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SECRET

DRAFT

8 July 1959

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT:

03

PARTICIPANTS: Mitchell L. MER BELL and [redacted]

1. I phoned Subject at his hotel on 8 July at 1100 as we had pre-arranged to ~~arrange~~^{set up} another meeting with him. I told him that it would only take about an hour, or an hour and a half and then he would be free to return to his home.

2. When I arrived I told him that after looking over the situation and consulting with my superiors ~~it had been decided~~^{I had decided that} for obvious reasons the United States would not support any revolutionary activities by Gen. Pedraza. I also said that the United States will observe its international obligations concerning Cuba and Pedraza, and that the United States would not overlook any violations by Pedraza or his followers of the neutrality laws.

3. I said that we had some interest in the possibility of his working for us as an intelligence gatherer under terms to be negotiated after we obtained a current security clearance on him. I pointed out that we were not attempting to limit his action in connection with the [redacted] nor were we assuming any responsibility for those matters he carries out in his own behalf. I stressed the need for security and discipline should he work for us, pointing out that he may be asked to do things which we cannot fully explain to him because of the need for security. He said he understood this perfectly. I dictated the attached Secrecy Agreement to him and had him sign it.

SECRET

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file in 201-294912

[Handwritten initials]

4. I had taken with me a PRQ Part 1 form and obtained the necessary data.

5. If his statements concerning previous employment are correct, his working history shows a ^{propensity} for taking ~~up~~ risks and switching employment frequently. He appears to be basically a promoter in the Public Relations and Advertising field. In 1957, the firm Mitchell WER BELL, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, engaged in public relations and advertising, went through ^{voluntary} bankruptcy. He has since been self-employed primarily as a consultant in the public relations and advertising field. He is also connected with a firm called World wide Information Services, 660 1st Ave., New York. Judging from the address, I questioned the strength of this firm. ~~and~~ Although Subject claims to be a Vice President of it, he admitted that he is employed on a commission basis and has had no earnings since January 1959. He said the reason for his failure to make ~~any~~ money during this period is that he has been involved in the transactions (mentioned in my earlier memorandum) ^{for} the exchange of Cuban pesos, which were largely unsuccessful.

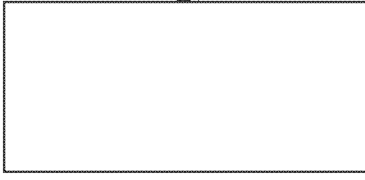
6. I had asked Subject to write out in detail as much as possible of the story he had given me on 6 July, but he had failed to do so. He wanted to know whether the United States Government was going to do anything about what he called the serious Communist crisis in Cuba. I told him that the United States would handle the matter in its own way and ~~an~~ own time and that for obvious reasons of security I could not go into any detail on any of these matters with him unless he were specifically to be charged with a given action.

7. Subject said that he had called the head of World wide Information Services, Richard W. Habbell, since he was in Washington anyway and proposed to go to New York to see him. He said while he was in New York he would attempt to contact Loos (See my memorandum of 7 July) and learn more of the alleged 1,000 available Germans. I told him that I neither approved or disapproved his taking this action at this time but if he did, I would appreciate hearing the results of it.

8. Subject said that he feels he should return to the Dominican Republic as soon as possible and asked if we were willing to finance such a trip. I told him it would be necessary to get his clearance before doing so, and that he would hear from us in a week to 10 days.

9. My second interview with Subject gave me a more unfavorable opinion than before. While obviously ^{in the line of} capable, I get the impression that Subject is such a big "wheeler and dealer" that he has failed in business despite considerable ability, initiative and energy. I recommend that no use be made of him until such time that a very careful covert investigation of his background and activities have been made; that if security approval is obtained, he initially be hired under a short term contract for testing purposes, and only after careful testing and evaluation should he be considered for long term contract employment.

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