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ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES

On March 29, 1963, our Savannah, Georgia, Office interviewed Private Santiago Alvarez Fernandez, a Cuban trainee stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, with the United States Army. Private Alvarez identified himself as the son of Doctor Santiago Juan Antonio Alvarez Rodriguez, owner of the yacht "Alisan," which reportedly was used in the raid against a Soviet ship off Cuba on the night of March 26, 1963. He said his father had telephonically contacted him from Miami, Florida, on March 28, 1963, to advise that he was back home safe and that the raid was successful. He quoted his father as stating the remainder of the raiding group had returned to a base, which was not identified.

On March 29, 1963, Santiago Juan Antonio Alvarez Rodriguez advised our Miami Office as follows:

He was formerly a Senator in Cuba and a doctor in Mexico. He resides in Miami and is unemployed at the present time but owns and operates the "Alisan," which has two diesel engines. The "Alisan" left Miami on March 17, 1963, and went to the vicinity of Orange Key on the western edge of the Grand Bahama Bank of the Bahama Islands, and thence proceeded north to a rendezvous with a 23-foot boat which took place on March 18, 1963, between Cat Cay and Orange Key. The 23-foot boat was taken into tow with the intention that arms hidden in three separate locations in the Bahamas would be picked up. Bad weather forced a delay, but on March 24 and 25, 1963, some arms were collected. The 23-foot boat was used to make the attack and seven men participated.

After the attack, the 23-foot boat was then used to return the arms to the hiding places, and the "Alisan" subsequently towed it to a point near the Miami shore. The "Alisan" is presently docked at North Miami Beach, Florida.

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Dr. Alvarez refused to pinpoint the location of the hidden arms and would not identify the other participants. He declined to identify where the "Alisan" was stored in Miami prior to the raid and would not give the present location of the 23-foot boat. He claimed the arms used were supplied by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and were originally to be delivered to Cuba prior to the April, 1961, invasion. Dr. Alvarez said he made 30 or 40 trips to Cuba prior to the April, 1961, invasion, and that these trips were made for CIA. He indicated he carried many loads of arms on these trips and hid some of them on small deserted islands in the Bahamas. According to Dr. Alvarez, these hidden arms are used by him in operations against Cuba and these arms were used in the March 26, 1963, attack.

Dr. Alvarez said an individual named Thompson, who lives at Cay Sal in the Bahamas, has cooperated with him in the past by warning that a British police boat was on the way to Cay Sal, which allowed Dr. Alvarez time to unload arms from the "Alisan" to be hidden ashore before the British police searched the "Alisan" and found no arms aboard. He said the bomb used in the March 26, 1963, attack was made in the Bahamas with materials brought from the United States. He denied that any arms used in the attack were taken out of the United States or that any were brought back into this country.

According to Dr. Alvarez, the "Alisan" frequently makes trips to the Bahamas to engage in anti-Castro activities and is usually stopped and searched by United States authorities on its departure and upon its return. He said no arms are ever found aboard. Dr. Alvarez also noted that British authorities have stepped up patrolling activities around Cay Sal Bank. Dr. Alvarez said his anti-Castro activities are financed by friends and noted that the March 26, 1963, raid used up all the available money. He denied receiving any United States aid or backing for the raid and said no Americans are in any way connected with his group.

On March 29, 1963, our Miami Office interviewed Eulalio Estevez Viera, a native of Cuba presently residing in Miami, who admitted participation in the raid. He said he was picked up at his residence on the morning of March 18, 1963, by Cubans whose names he did not desire to disclose and intended to accompany them on a trip to Cuba. His account of the raid

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was similar to that furnished by Dr. Alvarez and he admitted that Antonio Cuesta and Antonio Perez Quesada participated in the raid, as did Dr. Alvarez.

Antonio Cuesta del Valle told our Miami Office on March 30, 1963, that he participated in the raid and had originally left Rama Marina, North Miami Beach, Florida, on March 18, 1963, in the 23-foot boat. He said the "Alisan" had also left from Rama Marina. Cuesta, a Cuban national who entered the United States as a parolee in June, 1960, described the raid substantially as did Dr. Alvarez and Eulalio Estevez Viera, and added that approximately 20 cannon shells were fired into the Soviet vessel.

Cuesta named seven additional Cubans as participants in the raid and said two non-Cubans, Andrew St. George and an unidentified assistant, did not participate in the actual attack but remained on the "Alisan" while it was going on.

Agents of our Miami Office observed the "Alisan" at the Rama Marina in North Miami Beach on March 29, 1963. The dockmaster at the Marina stated it arrived there on March 28, 1963, and that six Cubans left the boat following its arrival. Our interviews with individuals having firsthand knowledge of this matter are continuing.

It is noted that CIA has previously advised that it had no connection whatsoever with the March 26, 1963, raid.

During the interview of Private Alvarez at Fort Jackson, he claimed that other Cuban trainees at Fort Jackson had told him small arms, ammunition and hand grenades were being stolen by the trainees. A check with military officials at Fort Jackson by our Savannah Office failed to substantiate that any such thefts had occurred.

On March 28, 1963, a United States Army representative at Fort Jackson advised that an Army source had learned of a meeting in Columbia, South Carolina, on March 24, 1963, of the Cuban exile organization known as Agrupacion Montecristi. Reportedly, 12 Cuban trainees from Fort Jackson attended this meeting, which was directed by the group's General Secretary, Dr. Francisco Carrillo of Miami. The trainees reportedly were

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requested to recruit members in each platoon of the regiment composed of Cuban trainees and to attempt to secure small arms, explosives and ammunition. Dr. Carrillo was quoted as stating that his organization had plans to form small groups to conduct raids against Cuba from a land base or from a ship.

