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TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED INTERVIEW OF PABLO HERNANDEZ MOYAS.

Subject arrived to Key West, Florida, on 9 January 1962, and was interviewed by Cesar DIOSDADO, Customs Agent.

~~DOCUMENT CONTAINS SENSITIVE INFORMATION~~ -----

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What is your full name, please?

Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas.

When and where were you born?

I was born on 6 June 1939 in Manicaragua, Las Villas province, Cuba.

What is your occupation?

Commerce. I worked in a shoe store in Santa Clara, Las Villas.

Do you belong to any underground group?

I was up in the hills fighting, in the Escambray, under Major Joaquin MEMBIBERES.

How long were you an insurgent in the hills?

I was 14 months up in the hills, from 26 August 1960 until approximately two months ago.

What other Majors or Chiefs were operating in that area also?

I was with CONGO PACHECO. The chief of the Escambray is Osvaldo RAMIREZ.

During your stay in the hills, how many men were there, how many men did you have?

The Escambray is divided into guerrilla groups. The Hqs counts on 300 men in arms, in addition to the rest of the guerrilla groups which are also under this headquarters.

What is the total number of men fighting in that area?

I estimate that there are approximately 2,000 armed men in the Escambray.

And are they well equipped, are you receiving arms in the Escambray?

Well, lately we have been receiving, during the past few months while

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

Then you have been receiving supplies?

Yes, a little delayed but we are receiving some. Now it is a little more advanced.

How is the morale of the insurgents in that area?

Everyone who is in arms in that area has a high morale.

And have they brought Militia troops to the Escambray?

That is tremendous. When they start one of their offensives they send 50,000 or 60,000 Militia troops. We have to fight every day. But sometimes we have a good situation because there is control within the Militias themselves, that is, militiamen from cooperative farms and granges are sent there by our own organizations, and they are good men. At least we have a good situation with them. The problem is when they unleash one of their offensives. But when things are quiet we have a good situation.

How are you receiving the arms with which you are being supplied?

We are receiving them through contacts.

Do you have contact with outside Cuba, or how were you getting these arms?

I think that lately we have had contact with other countries, but I do not know who they are because we only receive them and we don't know how they are obtained.

And who is the main contact which you have for Osvaldo RAMIREZ?

Well, I belong to another group. To CONGO PACHECO and Joaquin MEMBIBERES.

And do you have contact with people outside the Escambray area? That is, did you have contacts in the town so they would support you?

Of course, people were collaborating with us throughout Las Villas province.

Can you divulge the name or names of these contacts or people who were

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

Yes, one of our main contacts was a man named Rafaelito LUGONES. This interview will not be published will it? (question by HERNANDEZ Moyas)
No, this is strictly secret and confidential. (interviewer)

Well, also another man from Santa Clara called Andres (LNU) who used to come to the U.S.

You mean he comes to the U.S.?

No, he used to come. He is now under arrest.

Do you remember any other names?

No, I really don't. You see, there are so many and I have trouble remembering the names.

And then you say that there are approximately 2,000 men in the Escambray?

Yes, 2,000 armed men. What we need is ammunition.

The time when you were there, what was the most needed type of ammunition?

The most necessary ammunition was .30 Caliber, we had three .30 Calibers and we ^{were} short of ammo. We also needed grenades. Hand grenades are extremely necessary, it is the most effective weapon. It is very effective because one is always surrounded there, they encircle us and then we can break through with grenades and the enemy is afraid to come near us if they know we have them.

And how do the militiamen behave in combat?

Well, some militiamen fight well and others run like the devil.

And in your opinion, do you think that the majority of them run or what?

Well, at this stage of the game those who fight are Communists. Today those who are not Communists will not fight. When we first rose in rebellion, everyone would fight. Those who were deceived and who believed in the Revolution and all that. But now that they have realized what Communism is, the militiaman who is not a Communist will not fight. The Communists are the ones who fight. And now the Militia troops do not go up the hills with the same original enthusiasm, they have to be forced

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

to comb the area, and when they get up there they find that things are quite different. Now the militiamen are not fighting with the same enthusiasm which they had previously for the fight. There is much discouragement among them, and many of them are also good men.

Are they collaborating with you?

Yes, they are.

