
Agency Information

AGENCY : SSCIA
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10014-10103
RECORD SERIES : MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 07-M-09

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA
FROM :
TO :
TITLE : FDB: OPERATION MONGOOSE

Released under the John F. Kennedy
Assassination Records Collection Act of
1992 (44 USC 2107 Note). Case#:NW
66000 Date: 11-04-2021

DATE : 00/00/1975
PAGES : 46

SUBJECTS :
SPECIAL GROUP
OPERATION MONGOOSE

DOCUMENT TYPE : REPORT
CLASSIFICATION : Declassified
RESTRICTIONS : 1B; 1C
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 03/21/2000

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : CCBOX 450

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SPECIAL GROUP

DOCUMENT TYPE : REPORT
CLASSIFICATION : TOP SECRET
RESTRICTIONS : REFERRED
CURRENT STATUS : POSTPONED IN FULL
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 01/05/99
OPENING CRITERIA :
COMMENTS : CCBOX 450

[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

FDB: OPERATION MONGOOSE

The Special Group, The Special Group (Augmented) and "Operation Mongoose."

Control over covert operations conducted by the CIA during the period 1959 to 1965 was exercised by the Special Group, a subcommittee of the National Security Council composed of the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Today this group is known as the 40 Committee. In addition, during the period 1961 to 1965 another subcommittee of the NSC was established to oversee covert operations relating to Cuba. It was known as the Special Group (Augmented) and was composed of the members of the Special Group and Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Other high government officials frequently attended Special Group (Augmented) meetings on an ad hoc basis.

The overriding purpose of the Special Group was to exercise political control over covert operations abroad. The Special Group was charged with the responsibility of considering the objectives of any proposed activity, whether or not it would accomplish these aims, its likelihood of success and in general whether or not it would be "proper" and in the American interest. In addition, the Special Group had the responsibility for framing covert operations in such a way that they later could be "disavowed" or "plausibly denied" by the United States Government -- or at least by the President.

Political sensitivity was the chief criterion for submission of programs and activities to the Special Group. Also, the Director

of Central Intelligence would submit programs or activities to the Special Group if unusually large sums of money were involved, defined as \$25,000 or more. Despite these two general submission criteria, however, the procedures that were followed during the period 1959 to 1963 in determining which covert operations required Special Group approval were characterized by an internal CIA memorandum as "somewhat cloudly and thus can probably best be described as having been based on value judgments by the DCI."1/

The memorandum went on to say:

- b. It is obvious that a compilation of Special Group approvals in no way reflects the totality of significant CIA activities carried on over the past 15 years. With respect to overall DDP activity, it does not include any mention of FI/CI actions or, of course, any decisions in the overt field. Even within the restricted framework of covert action alone, a 1963 study prepared by this office showed that of the 550 existing CA projects of the DDP which were reviewed against the background of our own internal instruction on Special Group submission (CSI 50-20, 4 March 1963), only 86 were separately approved (or reapproved) by the Special Group between 1 January and 1 December 1962.
- c. From the above it seems that the procedures for determining which CA operations require approval were not only somewhat imprecise prior to 1963, but also, and equally important, we did not keep adequate records of just what projects (and in what detail) were discussed with the Special Group.2/

1/Memorandum for the Record, C/CA/PEG, Subject: "Policy Coordination of CIA's Covert Action Operations," 21 February 1967

2/Ibid.

Not until the CIA's own internal instruction, dated March 4, 1963, on Special Group submissions did the criteria for submissions become more formal and precise. The instruction (CSI 50-20) detailed the following types of programs or activities which, as a general rule, would require Special Group action:

Political and propaganda action programs involving direct or indirect action to influence or support political parties, groups, or specific political leaders, including operations which use labor, youth, students, and influential military organizations as political pressure groups.

Economic action programs designed to influence governments to support U.S. national policy objectives, or to prevent Bloc countries from obtaining some strategic politico-economic advantage in countries or areas of importance to U.S. global strategy.

Paramilitary action programs.

CIA clandestine and covert action annexes to U.S. Country Internal Defense Plans.^{3/}

The 1963 instruction also dealt with cases requiring resubmission to the Special Group. This was required where there was a need for a new policy determination or to reaffirm the previous policy decisions; when developments or changes were such as to make the subject a matter for re-examination by the Special Group; and if specifically required by the Special Group in its approval of the program or activity.

Meetings of the Special Group were infrequent until, at the beginning of 1959, regular weekly meetings were instituted. Presentations by the DCI to the Special Group took two basic forms: memoranda

^{3/}Ibid

requesting approval of specific, usually one country, undertakings and general memoranda or oral presentations describing broader international capabilities and actions. Such memoranda were to include a summary of the proposal, the problem to which the proposal was addressed, and the factors bearing on the problem.

In addition to its primary function of approving major covert action operations, the Special Group, during the 1959-1965 period, pursued its second responsibility of framing these operations in such a way that they could be "plausibly denied" by the U.S. Government, or at least by the President. As Richard Helms stated before the Select Committee:

...(the) Special Group was the mechanism...set up ...to use as a circuit-breaker so that these things did not explode in the President's face and that he was not held responsible for them. (Helms testimony, pp. 28-29)

According to one NSC staff official who served during the Eisenhower Administration, the concept of "plausible deniability" was taken in almost a literal sense: "The Government was authorized to do certain things that the President was not advised of."4/

In November of 1961, after a major reassessment of United States strategy towards Cuba had been completed following the Bay of Pigs debacle President Kennedy decided to mount a substantial effort designed ultimately to lead to the overthrow of the Castro regime. The effort, ultimately code-named "Operation Mongoose,"

4/Interview with Bromley Smith, May 8, 1975.

was under the overall policy direction of the Special Group (Augmented) ("SGA"). The SGA was chaired by General Maxwell Taylor, who had conducted the study of U.S. strategy concerning Cuba and the reasons for the failure of the Bay of Pigs and operation. Attorney General Robert Kennedy was also a vigorous participant in its activities and to many seemed the principal driving force.^{5/} General Edward Lansdale was personally selected by the President as the Chief of Operations for Mongoose activity. Lansdale's role was to prepare and develop plans as tasked by the SGA and then to submit specific plans and actions to the SGA for approval. This prior approval was the core of the SGA's role.

