandum, Carlos has known VENEGAS since about 1952 or 1953. Although they never had been friends, VENEGAS was cordial and Carlos can approach him at any time. VENEGAS and CUBELAS know each other well and Carlos suspects that CUBELAS might have told VENEGAS about the anti-Castro plot.

15. Rolando, like Fidel CASTRO and Camilo CIENFUEGOS, has the capacity to attract people - even though his manners leave much to be desired. He can be described aptly as brusque.

16. Rolando does not have either liking for or trust in Manuel ARTIME and met him only because of the Agency's insistence and at the recommendation of "El Mago" and "El Loco". Rolando criticized Carlos for getting ARTIME into the act but Carlos disclaimed any responsibility. Rolando believes ARTIME is a mercenary - out for what he can get - and a cheap politician.

17. Rolando does respect Manolo RAY and insisted on meeting him. Rolando and Carlos consider that RAY is an idealist willing to sacrifice himself for the cause. This is the opinion of the man in the street in Cuba even after the failure of RAY to keep his glowing promise about getting to and staying in Cuba to promote a revolution.

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18. Rolando told Carlos that he has an apartment on the Plaza Civica in Habana where the 26th of July celebration will take place. Rolando said that people loyal to him will be in the reviewing stands at the celebration. Carlos believes that Rolando may make an assassination attempt on 26 July 1965.

19. Rolando is disenchanted with the Agency. He told Carlos that the Agency has had abundant opportunity to deal with him and to furnish help but chose not to do so except through ARTIME - whom Rolando does not trust and who told Rolando that the Agency was offering its help through him, ARTIME.

20. Rolando considered that the injection of ARTIME was a completely useless and risky maneuver on the part of the Agency which, if it wishes to disclaim moral responsibility for the plot, could have used and still should use Carlos as the intermediary.

21. If Rolando can get through the risks, inherent in having so many people know about his plot, during the next couple of months, he certainly will carry through with his plans - this before the end of the year.

22. Although Carlos recognizes the defects of both "El Mago" and "El Loco", he shares their opinion that the Agency has not treated either them or Rolando fairly. Carlos believes that both these individuals, in addition to being useful in connection with the plot, could have been useful in many other ways because of their access to Cuban government representatives including intelligence people in Europe and elsewhere. "El Mago", who still is in Europe, is extremely clever and does have entry to all Cuban circles as a result of which Carlos believes "El Mago" still should be used by the Agency.

F. Miscellaneous comments of Carlos concerning additional names which have cropped up in connection with CUBELAS

23. Luciano NIEVES Mestre, who lives in Madrid, is said to be irresponsible (a "nut" like "El Loco"), but Carlos does not know him personally.

24. Jose Luis LLOVIO who lives in Paris is believed to work for Cuban intelligence.

25. Carlos once saw "Cayo Confites" - Luis GARCIA Cerdeira with either BERNAL or "El Mago" ROBRENO. CARRILLO believes that "Cayo Confites" is an agent for the U.S. Government.

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26. Felipe LLAUDY is not known to belong to the Cuban intelligence service and Carlos has heard nothing to make it appear that LLAUDY could be recruited.

27. Nilo MESSER Pujol who is connected with ARTIME is not a friend of CUBEIAS

28. Carlos knows nothing of interest about Hernan HERNANDEZ, America CISERNOS, Mario FISSOLO, Gustavo ARCOS, Luis CRESPO, Luis ALONSO, Luis TRASANCOS, Emilia OTERO, Carlos THEYE, Antonio SANZ or Victor ESPINOSA. (At the time when the foregoing names were reviewed with Carlos (about midnight) he appeared to be extremely weary and to have difficulty in continuing the interview.)

G. Ambassador CARRILLO

29. Carlos first met CARRILLO about 1957 when CARRILLO went to Carlos' store to price an engagement ring for Pepin NARANJO. At that time CARRILLO was the treasurer for the DRE - which was Rolando CUBELAS' group. Carlos bought some bonds and also contributed money apart from bond purchases. CARRILLO was once in Miami but the time is not known. About 1958 CARRILLO was exiled from Cuba and lived in Spain where he represented the DRE. After the collapse of BATISTA, CARRILLO returned to Cuba. In early 1960 he was a functionary in the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At that time CARRILLO's wife became a customer of Carlos' store, buying quite a bit of inexpensive jewelry.

30. To the best of Carlos' knowledge, CARRILLO does not suspect that Carlos is connected with the Agency; CARRILLO knows that Carlos is a friend of Rolando but does not know anything about Rolando's plot against Fidel. The dealings between CARRILLO and Carlos in connection with the latter's purchases of Cuban government jewelry arose because Carlos once had priced jewelry in Havana. CARRILLO remembered this and offered to sell jewelry to Carlos. When Carlos bought jewelry (on our behalf), Carlos proposed to CARRILLO that the latter tell the Cuban government that the jewelry was being sold at a lesser price than that which Carlos was paying. Carlos offered to arrange the bill of sale to show the lesser price so that CARRILLO could keep the difference. CARRILLO refused indignantly. Hence, Carlos believes that CARRILLO is playing square with the Cuban government. Carlos believes that CARRILLO, although not a communist, is happy with his status and privileges as Ambassador and that CARRILLO is not likely to defect or to accept recruitment.

