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CLANDESTINE SERVICES CUBAN COLLECTION PROGRAM

I. Factors Favoring Cuban Operations

The clandestine collection effort against Cuba, in its present scope and dimension, had its genesis in early 1962 when Task Force W was created and the Cuban target was designated as the highest priority for all components of the Clandestine Services. This organizational push, combined with certain characteristics of Cuba and the Cubans, resulted in a truly comprehensive collection program which has endured to the present time. Compared to other Soviet Bloc or Chinese Communist nationalities, the Cubans were omnipresent, accessible, and easy to recruit. We were dealing with an unsettled bourgeois generation only recently subjected to a Communist regime. Many, particularly the middle class, wanted out or, if forced by various reasons to remain, were willing to cooperate in place. Techniques and tactics of population control were at a rudimentary stage, while the habits, customs, and traditions of the entire populace were Western-oriented, particularly towards the United States. Cubans of all classes and occupations have some understanding of and sympathy for the U.S.; nearly every Cuban has a close relative or friend in exile in the U.S., Spain, or Latin America; most of the population is antipathetic to communism and to Eastern Europeans as such. These factors not only create a large potential-agent pool, but ease the recruitment problem. The Cuban internal security mechanism, though widespread and intensively active, has not yet measured up to normal denied-area standards. They are zealous in pursuit of the counterrevolutionary but still fortunately weak in pursuit of espionage. Finally, the country itself, being an island, must communicate and trade to survive, and these channels have never been rigidly controlled.

II. Factors Militating Against Cuban Operations

Ranged against these favorable factors, however, are others which counterbalance our efforts in something resembling an equal proportion. Cubans generally constitute very poor agent material. They do not know the meaning of security;

they do not take orders well; and the lonesome courage required for espionage is rarely part of their make-up. They make good fighters but poor spies. It should be noted too that the GOC is an excessively personalized regime. To know what is going on at the top, it is necessary to know what Castro and perhaps two or three others have on their minds. This severely reduces the number of potential sources who can provide intelligence of crucial significance. The Soviets in Cuba--the other half of the major target--have succeeded in achieving almost complete isolation from the Cuban population, with the consequence that agent collection against almost any facet of the Soviet presence has been virtually impossible. Finally, the steadily increasing isolation of the island has worked to our disadvantage by forcing almost complete reliance upon secret writing and radio, both of which have severe limitations. Personal meetings with the resident agents are all but impossible. Material supply is difficult and possible only in rare instances. Cameras are of limited use due to the danger to the user plus the virtual impossibility of getting the exposed film off the island within a reasonable period of time. Cuban economic chaos is so bad that at times agents must wait weeks for adequate paper on which to forward their secret writing messages, while the Cuban postal service is such that mail to the U.S., particularly by devious channels, often takes thirty days.

III. The Present Clandestine Collection Program

The main characteristics marking Clandestine Services operations against Cuba are size, complexity, and diversity. The collection program is not only world-wide, utilizing all proven collection techniques, but also parallels action and support programs such as economic denial; sabotage; a special program devoted to the utilization of Cuban ships, sailors, and aircraft; radio and propaganda; a sizable paramilitary facility; and numerous exile uses. Intelligence collection has a role in all of these programs either as an essential element on which the activity is based or as a by-product of a program oriented to some other end. In the case of economic denial, for instance, sound and pervasive commercial intelligence is a requisite. At the present time our continuing flow of intelligence relative to Cuban commercial plans, prospects, and intentions far outstrips

our ability or even the necessity to act against them. In another instance a sabotage project involving oil and chemical additives has produced some of our best insights into this area of the Cuban economy.

A. Types of Assets and Their Status

For purposes of management and operational reporting, collection assets pertinent to the Cuban target have come to be categorized into Resident Agents, Resident Nets, Legal Travelers, and so forth as discussed below under the respective headings. Each category of assets epitomizes a collection technique or function involving its own disciplines and particular problems.