Mongoose aimed for the overthrow of the Castro regime. The plan was to use propaganda and economic pressure--both covert and over through sabotage -- to build ultimately toward a hoped for internal revolt of the Cubans themselves. Liberal use was made of Cuban exiles, initially primarily infiltrated for intelligence gathering purposes and later for sabotage purposes.

The CIA was the principal action arm of Mongoose. William Harvey headed its Task Force W supported by the JM/WAVE station in Miami, Florida. Some 400 persons were directly employed by the CIA in the operation. The CIA was, in turn, given material support by the DOD.

^{5/}Other members were Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, or his deputy Roswell Gilpatric; Secretary of State Dean Rusk, or his deputy U. Alexis Johnson; CIA Director John McCone; USIA Director Edward Murrow; and McGeorge Bundy. Each of the constituent departments or agencies also had operational or working members assigned to perform tasks assigned by the SGA. These included William Harvey from CIA, Generals Benjamin Harris, _____ Craig, and George Johnson from DOD, Don Wilson from USIA, Robert Hurwitch from State.

Beginning in August 1962, but particularly in October 1962, the Mongoose plan for a build up toward a Cuban revolution was upset by the Cuban missile crisis. For the first time Cuba appeared to be an immediate threat to the security of the United States. The Mongoose operations were stood down, and with the successful conclusion of the missile crisis, the Special Group (Augmented) was disbanded.

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10 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Operation MONGOOSE - Appraisal of Effectiveness and Results which can be Expected from Implementing the Operational Plan Approved at the Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on 16 March 1962

1. Action: This memorandum contains the conclusions reached as a result of the reassessment of the MONGOOSE operational plan, conducted pursuant to your oral instructions to Mr. Helms on 5 April 1962. The recommendations for action are contained in Paragraph 11 below.

2. Under the MONGOOSE operational plan as approved, CIA is authorized and directed between now and 31 July 1962 to mount a concentrated operational program to collect intelligence concerning Cuba and to develop, insofar as possible, clandestine resistance cadres inside Cuba. This plan permits intelligence, political, economic, and covert actions, short of those reasonably calculated to inspire revolt within the target area, or other developments which would require U.S. armed intervention. These actions, insofar as possible, will be consistent with overt policies of isolating Castro and of neutralizing his influence in the Western Hemisphere and will be taken in such a way as to permit disengagement with minimum losses in assets and United States prestige. The plan provides that major operations going beyond the collection of intelligence be approved in advance by the Special Group. The plan does not provide for maximum, or even extensive, use of U.S. military personnel, bases, and facilities. No decision has been made that U.S. Military Forces will be committed at any time to support a revolt within Cuba or to intervene for any other cause.

3. Barring unforeseen difficulties, CIA can substantially fulfill the requirements of the present operational plan. However, this plan does not provide for a maximum intelligence

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and covert action program against Cuba. It probably does represent the maximum such program that can effectively be created within the current policy and other limitations. Fully effective implementation of the present program may require some limited use of U.S. military facilities, particularly training areas and submarines for agent infiltration and exfiltration. If a more intensive effort is to be undertaken, maximum use must be made of U.S. military facilities, personnel, and bases.

4. Under the present program, by August 1962 we will have far better hard intelligence coverage of Cuba, but it is doubtful if we will have achieved fully effective penetration of the top hierarchy of Cuban leadership. During the same period, we will have materially increased the clandestine resistance potential controlled by us in Cuba, but it will not be possible for us to field, activate, and keep alive large resistance groups. Our assets will consist of a number of small clandestine teams with limited supplies and possessing varying degrees of resistance and revolt potential. The teams will not be knit together into any central organization within Cuba. It is unlikely that by this time we will have developed any viable long term political leadership for a new Cuba. Such leadership does not exist in the emigration and it is doubtful if it can be developed within Cuba at any time prior to the forceful overthrow of the Castro regime, although some potential leaders of promise possibly can be developed.

5. Given the anticipated success in carrying out the currently approved plan, we should be able by August 1962 or within a reasonable time thereafter, provided policy approval is given, to begin to prepare these assets for an organized revolt of substantial proportions. This additional time will be required since under existing limitations we are not permitted to prepare the teams or cadres from their inception for any concerted revolt nor, in fact, give them any assurance of ultimate U.S. assistance which would support and preserve such revolt.

6. Any revolt we are able to generate within a reasonable time after the expiration of Phase I of the current plan, although possibly substantial in size, could not be considered a really full scale revolt in the sense that it alone could overthrow the regime. In the face of Cuban counteraction, the revolt could only be kept alive for a few days unless supported by active U.S. military intervention.

