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**SUBJECT**  
PERUMI/Operational-Initiation of Contact with AMBESS-1

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- References: A. MEXI 1014  
B. MEXI 1024

1. On the afternoon of 24 September 1964, when surveillance by the LIEBERACE team showed that AMBESS-1 was at his home, AMNIP-1 entered AMBESS' apartment where he was welcomed with a warm embrace by AMBESS. Soon afterward AMBESS and AMNIP drove to a restaurant on the Cuernavaca road where they conversed for about one hour. The results of this meeting were reported in MEXI 1014, 24 September.

2. In response to AMNIP's suggestion that AMBESS agree to meet with a KUBARK official who had come from ZMETAL to talk to AMBESS about cooperating in the fight to rid Cuba of Communism, AMBESS agreed to meet the next day with the official (Lawrence P. BARKER (P), hereinafter C/O) with two reservations: (a) AMBESS would not make a yes or no decision on cooperation without time to think things over after the meeting, and (b) AMBESS would meet only with AMNIP and the C/O, he would not meet with any other KUBARKERS now or later. AMBESS' principal preoccupation seemed to be in the realm of compartmentation.

3. AMBESS suggested that the meeting take place at some outlying restaurant but AMNIP suggested that it might be more secure to meet in a hotel room where lunch could be served. AMBESS agreed to this suggestion and said he would pick up AMNIP in front of the Diana theater at 1330 hours 25 September from whence the two would proceed to the hotel in a taxi.

4. The Station obtained two adjacent hotel rooms and Joseph M. RESCIONO (P) installed three transmitters in the room selected for the interview. Station personnel, augmented by John R. SANDAMANTIE (P), surveilled both the pick-up point and the hotel. AMBESS arrived at the pick-up point at 1355 hours and explained that he had decided not to proceed to a hotel. He explained to AMNIP that he did not wish to be recorded, as could easily be done in a hotel room, since he did not at this time wish to be forced into making a decision. Again reiterating his determination not to give a yes or no answer to the C/O, AMBESS suggested that the meeting be held

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in a nearby restaurant, the Chalet Suisse. AMNIP acquiesced, said he would see AMSESS at 1430, and proceeded to the hotel where he informed the C/O of these developments.

5. Station personnel were quickly alerted and transferred the surveillance to the vicinity of the Chalet Suisse where AMSESS and AMNIP met at the door at 1423 hours. At 1430 the C/O showed up and found AMSESS and AMNIP seated at a table for two in the upstairs portion of the restaurant. No tables for three were available. After a quick handshake with the C/O AMSESS suggested that the group repair to the nearby restaurant Manu Kai where tables would surely be available. As a security measure AMSESS proceeded to the restaurant alone followed by AMNIP and the C/O. Only two other tables were occupied, one by a Mexican family, one by two American tourists. AMSESS was seated at a table in the rear. The C/O sat down opposite AMSESS and AMNIP sat at the C/O's side.

6. AMNIP introduced the C/O as "Bob Lee," and "Roberto." AMSESS was very friendly. He appeared to be somewhat nervous for the first hour of the two hours forty five minutes that the meeting lasted, looking down at the table and generally avoiding eye contact. After this he was completely relaxed and maintained eye contact with the C/O. He spoke in rapid, rather sloppy Spanish heavily larded with Cuban slang. A music loudspeaker over the table effectively blanked out the conversation for other customers and the waiters.

7. AMSESS quickly reminded the C/O that he did not intend to make any commitments at this session and that he wished this to be understood before the meeting proceeded. The C/O said that he was interested primarily in exchanging opinions with AMSESS, had plenty of time at his disposal, and did not wish to rush into anything. A round of drinks was ordered and the C/O proposed a toast for Cuba. Sensing that there was nothing to be gained by further delay or attention to the amenities the C/O launched into his pitch.

