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ON OPERATION MONGOOSE

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5 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation Mongoose, Thursday, 5 April 1962

PRESENT: General Taylor, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Gilpatric, Mr. McCone and General Parker

1. Mr. Johnson reported that the Italian representative at the UN has now been briefed on the proposal to approach the Cubans with an offer of food or medicine in exchange for the Playa Giron prisoners. He noted that no specifics had been agreed on, and the first contact would be for the purpose of establishing in principal the possibility of such an exchange.

2. Mr. McCone reiterated that all reports of Cuban intervention in the Hemisphere are proving to have no substance when they are actually run down. In answer to General Taylor's question as to what the U.S. might do if hard evidence of this kind is obtained, Mr. Johnson pointed out that a subcommittee of the OAS, on security, had been authorized at Punta del Este. This committee was given the authority to mobilize multi-national action against the Castro regime in the event that such hard information is obtained. It was agreed that whatever information becomes available should be given to General White, who is the U.S. representative on this subcommittee.

3. Mr. McCone said that after studying the possibility of using Cuban air crews, CIA had concluded that they would not be suitable for supply drops at night. On the other hand, trained U.S. civilian crews could be provided by Civil Air Transport (CAT) in 30 days. Arrangements could be made to have these pilots ostensibly employed by Cuban exile groups in the U.S. and, therefore, they would be non-attributable to the U.S. Government. He said that available Cubans could then be used for less demanding missions such as leaflet drops. There appeared to be a general feeling on the part of the Group members that U.S. civilians of this type would not be essentially different than "sheep dipped" personnel in the event that any were shot down over Cuba. 16
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4. Mr. McCone referred to the Weekly Progress Reports which are now being produced by CIA. He said these are required internally within the Agency, and that to consolidate them with reporting from other responsible departments and agencies would slow things up and

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and make the report less useable. It was, therefore, agreed that the CIA Progress Reports would continue to be produced every Tuesday, and that a highlighted summary would be prepared weekly by General Lansdale and forwarded to General Taylor's office for information of the Group. It was also agreed that General Lansdale should normally brief the Group every other week.

5. Mr. McCone expressed some impatience with progress being made on the project, and speculated as to whether it might not be desirable to consider the possibility of a different approach. In this connection, he noted that reconnaissance has revealed considerably less Cuban military strength than had been expected. General Taylor asked that Mr. McCone give the Group, next Wednesday, a summary of the intelligence received from reconnaissance and from the debriefing of exfiltrated agents.

6. The Group discussed at length the question of whether the U.S. would actually welcome an excuse for overt intervention. One of the points raised in this connection was the possibility of massive death sentences for the Playa Giron prisoners, and whether this would serve as a casus belli. The possibility of a quick operation to liberate the prisoners was also mentioned. It was felt that the time has now come when the basic philosophy of the project should be examined once more, with particular reference to the possibility of finding a pretext for early overt intervention. A meeting was set up for next Wednesday at 2:00 p.m., to include the Secretaries of State and Defense.


Thomas A. Parrott

No distribution, except for General Lansdale - *by destroyed 4/9/63 - m.n.*