On March 29, 1963, Fort Jackson authorities furnished the following additional information obtained from their source concerning the Montecristi group at Columbia, South Carolina. Reportedly, this group had numerous .50 caliber and .30 caliber machine guns, as well as 75 and 20 millimeter cannons, with ammunition. The leader of the group was identified as Sergio Lopez Mesa, an instructor at Benedict College in Columbia who allegedly is married to the daughter of Jose Miro Cardona, well-known anti-Castro leader. According to the source, tentative plans had been set up for a small raid on Cuba in the immediate future, possibly during the week end of March 30-31, 1963, primarily to secure publicity on which a fund drive might be based. The source, who was in close touch with leaders of the group, reportedly left South Carolina on March 29, 1963, en route to Florida, carrying "action plans" of the group which he would give to Dr. Carrillo. The source reportedly would keep Army authorities currently advised, including full details of any raids to be conducted when plans were formulated.

This source further advised that the Montecristi group planned a raid on the mainland of Cuba in the future with the raiders wearing United States Army fatigue uniforms, so as to give the impression that the United States Army was attacking Cuba. In this regard, Fort Jackson authorities advised on March 29, 1963, that about 80 fatigue uniforms have been reported missing. The Army source further reported that Leslie Nobregas, described as a boatman in the Miami area, reportedly handled the securing of boats and acted as a naval guide for the various anti-Castro raiding parties leaving from the Miami area. Nobregas was said to be currently in a Miami hospital suffering from a recent heart attack.

Sources of our Miami Office have advised that the Agrupacion Montecristi group, with headquarters in Miami, is headed by Francisco Carrillo and its membership is made up primarily of professional men, including lawyers, bankers and physicians. The group is affiliated with the anti-Castro federation, the Cuban Revolutionary Council, and reportedly receives funds from that organization.

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On March 30, 1963, authorities at Fort Jackson advised our Savannah Office that there were no known shortages of weapons at that base. Fort Jackson officials are conducting a check to locate the missing fatigue-type uniforms and to definitely establish whether all weapons assigned to the base can be accounted for. Our Miami and Savannah Offices are conducting expedite inquiries concerning the Agrupacion Montecristi group pursuant to the request of Assistant Attorney General J. Walter Yeagley, who authorized an investigation on March 30, 1963, to determine whether there are possible violations of neutrality statutes. United States Army authorities have made dissemination to interested agencies and to the International Situation Room at the White House of the data secured from the Army source relative to the activities of the Agrupacion Montecristi group.

On March 28, 1963, our Miami Office interviewed Felipe Vidal Santiago, who identified himself as Secretary of an anti-Castro organization known as the United Front of National Liberation. Vidal, who had been previously identified as an anti-Castro leader who planned to head a strike against targets in Cuba, denied making any plans to attack Cuban targets. He said his organization had been in contact with the anti-Castro underground inside Cuba and had been making plans to infiltrate supplies and weapons to those individuals, but had canceled such plans after learning the Castro government had wiped out those individuals to whom the supplies and weapons would have been sent. Vidal noted that his group did not own a boat and actually did not have the capacity to get the supplies and equipment into Cuba since the person who was to lend his organization a boat failed to produce the boat when needed.

On March 29, 1963, our San Juan, Puerto Rico, Office advised that the L-66 group which carried out the attack on the Soviet vessel had filed a certificate of incorporation on December 4, 1962, under the name Comandos L 66, Incorporated. Its principal office in Puerto Rico was listed as Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and Pedro Guillot Solis was given as the person in charge of the office. An account was opened on behalf of this group at the Santurce, Puerto Rico, branch of the First National City Bank of New York with a deposit of \$76.75 on November 26, 1962. The account was closed on February 19, 1963, at which

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time the balance was \$250. Three individuals identified with L-66 in Puerto Rico advised on March 28, 1963, that they had no previous knowledge concerning the date the L-66 raid would take place and that representatives of the group in Puerto Rico had furnished nothing but money for this raid. It was stated the group's funds in Puerto Rico have been exhausted and that what little money had been available was sent to Pedro Muina in Miami, Florida.

Concerning the March 18, 1963, raid on Cuba conducted by members of Alpha 66 and the Second National Front of Escambray (SNFE), our Miami Office on March 29, 1963, interviewed Armando Fleites, a leader of the SNFE, who has previously been identified as having participated in this raid. Fleites claimed that all boats and weapons which figured in this raid, as well as all participating personnel, are still located in an area of the Caribbean which he declined to identify. However, he insisted that no part of the action or preparation therefor occurred in United States territory, including Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands. He declined to be more specific or to identify the participants in this raid, but claimed that no Americans were involved.

With regard to the use of British territory in connection with these raids, it is noted that the British territory in closest proximity to Cuba is the Cay Sal Bank, located 40 miles from the northern coast of Cuba. This Bank includes many uninhabited islands and stretches over hundreds of miles of water. A representative of British Intelligence who is located at Nassau, Bahama Islands, advised our Miami Office on March 19, 1963, that the British Government in the Bahamas has very few patrol boats and that the Cay Sal is difficult to patrol because of its great distance from Nassau. He acknowledged that the majority of recent anti-Castro raids have reportedly been conducted from islands located in the Cay Sal Bank.