8. In essence the pitch to AMSESS was as follows:

"We need facts in order to build a sound Cuban policy. In too many cases those coming out of Cuba as exiles tell us what they think we want to hear, rather than the truth. For example, we constantly hear that people are starving in Cuba yet one has only to look at those stepping off the Cubana planes here to know that this is not the case. We need facts, good news or bad, but facts. In turning to you, we have no intention of asking you to take action -- to plant bombs, to meet with other people. All we are after is occasional meetings to talk over the situation and we will not expose you to any other people."

"You would be surprised to know how many of your companions inside Cuba and in the Cuban diplomatic missions are working with us for the liberation of Cuba. We feel that the future of Cuba will be decided principally by people who are now officially tied to the Cuban government -- people who are cooperating in place -- rather than by those who charge around in speedboats shooting up sugar mills. We have been studying all Cuban officials abroad. Among those I have studied, you look like the sort of man who can be counted on to help build a new Cuba. Some people in exile think you are a real rat but in studying you I saw something solid which our friend here (AMNIP) confirmed. I am not trying to butter you up. I am perfectly capable of calling a man a "cabron" or "hijo de puta" if the words fit, but I think I'm a pretty good judge of character."

"Our sole interest is in a free Cuba -- free for the Cubans. As a matter of possible interest to you, I was once a rather rabid Fidelista myself. My government has no desire to see another Batista in Cuba, or a corrupt "autentico." We are well aware of the reasons for the Cuban revolution and sympathize with its legitimate aims. We haven't forgotten the Platt Amendment or other dark pages of US-Cuban relations. We are not fighting the people of Cuba. We are fighting Communism in

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any form, that means the Russians and the Chinese. When this nightmare is over we will do everything we can to make Cuba the showplace of democracy in the Western Hemisphere. Aid will pour in. Cuba will have its own Marshall Plan, because it is in our national interest to do so. As you are well aware, our national interests, those of your people and mine, are essentially the same."

"When the house of cards collapses we want to make the transition as painless and as bloodless as possible and that is why we need good men like you to phase over into the new Cuba and make it work. After the fall of Fidel I will probably ask for six weeks leave to drink Cuba Libre "en pachanga" with my many good friends in Cuba -- then my government will send me off to chasing Russians and Chinese. We will have accomplished our mission in Cuba."

"In return for your cooperation you will receive as your greatest reward the satisfaction of having played a vital part in the liberation of your homeland. In addition I can offer you two things (a) Security, both economic and physical -- you will not be stood against the wall and shot in the passions of the moment, and (b) a Future."

9. AMBESS replied as follows:

"I am not going to give you a definite yes or no today. I have already told AMNIP this. I need time to think things through. If I decide to join your team I will do so without reservations and will work with you to the death if necessary -- I am not afraid. I have read a good bit about Communism and I must be frank in telling you that I find it looks very good on paper. But in practice it does not work and I have not been blind to how it has wrecked Cuba. Nevertheless there are a lot of convinced Communists in Cuba now -- youngsters whose whole education has been in that direction. They are a determined bunch. Furthermore, I do not feel, as you apparently do, that the Russians will ever relinquish their hold on Cuba, their only solid base in Latin America. I long for the liberation of my country but I cannot see it on the horizon."

"The last time I was in Cuba it seemed to me that things were a bit better. There is food. There are shoes, although not many and of very poor quality. Of course, when you bring any people down as far as the Cuban people have been brought, in steady decline, any betterment is instantly noticed and appreciated no matter how slight and regardless of the fact that conditions in general are still way below what they should be."

"Then, I also have the problem of my father. I want to bring him out and that may take some time. I don't want to do anything now that will jeopardize my chances of pulling this off."

"I would not know what to do if I were to seek asylum. I have often thought of doing this but I would not fit into the exile picture. I would find it physically impossible to live away from Cuba for more than a year -- impossible. I am too much of a Cuban to contemplate that."