All things considered, the quality of these assets is good. Their reporting is voluminous and comprehensive, providing a complete and continuous picture of Cuba and of Cuban government machinations, both within and without the island. None of these assets, however, is high-level or privy to the basic political and military decisions which affect U.S. security. On this score we are left with putting bits and pieces of information together as indications of intent. There are, however, two possibilities for improving the collection program implicit in the assets listed below. Continued work with these assets could and will improve their performance in many respects. So too the acquisition of additional assets under any category may well improve our capability in one direction or another. The fact remains, however, that the odds are always very much against acquiring the right asset in the right place at the right time.

Resident Agents

Nets.10
(Comprising a total of 85 persons)	
Singletons.64
Soviet-Bloc Nationals	1

This pool of resident agents constantly undergoes slight quantitative and qualitative change. Though

for the most part the question of agent selection is a matter of opportunities available at any given moment, every possible means is utilized to obtain resident assets who have access to significant data. These assets report almost exclusively via secret writing, though a few have radios. By far most of these assets are in the Havana area, basically because of the protective anonymity afforded by the metropolis, plus the fact that communication with the provinces is difficult. We attempt to break this cluster pattern by illegal infiltrations of assets into the provinces, but success is limited by the many forces which work against illegals.

Although the numbers of agents are respectable by any standards and their reporting performance is good and constantly improving, none of them is close to the top political level of the GOC; none is privy to significant GOC military secrets; and none can report with any degree of consistency on the Soviet presence on the island. If such a prospect exists, present approaches will undoubtedly turn him up. It is not likely that increased expenditure or increased effort in any of the proven directions will materially increase our present chances.

Legal Travelers

Periodic Available Travelers	11
GOC Mariners (Recruited and Reporting) . . .	36
Legal Travel Missions of All Types (1964) .	29

The legal traveler, almost by definition is never going to be admitted to significant secrets in a country such as Cuba today. To the extent that such travelers are reputed communists or leftists, their access is increased, but no outsider of whatever complexion is going to acquire significant knowledge of the type with which we are concerned.

Penetrations of Cuban Diplomatic Missions

(Total - 15)

Mexico City . . . 2	New Delhi . . . 1
London 2	Cairo 1
Rome 1	The Hague . . . 1
Geneva 1	Paris 1
Brussels . . . 2	Beirut 1
Tokyo 1	Madrid 1

Cuban diplomats (and official travelers as well) provide perhaps the best chance of securing a high-level agent inside. They are accessible, recruitable in a decreasing percentage, and can be motivated and trained. It is hoped and expected that some of those now recruited will be returned to Havana to a high-level foreign office or other governmental post. Based on our target studies, name checks, and the like, the present rate of approach to likely recruits is close to 100 per cent world-wide. Increased effort in this milieu would merely reduce us to the "cold pitch" technique which has proven fallible too often to merit anything but the most limited and calculated use.

Audio Operations Against Cuban Diplomatic Missions

(Total - 11)

Rome 1	Madrid 1
Mexico City . . 1	Paris 4
Copenhagen . . 1	Athens 1
Brussels . . . 1	London 1

Telephone Tap Operations

(Total - 14)

London 1	Lisbon 1
The Hague . . . 1	Madrid 1
Berlin 1	Athens 1
Santiago 1	Oslo 1
Rome 1	Tokyo 1
Mexico City . . 1	Paris 1

Other Intercept Operations

(Total - 5)

London 1	Madrid 1
Montevideo . . . 1	Berlin 1
Mexico City. . . 1	

The types of operations listed above are all time-consuming, difficult to initiate and manage, and generally expensive in all respects. Normally they are judged to be worth the investment in terms of the general operational information they provide leading to identification and often recruitment of Cuban officials. Some, of course, depending upon a multitude of circumstances which range from the location of the transmitter to the habits of the target personnel, do produce disseminable intelligence information. None, however, has produced or is likely to produce high-level military or security information which is simply not available outside Cuba or the Soviet Union itself.

Third Country Assets

(Total - 205)

Collectors of Information	102**
Support Assets.	103**

**These figures have dropped during the past three months mainly due to South American countries breaking diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Collection/Support Agents Residing
in the United States

(Total - 259)

Collection/Support Groups	8***
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***These groups consist of an unknown number of Station assets (individuals) being used at various times on Cuban targets.