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31. However, the aunt of CARRILLO's wife is employed in Madrid by either the USN or USAF and neither she nor CARRILLO's wife are pro-communist, neither is the mother-in-law who, although she lives at the Embassy in Paris, is opposed to the regime. Carlos recommends that we talk to the mother-in-law if we have not done so already.

32. Carlos does not remember the name of the aunt (by marriage) in Madrid. However, he took a letter and some perfume from the CARRILLO family in Paris to the aunt in Madrid. He turned the letter over to an Agency officer for inspection prior to delivering it and therefore assumes that the Agency knows who the aunt is. (The case officer is a small fellow with white hair, not Earle.)

33. CARRILLO appears to enjoy the confidence of Fidel CASTRO and Celia SANCHEZ, both of whom have entrusted money to him for investment. The confidence probably is based on their trust in his financial acumen rather than on their trust in his political beliefs. These do not appear to be strong. He goes along with the regime because it provides him with a comfortable way of life.

34. CARRILLO knows both "El Loco" BLANCO and "El Mago" ROBRENO but is not a friend of either. Probably CARRILLO dislikes ROBRENO less than BLANCO.

H. ob [redacted] family

35. As pointed out above, Rolando plans to use [redacted] inside Cuba once the time for action against CASTRO arrives. Carlos knows [redacted] well because [redacted] assisted many friends of Carlos in getting out of Cuba even though they were enemies of the CASTRO regime. ob [redacted] did this because he then had control of issuing exit permits. ob [redacted] although not a completely trustworthy person, is a pretty good sort and Rolando believes that [redacted] can be depended upon in an emergency.

36. The mother of [redacted] was in Madrid fairly recently on her way back to Cuba. At that time, according to "El Loco" BLANCO, a Cuban working with the Americans named ROCHE tried to defect Marina by offering her money and used the name of "EL Loco" as a means of introducing himself to [redacted]. This incident was most embarrassing to "El Loco" because the Cuban Embassy in Madrid suspected that he might have had some connection with the defection attempt.

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I. CANTILLO

37. Carlos knows that there is a Cuban intelligence officer named CANTILLO who is assigned to the Embassy in Madrid. However, Carlos does not know him personally and never has seen him. CANTILLO has been mentioned to Carlos by "El Mago" and "El Loco".

J. Business activities of TEPEDINO

38. TEPEDINO is selling over three million dollars worth of jewelry per year at the present time. He employs a group of jewelry designers in Paris and then mass produces jewelry, using their designs in New York City. This jewelry, while not of the same quality as that of Paris originals, looks exactly like the current vogue in France and is selling extremely well. TEPEDINO is trying to secure jewelry contracts with the Hilton hotels in New York, Madrid and Puerto Rico. He also has a jewelry associate in Italy. His legitimate jewelry business is so good that he has no need to run the risk of engaging in illegal activities. This was the case even when he was in Havana but is even more so the case now. At no time has he engaged in smuggling, for example, in either Italy or Spain.

K. Travel Plans of TEPEDINO

39. TEPEDINO plans to travel to Miami about 8 or 9 July and expects to spend a week relaxing and fishing. From mid-July to the latter part of August, TEPEDINO expects to be in New York City and during this time would be happy to travel to Washington, D.C. if the Agency so desires. About the end of August, TEPEDINO plans to travel to Europe where he expects to remain for a month or month and a half. At this time, he expects to visit Rome, Milan, Paris and Madrid.

L. Recommendations

40. It is recommended that arrangements be made to give an LCFLUTTER to TEPEDINO while he is in the Miami area. (Questions for inclusion in a FLUTTER examination are attached.) The advantages of giving the FLUTTER examination at Miami are several. One is that at Miami we do have a Spanish speaking operator. Although TEPEDINO has adequate English for business purposes, he does not feel at home in the language and quite often misinterprets the English expressions. Another advantage is that testing at Miami by individuals who have not been connected and who are not likely to be connected with him in the future should provide an objective assessment and should not interfere with the rapport necessary to maintain good relations in the future if the tests are favorable. Another advantage is that his Miami trip is a vacation so that he should have time

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available and should not be distracted by business activities. Should the test be unsatisfactory or require further immediate interviewing, a Headquarters case officer (such as Mr. Webster) could proceed to Miami at once.

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Matters to be covered in LCFLUTTER

1. True name now is Carlos TEPEDINO Gonzalez
2. True name before legal change was Carlos LOPEZ
3. Never a member of Communist party
4. Knows Rolando CUBELAS
5. Not connected with Cuban intel or security
6. CUBELAS not connected with Cuban intel or security
7. Carlos is intermediary between the CIA and the CUBELAS group.
8. Carlos is not connected with any intel service except CIA..
9. Carlos knows Ambassador CARRILLO.
10. Carlos bought jewels from CARRILLO.
11. Carlos reported correctly to us about the jewels and the price paid.
12. Carlos handled an assignment for us in Mexico about 1959 and reported accurately.
13. Carlos went to Switzerland to do something for us in 1960.
14. Carlos never engaged in smuggling or illegal activity in Europe.
15. Carlos never engaged in smuggling or illegal activity in the U.S.
16. Carlos told us the truth about CUBELAS and members of his group.
17. Carlos never told CARRILLO about working with the CIA.
18. Carlos never told any intelligence service about working for us.
19. Carlos never has been directed by any intel service to work for the CIA.
20. Carlos has not intentionally withheld information from the CIA about CUBELAS or about Fidel CASTRO.
21. Carlos has not informed the CASTRO Government about working for the CIA.