In what form are they collaborating?

Well, with food and things like that. When we are encircled it becomes very hard to obtain food because they seize all roads and paths. And it is not as if we were operating on open country. We operate in guerrilla groups moving about and when we are attacked it is very hard to find food.

And what do those officers do, do they leave you food or what?

Well, no, let allow our contacts to operate by looking the other way. Of course, in those posts there is always some militiaman that is a Communist or something, but our men operate freely.

And those who are collaborating or supporting the Regime, don't you think that they may die in combat and thus they will be eliminated as time passes?

Well, those men are already on a black list. When the time comes they will be eliminated. Also when Militia forces were sent from Havana to comb the woods, as they call it, as these troops are not very experienced in the mountains, the ones with experience are the Militia troops that have been in the mountains for some time, then some of them who are good people would send us word that the troops were coming so that we could change our position. Then the troops would begin to comb the area but we were already out of that area and they would not find anything. Then the militiamen themselves warned you of this?

Yes, they themselves warned us.

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

You mean that the militiamen who were permanently assigned to the area were the ones who warned you?

Yes, they sent us word.

And this has been total collaboration from those men, or....?

Well, this collaboration has already been given for some months. Before everyone fought but then they realized things and collaborated with us. Now everyone in Cuba is collaborating.

And how do you see things. Do you think that if you had more cooperation and received more supplies of arms and ammo do you think that more of your men could operate in that area?

Yes, of course. If the Escambray had received more attention Fidel might no longer be in power. And they should have taken better care of it, but they were busy with other things.... why mention them? The most sacrificed people were we men from the Escambray, and if they had furnished all the requests which were made, then things might be different today. The thing is that we were abandoned to our own luck, to whatever we could do by ourselves. And I think that we have done even more than we might conceivably have been capable of doing. If we had had arms.... from the beginning there were hundreds of men who wished to go up the hills but they did not have arms. And they had to be turned down because we had no arms to give them and they would have been a hindrance for us. What can an unarmed man do in the woods? To accept them would have meant their capture. If there had been enough arms the Escambray would be free today. And you think that if more materiel is sent in, that more men could operate in that area?

The Escambray would soon be free. Infiltrating men into the Escambray, without ~~wink~~ the Castro Regime knowing about it, infiltrating expeditions taking materiel and everything. Most of the peasants in that area are dying to get a rifle in their hands, and if all those people are armed properly,

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

those whom we have had to turn down because there were no arms for them, then the Escambray would soon be free.

And is there a way of introducing that materiel over there?

Well, everything is possible in this life; nothing is impossible.

Yes, but I mean, are there places through which the arms could be brought in?

Sure, of course. Arms can be brought in through anywhere.

But I mean some specific place?

Sure, there are places. You see, Cuba is all organized today, and all those organizations have their plans because many people have gone there, and they say that they are going to drop arms and all that. And everyone is waiting. Some of those organizations have over 100 men, others over 200, others over 300, and all those men are unarmed and are only waiting for the arms to go into action, go up the hills, or do whatever might be necessary. For example, a farm in the area where we operate, there is a point, I believe that the plan is right here in the United States to drop arms, but nothing has ever been dropped. And is that point on the coast, or.....?

No, it is in the Escambray itself but in the more level part of the mountains. Around Manicaragua, the Salto de Manicaragua.

And what could be done, drop the arms?

Yes, they could be air dropped.

And it would not be possible by land?

Yes, it could be done but it would be much more difficult. But there is so much vigilance in Cuba....

And what about through the coast?

No, the coast is very far. The coast is near to Trinidad and Sancti Spiritus, but far from other inland areas. And there is much vigilance also.

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

Then it would not be possible to send in an operation through there to deliver arms to you?

Well, having a direct~~ix~~ connection with the people who are organized in that area, the arms could be delivered to them. I don't know. That is just a vague project, I don't know how it might be done.

And were you being furnished any arms?

Very few. Lately some were coming in. But a lot of ammunition is necessary and we are very short on ammo, it is very scarce.

And food, how are all those insurgents fed?

Well, food has to be rationed. Cows are bought from the peasants themselves.

And then you are also receiving funds for those purchases of livestock?

Yes, the organizations in the towns send money, but sometimes it is also a little scarce. But something is received.

