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3 November 1960

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Part IV Ex 1
7/10/75

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 3 November 1960

PRESENT: Messrs. Merchant, Douglas, Gray, Gen. Cabell,
Gen. Lansdale

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1. Cuba

Mr. Gray inquired once more as to the status of planning for problems which would arise post-Castro. Mr. Merchant said he would check into the progress of the State Department group which has been charged with developing recommendations on this matter.

From this the Group launched into a far-ranging discussion of the entire concept of U.S. efforts against Castro. Mr. Douglas, supported by Mr. Gray and Mr. Merchant, expounded the idea that perhaps things have now progressed to a point where covert activities of the type originally envisaged for CIA to undertake will not be effective. Mr. Douglas referred to the extensive program of the militia, Mr. Gray cited the matter of arms from the Soviet bloc, and Mr. Merchant dwelt on the increasing effectiveness of Castro's measures to control the population in ways which the Communists have developed so well. The latter said that he and others in the State Department had originally thought that a popular rebellion would develop within Cuba and that this could be augmented by the comparatively small-scale efforts of exiles under CIA control. Now the same people are beginning to feel more and more that despite the numerous defections and the economic deprivations being experienced by the middle and upper classes, time is actually working on Castro's side. Mr. Merchant said that he foresaw that there would occur a point in time beyond which covert intervention would not do the job.

Mr. Gray expressed the opinion that we will never be able to "clean up" the situation without the use of overt U.S. military force. He suggested the possibility of using the CIA-backed exiles to mount a simulated attack on Guantanamo in order to offer an excuse for overt

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131

intervention. This led to an involved discussion, the general conclusion of which was that such action on our part would not be desirable, but that should Castro be foolish enough actually to attack Guantanamo this would almost certainly mean war. Mr. Gray said that he had had the subject of Cuba inscribed on the NSC agenda for next Monday in order to be able to arrive at a top-level decision on this very point. He thought it essential that the policy of the U.S. should be completely understood by responsible officials, so that any overt Cuban act would be met with a previously-agreed-on response.

Mr. Merchant stated that, apart from any attack on Guantanamo, he thought that some of the previous argumentation in today's meeting was faulty, in that we could not have it both ways. By this he meant that it is not logical to conclude that an indigenous uprising is impossible and yet that it is feasible for the U.S. to go in overtly and "clean up the mess." He pointed out that if Castro's support were such that an uprising was out of the question then an open invasion by the U.S. would be met by a hostile population and we would be plunged into a situation like Algeria.

Turning to the immediate problem before the Group, Gen. Cabell outlined the general proposal to establish bases in the U.S., with the reasons for coming to this conclusion. He cited specifically the possibility of U.N. investigation in Guatemala and the increased scope of the program, which has been brought about by the increased strength of the Castro regime. All members of the Group expressed serious doubts as to whether such activity could be kept at all secure. Mr. Merchant said at one point, that although this does not represent a final conclusion on his part, he is inclined to think that the proposal embodies the worst aspect of both worlds; that is, the choice should rest between continuing our operations entirely on foreign soil or preparing to make the best possible case for overt intervention.

Mr. Gray suggested that the decision could be put up to his associates at the same time Tibet is discussed. Mr. Merchant agreed that this is where it should end up, but asserted that he is not prepared to move in that direction until a survey has been made of the possibilities of keeping operations in the U.S. unrevealed.

In this connection Gen. Cabell mentioned the possibility of using a refugee organization - either an existing one or a contrived one - to backstop the operations.

Mr. Douglas said that in any case he would be prepared to have the Department of Defense investigate the availability of specific locations that would be suitable.

Finally, Mr. Merchant asked whether any real planning has been done for taking direct positive action against Fidel, Raul and Che Guevara. He said that without these three the Cuban Government would be leaderless and probably brainless. He conceded that it would be necessary to act against all three simultaneously. Gen. Cabell pointed out that action of this kind is uncertain of results and highly dangerous in conception and execution, because the instruments must be Cubans. He felt that, particularly because of the necessity of simultaneous action, it would have to be concluded that Mr. Merchant's suggestion is beyond our capabilities.

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14. Supply Drops - Cuba

Gen. Cabell explained that the Pinar de Rio supply mission had not taken place because of the absence of specified communication from the DZ, and the Escambray operation had been canceled because of weather. He said that these missions are still planned, and assumed that the Group had no objections. The members so signified.

15. U-2, Cuba

Gen. Cabell said that the photographic coverage on the first flight had been only about 50%, because of cloud cover. He continued that we are analyzing the exact results on a priority basis and that some time after the middle of next week we should be in a position to make recommendations for the missions required to extend the coverage.

Mr. Gray commented somewhat wryly that this was all right with him since he "would certainly not be available to discuss anything of this kind before the middle of next week." The other members appeared to have the same reaction.

16. Policy Consideration Re Cuban Exiles

Mr. Gray said that Assistant Attorney General Yeagley had spoken to him after his meeting with Col. King and Messrs. Esterline and Holman. He had said that the information given to him by the CIA representatives, and the arrangements for future coordination if necessary, were entirely satisfactory to him. He had stated, however, that a problem remains with respect to action the FBI should take; that is, the FBI needs guidance in its handling of Cuban exile groups other than those under the direction of CIA.

The Group agreed that the best way to attack this problem would be to have Mr. Yeagley attend next week's Special Group meeting and discuss the matter at first hand. Mr. Parrott was asked to make arrangements for this.

17. Value of Cuba to the USSR as a Base Vis-a-vis
Cape Canaveral

Mr. Parrott gave Mr. Merchant the gist of the OSI memorandum

on this subject, which had been discussed with the rest of the Group
on 20 October 1960.

T. A. Parrott

THOMAS A. PARROTT

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5

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United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

elder/bolton checklist:

1. ~~AMLASH documents - 26 Dec~~
2. ZRRIFLE documents (need another look
+ cryptonyms)
3. ~~Haiti Memo~~
4. Sign affidavit
5. Isle of Pines source
refer to CIA
6. Deller's leader

Wn
S. Moran