Debriefing Centers for Cuban Refugees

(Total - 3)

Mexico City. . 1 Madrid. . 1 Miami. . 1

The groups of assets listed above have many uses beyond those implicit in their titles. Aside from the collectors whose role is obvious, they consist of surveillance teams, safehouse keepers, debriefing teams, commercial spies, accommodation addressees, translators, and a host of others. The number involved is one of the best indications of the size of the Clandestine Services Cuban effort. They are useful and necessary but seldom, in the nature of things, produce strategic intelligence.

Intelligence Collection by Illegal Infiltrations

After the Bay of Pigs practically all intelligence nets in Cuba were completely neutralized. When the Cuban crisis of 1962 occurred, the Agency had developed two new controlled and responsive teams with known contacts or sources amounting to approximately 100 persons. Both of these nets have now been rolled up. As a result of continued losses of illegal teams, the program has been modified. The new concept has been to reduce the size of the black teams to five men or less, infiltrating them for 15 to 30 days to recruit and train legal residents; operate their two-way radios; and, of course, to report intelligence information while they are there. At present we have eleven such teams organized and prepared in all respects. Seven of them have been infiltrated into Cuba one or more times. There are currently seven nets established by these means inside Cuba (northern Pinar del Rio - 1, northern Matanzas - 1, northern Las Villas - 2, southern Las Villas - 1, northern Camaguey - 1, and northern Oriente - 1) in various stages of development. Five of the nets have established, or are in the process of establishing, two-way radio communications.

Clearly, this is a feasible means of acquiring new coverage. The illegal teams themselves are very

restricted in movement and in access and for all substantial intelligence coverage must rely upon their ability to establish and exploit legal resident contacts. This in turn is a tenuous business--essentially starting the intelligence process all over again--with recruitment, training, furnishing requirements, reporting, communication, and so forth being essential. Then too, protection against just such infiltrations has long been a major preoccupation of the Cuban government. Naval and air patrols, as well as radar and coast watchers, have steadily increased. It is becoming progressively more difficult and risky to evade the ever-improving Cuban countertactics.

Although the nets and contacts established to date by illegal infiltrations have been generally low-level, provincial, and limited in their intelligence contribution to visual observation of OB or ground scars, this does not preclude the possibility that such an operation could ultimately develop a high-level source or be designed specifically to recruit one. Similarly, the tempo of current in/exfiltrations could be stepped up by added investment and commitment of manpower, but we would have to be prepared to suffer maritime as well as agent losses. The intelligence from this type of operation has been small, and, though short-term infiltration efforts will continue, it is doubtful that a sizable increase in the number of illegal infiltration operations could significantly affect the quantity of intelligence produced on Cuba.

B. Miscellaneous Collection Techniques and Targets

Support Assets as Collectors

The Agency has extensive contact with Western diplomats in Havana, wherever feasible, on a unilateral basis. These officials have not proved to be of consistent value as intelligence sources although the unilateral contacts especially have proven to be indispensable as support assets. We have had much the same experiences with Cuban sailors and ships officers. The Cuban merchant marine has been systematically exploited by the Agency with good results.

Though the officers and sailors who have been recruited (some 36 at the present time) have not provided intelligence of critical value, they have made recruitments and provided support to resident assets and, most important, are of key importance to the subtle sabotage program.

Refugee Reporting

Reporting by refugees from Cuba deserves special mention. It will be recalled that some of the first reports on the introduction of heavy Soviet missiles into Cuba (mid-1962) were based on refugee debriefings which preceded by several months evidence produced by aerial photography. Although refugee reports can never equal aerial photography in terms of reliability, timeliness, and detail, they have been shown to serve as a significant corollary to collection by technical means. The flow of refugees, however, has greatly decreased since early 1963.