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7. The increased operational activity of the present program will attract some attention, may raise the Cuban and U.S. "noise level", and could lead to some public criticism and an increase in Cuban propaganda play. Any intelligence or covert action which is surfaced will, of course, be charged to the United States and specifically to CIA. If a maximum program is undertaken it will inevitably attract more attention and possibly lead to more intense criticism. The level of activity envisaged by the present plan is not likely to convince the Castro regime or the Cubans themselves that the United States is seriously contemplating either invading Cuba or intervening to assist any planned revolt.

8. There is substantial dissatisfaction in Cuba and a considerable latent resistance potential which is disorganized and dispirited at the present time. Internal Cuban conditions, including the availability of food and the general state of the economy, will probably deteriorate during the next several months. Basically, however, time is running against us and Cuba is likely to be a tougher nut to crack a year from today than it is now. The effective communization of the Cuban State, the increasing effectiveness of its security and control apparatus, the increased discouragement of the populace, including a measurable loss of hope and lessening of sporadic spontaneous resistance can only lead to this conclusion. We cannot completely rule out the possibility of a spontaneous uprising of greater or lesser proportions, but the possibilities of this are not believed great and, in any event, unless the United States is at the time of any such spontaneous uprising prepared to and does intervene, this uprising will be ruthlessly and rapidly crushed. Even if the Cuban economy continues to deteriorate, it will in our opinion be bolstered to the extent necessary to preserve the status quo by the Soviet Bloc which cannot afford to lose the Cuban bridgehead in the Western Hemisphere. The Castro regime will not fall as a result of such deterioration or such economic counteraction as we can take. In fact, after a period of deterioration, it is entirely possible that the economic situation may gradually improve. There are some possibilities that the Castro regime may be seriously threatened by a power split at the top level or by a palace guard revolt. These possibilities do not appear at the present time great and certainly any such development is insufficiently probable to count on, although efforts are being made to develop and exploit any opportunities to this end. In any event, even

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if such opportunities develop and can be exploited, this is likely to be a long and involved operation with marginal chances of complete success.

9. Even if the current operational plan attains maximum success, it is our firm conclusion that it will not lead to the overthrow of the Castro regime and that if that overthrow is a serious objective of the U.S. Government, it will be necessary at the conclusion of the present plan to face the decision of military intervention, then prepare for it and intensify the preparation for any necessary revolt or provocation upon which it is based. This will require additional time and will be more difficult to do some months from now than it will be if it is commenced now.

10. CONCLUSIONS: Based on the reassessment that has been made and following the above comments, set out below are our conclusions:

a. The current plan does not constitute and does not permit a maximum intelligence and covert action program against Cuba. The plan is not likely to result in the overthrow of the Castro regime unless followed by extensive additional preparation and action based on a firm decision to use U.S. Military Forces at the appropriate point to destroy the regime.

b. If a maximum effort is to be mounted, the decision to use military force must be made now and the planning must go forward in phase to permit a concentrated and planned uprising with the immediate support of military forces to prevent its destruction. In addition, in preparing for the necessary revolt and/or provocation endangering U.S. lives and property, maximum use must be made not only of CIA assets and capabilities, but of the assets and capabilities of the respective military services.

c. To permit requisite flexibility and professionalism for a maximum operational effort against Cuba, the tight controls exercised by the Special Group and the present time-consuming coordination and briefing procedures should, if at all possible, be made less restrictive and less stultifying.

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d. The planning for the use of U.S. Military Forces must contemplate minimum reaction time and sufficient pre-positioning to permit the most rapid possible elimination of organized opposition within Cuba. If at all possible, the military intervention should be so planned and prepared that from the time of decision to intervene until the elimination of organized military opposition is only a few days, preferably not more than four or six. It is believed that this is extremely important in order to cut down the time available to the USSR and the Bloc to react and take counteraction elsewhere using Cuba as a pretext, and also to cut down the available time for a coalescing of intense domestic and foreign political press and propaganda opposition to this action. If the U.S. Forces to be committed can be pre-positioned in such a way that a landing in force takes place rapidly, it is believed that a substantial number of Cubans, including those in the militia and the armed forces, will give up quickly. The United States must, however, be prepared to cope with at least some substantial prolonged hard core resistance. In addition, the U.S. Government must be prepared with plans and resources to establish a military government within Cuba and maintain it for an appreciable period, probably at least a year, until the situation can be stabilized, political parties, movements, and leadership developed, and free elections insured.

11. ACTION:

A. If you concur with the above conclusions, it is recommended that you propose to the Special Group (Augmented) at its meeting on 11 April 1962 that it approve and propose for the approval of higher authority a plan of operations against Cuba requiring decision now to:

(1) Make maximum use of CIA and military resources to create a revolt in Cuba and/or provocation endangering U.S. lives and property, and

(2) Upon the activation of this revolt and/or provocation intervene immediately with sufficient military strength to eliminate organized military opposition within Cuba at the earliest practicable time.

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B. If such a plan is not approved, or if the decisions to take the actions necessary to ensure the overthrow of the Castro regime are indefinitely delayed, it is believed that you should give careful consideration as to whether, in the face of other heavy demands and commitments, the Clandestine Service can long continue to afford the present level of effort against Cuba and the heavy expenditure of funds and manpower involved in the operation of Task Force W, which comprises a substantial percentage of the overall assets of the DD/P.

