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4 May 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of [redacted] by WH/4, [redacted]

1. In view of the request of Mr. [redacted] representative, for identities and further particulars regarding the Robert Morton Geddes case a meeting was held on 2 May 1961 with WH/4/C1, [redacted] with Mr. Cleveland C. Cras and [redacted] of WH/6 also present.

2. At the outset Mr. [redacted] provided the following information:

a. Robert Morton Geddes is a British subject born in Lima, Peru, on 7 April 1932. He holds British passport No. C-34830, issued at Mazagua on 14 June 1956. He was not registered at the British Consulate in Havana and was regarded as being American or Canadian.

b. Two employees of the British Embassy, Havana, had visited Geddes in the Havana jail (military C-2 section) on Sunday evening, 30 April 1961, and had a 15-minute conversation with Geddes alone under circumstances which they felt were not monitored. Geddes stated to them: (1) On 19 April he was arrested by the militia (in civilian clothes) at his hotel; (2) He had been interrogated three times and gave the impression that he had not disclosed anything of importance; (3) He was accused of being a CIA agent and told that he could be shot because of the existence of civil war; (4) During the third interrogation Geddes was shown that there was a message in Spanish signed by Geddes which was sent allegedly by him by radio-transmitter asking that CIA send arms to Cuba.

c. The British Embassy in Havana learned on Saturday, 29 April 1961, that Geddes had regularly been "picked up" at the Havana airport on his trips to and from Miami. (Mr. [redacted] was not certain what exact interpretation could be given to the term "picked up").

3. After relating the above, Mr. [redacted] stated that his [redacted] is interested in obtaining an estimate of the sort of story the Cubans might use against Geddes or in provocation against the British Embassy, perhaps to prove that the British Embassy had been in collusion with the U. S. He referred to the following specific questions which he had submitted earlier on 2 May and which were relayed by WH/8 to WH/4: [redacted] for answers to be given in the afternoon session by [redacted]

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a. What was the identity of the agent inside Cuba who gave GEDDES the message he brought to the CIA contact in Miami on 11 March 1961;

b. What was the identity--or case or names--used by the CIA case officer in Miami;

c. Was Geddes given any means of clandestine radio-transmission;

d. What were the instructions given to GEDDES by his case officer.

4. Mr. [redacted] replied as follows:

a. The only means of communication given to Geddes, besides his open code phone contact with his wife in Boca Raton, was a very simple SW system. Geddes was not given any means for clandestine radio-transmission.

b. [redacted] then read and related the following chronology of Geddes' activities from WH/4 files:

11 March: Geddes came to Miami on the night of 11 March and made contact with Cabbage/4, a Cuban in Miami who was in contact with the CIA office. Geddes had a message from Cabbage/1 a CIA contact inside Cuba. C-4 put Geddes in contact with a CIA case officer in Miami on 12 March. Geddes claimed to be an active member of the United Revolucionaria, a resistance group inside Cuba of which C-1 was a member. At the time Geddes said the Cuban Navy has a plan to attack all pro-Castro facilities and then flee Cuba on or about 22 March. Geddes did not ask for any money. His motivation was not known. The case officer instructions to Geddes were related solely to Geddes' report that the Cuban Navy would defect. Geddes returned to Havana.

16 March: Geddes departed for Havana.

20 March: We heard indirectly - Geddes had phoned his wife and indicated that the individual (C-1 with whom he had been collaborating in United Revolucionaria was in trouble. The fact behind this was that one of our agents (member of the UR) inside Cuba had against instructions visited his wife in Cuba. As a result a UR net of seven persons was arrested including C-1. Besides C-1, some of the others of this network of Geddes' activities.

21 March: Geddes returned to Miami.

26 March: Geddes came to Havana. He was given a simple SW system. Beginning about 25 March we had reason to suspect Geddes as a possible provocateur since the defection had not come off and possibility of keeping the defection of the Navy secret in itself was implausible.

27 March: Geddes sent a SW message to Miami regarding the possible Cuban Navy defection.

28 March: Through open code telecon with wife said defection of Navy not for W to 4 April.

29 March: Geddes called wife on telephone.

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1 April: Geddes sent an SW message which was hand-carried to Miami by a courier. Geddes also had a telecon with his wife on this day.

2 April: Geddes said in telecon to wife that Naval conspirators would meet on 3 April and Geddes would give on 5 April a final date for the defection.

4 April: Geddes indicated in telecon to wife that the Naval defection would take place "any day" now.

7 April: We received a message from Geddes delivered by a third party (courier) that the Navy plans to defect on 6 or 7 April. Geddes returned to Miami and said the date was now set for 6 or 9 April.

10 April: Geddes returned to Havana.

11 April: Geddes telephoned his wife that the defection could take place on 13 or 14 April.

18 April: Geddes in telecon with wife reported that the defection would be on 17 or 18 April.

c. During the account of the above chronology, Binemas made the following comments:

(1) The CIA agent inside (C-1) vouched for Geddes but we here in Headquarters do not know to what extent C-1 had probed into the background of Geddes and his contacts. We here did advise Miami not to take any action until we had obtained [redacted] concurrence but by that time Geddes had already returned to Havana. He reiterated that Geddes was a walk-in and was never treated as an agent.

(2) Geddes and his forecast regarding the defection of the Cuban Navy were suspect from the outset. He claimed to be a British citizen but was already performing for the U.S.

(3) To Mr. [redacted] question as to whether Geddes had any access to a V/T man, [redacted] replied that to his knowledge Geddes only had phone contact with his wife, SW and use of courier.

(4) No arms deliveries were involved in the contact with Geddes.

(5) [redacted] said he would look into whom Geddes could contact or put the finger on.

(6) To Mr. [redacted] question regarding request for identities of C-4, C-1, the Miami case officer, and the set that was arrested on 18 March, [redacted] replied that only the DCI has the authority to release such information.

(7) The Miami case officer never served inside Cuba.

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5. After Mr. [redacted] had put a number of questions to [redacted] the latter asked [redacted] whether Geddes is possibly a [redacted] agent which Oldfield emphatically answered in the negative.

6. Mr. [redacted] said that he would now send off a communication to his [redacted] indicating that Geddes might be a phony—a provocateur. However, he asked that he be provided with the following:

a. CIA appreciation of the United Revolutionaria;

b. Identities of C-1, C-4 and members of the net with whom C-1 was arrested on March 18 (Note: [redacted] acknowledged that besides C-1 conceivably several other members of this net might have known of Geddes and his activities.)

c. Identities of the couriers who had contact with Geddes

d. The identity of the CIA case officer--the name or names used by him in contacts with Geddes;

e. Chronological summary of the visits of Geddes to Miami and returns to Havana; also a list of the nature of his communications to Miami (by telecoa, courier, etc.) and communications sent to him in Havana.

[redacted]
DC/WZ/6

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