Ground Observers

Ground observation of the camps and sites may provide information on missile sites. This is gained by recent refugees who have lived in the neighborhood and who can report the existence of camps and camp activity, such as movement of personnel in and out, major construction work, and movement of equipment. Similar information comes from travelers or resident agents who pass by the sites, either regularly or on one or two occasions. It must be emphasized that the coverage is spotty. An increase in quality could possibly be obtained by selective use of black box operations against key missile sites.

Port Watchers

Some sources can observe the arrival and unloading of ships, and their descriptions of the cargo unloaded can sometimes reveal the delivery of missile-related equipment. Such reports are valuable if the descriptions are clear enough; but again the coverage is spotty. We do not have sources covering all important

Cuban ports 24 hours a day. Analogous to this is road-watching. Sometimes missile equipment can be seen en route from the port to the camp or from one camp to another, and agents do report on the movement of convoys.

Military Sources

Much less frequently, information is obtained from military personnel stationed at the camps in question, or having access to them. These sources are in a position to report on what is actually present at the camps. On rare occasions a source who has access to high government officials is able to report statements by such officials concerning the presence of missiles. Such reporting is sporadic at best.

The Soviet Target

Coverage of Soviet installations in Cuba by the Clandestine Services has been spotty. The failure to provide adequate coverage, however, is by no means due to lack of sustained effort. Many attempts have been made to develop assets with access to this target, but we have never succeeded in developing a source capable of reporting on this subject on a continuing basis. Rather, we have had to be satisfied with a number of sources on the periphery of the target, whose cumulative reporting provided some insight into the target but insufficient, broadly based intelligence to serve the needs of the community.

IV. Human and Technical Limitations

A. Recruitment - Motivation

Within the past 12 months the Agency has experienced the emergence of a new attitude amongst most of the Cubans whom it has attempted to recruit. We can epitomize this attitude in the phrase "standard denied-area mentality." Though Cubans of all walks of life continue to exhibit an unusual

willingness to meet with our case officers (or to respond to our efforts to recruit via the mails), they demonstrate, increasingly, an unwillingness to accept recruitment. The reasons given for rejection of our proposals turn essentially upon the complex of fears found in any of the old-line police states. Whereas even 12 months ago nearly 60 per cent of all persons approached would express readiness to serve as sources of intelligence on Cuba (actual performance rate, of course, was much lower), we are now receiving turn-downs at a ratio of 4 to 1.

The causes of this quiet "crisis in motivation" are many. By and large they are a function of the entire history of the frustrations experienced by most Cubans over the past five years. Of late the objective conditions bearing on the durability of Castro's regime have shifted in our favor. The shift has occurred essentially because of the proliferation of severe economic problems, and though there exists a genuine possibility that Castro's government will ultimately collapse from managerial ineptitude, the shift has been subtle, nondramatic, and is not easily worked into the structure of the recruitment pitch. Those official Cuban targets on assignment outside Cuba may well, as they sense impending disaster, become increasingly susceptible to recruitment or defection, but residents of Cuba will, if anything, become even less prone to risk-taking, particularly as the internal security system tightens.

Against this background the question of the availability of funds is not particularly relevant, since experience has clearly demonstrated that money as such is not the critical factor in inducing the Cubans to conduct espionage. In rare instances the promise of high pay has perhaps been the stone in the balance, but, particularly in regard to resident agents, money has not and will not serve as a strong inducement. In any event, were the salaries of all existing agents doubled and these rates applied to all future recruits, the sums involved would be relatively modest.

B. Technical Factors

We must assume here that, though most valuable as sources of some types of intelligence, official Cubans stationed outside the island cannot begin to afford the comprehensive intelligence coverage necessary to the policy makers. Thus though efforts to recruit such officials will be sustained, we must continue a major effort to pursue the intensive exploitation of resident agents and the complex process of acquiring additional on-island assets. These two enterprises, at once interrelated and independent, are inhibited most profoundly by the problem of communications. Basically, this matter has two major facets, discussed below.

