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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

TDCS DB-315/02005-65

DATE OF INFO. 8 - 9 JUNE 1965

17407

DISTR. 11 JUNE 1965

SUBJECT

RECRUITMENT OF CUBAN EXILES BY ATON/CONSTANZO/PALAU
TO JOIN RANKS OF THE FORCES OF GENERAL IMBERT AND
GENERAL WESSIN Y WESSIN

6-31
Z

PLACE & DATE ACQ. UNITED STATES, MIAMI (10 JUNE 1965)

REF IN 87815

SOURCE

FIELD REPORT NO. UFG-7261

AND APPRAISAL

A MIAMI BUSINESSMAN WHO WAS A RESIDENT OF HAVANA FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THE SOURCE HAS CONTACTS WHO RECOGNIZE HIM AS A CHANNEL TO U.S. INTELLIGENCE. THIS INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED FROM A CUBAN EXILE WHO SPOKE WITH ATON CONSTANZO PALAU.

(SEE TDCSDB-315/01985)

1. FIELD COMMENT: IT HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN REPORTED THAT A COMMANDO TEAM OF 49 CUBAN EXILES AND 11 AMERICANS IS BEING FORMED IN MIAMI, FLORIDA, BY ODELIO GARCIA DERIZANZ AND GERALD PATRICK HEMMING, AN AMERICAN ADVENTURER AND SOLDIER-OF-FORTUNE. ATON CONSTANZO PALAU AND RAMON ESCARDA RUBIO APPEAR TO BE LEADERS WITHIN THE GROUP. THE COMMANDO TEAM IS ALLEGEDLY TO BE USED BY DOMINICAN GENERAL ANTONIO IMBERT BARRERAS, HEAD OF THE LOYALIST FORCES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, PRESUMABLY TO TRY TO TOPPLE FRANCISCO CAAMANO DENC, LEADER OF THE REBEL FORCES. THE FINANCIAL BACKER OF THE COMMANDO TEAM HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS AN AMERICAN LAWYER LIVING IN MIAMI.)

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TDCSD8-315/02005/ TAG

2. ON 8 JUNE 1965, ATON CONSTANZO PALAU, A FORMER CUBAN REBEL ARMY CAPTAIN WHO RESIDES AT 752 SW 4TH STREET, MIAMI, FLORIDA, SAID THAT HE HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN THE RECRUITMENT OF 60 CUBAN EXILES WHO ARE TO FIGHT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. THE EXILES ARE BEING RECRUITED TO JOIN THE FORCES OF DOMINICAN GENERALS ELIAS WESSIN Y WESSIN AND ANTONIO IMBERT BARRERAS IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST THE REBEL FORCES OF FRANCISCO CAAMANO DENO, AND ARE TO BE PAID \$50 A DAY FOR THEIR SERVICES. ALL OF THE RECRUITS HAVE A REVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND BUT DO NOT INCLUDE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE FORCES OF FULGENCIO BATISTA. CONSTANZO SAID THAT HE HAS BEEN RECRUITING THESE MEN FOR A RICH DOMINICAN BUSINESSMAN WHO LIVES IN THE MIAMI AREA.

3. CONSTANZO SAID THAT IN ABOUT APRIL 1965 HE HAD RECRUITED SEVERAL CUBAN EXILES FOR ROBERTO ALEJOS ARZU, A GUATEMALAN MILLIONAIRE LIVING IN MIAMI BEACH, WHO WERE TO BE USED BY ALEJOS IN HIS ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT OF ENRIQUE PERALTA AZURDIA. CONSTANZO STRESSED THAT THERE WERE POLITICAL COMMITMENTS INVOLVED IN ALEJOS' RECRUITMENT OPERATION, IN THAT THE CUBAN EXILES WERE TO BE PERMITTED TO ESTABLISH AN ANTI-CASTRO BASE OF OPERATIONS IN GUATEMALA IF THE ATTEMPTED OVERTHROW WERE SUCCESSFUL. (FIELD COMMENT: ALEJOS' ATTEMPTED OVERTHROW ABORTED IN EARLY MAY AND THE CUBAN EXILES DISBANDED. CONSTANZO HAD BEEN RECRUITED FOR THE OPERATION AS A TEAM LEADER.) IN THE PRESENT RECRUITMENT OPERATION, HOWEVER, CONSTANZO POINTED OUT THAT THE PRIMARY ATTRACTION IS THE \$50-A-DAY PAYMENT FOR SERVICES RENDERED.

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4. GERALD PATRICK HEMMING, AN AMERICAN, IS REVIEWING ALL THE FORMS SUBMITTED BY THE POTENTIAL RECRUITS FOR THE OPERATION AND HAS THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE FINAL APPROVAL TO THE CANDIDATES. ON 8 JUNE HE WAS SEEN DRESSED IN COVERALLS AND WAS WEARING A SILVER-COLORED HELMET, ATTIRE WHICH IS USUALLY EMPLOYED BY MEN ENGAGED IN CONSTRUCTION WORK.

5. AS OF 9 JUNE, A GROUP OF THE EXILES WAS SCHEDULED TO DEPART FROM THE UNITED STATES ON 12 JUNE, PRESUMABLY FOR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

6. FIELD DISSEM: CINCSO, CINCLANT, COMKWESTFOR, MIAMI REPS, OF STATE, FBI, CUSTOMS, I&NS, BORDER PATROL, FAA AND USCG.
(ALSO SENT [SANTO DOMINGO.]¹⁶⁻¹⁰)

END OF MESSAGE

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