WILLIAM K. HARVEY
C/TFW

CONCUR:

Deputy Director (Plans)

The recommendations contained in
Paragraph 11 are approved:

Director of Central Intelligence

Date _____

EYES ONLY

TO : Fritz Schwarz and Curt Smothers

FROM: Joseph E. diGenova

DATE: July 7, 1975

EDWARD G. LANSDALE: SHORT SUMMARY

Edward G. Lansdale was the Chief of Operations for Operation Mongoose from November 30, 1961 until early 1963. He was present at the Special Group meetings at which sabotage was discussed and provided the overall planning framework for the approval of that Group. He was present at the August 10, 1962 meeting of the Special Group when Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara broached the subject of the assassination of Castro. He wrote a memo on August 13, 1962 which tasked the CIA with developing plans "including liquidation of leaders." Lansdale's testimony should involve the following questions:

- Did any of the Special Group meetings implicitly or explicitly contemplate or plan assassination attempts against Castro?
- To what extent were CIA plans against Castro authorized or made known to President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, DCI John McCone, or the Special Group as a whole? (It was established practice and policy that all proposed specific actions were reviewed before implementation.)
- What was the process involved in making decisions; what was Lansdale's authority?
- If the Special "turned down" the idea of assassinating Castro on August 10, why did Lansdale task the CIA on August 13, 1962 with developing plans "including liquidation of leaders?"
- What was the "sensitive work" referred to in Lansdale's January 18, 1962 memo to RFK which he did not tell the Special Group about? What was the "touchdown play?"

Questioning of Lansdale should focus upon the following documents:

- Inspector General's 1967 Report, page 113.
- Memorandum of August 13, 1962 from Lansdale to Wm. Harvey.
- Memorandum of August 14, 1962 from Harvey to DDP (CIA).
- Memorandum of January 27, 1962 from Lansdale to R. Kennedy.
- Memorandum of January 18, 1962 from Lansdale to R. Kennedy.

PERTINENT RELATIONSHIP

President Kennedy	Lansdale was personally selected by the President to coordinate Mongoose after the Bay of Pigs.
Robert Kennedy	Lansdale's direct link to the President during Operation Mongoose. In essence, he headed the SG.
William Harvey	The CIA operational representative under McCone to the Special Group. He coordinated the agent infiltration into Cuba. He frequently attended SG meetings.
John McCone, DCI	Met with Lansdale at the Special Group.
Robert McNamara	Lansdale was his Assistant for Special Operations before he became the Mongoose Chief of Operations.

July 7, 1975

TO: Fritz Schwarz and Curt Smothers
FROM: Joe diGenova
SUBJECT: Preliminary Interview With Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale

Gen. Lansdale was interviewed on July 7, 1975 from 11:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. by Fritz Schwarz, Curt Smothers, Mike Madigan, Charles Kirbow and Joe diGenova.

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

In late October of 1961, President KENNEDY asked Gen. LANSDALE personally to investigate what was being done in regard to Cuba by the U. S. Government. LANSDALE discovered that U.S. activities included minor harassment and sabotage. He felt that these acts were counter-productive since they seemed to sharpen police controls over the people of Cuba. Because Castro was so charismatic, these actions worked in his favor with the people creating a "David and Goliath" syndrome.

After his study, LANSDALE considered the possibility of forming a group to do a "modified revolution in Cuba." He concluded that it would take a long time and would require a firm unifying political platform for Cubans to adopt and to find attractive. It would have to be something of their own. He hoped that this group could be formed from diverse groups in Florida and Venezuela. "President KENNEDY personally told me sometime in 1962 'you go ahead with that.'"

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LANSDALE suggested that he report to the PRESIDENT through a trusted subordinate. "He told me to see RFK."

The organization developed very quickly with representatives of each department (DOD, State, CIA, White House). LANSDALE outlined his general idea which was to talk to Cuban exiles and develop them as the actors so that the U.S. wouldn't be the "doer" but would merely guide the Cubans who had the will, desire, and capability to do something; i.e., develop a political program that would gain support of the Cuban people in order to have a country more compatible with the U.S. as a neighbor.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY personally told LANSDALE that he wanted him to work on getting approval at each stage from the Special Group. "My duty became to draw up plans for approval for the Special Group for each stage."

Strategy

The idea was to organize both in and out of Cuba and establish safe entry and exit for people declared enemies of the Castro regime. This included establishing "cellular organizations in Cuba to achieve political results when the right time came."

Bay of Pigs

LANSDALE said that this project was a failure due to the fact that no political ground work had been done inside of Cuba before the exercise. The success of such an operation, he said, shouldn't rely on military support but rather on the people accepting those who are coming into the country. In this regard LANSDALE noted that

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people in the Special Group confused hit and run tactics with a concept of revolution. Their backgrounds, he said, were obviously not in this area.

II. THE PROCESS

Plans were drawn up by LANSDALE and taken to the Special Group. Initially the Special Group did not accept his overall plan; both in terms of general strategy and tactics. It was during this time that he spoke with the Attorney General and explained to him that patience was needed in a project of this magnitude. LANSDALE claims that during this time he criticized the ongoing harassment raids along with JOHN MCCONE. "Some place in there there was a very definite feeling, which I thought came from the President, that the harassing should stop." LANSDALE associated this feeling with the missile crisis or the prisoner release crisis. At this juncture he was shown his August 8, 1962 memo to the Special Group Augmented and he could not reconcile that memo with his recollection of a cutback on harassment. When shown a January 24, 1962 JCS memo which said that he had wanted paramilitary operations all along, he denied that that was his position. LANSDALE noted that there were limitations on what he could do. Guidelines had to be approved by the Special Group. He felt, after he "tried to get plans brought forward, that there wasn't an understanding that Americans wouldn't go in. The CIA didn't see it that way. They kept trying to do things themselves. The concept of getting Cubans to do things in a Cuban manner was foreign to the CIA." Merely because the sabotage effort was minuscule during this time BW/CW was tasked out to the Department of Defense for a

feasibility study. They determined it was infeasible and it was cancelled. He noted, however, that if it had been a possibility, it would have been a go project if DOD had determined it was feasible.