And then you see a lot of bullets there?

Yes, even the women fight. The women peasants ask for rifles to fight, and even the boys fight. There is a lot of dignity in Cuba. The only ones who are with Fidel is the rabble, the lowest elements, bunch of thieves and criminals. Anyone with dignity is against Fidel and against Communism. Fidel only has the support of a small bunch of Communists, the problem is that people are living in terror and everyone is afraid. But all he has is an insignificant bunch of Communists. And the people can even move. They send anyone to the execution wall for the slightest thing. I believe that if Cuba is attacked by different places that this will soon fall. The Cuban people are desperate for something to happen so they can go out and fight.

And did you come to make a contact, or do you have a mission here in the United States?

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

We were encircled and I was left alone. A lot of militia troops were thrown against me. Then my first departure was for Havana, that is, for Santa Clara and from there to Havana. And then I made a connection to come over here. My idea here is to contact Major Joaquin MEMBIBERES. Then you were separated from your group?

Yes, I was dispersed. I and another young fellow.

And where is he?

He is still in Havana.

He didn't want to come to the United States?

Well, I didn't have time to send word to him. This opportunity for me to come was something which happened very fast.

And then was it an organization that made contact with you for you to come on this trip, or what?

Well, I came here through a contact of our own people. Supposedly anyone coming from the hills and having contacts can easily find a way to leave.

And then you had no problems while leaving in the boat "BLANCA NIEVES?"

Well, the problem was that the trip took too long. We left there on the 2nd and arrived on the 9th. We had a very rough time. The boat broke down, we almost sank twice, spent three days on some keys almost without any food and water. Then an aircraft flew over the keys where we were, and it sent word to a Coast Guard cutter which brought us over here.

That is how you got here?

Yes.

And what is your personal opinion regarding the towns near the Escambray; are they collaborating with you?

Terrifically. There is always some Communist who is with Fidel, but

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

Do you know any of their names?

Whose names?

Of the Communists.

Yes, I know some.

Can you give me their names?

Yes. We were reported that a man was a member of the G-2, his name is Angel HERNANDEZ.

Where is he from?

He's from Manicaragua, from a part called Quirro. I think he owns a grocery store. And another man from there who is named Andres PEREZ and who is a Communist.

Where is PEREZ from?

Also from Quirro. And there is another man called Arsenio (LNU) from Manicaragua. There are many other G-2s but I don't remember their names.

And what other forces are operating in that area, in addition to CONGO PACHECO's forces.

Well, there is another man called Luis VARGAS, and another called GUILLEN. What is GUILLEN's first name?

Well, I don't know. He operates in a different area and everyone knows him as GUILLEN. He signs just GUILLEN. We have had some conversations but have had little contact.

And where is he from, how old is he?

He is from La Moza, from around that area in Las Villas province.

Does he have brothers?

Yes, he has brothers. But like I said, I have had very little contact with him because he operates in one area and we in another.

And how old is he; is he young?

Well, I don't know his age, but he is young. He must be around 32

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

And who else are operating with him?

Well, the groups there are divided by areas. Each has a different zone of operations. RAMIREZ is also near that area, near Sancti Spiritus, around Ojo del Agua and Cabaiguan.

And who else are up there?

Luis, GUILLEN, CONGO, Osvaldo RAMIREZ, those are the chiefs of our groups. There are also other guerrillas which I do not know. The mountains are a very large area and there are other small groups in other areas.

And do you run into them?

Yes, we run into them.

And how do you distinguish yourselves among each other?

Well, we know each other, and the passwords are known.

Do you have passwords up there?

Yes, insurgents have to have them.

And what communications do you have between the different groups?

Through contacts.

Person to person.

Yes.

You have no radios to broadcast.

No. At least not while I was there. I don't know if they have arrived in the last two months.

Then they are operating well in that area?

Yes, that area is very good in spite of the offensives. Sometimes one has to fight every day. But we fire four shots at the militiamen and they start running. They dig foxholes and encircle us. But then you fire a shot at them and they put their heads down inside the hole. All they do is put their sub-machine guns and start firing but keep their heads well down. Then we are able to break the encirclement easily.

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

Then all you do is fire two or three shots?

