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TO : THE SPECIAL GROUP
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SUBJECTS : SUPPORT OF AUTONOMOUS ANTI-CASTRO GROUPS

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CIA

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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

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18 Aug 1963

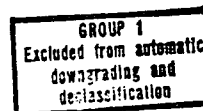
FROM THE COORDINATOR OF CUBAN AFFAIRS
TO THE SPECIAL GROUP

SUBJECT : Support of Autonomous Anti-Castro Groups
REFERENCE : Memorandum for the Standing Group of The
National Security Council, dated 8 June
1963, SUBJECT: Proposed Covert Policy
and Integrated Program of Action towards
Cuba.

1. Submitted herewith for consideration and approval
is a covert program for the support of an autonomous Cuban
exile group. This program is an implementing measure of
the previously approved course of action F in reference
memorandum, which calls for support of autonomous anti-Castro
groups as part of the integrated program of action towards
Cuba.

2. It is proposed that non-attributable support in the
form of funds, materiel and guidance be furnished to the
action element of a Cuban exile group known as Comandos L
which is an offshoot of the exile action group originally
known as Alpha 66. This support would only be furnished if a
mutually acceptable modus vivendi can be agreed upon which
does not conflict with current U.S.G. policy. Comandos L
have been conducting fund drives and the money collected

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appears to have been properly handled and applied to anti-Castro propaganda and action operations. The group's present primary action program calls for maritime operations, e.g., attacking shipping in Cuban waters and making commando-type attacks on targets in Cuba. To date they have conducted at least one such operation in Cuban waters; in this operation which took place in March 1963 the group fired on an unidentified ship (which turned out to be a Russian freighter) in the Cuba harbor of Caibarien. The group has been relatively inactive since the recent restrictions were placed on the movement of certain Cuban activists and their boats but recent reports indicate that Comandos L is attempting to establish a staging base on Andros Island in the Bahamas and may already have sent several boats and some personnel to the base. There are also reports that several factions of the action element of Comandos L have had discussions with Luis Somoza of Nicaragua and are considering operation out of Nicaragua if Somoza will support them.

3. The general lines of the proposed program would be as follows:

A. OPS CONCEPT:

The conduct by Comandos L of a series of anti-Castro

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maritime operations along the north coast of Cuba;
particularly during the light of the moon period when unilateral CIA maritime operations are not being conducted. These operations would provide valuable support to the CIA operations by wearing down Cuban coastal defenses and by preventing the establishment of any discernible operational pattern. The successful execution of these operations would also make a significant contribution to the objectives of reference program in that such operations will stimulate internal resistance and weaken Castro/Communist efforts to consolidate the position of the regime.

B. SCOPE AND MAGNITUDE:

No more than two operations per month would be conducted with the targets being Cuban patrol vessels and/or Cuban owned shipping in Cuban harbors or waters and coastal installations such as docks, warehouses and other such facilities. The selection of targets for proposed operations will be reviewed by the Cuban front (and thence covertly by CIA) for conformance with whatever policy framework may obtain at the time. Any deviations from approved proposals will be dealt with on an ex post facto basis in line with paragraph 3F below.

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C. MODUS OPERANDI:

A wealthy American who has been deeply involved in Cuban and Latin American affairs for many years and who has cooperated closely with CIA in the past, would be asked by CIA to present the program to an eminent and respected Cuban exile who in turn would be asked to act as a funding and cover front for the support to be furnished to Comandos L. The Cuban front would then approach the leadership of the Comandos L action element and indicate funds come from conservative elements of the Cuban exile community and from contributors located in Central America and in the United States. CIA or U.S. Government involvement would not be revealed to any members of Comandos L. The Cuban front would spell out the use of a Caribbean Operations Base and why he wants to concentrate on the North Coast, i.e., accessibility. Additional ground rules would also be established regarding target selection and tactics. The essential point would be made that final authority for all actions rests with the Cuban front or his representative. If Comandos L accepts this proposition, the Cuban front would then go about acquiring a Caribbean Operations Base under guidance from the American cutout.

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Once a Base is obtained, members of the Comandos L would depart legally from the United States to a Caribbean country where they would board fishing vessels, provided by the Cuban front, which would then take them to the Caribbean Operations Base. From the Operations Base, strike boats would be towed to close proximity off the North Coast where they would then be released to carry out their mission. After completing a mission, the strike boats would rendezvous with the fishing boats and then return to the operational base. Upon completion of an operation, appropriate relatively low-key publicity releases will be made outside the U.S. in consonance with guidance furnished covertly by the CIA.

D. OPERATIONAL BASE:

A British Island, in the Bahamas or one of the Cayman Islands would serve as Caribbean Base for Comandos L. The Island would be leased by contacts of the Cuban front or the American cutout under a suitable cover story. We would not plan to inform the British of the activities of the group or of U.S. involvement.

E. CIA SUPPORT:

We estimate the initial capital investment of approximately one hundred thousand dollars would have to be made

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to provide, through appropriate cover, for the establishment of the Base camp, procurement of fishing and strike boats, and other required materiel and services. It is estimated that operating costs would be about \$15,000 monthly based on approximately 20 men with two fishing and two strike boats. To the fullest extent possible, Comandos L personnel or the Cuban front will accomplish all their own procurement and other required activities. Any specialized equipment or guidance which must be provided by the CIA will be non-attributable and accomplished by appropriate covert mechanisms.

F. U.S. INFLUENCE:

It is felt that an acceptable degree of U.S. Government influence can be exercised over the Comandos L action operations by having the Cuban front making it clear that any actions not in accordance with the agreements (which CIA will stipulate through the American cutout), will not only result in all support being immediately terminated but in addition such actions would undoubtedly result in U.S. [and/ or British] authorities making a maximum effort to restrict future Comandos L activities. In addition, we believe that Comandos L leadership realizes that unless its operations are conducted within the general framework of U.S. Policy

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in terms of foreign bases, appropriate targets and acceptable publicity releases, they will not be able to operate effectively against Cuba.

5. It is requested that approval be granted for the CIA to proceed with the implementation of the program as outlined above.

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