Timeliness of Information

Many factors conspire against timely reporting from Cuba, primary amongst them being the inefficiency of the Cuban postal system and the impoverishment of the Cuban transportation facilities. Without benefit of OWVL, the exchange of secret writing messages between Havana and the West consumes an average of four weeks. The introduction of OWVL can cut this to ten, sometimes seven days. For the immediate future there will be no ready solution to the timing problem. We must live with the seven-day minimum except for those few agents who can utilize their own W/T set.

Communications Materiel

Though techniques have been developed whereby agents can be placed on two-way secret writing via the mails, thus greatly expanding the potential agent pool, the technique is time-consuming and in its initial stages very complex. The problem is not only to get the idea of message development and carbon technique across to the prospective agent, but to hold him to task long enough to train and provide him with ever-more adequate, secure materials. In order, however, to make these "bootstrap" operations genuinely effective, it is necessary to introduce OWVL. Forceful efforts are being

made to perfect the development of a secret writing key text and developer system which can be forwarded to the agent via the mails. Clearly, success in this effort would not only enable us to increase the number of agents on OWVL but would make them more effective operationally by reducing the 4-6 week exchange time involved in two-way secret writing. To date all agents operating with OWVL have received their materials via dead drops, with one or two having been delivered by courier. Except for a few dead drops by infiltrated teams, all dead drops have been made by two diplomats, one of whom, a unilateral asset, has made a prodigious number of drops. The other diplomat, more conservative and under tight control by his service, will increase his dropping activity, but only to a limited degree. There are definite limits to the number of diplomats available for drop-making and limits to the drop process itself.

Miniaturized medium-speed W/T sets can be and have been cached and recovered. It will always be a rather major undertaking to cache a W/T set and a major task to recover it. Still neither undertaking is as massive as that of rendering the gear operational. A vast assortment of factors here render definite, very narrow limits to the number of W/T operations we can expect to activate and maintain within a 12-to-18-month period.

V. Conclusion

The problem facing the Clandestine Services in the present context is one of developing a sufficient number of reliable assets with adequate access to the target and effective communication, who could serve as sources of continuing, timely, and reliable reporting. There is no simple solution to the problem, and an increase in funds would help to solve it only partially. Availability of funds has never been an obstacle. Rather, the problem has and will continue to revolve around one critical issue: to find, recruit, and train agents in place. By increasing the number of competent case officers we can expand the effort in most categories and improve the over-all intelligence

take but only to a limited degree owing to the limitations previously cited. However, should the Agency, despite these limiting factors, be called upon to replace the coverage now provided by the U-2, it would be necessary to reorient the present broad collection mission and concentrate on "early warning" collection specifically relating to the reintroduction of missiles and associated delivery systems.

In such a situation, the order of priorities would become:

- Cuban military structure;
- Soviet military presence;
- Cuban political developments;
- Export of the Revolution;
- Cuban economy;
- Chinese Communist involvement; and
- Anti-regime conspiracy.

To meet these objectives, existing agent networks in Cuba would need to be expanded and redirected and new assets would have to be recruited in the hope that a minimal acceptable level of early warning intelligence could be produced in timely fashion, thereby filling the gap created by discontinuing U-2 flights. Cessation of U-2 overflights, however, would most certainly be taken by the people of Cuba as further evidence of a U.S. policy of "coexistence with Castro." To combat this and to bolster morale of those Cubans who might otherwise have been ready to assist us, it would be essential to step up those portions of our psychological warfare program aimed at stiffening the Cuban patriot's will to resist.

Such an accelerated program of operations against Cuba, backed by increases in funds and personnel, would undoubtedly increase the quantity of our military early warning intelligence. It is unlikely, however, that it could ever be made to equal the intelligence now available through a collation of photographic intelligence with the current volume of clandestine and other reporting. This conclusion is based essentially on the recognition that in an era of nuclear confrontation, policy makers will not accept agent reporting as the hard intelligence needed before momentous decisions can be made. In this context, it is believed that our expanded intelligence effort would be, at best, an early warning net designed to detect signs of

strategic missile reintroduction. When these signs are identified, U-2 flights and other technical collection techniques would have to be launched to confirm or deny the intelligence produced by agent assets.