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TO : CHIEF, WH/4
TITLE : DRAFT PAPER: "WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF CASTRO DIED?"
DATE : 10/06/1961
PAGES : 9

SUBJECTS : CASTRO DEATH

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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED 104-10315-10006

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6 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, WH/4

SUBJECT: Preparation of Draft Paper on Castro

1. In compliance with your request of 5 October 1961 to prepare a paper on the subject of "What Would Happen If Castro Died?", subject paper is attached herewith.

2. This paper was prepared utilizing contributions from WH/4/PA-PROP, WH/4/INTEL/REPORTS, WH/4/FI-CI and this section. In addition, a conference was held on 5 October 1961 with representatives of OGI, who have been following the Cuban developments, and their thoughts and expressions are included in the attachment.

ALBERT C. DAVIES
C/WH/4/Intel.

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6 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Park F. Wollam

SUBJECT: What Would Happen If Castro Died?

The attached paper, subject as above, is forwarded in response to your request of 5 October 1961.

(S) Rapord W. Herbert

RAFORD W. HERBERT

1 Attachment

DDP/WH/4/Intel/ACDavies;naw (6 Oct 61)

Distribution:

- Orig & 1 - Addressee
- 1 - AC/WHD
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6 October 1961

SUBJECT: What would happen if Castro died?

1. Introduction.

The impact of Fidel Castro's sudden death would obviously have some internal repercussions on his Communist dominated regime. However, it would be wishful thinking to believe that the Cuban people would immediately rise up and overthrow the regime, now that Castro had departed the scene. In view of the tremendous strides made during the last five months toward the organization of Cuba into a complete police state and the lack of any unified anti-Castro opposition, there can be little doubt that the demise of Fidel Castro, whether by natural causes or assassination, would offer little opportunity for the liberation of Cuba from Communist and Soviet Bloc control. To believe otherwise would be to underestimate the strength and power of control of a Communist police state. If he died of assassination, instead of natural causes, the factor of his martyrdom to the Cuban masses would further strengthen the power of the present regime in maintaining control. Also, it is probable that the Soviet Bloc would react to such an event with greatly increased economic aid in order to assure maintenance of their established beachhead on the American continent. Although it is possible to anticipate the immediate results of the death by assassination of Fidel Castro, the end result of such an action would depend to a great extent on the respective effectiveness of the work of the police, the Communists, the military, and the anti-Castro groups.

2. Fidel Castro's Successor.

It would appear that Castro's successor would emerge from the following choices:

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Raul Castro, Minister of Armed Forces
"Che" Guevara, Minister of Industry
Nunez Jimenez, Director INRA
Faure Chomon, Ambassador to USSR

Early in 1961, Raul Castro was appointed Vice-President and principal executive officer of the Central Planning Committee. This increased authority and his continuing power as Minister of the Armed Forces rank him second only to the Prime Minister.

It is felt that Ernesto "Che" Guevara would not be acceptable to the Cuban people as he is not Cuban born. He appears destined to wield tremendous power but not as the ranking authority.

Nunez Jimenez, the Director of the Institute of Agrarian Reform lost a good portion of his industrial empire to "Che" Guevara during past reorganization and consequently relinquished considerable prestige among the present leadership.

Faure Chomon fought with Castro to oust Batista. He led his own "13th of March" group in the early fighting. Subsequently he was appointed as Cuban Ambassador to Moscow and it was generally conceded that, at the time, Castro was ridding himself of a potentially dangerous rival.

Of the four individuals aforementioned, none of them have the personal magnetism or popular support of Fidel Castro. On the other hand, Raul Castro, Guevara and all the top Communists together have strength and control which could not possibly be equalled by an opposition leader. Many of the most influential and promising young anti-Communists have long since left the country. Of the anti-Communists remaining in Cuba, many have been arrested and/or executed and any known or suspected ones would surely be rounded up quickly by the government forces in the advent of Fidel's death. Communications media, which are controlled almost completely by the government, would use every means to control and frighten the opposition from acting, and those who might otherwise support an opposition movement would be inclined to wait too long to act effectively.

- 2 -

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