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SECADES, ROLAND

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*See L to RI for FB
Classification + file in
CUBELA 701*

13 April 1966

NAME Rolando CUBELA Secades
DPOB 19 January 1933, Cuba
MARITAL STATUS Twice married. Was divorced by his first wife by whom he had one child. Has one child by second wife.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA Rolando CUBELA Secades was one of the activist student leaders who assisted in the overthrow of Batista and later turned against the Castro regime because of disaffection with communism. As early as March 1952, CUBELA was working against Batista. With student friends, including the four Humboldt Street martyrs made famous in the Marcos Rodriguez trial, CUBELA re-instituted the University Student Federation or Directorate - FEU or DR, as it is called. In 1956, CUBELA participated in the assassination of Lt. Col. Antonio BLANCO Rico of Batista's Military Intelligence (SIM). Fleeing to the USA, he became involved in military planning and purchasing arms until 1 February 1958, when he and 16 other students returned clandestinely and into the Escambray to fight. He led a famous column, became the overall DR military leader. Although the DR joined military forces with Castro's 26 July Movement, they refused Ernesto "Che" Guevarra's military leadership, fighting only under CUBELA'S orders. They occupied the Presidential Palace when Batista fled on 1 January 1959 and initially declined to turn it over to Guevara and Castro. In October 1959, CUBELA became president of the government-sponsored FEU, after ~~resuming his medical studies at Havana University.~~ In 1961, after his term ended, he terminated his connection with the regime because of serious disagreements with Castro and Guevara.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY: 1. In March 1961, CUBELA went to the Latin American Peace Conference in Mexico where he was contacted by a personal friend, Carlos Tepedino (AMWHIP/1) who knew Jack Stewart (in true name) from Havana and introduced them. The KUBARK objective of the meeting was to determine whether CUBELA was anti-Castro and, if so, to bring his views to the attention of the authorities in the United States.

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- OPERATIONAL SUMMARY:
2. In August 1962 CUBELA went to the Helsinki World Youth Festival where he was met by Tepedino who introduced William Wainwright under the alias William "Bill" Thompson. This was a follow up to the first meeting with the objective of inducing and facilitating CUBELA'S defection. However, due to CUBELA'S plans, the objective became an attempt to set up an internal dissident group for the overthrow of the Government and sabotage. CUBELA said he was not interested in any small undertaking, and declared the assassination of Fidel and other leaders would be the most effective way to rescue the revolution from the Communists.
 3. Later in August 1962 CUBELA "went on vacation" in Paris where he met "Bill Thompson" again and KUBARK sought more information on his proposal to overthrow Castro. CUBELA also discussed the need for the U.S. to become more deeply involved with LA students who, ten years later, would be on the road to becoming key figures in LA governments. Tepedino was present at most of these meetings.
 4. In late August-early September 1962, CUBELA was taken to a U.S. Air Force Base in southern France where he was given a demonstration in explosives. CUBELA had thought of blowing up an oil refinery and was also considering the elimination of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the Soviet Ambassador, and Fidel himself. CUBELA was not given any sabotage equipment but was trained in SW. Earl Williamson (true name) accompanied CUBELA on this trip but was always called "Jaime" by CUBELA. Jack "Red" Stent (as Jack Stevens) and a TSD SW technician under the assumed name of Capt. David L. Harper also accompanied CUBELA.
 5. ~~In September 1963, CUBELA was met in Porto Alegre, Brazil, by "Bill Thompson" and by Nester Sanchez, the latter using the name "Nicolas Sanson".~~ Tepedino was also present at these meetings. CUBELA claimed he had written two SW messages with FI (one was received) but nothing significant had been happening in Cuba. He said he was reluctant to use SW because he feared the efficiency of the Cuban postal censorship.

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OPERATIONAL SUMMARY:

He cited a group of Cuban military officers and discussed ways to approach them. The problem was, he explained, that although many of them were anti-Communist, they were loyal to Fidel or they were so afraid, they were reluctant to discuss any conspiracies for fear they might be provocations. CUBELA was of the opinion that there was no organized conspiracy within the military or in other groups in the country. Internal security and controls were effective and improving daily. At this meeting CUBELA volunteered the information that he thought highly of Ramon GUIN Diaz (AMTRUNK/10) who was hiding Miguel DIAZ Isalgue (AMICE/14, an infiltration asset who was sent in to recruit Guin, and did so). CUBELA said he planned to use Guin but he was concerned about his nervous condition and the fact he drank heavily. CUBELA was told to assist Guin and let him remain in Cuba rather than help to leave the country as CUBELA proposed.

6. From Porto Alegre, CUBELA went to Paris on 14 September 1963 where he met with Tepedino, "Nicolas Sanson", Jack "Red" Stent, Richard Long. CUBELA was attending the Alliance Francaise in Paris at the time. It was learned the French were unilaterally surveilling CUBELA whereupon we advised them our contact with him was an attempt to defect him. On 15 October CUBELA insisted that he meet U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy because he believed Kennedy ran Cuban affairs. "Sanson's" position at the time was: "We do not consider CUBELA is working for us but since we have a common objective, we are willing to render support." CUBELA went on vacation and on his return on 29 October 1963, it was arranged for Desmond FitzGerald, under the name "James Clark", to meet CUBELA at Stent's home that day as an emissary of the policy level of the Government. "Clark" made the following statement: "The U.S. is prepared to render all necessary assistance to any anti-Communist Cuban group which succeeds in neutralizing the present Cuban leadership and assumes sufficient control to invite the U.S. to render the assistance it is prepared to give." Clark assured CUBELA of moral support for any activity in this direction which CUBELA might take.