"I appreciate your viewpoints which are clearly stated and I appreciate your sincerity. You in turn must appreciate the necessity for me to think things over, to have another look at Cuba. I am going on Sunday (27 September), to see about bringing out my father, to talk to my friends there. All of this I must do before I see you again to give you my decision."

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10. In the animated conversation which ensued it soon became clear that AMSESS' primary concern in cooperation concerned his security; he seemed to consider it almost a certainty that he would sooner or later be discovered. The C/O devoted several minutes to the subject of operational security, assuring AMSESS that he had never lost a man who faithfully followed the simple rules of compartmentation whereas many people had been lost because they had, like so many Cubans, decided to inform some third party of their involvement in intelligence activity. AMSESS was informed that no-one else in ODYSS knew that the C/O was talking to AMSESS, at Headquarters it was only known that the C/O was in Mexico on official business. AMSESS inquired about the possibility that the C/O might try to introduce him to other people, officials or agents, and was told that no such action was contemplated at this time or in the foreseeable future and that AMSESS would always be in a position to refuse such contact if he felt it endangered his security. As an example of the organization's concern with the safety of those cooperating with it, AMSESS was reminded that many of his colleagues are already cooperating but that he would never learn the identity of any of them from the C/O; in a similar manner his identity would be protected from both friend and foe.

11. In accordance with AMNIP's assessment of AMSESS as willing to talk but not willing to submit at this time to a grilling, for the first part of the meeting the conversation was allowed to drift with a minimum of direction; later on the C/O posed more direct questions and AMSESS provided direct answers. AMNIP had cautioned the C/O repeatedly to go easy on AMSESS, not to push him or to bring up topics which he might construe as designed to exert pressure. For example, the fact that AMSESS was involved in a theft case involving official funds in Camaguey was not mentioned. The approach was designed to entice AMSESS into cooperation rather than to force him.

12. Some of the information drawn from AMSESS follows:

- a. A-1 has a great and enduring love for his homeland.
- b. He is blamed by a lot of people for the imprisonment and execution of many persons in Cuba. At the time that he functioned as Second Chief of the Habana Police Patrol he arrested many people on orders from his superiors. Some of these are still in prison, others have been shot. People who don't know any better look upon him as arresting officer, trial judge, jury, and firing squad. Not too long ago a lady he never remembers having seen before shouted "murderer" at him in Habana as he drove down the street. Many people think he is a murderer. He doesn't really care what they think.
- c. His economic situation is good in Mexico. At one time he could have gotten his hands on 700,000 dollars, now he could make off with about 125,000 dollars if he wished. His salary is just over 500 dollars a month (confirms LITAIN's trash report) and he gets an allowance for expenses of some 150 dollars a month. The government pays him for gasoline used by his car. If he were to be transferred to Cuba his situation would be much worse since his salary would drop back to about 200 Cuban pesos a month.
- d. He buys some clothing items from the United States by mail.
- e. His servant is not to be trusted. She used to work for Ramon SINOBAS. No clandestine communication with him should be through her.
- f. His wife is completely trustworthy in every respect. It would be alright to leave messages with her.
- g. His wife would very much like to see her father, if possible around January 1965. He lives in Hialeah, Florida (confirms JMWAVE information). A-1 doesn't much care for his father-in-law. The feeling is mutual but A-1 thinks it would do his wife a lot of good if the father-in-law could visit Mexico. He has been unable to get a Mexican visa.

