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PLANS TO ASSIST CUBANS IN OVERTHROWING THE COMMUNITIS
REGIME AND INSITUTE A NEW GOVERNMENT

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Program Review by
Brig. Gen. E. G. Lansdale,
Chief of Operations

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18 January 1962

THE CUBA PROJECT

I. OBJECTIVE

The U.S. objective is to help the Cubans overthrow the Communist regime from within Cuba and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace.

II. CONCEPT OF OPERATION

Basically, the operation is to bring about the revolt of the Cuban people. The revolt will overthrow the Communist regime and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace.

The revolt requires a strongly motivated political action movement established within Cuba, to generate the revolt, to give it direction towards the objective, and to capitalize on the climactic moment. The political actions will be assisted by economic warfare to induce failure of the Communist regime to supply Cuba's economic needs, psychological operations to turn the peoples' resentment increasingly against the regime, and military-type groups to give the popular movement an action arm for sabotage and armed resistance in support of political objectives.

The failure of the U.S. -sponsored operation in April 1961 so shook the faith of Cuban patriots in U.S. competence and intentions in supporting a revolt against Castro that a new effort to generate a revolt against the regime in Cuba must have active support from key Latin American countries. Further, the foreignness (Soviet Union and Bloc) of the tyranny imposed on the Cuban people must be made clear to the people of the Western Hemisphere to the point of their deep anger and open actions to defend the Western Hemisphere against such foreign invasion. Such an anger will be generated, in part, by appeals from the popular movement within Cuba to other Latin Americans especially.

The preparation phase must result in a political action organization in being in key localities inside Cuba, with its own means for internal communications, its own voice for psychological operations, and its own action arm (small guerrilla bands, sabotage squads, etc.). It must have the sympathetic support of the majority of the Cuban people, and make this fact known to the outside world. (It is reported that the majority of Cubans are not for the present regime, but are growing apathetic towards what appears to be a hopeless future or the futility of their status.)

The climactic moment of revolt will come from an angry reaction of the people to a government action (sparked by an incident), or from a fracturing of the leadership cadre within the regime, or both. (A major goal of the Project must be to bring this about.) The popular movement

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will capitalize on this climactic moment by initiating an open revolt. Areas will be taken and held. If necessary, the popular movement will appeal for help to the free nations of the Western Hemisphere. The United States, if possible in concert with other Western Hemisphere nations, will then give open support to the Cuban peoples' revolt. Such support will include military force, as necessary.

III. ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION

Our planning requires sound intelligence estimates of the situation re Cuba. The latest National Estimate (SNIE 85-61) of 28 November 1961 contains operational conclusions not based on hard fact, in addition to its intelligence conclusions; this is a repetition of an error in the planning for the unsuccessful operation of last April.

The planning indicated herein will be revised, as necessary, based on the hard intelligence estimate of the situation by the U.S. Intelligence community. A new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE 85-62 on Cuba), due on 23 January, apparently has been postponed until 7 February.

It is recognized that one result of the Project, so far, has been to start the collection of Intelligence on Cuba in depth, to provide facts on which to base firm estimates and operations.

IV. INITIAL PHASE

(30 Nov 61 - 18 Jan 62)

A. Establish a U.S. mechanism for the project.

Status: The President's directive of 30 November 1961 was implemented by creating a U.S. operations team, with Brig. Gen. Lansdale as Chief of Operations, and with tasks promptly assigned. His immediate staff are Mr. Hand and Major Patchell. Representatives of Secretaries and Agency Directors are:

State - Woodward (Goodwin, Hurwitch)

CIA - Helms

Defense - Brig. Gen. Craig

USIA - Wilson

B. Intelligence Support

Status: CIA made a special survey of U.S. capabilities to interrogate Cuban refugees in the USA (1,700 - 2,000 arriving per month) and on 16 January approved a program increasing the staff at the Opa Locka Interrogation Center in Florida from the present 2 people to 34. CIA will build up agent assets (positive intelligence assets inside Cuba are very limited and it has no counter-intelligence assets inside). Special intelligence assets will be exploited more fully. The Cuba project needs far more hard intelligence in depth than is presently available. CIA will require further assistance from Defense and other U.S. organizations in this intelligence effort, and is submitting specific qualifications for personnel on 19 January.

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C. Political platform for peoples' movement inside Cuba.

Status: State has sketched in a broad outline. CIA is to produce the firm platform statement of aims for which the Cubans who will operate inside Cuba are willing to risk their lives, and upon which popular support can be generated.

D. Nucleus for popular movement

Status: To date, CIA has been unable to produce the necessary political action agents for this purpose. Upon re-evaluation of its capabilities, CIA now hopes to complete spotting and assessing eight to ten Cuban political action agents by 15 February, from among Cubans available in the United States. The minimum need for the Project to be effective is 30 such political action Cubans and CIA is tasked to make a priority search for them among Cubans in the U.S. and Caribbean area.

E. Deployment of nucleus

Status: CIA is tasked to select 20 localities within Cuba where political action groups can be established. Initial selection and plans for establishing these action groups are now due 1 February. Havana, and localities in the provinces of Camaguey and Las Villas will receive priority consideration, according to present intelligence. Planning on this must be adjusted as firmer intelligence is acquired.

F. Diplomatic actions

Status: State is concentrating on the OAS Meeting of Foreign Ministers, which opens 22 January, hoping to get wide Western Hemisphere support for OAS resolutions condemning Cuba and isolating it from the rest of the Hemisphere. A companion resolution, to offer OAS relief directly to the suffering Cuban people (similar to U.S. relief to Russia, 1919-20) is being considered, as a means to reach the Cuban people sympathetically without going through their Communist government. The OAS meeting is to be supported by public demonstrations in Latin America, generated by CIA, and a psychological campaign assisted by USIA.

The major task for our diplomatic capability is to encourage Latin American leaders to develop independent operations similar to this Project, seeking an internal revolt of the Cuban people against the Communist regime. This is yet to be initiated by State and must be vigorously pressed.

G. Economic warfare

Status: This critical key to our political action Project is still in the planning stage under State leadership. State is basing future economic actions, including plans for an embargo on Cuban trade, on the outcome of the forthcoming OAS meeting. Meanwhile, State has chaired an Economic action group, which agreed on developing 13 actions. 15 February is set for a report on implementing plans, so that actions can be initiated. CIA was unable to undertake action to sabotage the sugar harvest, which commences about 15 January, and upon which Cuba's one-crop sugar economy depends. (Sabotage of transport, mills, sugar sacking and cane fields was explored.)

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