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9 December 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH: Deputy Director (Intelligence)
SUBJECT: Considerations for US Policy Toward
Cuba and Latin America

I. US POLICY OBJECTIVES

1. US policy toward Latin America is to increase the stability of the area, to strengthen friendly democratic governments, and to prevent the establishment of Castroite and anti-US regimes. None of these seem attainable so long as Castro, with Soviet support, rules in Cuba. Accordingly, the most immediate US objective in Cuba is the replacement of the Castro-Communist regime by one compatible with the goals of the United States. Current US policy in pursuance of this objective is to isolate Cuba from the Western Hemisphere and the rest of the Free World and to exert maximum possible pressures, short of open and direct US military intervention, to prevent the consolidation and stabilization of the Castro-Communist regime. The CIA covert action program is designed to support other governmental measures to proliferate and intensify the pressures on Castro; its ultimate purpose is to encourage dissident elements, particularly in the military, to carry out a coup and eliminate Castro and the Soviet presence in Cuba.

II. PROSPECTS FOR ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES

2. The situation in Cuba is characterized by economic stagnation, depressed living conditions, the loss of revolutionary impetus, and the disillusionment of an increasingly large majority of the population. To some extent this is a result of innate economic deficiencies in Cuba, and more recently, Hurricane Flora; but to a considerable extent, the problems confronting the Castro regime have been magnified by Castro's own ineptitude and by the US policy of economic and political isolation, and other harassment and sabotage measures. Castro's position appears to be eroding gradually and recently he has been forced to adopt increasingly harsh measures to maintain his control. We believe that a continuation of present US policy over the next 18 to 24 months will produce a substantial further deterioration in

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the Cuban economy and in Cuban morale, with consequent serious implications for Castro's position. But US pressures must be intensified if the deteriorating situation within Cuba is to result in the overthrow of the Castro regime in the foreseeable future.

3. Despite whatever problems he has been having in Cuba (or perhaps because of them), Castro has recently intensified actions aimed at fomenting violence, subversion and revolution throughout Latin America. Given stable political conditions in this region, Castro's limited subversive capabilities would pose no immediate threat to US interests. But since political conditions are highly fragile in many Latin American countries, the threat from Castro is real and disproportionate to his own meager assets. His urgent need to achieve some early triumph has impelled him to shake off his recent caution as evidenced by the Cuban arms cache discovered in Venezuela, his call for violent revolutionary action to take place in Peru, Brazil, and Panama, in December, and his threat to cut off support from his followers in other countries unless they initiate early action. While we believe that these actions are evidence of some desperation and that they may even backfire, they nevertheless demonstrate Castro's determination to pursue an all-out campaign of revolution. The key questions then, are how much time does Castro have and, in this time, can he set dangerous revolutionary fires throughout the hemisphere. A corollary question is whether present US policy vis-a-vis Cuba and Latin America meets present US requirements. Our view is that the pace is slow and is allowing Castro a dangerous latitude in his Latin American program of subversion and revolution. We believe that Castro's recent activities in Latin America now provide us with our opportunity to pursue a more openly aggressive retaliation approach against the Castro regime, both unilaterally as well as in collaboration with the countries of the OAS for joint action designed to remove Castro.

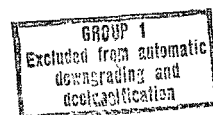
III. COURSES OF ACTION

A. Invasion

4. A successful invasion of Cuba would provide the most direct, simplest, and expeditious way of removing Castro. This course has been shunned up to now largely because of concern for world reactions and the possibility of escalation into global war with the Soviet Union, which is at least morally committed to defend the Castro regime. However, several new factors have become apparent since the gains and costs of an invasion course were last thoroughly examined over

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a year ago and we believe that a reappraisal is now warranted. The USSR is having economic difficulties, the Sino-Soviet rift has widened, and ties among the Eastern European satellites have loosened - all of which might have a moderating influence on Soviet reactions to a move against Cuba. As for Castro, his difficulties at home and his behavior abroad may weaken his ability to defend his island while at the same time encourage other Latin American governments to undertake more aggressive actions.

