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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

29 October 1962

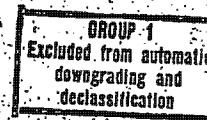
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General E. G. Lansdale
SUBJECT : Operation MONGOOSE - Infiltration Teams

1. Forwarded herewith for your information and action is a cable in clear text received today from our Chief of Base in Miami outlining the status of the twenty (20) infiltration teams which are currently being held awaiting policy decision.

"Miami Operations Base currently has twenty infil ops scheduled i. e., nineteen PM and one FI. This means we have twenty teams safehoused under conditions maximum security. Equipment checkout, commo briefings, discussion infil routes and assignment two-fold mission of intel collection re missile sites and imminence hostilities indicators plus preparations to provide support to U. S. military forces during any military action has brought teams to highest possible pitch of motivation and state of readiness. Human psychology and stamina being what they are, this high peak of proficiency cannot be maintained indefinitely because fighters of all types go stale as is so well documented in pugilistic annals and all other competitive fields where combat readiness is required. This particularly true with Cubans who volatile, emotional, expressive people. While this all well known Headquarters believe fluctuations in go and stop orders over past seven days have been such that prudent judgment dictates that you be personally apprised that we are sitting on explosive human situation which could blow at any time within next forty-eight hours. Wish assure you that while full gamut of leadership tradecraft psychology and discipline will be harnessed to prevent any human explosion we cannot guarantee that it will not happen. Believe positive or negative action is only guarantee which will insure our retaining control over these human resources to extent that flap will be avoided. There is in my judgment no middle ground on this issue.

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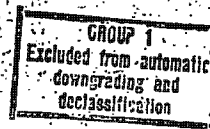


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"Positive action would consist resumption infiltration activities. This connection wish point out all teams currently scheduled for infil are trained assets which WAVE has been developing since March 1962. As you well know this large backlog of assets has accumulated because CIA maritime assets have been totally incapable infiltrating these teams at rate commensurate with speed at which teams were developed to maturity and readiness for on target ops assignments. We are therefore not advocating mass infiltration of ill prepared and untrained people. These teams are as good as our current system can produce. Despite this sound preparation infiltration at this time will produce losses because Cuba is on general alert and this bound make our mission extremely difficult. While being fully cognizant this loss factor believe that so long as U. S. reconnaissance flights are in motion over Cuba, CIA should attempt supplement this collection via agent ops. This judicious blending of agent reporting and aerial reconnaissance on Cuba has been significantly and to my knowledge uniquely effective. Do not believe this interlocking combination should be broken up at this critical juncture. View cessation mail flow from Cuba and in light limited number W/T assets now functioning Cuba, suggest there no alternative, from philosophical or intelligence doctrinaire view point, except to push for increasing our intel collection capability by putting trained teams with W/T into Cuba as soon as possible. If this done quickly we should have increased intel coverage as well as capability support in meaningful manner U. S. forces if and when they move against Cuba.

"Negative action would be disassembling of teams at that juncture when in our judgment we could no longer securely hold in safehouses any given team. This would be employment safety valve technique but its use is not without pitfalls. Most obvious ones being reduction our future potential get these teams back into appropriate state of readiness for future use plus fact once released, teams would talk and their experience would sweep exile community like wildfire. Once in exile community their experience

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would be interpreted as U. S. backdown. This bound hit press and could be detrimental to U. S. public image and/or negotiating position.

"Above comments have attempted to place major CIA Miami Operations Base problem into context of nuts and bolts intelligence realities based on clinical objective appraisal our situation. It has obviously not considered political realities which face U. S. as these so fast breaking and we so consumed with nuts and bolts ops problems that there virtually no time for National political reflection. With all of these factors in mind, would appreciate guidance re possible courses of action which Miami Operations Base might be expected or required carry out within foreseeable future with emphasis on what will be expected of CIA Miami Operations Base re infil teams."

2. We are waiting your guidance before responding to the above message.



BRUCE B. CHEEVER

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