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- h. He would not report from Cuba by radio as DF<sup>ing</sup> stations are as thick there as mushrooms. (Nothing was said about a radio link with A-1 up to this point. He was assured that he could be trained in a secure method of communication not involving radio or third parties. AMNIP endorsed this statement).
- i. He was surprised recently to learn that his mother had once been a Communist in the 1930's. This fact was brought to his attention by Security officers in Habana who had run a new security check on A-1. His mother is from "uneducated country stock."
- j. His mother and father are divorced. He is much closer to his father. His father is about 70, birthdate unknown even to himself, and has had prostate trouble recently.
- k. Before the revolution he was accountant and worked for a man now residing in New York. The accounting firm was called Falla-Quiterrez.
- l. He has never visited the U.S. He planned to visit Washington in the early days of the revolution when a friend was Consul General at Washington.
- m. Fidel CASTRO's reaction to the trial of Marcos RODRIGUEZ Alfonso was not surprising to A-1. CASTRO had no alternative. Had he used the trial to clobber the Communists the people of Cuba, fed up with Communism, would have taken this as license to run amok and turn the country upside down.
- n. He was once in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He found this a drab as present-day Habana even though it is touted as the most capitalistic city in Communism.
- o. His commercial activities don't keep him very busy. He made one trip to Sinaloa to buy garbanzos (chick peas). He negotiated the recent purchase of medical equipment from Hoffman-Pinther & Bosworth that caused so much trouble and publicity in the papers. He got the now-famous check from the Banco del Atlantico because the bank was short of cash at the moment; when it was not acceptable he took it back and got cash instead. This affair caused so much trouble, he had to go to Habana to explain things to his superiors.
- p. Antonio GARCIA Lara did a lot more traveling about on commercial activity because he knew so many more people in Mexico having lived here during the time CASTRO was fighting in Cuba.
- q. The Ambassador is spooked by the thought that the Embassy is full of hidden microphones. He called a staff meeting and read an article from Time or Life about electronic eavesdropping; since then he has "seen" microphones everywhere. (Confirms LITAMIL-9 reports).
- r. The Soviet Embassy is also very worried about hidden microphones.
- s. The code clerk of the Cuban Embassy in Montevideo once left the Embassy with the code materials in his possession. He was gone for two days, was unable to make contact with KUBARK and eventually went back to the Embassy to his wife and children. He was sent back to Cuba as a prisoner. (This item was revealed to AMNIP on 24 September).
13. In reminiscing with AMNIP about mutual acquaintances dating from the time of their service together in G-2, AMSESS revealed the following:
- a. Luis GOMEZ is now Segundo Jefe de Operaciones, DSE, Camaguey. His father is an old-time PSP militant.
- b. Ismael ARCIA Dominguez, aka "El Chino," is Jefe de Inspeccion de la Policia for the entire island. Camilo GOMEZ, a DOI man,

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accused Areia of being a homosexual but Areia threatened witnesses against him and they decided not to testify.

- e. Captain Carlos FIGUEROA was sentenced to three years in jail for setting fire to his home after a quarrel with his wife who is a sister of Jose ABRAHANTES. There were a lot of explosions when the flames reached ammunition and explosives in the house. Figueredo has been sent to the prison on the Isle of Pines.
- d. The office of Manuel PINEIRO, aka "Barbaroja," has been moved from his home to the Ministry of Interior building. It was moved because Pineiro was afraid that a nearby embassy would be used as a listening post for technical operations against his office.
- e. Captain Armando TORRES, aka "El Frances," is in charge of coordination of guerrilla warfare training courses.
- f. Major Guillermo JIMENEZ and Camilo GOMEZ now work for the DOI. (Throughout A-1 referred to the DOI as "M" -- he did not use the term DOI).
- g. Antonio ARGUELLES is now in charge of technical operations of DSE.
- h. Captain Orlando PANTOJA is in charge of the counter-infiltration group of DSE.
- i. A-1 was assigned to a course in counter-infiltration techniques when groups specializing in this were being set up, but when the Communists found out about this they removed him from the course. A Soviet general taught in this course.
- j. (fnu) SANTACOLOMA is in charge of the Plan Norte and recently went through Mexico en route to Canada; he did not return via Mexico. (DEGRIP-1 recently reported Enrique OLTUSKI in charge of this plan known as the Plan Norte de Matanzas, a cattle-raising enterprise).
- k. A Security official named (fnu) CAMPOS recently went through Mexico.
- l. Alberto PEREZ, aka "El Loco," is now in Paris.