5. Regardless of any of these recent developments, we must recognize that an invasion of Cuba carries great risk of a US-Soviet confrontation (probably in Berlin rather than Cuba). The risk of such a confrontation would be less if an invasion was clearly a result of a unanimous OAS decision and if the invading forces were genuinely multilateral in composition than if the attack on Cuba was strictly a unilateral US action. In fact, anything more than a unilateral US action, even though substantially less than an OAS action, would take some of the edge off the risks implicit in an invasion. The risk of confrontation would be substantially less if multilateral OAS action were coupled with unrest inside Cuba leading to a coup. In any case, however, the USSR would probably step up tensions sharply in Berlin and we should be prepared for strains among our NATO allies. This will be especially true if the invasion were undertaken without prior NATO consultation.

6. Finally, it should be noted that the President told Mikoyan on 26 November that the US was not planning to invade Cuba. A US invasion in the face of the President's remarks might reflect on the good faith of the President and the credibility of future US discussions with high Soviet officials. On the other hand, Mikoyan asserted that "Cuba was too small to subvert anyone;" clearly demonstrable evidence that Castro was, in fact, engaging in subversion would provide sufficient justification to warrant a reversal of any commitment, explicit or implicit, that was made to Mikoyan. If an invasion were an OAS affair, (or even undertaken by several Latin American countries who were conspicuous targets of Castro's subversive activities) so much the better.

B. Blockade

7. A complete and successful blockade of Cuba, including all Soviet Bloc shipping, could be expected to bring down Castro from within, short of an actual invasion. Such a move,

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in the absence of an actual declaration of war, would almost certainly result in a substantial reaction against the blockaders (whether the US alone or the OAS in its entirety) and considerable opposition even among our closest allies in Western Europe, especially if it were a prolonged blockade. The international reaction to a blockade would probably be reduced if the blockade were:

- a. Selective (i.e., limited to POL and munitions);
- b. A quarantine of covert shipments of arms, equipment, and personnel between Cuba and Latin America (see paragraph 11 B (1) below).
- c. An operation in which there were very substantial participation by other OAS countries;
- d. An action following a clear and convincing case that Castro was engaged in subversion throughout Latin America.
- e. Of short duration and resulted in the overthrow of the Castro regime from within.

8. As in the case of an invasion, Soviet reaction will probably be more likely to take place in Berlin (where their strategic position is as favorable to them as ours in Cuba is to us). Thus, if this course were pursued, it should be done recognizing that a counterblockade of Berlin and incidents involving Soviets ships in Cuban waters will almost certainly be an immediate consequence.

C. Actions Short of Invasion of Complete Blockade

9. Both an invasion and a blockade are high-risk actions which would represent a major change not only in our Cuban policy, but in our international policy as well. For this reason, domestic political as well as the broadest strategic military and foreign policy considerations would be involved. There are, however, certain courses of action which could be directed against Castro in Cuba and Latin America which are less risky than either an invasion or blockade, but would involve a substantially higher "noise level" and risk of confrontation with the Soviets than those presently in effect. Some of these have been considered in the past, but have been rejected, usually either on grounds of excessive risk or lack of feasibility. We believe it is now appropriate to reconsider

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these and other actions designed to step up the intensity and pace of overt and covert actions whose purpose is to bring about the downfall of the Castro regime in the foreseeable future. The status of current programs and recommendations for future action are discussed below.

10. CIA Activities

A. CIA's Integrated Covert Action Program toward Cuba, approved by higher authority in mid-June 1963, consists of the following interdependent courses of action and has made progress as indicated below:

(1) Covert collection of intelligence, both for US strategic requirements as well as for operational requirements - covert collection of intelligence utilizes all collection techniques both within Cuba as well as against Cuban installations and personnel abroad. The quantity and quality of this intelligence continues to improve, although still far from our goals.

(2) Propaganda actions to stimulate low-risk simple sabotage and other forms of active and passive resistance - CIA-controlled radio programs and other propaganda media directed at Cuba encourage low-risk simple sabotage and other forms of active and passive resistance. These media also seek to stimulate and exacerbate tensions within the regime and between Cuba and the Soviet Bloc, taking advantage of Sino-Soviet tensions. The program includes both mailing and radio operations.

(3) Economic denial actions - government-wide overt official US economic sanctions in conjunction with covert economic denial operations are causing a marked adverse effect on the Cuban economy.