III. ASSASSINATIONS

LANSDALE personally opposed assassination of Castro because he was concerned that that in itself might lead to a disastrous end because the only heirs apparent were RAUL and CHE GUEVARA. "Castro had more breaks on him." He indicated that the subject of assassination came to him initially through rumor because there was talk of this from Cuban refugees in Florida. He got these rumors from people in the intelligence community. He thought that he might have talked to RFK about these reports.

According to him, the only time assassination was ever brought up in the Special Group "it was turned down very hard." Initially during the interview, he said it was turned down, he felt, because of the ethics or morality and it was done openly at the meeting. He noted, however, that he didn't remember MCCONE's "oration of the immorality of assassinations. He might have (raised the subject of assassination). The idea was to explore drastic actions, ideas or plans. But I don't recall ever talking to RFK about assassination except at that one meeting (Aug. 10, 1962.)" Yet LANSDALE sent a memo to Harvey on August 13 which included tasking HARVEY to prepare plans for the "liquidation of leaders." LANSDALE said "If I used the word liquidation, that mean't killing." He did not recall, however, having the phrase including liquidation of leaders blocked out from his August 13 memo after a call from HARVEY. He indicated that

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MCNAMARA could well have raised the assassination issue at the August 10 meeting. "It was well within his nature. He talked off the cuff in a brusque way. He was an impatient man." The idea of assassination might have come up at that meeting because of the missile crisis developing in Cuba. "MCNAMARA essentially didn't understand human beings. He wasn't ethical." (He noted that shortly after the stories in the New York Times and the Associated Press came out naming LANSDALE as MCNAMARA's deputy who had been involved in the plots to assassinate Castro, MCNAMARA called the Times and the Associated Press telling them LANSDALE did not work for him at that time. Our records indicate that LANSDALE did work for him at that time. LANSDALE noted "MCNAMARA is a strange person."

Actual Attempts

LANSDALE had heard gossip of mafia attempts against Castro but had never heard names mentioned until recent newspaper stories. CIA personnel had told him that some Cuban exiles were planning to assassinate Castro but these people were not under CIA control and the CIA people who briefed him on the matter were nonoperational. He had heard the gossip about the mafia in the late EISENHOWER administration. It centered on the thesis that the mafia was angry at losing their casinos. He assumed that the CIA or its people were trying to do something about assassination Castro. The gossip never became more concrete and to his knowledge the mafia was never part of Mongoose.

WILLIAM HARVEY never told LANSDALE that he either was or was not engaged in assassination. He had no recollection of HARVEY ever telling him he was engaged in assassination or used the mafia. "I'm damned sure he wouldn't have told me if he were... HARVEY was naturally

secretive. He did not give information." He gave LANSDALE generally monosyllabic responses to questions. (NOTE: The luncheon recess occurred at this juncture and GEN. LANSDALE reviewed documents which included all of his program reviews, pertinent Special Group minutes and other memoranda for approximately 1-1/2 hours with Mr. diGenova). He noted that Mr. PARROTT was an excellent minutes writer and that he excluded little if anything from them. Consequently, LANSDALE was at a loss to explain why PARROTT did not include the discussion of assassination in his minutes of the August 10, 1962 meeting.

Documents Arguably Related to Assassination

February 20, 1962 Program Review: This document noted the use of ganster elements from Cuba to attack the cadre of leaders. LANSDALE said this meant "up to and including killing these leaders." HARVEY received a copy of this review. When asked if HARVEY wanted to decide whether or not to kill Castro and could this section of this document give him that impression, LANSDALE remarked, "I don't see how it could have. Individual actions against individual targets had to be brought up to the Group and none ever were." LANSDALE never told HARVEY or anyone else, however, not to kill Castro.

January 27, 1972 "Touchdown Memo" to RFK: When shown this memo which referred to a "touchdown plan" he said this referred to the removal of the Castro Government. The "institutional program" referred to in the document was his January 18, 1962 program review. In the January 27 document, he was pleading with RFK to be freed to go to work directly with Cuban leaders in Florida to see what they were planning. He received approval to go to Florida and Guantanamo personally under assumed names.

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January 18, 1962 -- LANSDALE's Note to the Attorney General:

When asked what the "sensitive work" was referred to in this handwritten note, work not included in the program review to which it was attached, LANSDALE replied, that this referred to his personally going to Florida and speaking with Cuban leaders. The sensitive work was "not an assassination thing." He would have regarded BW/CW as sensitive but he would rule out assassination as an interpretation of "sensitive work" because he never had that in mind. He noted that he had previously travelled to Florida under false names because the exiles would never have spoken to him if they had known who he was. According to LANSDALE "Operation Bounty" was never approved. "It was an ill conceived thing."

General Comments re Assassination

"I have a very strong feeling from my own relationship with them that neither of them ever ordered such thing (assassination). ROBERT KENNEDY was scrappy, but he wasn't murderous scrappy. BOBBY made a grimace when I suggested chemical warfare. It was unorthodox enough that he didn't go along with it. He found it distasteful. These were free going discussions. This type of thing, a personal attack on a leader was beyond his character."

LANSDALE noted that someone could have interpreted some of their meetings to aim at assassination, "but the process would weed this out. Individual actions had to be approved -- that was made very clear." He also noted that he never discussed assassination with MAXWELL TAYLOR whom he said would have been against it morally. LANSDALE added that there is a practical distinction (i.e. RAUL and CHE replacing Castro) but not a moral distinction between assassination

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per se and an overthrow that leads to the killing of a leader. "I have never ordered executions, but I have been a target several times. I was opposed to violence for violence sake."

