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Notified at 1015 of meeting in Mr. Bob Kennedy's office at 1100 attended by Lansdale, Woodward (State), Helms (CIA), Wilson (USIA), Craig (DOD) at 10th and Constitution, 1100, Mr. Kennedy's office. Personnel actually attending the meeting were: Lansdale, Craig, Hand, Patchell, McManis, (CIA), Helms, (CIA), Wilson. State Department representative failed to report. Meeting opened with Lansdale covering 32 tasks given various departments. Reported to Mr. Kennedy that the project was in slow motion. We must get things off dead center. Mentioned there were many taskings, some of which may or may not work. It is high time the US Government gave this project and the tasks involved a fair trial. It is high time the United States gets busy. Something to be generated in the form of assets, etc. around the Caribbean basin. Lansdale reported that at the Special Group meeting yesterday, General Taylor asked if the tasks had been accepted by various departments. Lansdale had replied that most had been accepted but not all. One task was the defection of top Cubans in the Castro regime. This is a thing CIA could handle and must. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Lansdale will be adding tasks from time to time. Deadlines in the plan issued and distributed yesterday were developed carefully not haphazardly. As we become ready in any phase we should push ahead. Lansdale expressed his concern regarding the absence of State representative at the meeting. He does not feel that State realizes the importance of this project. State should give this project more emphasis. Lansdale mentioned Interrogation Center Opa-Locka and ask Mr. McManis to give Mr. Kennedy a brief report. Requirements have been developed and submitted to J-5, Joint Staff which is considering the support required from the military. [REDACTED] CIA people are involved. Plan is that CIA people will absorb military personnel. The Interrogation Center will be ready on schedule, but this does not mean that an underground can be put into Cuba

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simultaneously. We must first get the mass of information before we can develop the necessary dope for underground. Detailed information for establishment of successful underground is necessary. Mr. Wilson indicated that as the Interrogation Center gets information available, USIA can use it for broadcasts, news items, etc. The Attorney General asked what is being done with the people, i.e., refugees who have already escaped from Cuba. McManis replied CIA trying to get people particularly who have come out since October. Mr. Kennedy feels that the people who have escaped in the last 6 months are important. His view is that we must find the key Communist informers in each village and province who back the Communist regime. We must find out how the operation was conducted 6 months ago. How it is conducted now. What changes. What those changes imply. We must determine those people who are potential assets, those unfriendly to Castro. Mr. Kennedy stated that money is no object. McManis reported that US has a base of [ ] Cubans with knowledge. Mr. Kennedy referred to a recent project involving placement of [ ] operators into Cuba recently which were picked up within 3 days. He stated that if the United States had known the facts or had full information, we could have avoided this failure. Mr. Kennedy indicated that people involved required for the Interrogation Center as interrogators, etc. should be no objection. We will get the people no matter where they must come from. We must cause Castro trouble that is meaningful. Lansdale brought up necessity for military personnel operating in the Interrogation Center wearing civilian clothes. Mr. Kennedy did not comment on this. Neither did Mr. McManis. USIA feels that Interrogation Center will be very useful to the USIA. Lansdale brought up the necessity for getting names of relatives of Cubans who have been persecuted or executed by the Communist and propaganda in Cuba. Mr. Kennedy concluded the meeting by summarizing the situation as follows:

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He stated how the project Caribbean Survey Group got started. Immediately following the April fiasco, the US government had to lie low for obvious reasons. During this interim period first the middle class refugees and then the farmer refugees stated out. General concensus of these refugees that a strong feeling is cropping up against Castro within Cuba but also the Cuban military is getting stronger day by day and Castro's control is drawing tighter and tighter. Time is decidedly in Cuba's behalf. With this in mind the government decided to do something. General Lansdale was told to make an appraisal at a meeting at the White House. Two week survey was made and Lansdale reported to the President in late November. Results were that Lansdale was directed to go ahead. A major effort was definitely worthwhile. A real drive and real effort can provide meaningful results. We must cause Castro trouble and worry regarding the retention of his control of Cuba. This will not give him time to cause trouble in other Latin American countries, since he will be busy trying to assure his official and personal survival.

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Mr. J. F. Kennedy wanted him working on the Caribbean Survey Group. This project has priority and General Lansdale was placed on it.

Initially, Mr. Kennedy had hoped we could get something going to harass the work of the Cubans in harvesting their sugar. We still have the problem of interfering with the sugar harvest.

This project is first priority of all projects under way by the United States of America. Time, effort, manpower, dollars are not to be spared. The President has indicated

that Castro cannot be tolerated and the final chapter to this has not been written. Mr. Bob Kennedy indicated that J. F. Kennedy made this report at an NSC meeting. Mr. Bob Kennedy will be watching conduct and the progress of this project. The group will be required to make periodically reports to the 5412 Group. If it does not go, you the members of the Caribbean Survey Group are responsible. Imagination, ideas, thoughts and these are to be forwarded to General Lansdale. These are important to the project. Members of this group must not wait and react only to Lansdale's guidance they must produce ideas and thoughts of their own.

"The big bird is on your shoulders, you members of the group. There is no question but that you must see that absolutely nothing stands in the way. We must do this job now. We cannot stand by and set on our ---. We must get going now. This is not a 3 or 4 year project but an immediate one that must show results now. Each of you as Senior representatives of your department has full authority. Mr. Rusk, Mr. McCone, Mr. McNamara all understand this. You have absolute authority in your respective agencies where this project is involved, and if you are held back on anything by blocks within the Departments I want you to tell me or General Lansdale and he will tell me. I will see that the blocks are moved. There will be no excuses if the project is not successfully accomplished." After the above orientation by Mr. Bob Kennedy, there is no doubt in my mind but that the Caribbean Survey Group has the full backing of the President of the United States.

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19 January 1962

Prepared and dispatched memorandum Gen. Lansdale.  
Subject: Situation at Guantanamo. See copy in Record.

Prepared Memorandum for Record of the conference with  
Mr. Bob Kennedy.



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