Yes, we break the encirclements easily. The bad thing is falling into an ambush, then we are forced to clash there in the open.

And what do you do with the wounded?

The situation of the wounded is a little rough, there are little medicines. They are bandaged and if possible, they are taken into the towns where they are given medical attention.

Have you had many losses?

Yes, we have had many, but we have inflicted many losses upon the enemy also. At the time of the big offensive in February we had many losses. They threw 110,000 thousand militiamen against us and attacked with artillery and heavy weapons.

And did many of you have the opportunity to escape; what did you do?

Yes. At the time of the big offensive it was almost impossible for us to remain in the woods because we had no food, and all the peasant homes were occupied by the Militias. We had to eat boiled bananas. Then we went down to the plains, after breaking encirclements during 32 days, and having eaten only nine times during all these days. Then we reached the plains, and in the plains things changed a bit. We were able to recover somewhat. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ We were fighting in the plains for two months and when they called off the offensive we went back up the mountains. And we managed to get along like that.

And how long did that encirclement last.

Three months.

Did you have many losses, or did you inflict heavy losses upon the enemy?

At first we were in a good situation. We had over 2,000 armed men. Evelio DUQUE was there at that time, MEMBIBERES, and all those people. Then they sent 10,000 militiamen against us. We fought hard and inflicted heavy losses upon them. Approximately 5,000 militiamen were

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

killed by us and less than 5,000 remained. That was the first group of militiamen. Then they kept sending more and more militia troops until they had 110,000 troops fighting against us. Then our situation became very difficult. Some of the weakest men were forced to surrender by hunger, others were killed. And militiamen were killed in great numbers by us. They sent new troops without discipline which were easy pickings.

And did you have the opportunity of capturing arms from the enemy?

Yes, we captured some of them. We captured many Czech sub machine guns but they are no good, they jam. And we had no ammo for them. The truth is that we didn't like them very much.

Then when you used up their ammo, you put them aside or what?

Then when we had used up their ammo they were no good to us. We had to go for ammo to Russia.

Then your forces inflicted many losses upon the enemy?

Yes, a lot.

And you said you had recently been in Havana?

Yes, I spent approximately 20 days in Havana. I spent Christmas in Havana. There wasn't one roasted pig; it seemed like All Souls Day. There was no gaiety or anything. They people are very upset. They are very upset, but they are not yet ready?

Well, I'll speak to you clearly. The people, the real people are against Fidel. The only ones who are with him are those who never had anything of their own, the rabble. But the real people is opposed to Fidel. And then the general feeling is quite.....?

Well, you see, in the past few months there was a lot of discouragement. Among the underground?

No, among the Communists. The militiamen. You see, many of the militiamen have been indoctrinated. But many are opening up their eyes.

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

You see, at first things were quite rough for us, but not now, things have changed. At first everyone was a Communist, but now the majority have turned against them. And I also think that the Castro Regime must be exterminated with lead. Hunger will not overthrow them. The Communists know how to be hungry.

And how is the underground, the groups in Havana?

Well, the groups there are waiting.

Is there unity among them?

Yes, there is quite a bit of unity. But they are waiting because they do not have orders to do anything. According to what they told me, they do not even have orders to light a cigarette.

There are no sabotages?

No, nothing. They say that they do not have orders to perform sabotages. That is, according to some people with whom I talked. They say they do not have any orders.

Do you know Evelio DUQUE well?

Well, no, I don't know him. But my brother does, because he was fighting with his group. But Evelio knows me more or less on account of my brother.

And what is your brother doing, is he still there?

No, he isn't doing anything now because he is in prison. My brother was the second in command of Joaquin MEMBIBERES.

And what is your brother's name?

Justo HERNANDEZ Moyas.

He was Evelio DUQUE's second in command?

No, Joaquin MEMBIBERES second in command?

And when was he captured?

On the 26th of February at the time of the big offensive. When they

also captured Evelio DUQUE's brother, and CASTRO (CARRO? tape not clear),

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

LIMA(?), QUELO (?) and those men.

And did you ever hear BLANCO mentioned? - Captain BLANCO?

BLANCO? I don't know. That name sounds familiar.

And who else were in the zone of operations?