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Fritz Schwarz

FROM: Joesph E. diGenova

DATE: July 6, 1975

Subj: Summary of the Testimony of Brig. General Edward G. Lansdale before the Rockefeller Commission on May 16, 1975.

Attached you will find a summary prepared by me of the testimony of Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale before the Rockefeller Commission on May 16, 1975. That testimony was taken by David W. Belin and was under oath.

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SUMMARY OF: Testimony of General Edward G. Lansdale before the
Rockefeller Commission. Sworn on Friday, May 16,
1975 and examined by David W. Belin.

Lansdale is a retired Major General from the Air Force. He went into the military during World War II (Tr. 2). After the war, he became a regular officer in the Air Force and stayed in until November, 1963. He was aware of the very early planning phases of the Bay of Pigs as an advisor on the staff of the Secretary of Defense, and attended some policy meetings concerned with the Bay of Pigs. Thomas Gates was the Secretary of Defense at that time under Eisenhower. Lansdale was Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations. But he had no direct involvement in the planning of the Bay of Pigs. (Tr. 3). He was asked:

Q. At any time during 1960, did you have any knowledge of any discussion of possible plans for the assassination of any foreign leaders?

A. I don't recall any at all. I would say none. (Tr. 4).

At the end of 1960 he was in Vietnam doing a survey for the Secretary of Defense concerning the security conditions in the country and its political and economic needs. (Tr. 4). He returned to the U.S. in January of 1961. (Tr. 5). After the inauguration, McNamara asked him to stay on and Lansdale became the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations. The job scope was unclear but it initially "became a job of helping the Armed Forces get ready for counterinsurgency, that is the Army, Navy, Air Force, and even the Marine Corps." (Tr. 5). In the late fall of 1961, Lansdale became involved with Cuba. "The President of the United States asked me to look over the situation vis a vis the U.S. in Cuba and to see if I had any ideas or could give him some ideas." (Tr. 5). This resulted from direct conversation with the President (Tr. 5-6). "It was a rather vague assignment by him, but it was to be done for him personally" (Tr. 6). (Emphasis added).

Lansdale suggested that he work with the President through an intermediary and the President "appointed his brother, who was the Attorney General." (Tr. 6). Subsequently, he worked with both the President and the Attorney General, but it was primarily with the Attorney General, "but with several conversations with the President." (Tr. 6). The Special Group was "part of the approving group for any recommendations that I would come up with..." (Tr. 6). After the meeting with the President, Lansdale read as many documents as he could find on the subject and made a report to the President (Tr. 7). He made an initial recommendation to the President at the end of September or December 1961 or early 1962, that the U.S. "see if there was a possibility of using Cuban refugees to help them get their political thinking together to see if there would be any feasibility of a revolution in Cuba." (Tr. 7). That recommendation was in writing and

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Lansdale thought that it was delivered to the Attorney General. But "the only copy of that paper was in the files of the President. I saw it there later." (Tr. 7). He saw it later when he delivered all of his files on the matter to the President, "and he had his secretary put them in his own personal file, and at that time I saw what else was in the file." (Tr. 7). Lansdale kept no copies of his own files (Tr. 7).

After he made the recommendation, he surveyed the refugee organizations in Florida, talked with people in the Department of State, CIA, and the U.S. military and proposed some "careful organizational plans of the Cubans to see if they could reconstitute one of their previous constitutions of Cuba, and if an organization would be willing to work under such guidance." (Tr. 8-9). No such group was ever organized. (Tr. 9).

This took place in early 1962 and during that time there were discussions of Cuban exiles possible going back inside Cuba to harass the regime. At this juncture Lansdale was asked:

Q. Were there any discussions that possibly some of these exile groups might very well try and assassinate Castro?

A. It might well have been mentioned, yes.

Q. Do you remember whether or not there was any discussion of the fact that such plans for assassination might actually be taking place?

A. I don't recall a single instances of any serious action being undertaken on any such plan.

Q. What you're saying is you recall discussions, but you don't recall specific discussions as to existing plans?

A. That is correct.

Q. And so would you say those discussions related to possibilities rather than actualities, is that a fair statement?

A. Yes, definitely. (Tr. 9-10) (Emphasis added).

The President, the Attorney General, and Lansdale did their best "to stop harassing raids against Cuba since they were not serving the purpose of assisting the exile groups of doing something very carefully and constructively politically inside the country." (Tr. 10). This effort was in the first part of 1962.

Lansdale remembered the Special Group and the Special Group Augmented. "There was a Special Group that I was reporting to on this, and so yes, I do recall such a thing." (Tr. 10). Lansdale was here shown Helms Exhibit No. 7 (Lansdale's August 13, 1962 memo re the August 10, 1962 SGA meeting) (Tr. 11).

