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Examiner info
from MOK of RTIAB meeting with DCI
McCone, 23 April 1963



he was giving the Special Group this afternoon a study showing the results of 51 days' reconnaissance over Cuba and that this was disturbing when the four principal targets were analyzed. There were 59 occasions when weather precluded any readout of what was going on in these four Soviet military camps. Some of the camps were not seen for five or six days in a row and in one instance for as long as 12 successive days. Mr. McCone then read from the memorandum on reconnaissance over Cuba dated 23 April 1963 and said he would provide the Board with a copy.

The DCI then reported that James Donovan during a nighttime drive to Veradero had passed a convoy of 25 very large trucks, the type generally carried on railroad flatcars. Mr. McCone stated that an examination of the photography for that day and the following day provided absolutely no trace of the convoy. Dr. Land stated that the DCI's previous statement may have provided the answer as to where this convoy might be. The DCI said he planned to recommend low-level flights in order to provide more information.

10. At this point Mr. FitzGerald was asked to give his presentation on operations in Cuba. He commenced by displaying the chart which indicated the number of resident agents, illegal teams, legal teams, shipboard agents and penetrations of Cuban installations. He noted that the number of illegal teams had risen to three as a result of a successful operation on Sunday, and one of these teams had as many as 100 subagents with extensive coverage in the province of Pinar del Rio. Dr. Langer asked what the subagents were looking for, and Mr. FitzGerald replied that their coverage was mostly military. Mr. Murphy asked if these agents were all strictly collecting intelligence, and Mr. FitzGerald replied that this was their primary purpose at the moment, but the illegals could create a resistance net if this was desired. He pointed out that the policy at the present time precluded attempting to develop a large scale dangerous activity.

Mr. FitzGerald pointed out that the penetration of Cuban installations were mainly diplomatic installations and that some 14 Cuban diplomats were our agents. Mr. Clifford asked how the information was gotten out of Cuba, and Mr. FitzGerald replied that it was mostly by secret writing transmitted to Mexico City by mail and then forwarded to Washington. He said there were four radios in Cuba and that we now had a greatly improved medium speed transmitter that was quite small, the size of about two cigarette cartons, and it could get a message off in just 60 seconds. He said that there was a smaller and better transmitter currently in the process of development.

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Dr. Land asked if the loss of this transmitter would compromise others. Mr. FitzGerald replied that it would not compromise any other agents except the one apprehended, and the DCI noted that it would simply compromise the instrument.

Mr. Murphy asked concerning the quality of substantive reporting, and Mr. FitzGerald noted that the 1,040 reports looked impressive, but it was quite true that this was not a true indication. He said that some of the reporting was very good, and there were two [redacted] on the payroll who provided some first-rate reports and were closest to the bone in what Castro was thinking. Mr. Murphy asked if we had Castro's immediate entourage penetrated, and Mr. FitzGerald said his sister worked for us but that she didn't always have inside information. He pointed out that the 665 reports from resident agents were primarily on military targets and the intelligence community felt they were really worthwhile as a supplement to overhead reconnaissance. General Doolittle asked if an illegal team was two men and Mr. FitzGerald replied "yes". Mr. Murphy asked whether these agents provided information on Soviet troop strength and equipment, and Mr. FitzGerald replied in the affirmative. Mr. Clifford noted that with just two illegal agent teams in Cuba at this time we were back to where we started from in 1962. Mr. FitzGerald commented that the casualty rates were very high and referred to the charts "Legal Resident Agents in Cuba" and "Illegal Agent Development".

(At this point Mr. McCone left the meeting and Mr. Cottrell came in.)

Mr. Gray asked if the modest number of agents was a result of policy or operations. Mr. FitzGerald replied that this was primarily a result of operations and noted that it was not the result of lack of effort, but because of the high attrition rate and the dangers involved. He went over the lists of what had happened to the agents that were put in. He noted that it was presently planned to carry out approximately five operations a month. Mr. Murphy asked if there was evidence of organized resistance in Cuba. Mr. FitzGerald replied "yes", but they were now small bands scattered throughout the island. He noted that Castro had broken up the large country-wide resistance networks last summer. He then produced the chart entitled "Illegal Infiltration -- Exfiltration Operations" and commented on this. Mr. Murphy asked if the groups on the island committed sabotage, and Mr. FitzGerald said the policy presently precluded major sabotage operations and limited it to "subtle sabotage". Mr. Murphy asked what constituted "subtle sabotage", and Mr. FitzGerald described it as tying a rock to a wire and throwing it across high tension lines.

11. The Board then turned to Mr. Cottrell and asked him to describe the work of his group. Mr. Cottrell said the President had become concerned there were so many government agencies dealing with so many Cuban groups, and he had set up the group under Mr. Cottrell to coordinate all of this activity. He said that his immediate group consisted of a representative of Defense and CIA, and there were additional committees or groups reporting to them. He outlined the general policy guidance under which they were operating and under questioning from Mr. Murphy stoutly denied that the policy was basically defensive in nature, and it was directed toward getting rid of communism and Castro in Cuba. It was further explained that CIA's activities were coordinated through this group.

12. Dr. Killian then asked Bruce Clarke to give a brief report on the situation in Cuba, and with the aid of photographs Clarke analyzed the present Soviet troop strength on the island and explained how these figures were arrived at. At 12:00 this session was recessed to permit the presentation by DIA.

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Executive Director



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