14 On the subject of "M" (Direccion General de Inteligencia), the following exchange took place:

C/O: Who is the "M" chief in the Embassy?

A-1: Vega. (Manuel VEGA Perez)

C/O: Is he here permanently now, or temporarily?

A-1: Permanently, I think.

C/O: Who else is with "M"?

A-1: Rogelio (Rogelio RODRIGUEZ Lopez). But he is just a second rater.

C/O: Was Mirabal "M"? (Alfredo M. MIRABAL Diaz)

A-1: Yes. But he had to go home -- something to do with an infection here (Pointing) on the outside of his mouth. It wouldn't clear up.

C/O: Are the other consuls with "M" -- Mariano (Mariano GARCIA Perez), Ovidio (Ovidio SAMA Viamonte) and Posada (Jose Luis POSADA Torres)?

A-1: No. Mariano is a very good consul by the way. Sama is a jerk.

C/O: Are you with "M"?

A-1: Well, yes.

C/O: You are considered an "M" officer -- by "M" and by yourself?

A-1: Yes, but I am on the fringe. I don't do anything important. Nevertheless they consider me as still connected with Security

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(Seguridad). For example, recently they issued new Security credentials, replacing all the old ones, and they sent one to my home all filled out.

C/O: Here or in Habana?  
A-1: In Habana.

C/O: What do you do for "M"?  
A-1: Little jobs from time to time. Passing out money, for example. X is going to Paris so I meet him on a street corner at night and hand him an envelope with 2,000 dollars in it -- that sort of thing.

C/O: What else?  
A-1: That's about it.

C/O: Is Villavicencio with "M"?  
A-1: (Puzzled expression, looking to AMNIP) Who?

C/O: Enrique VILLAVICENCIO Argudin.  
A-1: Oh! No, he is not with "M". (Breaking into wide grin) He does special work.

C/O: What kind of special work?  
A-1: You know.

C/O: The same thing Interian (Elpidio INTERIAN Comezanas) used to do?  
A-1: That's right.

C/O: What Sardinias (Armando SARDINAS Garcia) did before that?  
A-1: Right.

C/O: Where is Sardinias now?  
A-1: In Yugoslavia. By the way, he got into some trouble when he was here -- fell in love with some girl in Bolivia where he was before he came here--wanted to marry her -- trouble was he already had a wife in Cuba. He's older than he looks -- about 51 -- but he sure was in love with that Bolivian girl. (This information confirms data from LIMUD and LICARD-1)

C/O: Have Villavicencio's wife and son arrived yet?  
A-1: Yes, they arrived just recently. (Confirms LIFIRE and LITAMIL-9 reports)

C/O: Was Nico (Jose Antonio GARCIA Lafa) with "M"?  
A-1: Yes, but he did work of even less importance than I do.

C/O: What ever happened to Earle PEREZ Friman?  
A-1: He's in the Uruguayan Embassy in Habana. When he came through here he gave us some cock-and-bull story about having been kid-napped -- said his gun was taken away from him but he had another one tucked in his belt and got away from his captors (Same story told to LITAMIL-9). Just before he left here he got a call at the Embassy from some foreigner who claimed to be a Canadian. I took the call (Call was made by a Station officer). I escorted PEREZ to Cuba as a prisoner. Over there they put him in the Presidente Hotel for a couple of months -- told him to sit tight while they investigated his story. Then someone told him that Security had a case on him and he slipped into the Uruguayan Embassy just in time. He's a crazy kid -- sandwiches three lies in between each two truths. He got into trouble when another guy, a Granma expeditionary from Montevideo, defected here in Mexico en route home.

C/O: Santana? (Rolando SANTANA Reyes)  
A-1: Right. Santana never was anything. A real nullity.

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