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When asked about the whited out words and asked if there was testimony that the whited out words were "including liquidation of leaders" if that would refresh his recollection he replied, "I doubt it. I doubt it. I just don't recall anything at all on liquidation of leaders." (Tr. 12). When asked if he recalled anyone bringing up the topic of possible liquidating Cuban leaders he replied, "Possibly, I simply don't recall that." (Tr. 12). He did not remember Frank Hand telling him a few days after that August 10, 1962 meeting that Mr. Harvey had talked to Hand to recommend that some words be excised from that memorandum. (Tr. 12). (Tr. 13). He did not recall calling Mr. Harvey a day or two later and telling him that the words had been excised (Tr. 13). It might have happened, but he could not recall (Tr. 13). Lansdale then notes concerning Exhibit No. 7 that it "was a request for some planning and some ideas which were later submitted as part of a plan for approval and it was not approved" (Tr. 14). It was not an authorization necessarily for carrying out the action. "That we had been asked to come up with plans and then what I was doing was asking each element to come up with some plans, and we could put that into an overall plan." (Tr. 14). There may well have been a request for the CIA to come up with a plan for liquidation of leadership as a possibility. (Tr. 14). Lansdale might have made such a request to Harvey. He would have probably discussed that idea with the Secretary of Defense, (Tr. 14-15), and "possibly with the Attorney General, with whom I was in contact." (Tr. 15).

When shown McCone Exhibit No. 3, a memo of SGA meeting of October 4, 1962, he did not remember the Attorney General asking for more sabotage. "In fact, it was just the reverse of this, and McCone might well have said that no sabotage was authorized, but also the Attorney General said that." (Tr. 15). Lansdale noted that he possibly had some very short meetings with the President in 1962 concerning the development of plans for Mongoose. "It was a very tentative contact with the President. It was mostly with his brother." (Tr. 16). He had no knowledge during 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963 of the existence of any plans for the assassination of any Cuban leader, (Tr. 16), nor of anyone else (Tr. 17). Nor did he ever have any discussions other than what he referred to (i.e., the discussions of possibilities) with anyone concerning the assassination of a Cuban or other leader (Tr. 17). He added:

No, except of in planning and planning various possibilities, this subject was discussed as a possibility, and whether such a thing would be feasible and if done, if it would have constructive results and a decision was always that the results would not be worth doing, something like that. (Tr. 17).

That latter decision was reached by "I suspect it was largely in the group itself. The reaction toward that was always quite sharp by members of the group including the Attorney General, McCone, and McGeorge Bundy, among others." (Tr. 17) (Emphasis added).

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Lansdale might have brought the point up for discussion along with other points. He added:

I might point out, most of this was in planning to do something with the plans, not ever really reaching fruition other than getting ready to do things and not carrying them out, and one of the things definitely wasn't an assassination.

I say one of the things we planned to carry out definitely was not an assassination of Castro or another leader there. (Tr. 18).

Lansdale admitted that there was "a lot of pressure" on this group to "do something about Castro." (Tr. 18). But he reiterated that he remembered about 1962 that "most clearly...that it was definitely against the top executive policy to carry out harassing raids in Cuba, and I had exacted a promise and had given instructions in writing to CIA to cease and desist on that, not carry them out." (Tr. 18-19). These instructions were generally followed, although he thought there was "one raid that had been too late, that had been planned or a group had gone in to harass and it had not been authorized." (Tr. 19). He said "at least...it hadn't been authorized by me. It might have been by someone else." (Tr. 19). Generally, moreover, the CIA would not undertake plans of this kind unless they were authorized (Tr. 19).

And when the CIA was ordered to cease an operation, Lansdale "could be fairly definite on that" that they would obey. "I use the term fairly because if they were undertaking a series of actions, such a directive to them might come in too late to stop an operation. I think they would try to do so, though." (Tr. 19). When asked then whether they (the CIA) obeyed orders he remarked:

There might have been individuals there who would be inclined to know better than an outsider, and they might attempt something, but it's just a feeling I had. I have not ever been able to pin that down specifically.

It might have been Harvey. It might have been such a person. (Tr. 20).

Lansdale said that Harvey might have done something without direction from above. This prompted Lansdale to give Harvey "directions in writing." (Tr. 20). "It was just a gut feeling I had dealing with him," but not with anyone else at the CIA. (Tr. 20). Apart from Harvey, Lansdale

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did not have any feelings that the CIA would undertake an activity without directions from above. (Tr. 21). The CIA was "quite disciplined in following executive direction." (Tr. 21).

Lansdale had never heard any discussion of Executive Action Capability "which was defined as a capability of being able to assassinate foreign leaders (.)" (Tr. 21). He opined that if planning existed, prior to the August 10, 1962 meeting, for assassination "the planning part of it might well have developed inside the Agency as a possibility or something to be considered. Any step from a possibility over to an actual starting, initiating a plan to carry it out, I feel very definitely would require the top authority approval first." (Tr. 21). By "top authority" Lansdale meant probably the President of the United States. (Tr. 22). "I say probably because it might have been either a Secretary of State or a Secretary of Defense, but again, speaking for the President. And it would be done perhaps orally." (Tr. 22). (Emphasis added).

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

January 27 Lansdale Memo to AG stating need for strong decisions and evidence of his support. Efforts of Agency so far have accomplished goal re Cuba, "and I still feel that we might uncork the touchdown play independently of the institutional program we are spurring." (emphasis added)

January 30 Lansdale memo Craig re "Operation Bounty" which establishes system of financial reward comensurate wiht position and stature of victim, for killing or delivering alive known Communists in Cuba.

February 20 Lansdale program review. Proposed plans for September will include "an attack on the cadre of the regime including key leaders. Gangster elements might provide the best recruitment potential for actions against police -- G2 officials...CW agents should be fully considered."

" Lansdale memo to SGA wiht basic plan of action notes "any inference that this plan exists couldplace the President of the United States in a most damaging position."

March 2 General Taylor's guidelines will be reviewed and shown to higher authority, "but in the context of information rather than a request for specific approval." Rusk notes that "once the agents are within the country they cannot be effectively controlled from the U.S."

March 5 Taylor guidelines for Mongoose sent to Lansdale in draft form. "Are responsible for performance through normal command channels to the President." (The word "President" is crossed out and "higher authority" is put in its place.)

