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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : A. H. Belmont

DATE: 7/9/59

FROM : S. B. Donahoe

SUBJECT: CONF. INFO.
MM 635-S
(JUAN FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO RODRIGUEZ)

Tolson ☒
Boardman ☒
Belmont ☒
Mohr ☒
Nease ☒
Parsons ☒
Rosen ☒
Tamm ☒
Trotter ☒
W.C. Sullivan ☒
Tele. Room ☒
Holloman ☒
Gandy ☒

Above informant (no relation to Fidel Castro family) is Miami informant on Cuban matters. He is Cuban citizen and is paid up to \$200 monthly for services rendered. He is 32 years of age, former Miami resident and more recently has resided in Havana with his mother.

Fernandez offered his services to Miami Office on 2/1/59. He had previously been implicated in gun smuggling activities on behalf of Carlos Prio group in Miami and is former member of Cuban National Police. Prior to fall of Batista he furnished valuable data on Cuban affairs and was active in reporting on July 26 Movement. He has proved to be stable and reliable. He went to Cuba in March, 1959, at invitation of Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz, then Chief of Cuban Air Force, and on 4/7/59 came to Miami and advised he had been made Second Lieutenant in Cuban Air Force and was serving as assistant to Marcos Diaz, Cuban Air Force Inspector and brother of Pedro Diaz. He was accompanied by Diaz brothers on trip to Miami and he advised of concern of Pedro Diaz over communist trend in Cuba and efforts of Raul Castro to oust Pedro Diaz. He personally recognized his own position was extremely precarious and dangerous should Castro learn of his cooperation with Bureau but indicated he intended to travel to Miami to report and has done so. He actually accompanied Fidel Castro on his visit to U.S., which indicates excellent position he was in to furnish data. He has furnished excellent data and has been repeatedly briefed on necessity not to disclose his cooperation with Bureau.

Recently Castro deposed Pedro Diaz Lanz as Chief of Cuban Air Force. Diaz escaped to U.S. and was interviewed by Miami Office 7/2/59. He expressed fear his brother and others on his staff, including informant (informant status not known to him) had been arrested by Castro. Miami indicated no word had been received from informant.

134-5991

Enclosure sent 7-9-59

- 1 - Belmont
- 1 - DeLoach
- 1 - Roach
- 1 - Donahoe
- 1 - Nasca

SBD:bdr

NOT RECORDED

176 JUL 15 1959 20 JUL 14 1959

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

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DATE 10-16-94 BY SP8 MAC/UM

ORIGINAL FILED IN 134-5991

Memorandum for A. H. Belmont

Re: MM 635-S

(Juan Fernandez de Castro Rodriguez)

134-5991

By cable 7/3/59 Legal Attache, Havana, was alerted to possibility informant may have been arrested and was told to furnish any data received but to make no open inquiry which might jeopardize informant or compromise Legal Attache himself. Legal Attache cable 7/6/59 advised no data received.

Miami teletype 7/8/59 advises of call from "McFarlane" (whose identity is unknown but who is apparently acquainted with informant) who said he had message from uncle of informant to effect "Joe is still behind bars." "Joe" is code name of informant and it would appear informant is definitely under arrest by Castro Government.

Although informant is probably under arrest, it seems clear he has not revealed his relationship with FBI as we would probably have heard a loud blast from Castro by now. Informant recognized his precarious position in acting as informant and presumably he will not reveal his cooperation with FBI although there is no guarantee what any man will do under pressure of interrogation or in fear of his life. Presumably, he would not do so except under most extreme circumstances for it would only aggravate his predicament. Obviously, his present arrest stems from his alignment with Cuban Air Force rather than his informant status. He entered Cuban Air Force on his own initiative and recognized dangers of alignment with Diaz brothers. Fact that he was in Cuba and working with us was risk he assumed and we, in turn, had to assume risk of exposure or loss in return for valuable data on a critical situation.

It is not believed we can or should do anything at this time to intercede for him. Such intercession would only compromise him and aggravate situation for him. If we are later faced with charges by Castro or inquiries from press that he admits working with FBI, we are simply going to have to withhold comment as to confirm it would not help him or us. At same time he has been trustworthy informant and we should assist if opportunity presents itself and if it can be done without jeopardizing Legal Attache operation. For example, if Fernandez should get free on bond, escapes, or charges are dismissed and he seeks assistance of Legal Attache in coming to U.S., it is believed we should examine circumstances at that time and decide what, if anything, can reasonably be done.

Memorandum for A. H. Belmont

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RECOMMENDATION:

Attached is cable to Legal Attache, Havana, advising him that informant appears to have been arrested, reiterating no open inquiries to be made and instructing Legat that if informant should be released and seek assistance or if others seek assistance on his behalf, immediately submit recommendations as to what can reasonably be done without compromising Legat operation.

over

AM/Bar

OK.

H.

V.