(4) Exploitation and stimulation of disaffection in the Cuban military and other power centers - we are undertaking an intensive probing effort to identify, seek out, and establish channels of communication with disaffected and potentially dissident non-Communist elements in the power centers of the regime, particularly in the armed forces hierarchy. The objective is to stimulate an internal coup which would dislodge Castro and his entourage. We currently are in direct contact with several individuals inside Cuba who may be of significance for this program.

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(5) General sabotage and harassment - sabotage in this program is both an economic weapon and a stimulus to resistance. Since the approval of the program, four externally mounted sabotage operations have been successful

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three additional were ready to go, but for several reasons including weather, were recalled at the last minute. While it is recognized that no single act of sabotage will materially affect the economy, we believe these sabotage raids have had a significant cumulative effect and should be continued.

We believe the recent rise in internal sabotage and increased disaffection and demoralization in the armed forces are partly due to the impact of these externally mounted sabotage raids.

(6) Support of autonomous anti-Castro Cuban groups to supplement and assist in the execution of the above course of action - in order to expand sabotage and resistance activities it has become necessary to accept the risks involved in utilizing autonomous Cuban exile groups and individuals who will not necessarily be responsive to our guidance. Substantial progress is being made in this part of the program and we expect the first infiltration and sabotage operations to begin in mid-January.

B. Suggestions for Intensification of Covert Action Programs Directed Against Cuba. As stated above, the primary objective of the covert action program is to create conditions and exploit all opportunities which could lead to a coup against the Castro regime. Under the program approved in mid-June 1963, we have adequate policy latitude and we are now making maximum use of

[redacted] In our judgment, however, the category of sabotage and harassment should be intensified, at least for the next year, both as to quantity and quality, if the overall program is to have a chance of producing the desired results. With regard to quantity, the policy decision

[redacted] In this field, but it has also drastically reduced the

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number of raids against Cuba. With regard to quality, we have long recognized the importance of incapacitating the critical power plants and oil refineries in the Havana, Matanzas, and Santiago areas of Cuba. But unduly hazardous operational conditions around these installations for maritime raids and concern over the political repercussions of the capture of commandos sent on these missions, have militated against mounting such raids. Moreover, the effective damage that can be done to these heavily defended targets by small teams now used covertly is problematical. A number of these targets, however, can be effectively attacked from the air under acceptable risk conditions. We, therefore, propose the following:

(1) Relaxation of the present policy banning all independent (non-CIA controlled or sponsored) Cuban exile maritime raids and air strikes against targets in Cuba from US and urge the British to do likewise for Bahaman territory.

(2) Authorization to conduct CIA or autonomous group controlled air strikes against selected major economic targets such as the power plants and oil refineries in the Havana, Matanzas, and Santiago areas of Cuba.

11. Action by Other Governmental Agencies, Supported by CIA as Appropriate. Unless all governmental agencies accord the highest degree of priority and urgency to bringing about the downfall of the Castro regime, an intensification of the covert action program alone is not likely to achieve the desired result. Accordingly, we recommend that the following proposals be given renewed emphasis or be initiated if not already in effect:

A. Actions Against Cuba

(1) It is urged that President Johnson make a policy declaration on Cuba at the earliest opportunity to make clear that the US continues to regard the Castro regime as intolerable. A "no rapprochement with Castro" statement should be explicitly included so as to stimulate and encourage anti-Castro/Communist dissident elements in the armed forces to carry out a coup. Some suggestions for a Presidential statement to further this objective are contained in Tab A attached.

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(2) By an interplay of diplomatic pressure and political warfare to cause the Kremlin leadership to conclude that disengagement from its overextended and precarious position in Cuba would be in the best Soviet interest. The President and his representatives can put the Soviets on notice via diplomatic channels and in private confidential discussion that US rapprochement with Castro is excluded from consideration, and that the existence of the Castro regime is a serious impediment to detente with the USSR. The US could offer to assist the Soviets in finding a face-saving way to withdraw gracefully from Cuba without serious long-term damage to its prestige, a technique already successfully applied during the missile crisis of October 1962. CIA could support this effort by covert political and deception operations to exacerbate existing tensions between Castro and the Soviets by causing Castro to believe that the Soviets are engaged in secret negotiations with the US to eliminate him.