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OPERATIONAL SUMMARY: 7. The highlights of CUBELA'S reaction to this proposal were:

a. The majority of the Cuban people are against Castro, but mainly because of fear they did nothing about it. Castro's primary support comes from the young teenage militia group.

b. Many high ranking military officers are anti-Communist and many are convinced Castro must go but they are afraid to organize or even talk against Castro to other people. This fear and Castro's control of the Government apparatus (security, military, defense committee, economy, etc.) make it extremely difficult to organize a coup against him.

c. If Castro falls, the military will probably break up into four or five groups. Without Castro, the present regime will disintegrate. Unless there is strong and immediate support, the situation can easily become chaotic. Nothing of an operational nature was discussed at this meeting. After the meeting, CUBELA stated he was satisfied with the policy discussion but he now desired to know what technical support we could provide him.

8. On 19 November 1963 it was decided at Headquarters that we would advise CUBELA would receive a cache inside Cuba. If he requested it, the cache would include sabotage material, C-4 and equipment, high power rifles with scopes, hand grenades, pistols, etc.

9. On 22 November 1963, "Sansou" met CUBELA who asked for 20 hand grenades, two high powered rifles with scopes and approximately 20 pounds of C-4 and related equipment in the cache. He had refused to carry any incriminating equipment with him on his return to Cuba. CUBELA spoke again about Guin and his concern for Guin's security (it had never been admitted to CUBELA that Guin was recruited by Diaz). When the meeting broke up, "Sansou" and CUBELA were informed about President Kennedy's assassination. CUBELA was visibly moved and asked: "Why do such things happen to good people?" At this as well as earlier meetings, CUBELA was given small sums of money to cover personal expenses.

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- OPERATIONAL SUMMARY:
10. On 17 March 1964, the following items were included in two caches put down for CUBELA.
 - 2 Belgain FAL rifles and ammo
 - 2 UZI 9 mm. SMG and ammo
 - 2 Browning pistols with silencers and ammo
 - 10 handgrenades (fragmentation)
 - 10 handgrenades (white phosphorous)
 - 20 lbs of C-4 with firing devices and allied equipment including time pencils and clocks.
 11. On 3 May 1964, CUBELA asked for an FAL silencer. According to the news, the cache was discovered by a small boy. In February 1965, CUBELA said portions of the cache were recovered by a fisherman. The pesos were not usable due to type. He never received any part of the cache, he said.
 12. On 30 August 1964, Jorge Carlos ROBRENO (AMLASH/2 "El Mago", a Cuban refugee in Madrid, and Cdte. Efigenio Ameifeiras, Vice Minister of Special Affairs MINFAR, put out feelers to AMWORLD saying they were out of step with the regime and wanted to talk to AMBIDDY/1 (Artime). ROBRENO was staying with Jose Luis GONZALEZ Gallarreta (QUHOPS/1), an attache at the Cuban Embassy in Madrid. Then Alberto BLANCO Romariz (AMLASH/3) arrived in Madrid on 2 September 1964 as a refugee. He talked to Mr. James Noel and Anthony Sileo on 15 September 1964 with Gonzalez Gallarreta making the introduction. He spoke vaguely about CUBELA'S plan to assassinate Castro. He said that Tepedino was responsible for delivering into Cuba one FAL with Silencer. CUBELA was to be the trigger man with the support of unidentified military officers. Noel and Sileo reprimanded BLANCO and said their conversation was all a waste of time.

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- OPERATIONAL SUMMARY:
13. On 11 November 1964, CUBELA went to Prague as a special guest of the International Union of Students (IUS). His trip was arranged at his request by Jose VENEGAS Valdespino, a Cuban vice president of IUS and a personal friend. On 13 November Artime agreed to talk to Cubela, as the outside contact of the internal 26th of July and DR internal dissidents. At a meeting with "Sanson" on 6/7 December, Cubela told "Sanson" he was going to meet Artime. The meeting with Artime took place on 27 December 1964. Present were CUBELA, ARTIME, Jorge Carlos ROBRENO, Alberto BLANCO Romariz, Nilo Messer and Miguel "Cuco" de Leon. During the meeting, after they were alone, CUBELA explained his position, plans, needs, etc., to Artime and an agreement was reached. Artime provided Cubela with a silencer for an FAL.
 14. On 1/2 February 1965, Cubela requested \$10,000 from "Sanson" to finance his operations. It was refused on 3 February. Instead Tepedino gave Cubela \$7,000, \$5,000 of which had been provided by KUBARK and \$2,000 by Tepedino.
 15. Cubela returned to Cuba on 23 February 1965. CIA has had no further direct contact with Cubela, and he has not utilized his SW to us since that time.
 16. On 23 February 1965, CA/PA passed a letter through the AMSNEAK operation to UNSNAFU/25 implying that Cubela, i.e., "one of the Comandantes" had recently received an additional \$5,000 in his secret bank account.

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