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TO: Mr. Gordon Chase		
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FROM: <i>CLC</i> Chester L. Cooper, O/DDI		
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1 December 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Considerations for US Policy Toward
Cuba and Latin AmericaI. 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. The ultimate US objective in Cuba has been the replacement of the present 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 feasible pressures, short of open and direct military intervention, to prevent the consolidation and stabilization of the Castro-Communist regime. In support of all-overt actions, the covert action program is designed 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, but to some extent Cuba's problems have been magnified by US policy (especially the virtual trade embargo), by Hurricane Flora, and, to a lesser degree, by other US pressures. Castro's position appears to be eroding gradually; recently he has been forced to adopt increasingly harsh measures to maintain his control. Thus, in Cuba the situation is moving in the right

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direction from the US point of view. On the other hand, Castro has recently intensified actions aimed at fomenting revolution throughout Latin America. The key question is whether the present rate of erosion is sufficient to achieve its objectives not only vis-a-vis Cuba, but Latin America as a whole.

3. Given stable political conditions throughout Latin America, Castro's subversive capabilities would pose no immediate threat to US interests. But since political conditions are highly fragile in many countries, the threat from Castro is real and disproportionate to his own meager assets. Castro's urgent need to achieve some early triumph has impelled him to shake off his recent caution: the Cuban arms cache discovered in Venezuela is the first known to us since 1959. He has called for violent revolutionary action to take place in Peru, Brazil and Panama in December and has threatened to cut off his support from his followers in other countries unless they initiate action soon. While we believe that these actions are evidence of some desperation and that they may even backfire, they nevertheless demonstrate Castro's intensified determination to pursue a vigorous policy of subversion throughout Latin America. Castro probably hopes to provoke a military takeover in several countries because military regimes will create environments more susceptible to the growth of revolutionary movements.

4. In the near future the effects of the Venezuelan election, of Castro's instructions to his agents abroad, and Cuban and Latin American reactions to the new US administration will become clarified; the necessity for a new and more vigorous US policy may then become more evident. Thus, the US Government should be planning a new policy with respect to Castro and Cuba. Meanwhile the intervening task would seem to be to concentrate upon other Latin American political leaders and governments.

5. The elimination of Castro would not in itself solve our larger problem in Latin America. Its principal effect upon the combustible situation there would be to deprive local revolutionaries of inspiration and support; but the underlying causes of instability, and the determination of dissidents to remove them, would remain. Moreover, a post-Castro Cuba would, for a long time to come, be characterized more by chaos than progress, yet we would have to commit ourselves to very massive economic and other assistance.

6. We believe that the situation has not yet reached the point where new and drastic US action to remove Castro is justified. The present and immediately prospective situation seems to us, therefore, to call for a continuation of present policy with certain intensifications and additions described below.

III. SUGGESTED COURSES OF ACTION FOR ACHIEVING US OBJECTIVES

7. A comprehensive review of the CIA Cuban Program was held for President Kennedy on 12 November 1962. It was the consensus at that time that this program had produced a worthwhile impact on Cuba during the five months it had been in operation and should continue. There was, however, some reservation on the part of the State Department regarding the desirability and efficacy of the externally-mounted sabotage actions unless they could be clearly marked as retaliatory measures for specific acts of aggression or subversion committed by the Castro regime.

8. The discovery and exposure of the Cuban arms cache in Venezuela and other evidence of Castro intervention in the internal affairs of a number of Latin American countries now provide us with this opportunity. It will also make tolerable a higher "noise level" resulting from intensified overt and covert US sponsored actions.

9. We recommend the following courses of action in Latin America as part of the broader United States program to counter the mounting pressures from Communists and Castroite insurrectionaries:

a. Negotiate bi-lateral agreements with Latin American Governments 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 in this effort.

b. Strengthen on-site programs to increase the anti-subversion 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. Moreover, the capabilities of the governments of the area for detecting and coping with infiltration, subversion and armed uprising are very low.

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c. Continue to encourage efforts by Latin American Governments to develop and to improve arrangements among themselves for the control of the movement of arms and of persons suspected of subversion. A measurable improvement would be Latin American acceptance of increased participation by US forces.

d. To reduce Castro's chances of success in exporting his revolution, develop with Latin American countries a plan for the quarantine of covert arm shipments by air or sea from Cuba to Latin America. For maximum effect the cordon should be drawn as close to Cuban shores as tactically feasible.

e. Attract world attention to Venezuelan efforts to expose the Castro regime for plots and aggression against Latin American Governments.

2. Continue the current policy of collaborating with the United Kingdom to bring about the downfall of the Cheddi Jagan Government in British Guiana. Castro is providing the Jagan government direct material support, and there is close identity of view between the two.

10. With regard to Cuba, it is urged that, at an appropriate early occasion, the President make a public statement of policy. In this connection, it is of particular importance to stimulate anti-Castro and anti-Communist dissident elements in the Cuban armed forces to take action against the Castro group. (Some suggestions involving the use of Presidential statements to further this objective are contained in Tab A attached.)

11. In addition to an early policy statement on Cuba, we recommend the following actions:

a. The President and his representatives 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.

b. Covert operations could be conducted by CIA to exacerbate existing tensions between Castro and the Soviets by causing Castro to believe that the Soviets are engaged in secret negotiations with the United States to eliminate him.

c. Simultaneously, actions could be undertaken designed to create and maintain a high state of anxiety

within the Castro regime regarding his intentions.
These could include military visits, public activities,
and covert diversion operations which would cause
frequent Cuban military alerts and constant movement
of Cuban forces throughout the island.

(S)
CLEMENTE L. COOPER

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