(3) There is still considerable opportunity for tightening the economic noose around Castro if the US is prepared to incur the temporary displeasure of certain allies and neutral countries. More severe US sanctions against countries that trade with or ship to Cuba could be imposed. We are particularly concerned with the current trade and shipping practices of Canada, the UK, Spain, and Japan.

(4) US military feints could be undertaken designed to create and maintain a high state of anxiety within the Castro regime regarding US intentions. Supported by covert political and deception operations these feints would cause frequent Cuban military alerts and constant movement of Cuban forces throughout the island.

(5) Initiation of frequent low level reconnaissance flights would provide additional useful intelligence on Cuban and Soviet military movements. These flights would also have a positive psychological effect inside Cuba in demonstrating US contempt for Castro in a visible and dramatic manner.

B. Actions in Latin America. As Castro's domestic position deteriorates, he is likely, in desperation, to become increasingly ruthless and reckless in fomenting subversion, violence, and revolution in Latin America. It thus becomes especially important to make certain that Castro does not outflank US efforts by

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allowing him a major success somewhere in Latin America such as he has sought to achieve in Venezuela.

It would be unrealistic to expect such in the way of militant or aggressive action against Castro from the OAS or most of the individual Latin American countries strong enough or so geographically located as to make any significant contribution. But the vulnerability of OAS countries to Castro's subversive activities provides all the more reason for an OAS that has the substance as well as the forms of an alliance. For this reason we would place high on the list of US actions a move to revitalize the OAS. Although many of the actions listed below could be undertaken unilaterally by the US, a coordinated OAS approach would not only increase their effectiveness, but reduce their risk. In cases where it is impossible to get wholehearted and unanimous participation by the OAS, it should be our guiding principle to bring as many Latin American countries as possible along with us, by bilateral agreements if necessary.

The following actions with respect to Latin America are essentially defensive in the sense that they are designed to thwart Castro's subversive efforts in this region. We assume that they will be accompanied by long-term programs to build up the stability and strength of friendly Latin American regimes:

(1) Perhaps the most important action the US could take to isolate Cuba from Latin America and insulate these countries from Cuban subversion efforts is to quarantine covert arms, equipment, and personnel shipments by air or sea from Cuba to Latin America. For maximum effect, the cordon, preferably sanctioned by and participated in by the OAS, should be drawn as close to Cuban shores as is tactically possible. It must be recognized that this quarantine would not be fully effective, but it would provide a legal basis for seizing and searching Cuban, and, if necessary, non-Cuban, vessels and aircraft at will to determine whether they are engaged in running arms, equipment, and men to Latin America.

(2) Early recognition of the Dominican and Honduran governments would assist our efforts against Castro. Two strongly anti-Castro governments would be added to the support of the US in the OAS and additional Caribbean bases for operations against Castro would become available.

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(3) Appropriate Latin American countries should be encouraged to offer support and assistance, including bases, to responsible Cuban exile groups to permit them to operate against Castro.

(4) OAS-wide or bilateral agreements with Latin American governments should be negotiated for joint measures, to detect and to prevent arms smuggling by land, sea, or air into Latin America. Because of the urgency of the threat, Venezuela should be given first priority and every effort be made to build up Venezuela as a decisive defeat for communism in Latin America.

(5) We should strengthen on-site programs to increase the antisubversion capabilities in the Latin American countries. At present, the Communist and Castroite groups in most Latin American countries are not large, and for the most part they are disorganized and poorly equipped. However, the capabilities of the governments of the area for detecting and coping with infiltration, subversion, and armed uprising are very low.

(6) We should attract world attention to Venezuelan efforts to expose the Castro regime for its plots and acts of subversion against Latin American governments and to help provide a legal basis for collective action by the OAS against Castro.