In the Escambray there were also QUELO, Nardo LIMA (? - tape not clear) who were caught in the offensive. CARRO (? - tape not clear).

Were those men also captured?

Yes. There was also Ismael ROA (? - tape not clear), who was also captured in February during the big offensive. You see, it seems they fell in a very bad area, and they had to..... They captured many men there, many.

About how many men did you have up there at that time?

Approximately over 2,000 men. We also had many unarmed men, and that caused much..... You see, they had to surrender because what could an unarmed man do up there?

And you say that you are receiving few arms now?

Well, arms are received but a little slowly. A few come in every now and then. But I don't know about the last few months. It is said that quite a few arms have been sent up there lately. And that many men have gone up, and some expeditions have infiltrated through different areas, according to what my contacts have told me.

That arms are being sent in then?

Yes, they are going in. In Cuba there are insurgents everywhere. In any sugar cane field there is a guerrilla. What they are waiting for is the order. That there be something effective so they can back all those people. Because, you see, in some of those areas the guerrillas can't operate because they will send 15,000 or 20,000 militiamen against them. They would be exterminated.

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

But if they rise in rebellion in an area, and they send the 15,000 or 20,000 militiamen, and then there is another uprising in another area, they have to divide that militia force, don't they?

Well, of course. But then the uprisings in different areas have to be coordinated.

And what is the present situation of Osvaldo RAMIREZ?

Osvaldo is all right.

And PACHECO is also all right?

He is also all right. But he needs ammunition.

Then you believe that if they were given more arms and ammunition, that more men could go up into that area to operate?

Certainly. That is what everyone is waiting for. At this time we need arms. The people are desperate to take a rifle in their hands.

And have they sent heavy artillery against you in that area, or can't they come near you?

Yes, they have sent quite a bit of artillery against us. They have used a lot of artillery against us. When they locate our position they shell the woods with bazookas and artillery, and mortars. It's very rough.

Do they use the Air Force against you?

No, they haven't used the Air Force. Not up in the hills.

Is it hard for them to use the Air Force up there?

Well, I don't think the Air Force is effective up in the woods. It is worse for them.

Because they would be met with fire from down there?

Sure.

Then you believe that ^{if you} received more supplies of arms and ammo that you would be joined by more men.

Yes. I can assure that to you. The people are dying to go up the hills, but they are holding back because what would all those men do up

Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

And how could more people maintain themselves up in the Escambray with regard to food?

Well, like I said, everyone is collaborating up there. And also the food that is sent through the contacts. The cows and food that are bought from the peasants. And we manage to get along.

Then they are collaborating very much with you?

Yes, of course. The peasants up there are such good people that Fidel took 1,000 or 2,000 of them out of there and sent them to the cooperative farms because he said that they were collaborating with us. And then they set up posts in the houses vacated by those people. But there are still many good ones left.

And they don't attack you from those posts?

Well, there are also good people in those posts. We also have men there. If it weren't for that, where would we be now?

Then all those people are also collaborating with you?

Some of them. That is a very delicate thing. There are always some Communists there too. But it is a very delicate situation because if one of these officers are found out to be collaborating with us, he is executed in 24 hours.

Then the situation there is difficult anyway?

In what sense?

To operate up there.

Well we are holding back, waiting. Because one of those posts could be attacked and the arms captured. But what would be gained by that? They would send heavy forces against us. We are waiting, and orders have been received not to do anything, to wait. That the time will come to act. The truth is that the men are upset. This is a problem that should have been solved before. Not let it take so long.

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Interview of Pablo HERNANDEZ Moyas (cont.)

Then you say that there are insurgents in other areas of Cuba?

Yes, there are groups everywhere up in arms. In the Encrucijada area there are some small groups in the cane fields. Also in Corralillo where TONDIQUE and CAMPITOS are operating.

Then you did not come to the United States on any special mission?

No. You see, I came because MEMBIBERES himself had sent word that his men who could, should come out. But at that time we could not even move up there from where we were, and I was caught in a very difficult situation up there and I had no other choice than go out to Santa Clara first and then go to Havana. Then our own people told me to leave Cuba and then I could return later. So I came over here.

Well, I wish to thank you and congratulate you for your good fortune, and I hope you continue to have the same good fortune here.

Thank you, goodbye.

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