DESMOND FITZGERALD
Chief, Special Affairs
Staff, DDP

CHESTER L. COOPER
Assistant Deputy Director
(Intelligence), (Policy Support)

Attachment: Tab A

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**SUBJECT: Suggestion for Additional Administration
Statements on Cuba to Stimulate Anti-Castro
Action on the Part of Dissident Elements in
the Cuban Armed Forces**

1. The ultimate objective of our covert action program directed against Cuba is to create the conditions which will stimulate non-Communist dissident elements in the armed forces and other power centers of the regime to carry out a coup against the Castro/Communist leadership and eliminate the Sino-Soviet presence from Cuba. With this objective in mind, CIA has established and is seeking intensively to expand contacts with disaffected senior military officers in the Cuban armed forces. In so doing, we have been impressed by the unanimity with which these contacts insist on personal and political assurances from the United States as a prerequisite to active conspiracy against the Castro/Communist entourage. These non-Communist anti-Castro dissident Cubans argue that there is no personal advantage or patriotic incentive for them to overthrow Castro when: (1) they run the great risk of being liquidated themselves as high officials in that regime and (2) there is a likelihood that the political clock will be turned back and Cuba will again fall under the rule of Batista or someone akin to him. They assert that they must have solemn assurances from high level U.S. spokesmen, especially the President, that the United States will exert its decisive influence during and immediately after the coup to prevent their personal liquidation and a political regression.

2. CIA has attempted in a general and very limited manner to provide these assurances, but it remains for the President and other Administration spokesmen to instill a genuine sense of U.S. commitment to our efforts. President Kennedy's speech to the Inter-American Press Association on 18 November alluded to this problem when he stated:

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"No Cuban need feel trapped between dependence on the broken promises of foreign Communism and the hostility of the rest of the hemisphere. For once Cuban sovereignty has been restored we will extend the hand of friendship and assistance to a Cuba whose political and economic institutions have been shaped by the will of the Cuban people."

3. Our Station in Miami reports that exile conservatives were depressed because they interpreted this passage as U.S. willingness to accept "Fidelismo without Fidel," while leftist oriented groups were encouraged to believe that "anti-Communist progressive and revolutionary elements" have the support of the U.S. Government. These Cuban exile reactions, however, cannot be taken as reflecting the views of people inside Cuba. It is typical of exiles that they become oversensitive to the innuendoes of official public statements bearing upon their problems. Within Cuba, we believe that President Kennedy's statement probably contributed significantly to providing political assurances to the relatively small number of potential coupsters to whom these remarks are addressed. But we believe that action may be expected to follow only when these assurances are coupled with open recognition from authoritative U.S. spokesmen that many Cubans now serving in the armed forces and other power centers of the Castro regime will have to play a major role in its overthrow. These people need to be assured that the United States is sympathetic to the personal problems they will face in the event of a successful coup. To meet this and related problems, we recommend that the following passages be given some prominence in a Presidential press conference, declaration or speech at the earliest appropriate occasion:

"There are many in the ranks of the Cuban armed forces, and in the Cuban Government itself, who have viewed with sorrow and anger the end of Cuban liberty, the subjugation of the Cuban nation to another state and to a foreign ideology that is alien to Cuba's authentic nationalist and democratic sentiments.

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"To these men I say the United States is ready to welcome to discussion without rancor and without reprisal a non-Communist Cuban leadership which truly represents the will of the Cuban people to strike down the barrier of Soviet domination, renounce Communism as a way of life and re-enter the community of American republics. We recognize that many non-Communist Cubans who now appear to be a part of the machinery of tyranny, will ultimately be instruments in destroying it and for this reason should be entitled to special consideration."

4. The President may also wish to refer to a speech celebrating the return of the Brigade members delivered by President Kennedy at the Orange Bowl on 29 December 1962 at which time he declared:

"Under the Alianza para el Progreso, we support for Cuba and for all the countries of this hemisphere the right of free elections and the free exercise of basic human freedoms. We support land reform and the right of every campesino to own the land he tills. We support the effort of every free nation to pursue programs of economic progress. We support the right of every free people to freely transform the economic and political institutions of society so that they may serve the welfare of all...and I believe these are the principles of the great majority of Cuban people today, and I am confident that all over the island of Cuba, in the government itself, in the army, and in the militia, there are many who have viewed with dismay the destruction of freedom on their island and who are determined to restore that freedom so that the Cuban people may once more govern themselves."
(Underlining ours.)

The President might note that in the intervening year the prospects have improved for a return of Cuba to the OAS family of nations and he looks forward to that day with confidence.

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