Was this genuine concern for lack of control? Was what Harvey had done a known example? (poison pills) Was what Harvey did inconsistent with control

Is this another example of attempts to isolate the President on the record from the project?

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

March 5	Lansdale memo to Goodwin asking for alternate tracks Rusk sees open to achieve Cuban objectives; plus list of pretexts Rusk sees as desirable in connection with any direct military intervention.	Is this part of "plausible deniability"
March 12	Lansdale tells SGA CIA urgently needs policy determination "on the supplying of arms and equipment to deserving Cuban guerrillas, as they are located, assessed, and request help. Such requests are starting to surface...there is a need for defining the limits of arming guerrillas (for self defense, for training, for purposes shor of open actions in revolt), to permit operational judgment to be used by designated operations officers."	What were the guns to be used for? Were the limits" concerned with control of what was done with the guns, or with the timing of their delivery (CIA was setting up new contaçts with Mafia in late March)
March 13	Lansdale memo to SGA says many agents infiltrated into Cuba "will be trained for paramilitary skills as well as intelligence collection...however, the CIA has noted that, once the agents are inside Cuba, they cannot be controlled effectively outside Cuba."	
"	Craig reports to SGA that use of BW/CW to incapacitate Cuban sugar workers "infeasible and it was cancelled."	
March 16	Taylor memo re meeting of SGA with President discussing Taylor's guidelines notes "General Lansdale and the Special Group (Augmented) were given tacit authorization to proceed in accordance with the guidelines." Footnote says: "...group was unanimous in feeling that no authorization, either tacit or otherwise was given by higher authority." Footnote added one week later.	Isolating the President once again? Plausible deniability? If so why such a clumsy attempt?
April 5	SGA meeting. McCone impatient. Group consensus is that time has come to reexamine basic philosophy of project with particular reference to the possibility of finding a pretext for early overt intervention.	

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

April 10 Harvey memo to McCone.cites need for less restrictive and less stultifying controls by SGA. Harvey considers Lansdale insistence to be given details improper.

April 11 At SGA meeting McCone urges speed-up of covert action schedule. "General Lansdale said it would be useful to have approval to go further with infiltrated agents! than restricting them to intelligence missions."

April 12 Three pages marked alternatives I, II, III, with no attribution note: "hence, our covert activities should be directed at the...attrition of the leadership of the government, through bribery and related means, and at all other disavowable courses of action detrimental to the local regimes." (00270-00272)

" Lansdale tells Taylor "Under revised plan for Operation Mongoose, proposal for supplying arms and equipment to these (one team in place plus 7 local groups identified) will be submitted to the SG for decision, ad hoc. No proposals have been received."

May 3 SGA meeting. Harvey reports on his infiltration teams. Three are in place.

May 7 Lansdale memo to SGA complains of breakdown of communication with Chief of Operations. He requests that "all plans and actions with operational aspects hereafter be made known to the Chief of Operations...." If this is not done, "we invite the danger of matters falling between the chairs."

Does McCone's statement show pressure or lack of it? Lansdale's comments are inconsistent with his Rockefeller testimony.

Did Harvey mention the poison pills, and other attempts on the life of Castro? If he did not why would Taylor make a special report to the President on May 7 of Harvey's report?

Was this an allusion to recent discovery of unknown Harvey activities? Or was it complaint that Harvey had simply not kept him informed in greater detail? Did it have to do with Harvey at all?

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

May 7	Taylor reports to President on Harvey's report to the Special Group pointing out "the very limited progress that has been made."	What limited projects? Was this an allusion to assassination?
June 20	Harvey memo to Lansdale requesting permission from SGA for aerial resupply of infiltrated agents.	Were arms involved in the request?
July 11	Parrott memo to a superior re air resupply operations. "Exactly what supplies is it intended to provide?...This sort of thing gets us pretty close to the moment of truth."	What is the moment of truth? Why such concern for the nature of the supplies?
July 23	DOD working group tells Lansdale electronic intelligence should improve and provide increases information in areas such as: "plots against prominent figures."	Where does DOD get this idea? What plots are they referring to?
July 24	Harvey memo to Lansdale outlining CIA participation in phase one states reason they haven't done more in area of infiltration has been lack of decisiveness by "higher authority" on use of military force.	Was Harvey frustration put into action by disobeying orders?
August 8	Lansdale memo to SGA states "the major difference from phase one of Operation Mongoose would be in removing the restriction, in the 14 March policy guidelines, which kept our actions 'short of those reasonably calculated to inspire a revolt within the target area.'"	
August 8	Lansdale memo to SGA concerning Harvey request for authority for major sabotage against industry and public utilities. Lansdale requested this stepped-up plan from Harvey.	

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

August 10	Special group meeting at which McNamara raises issue assassination of Castro. Lansdale is present.	What was the extent of the discussion? Were people told to present plans?
August 13	Harvey memo relating to August 10 meeting states "we will produce an outline for an alternate course B for submission. Papers required from individuals for Tuesday meeting include 'Mr. Harvey: Intelligence, Political (splitting the regime, liquidation of leaders)'".	Lansdale understood from August 10 meeting that plans were to be prepared. Did everyone else get this impression?
August 14	McCone calls McNamara after receiving Lansdale memo insisting that it be withdrawn because no decision had been made on the subject of liquidation and Lansdale was out of order in asking CIA to consider the matter. McCone testified that McNamara agreed memo should be withdrawn.	Was this the first time McNamara was aware of the Lansdale memo? Had he himself made an effort to have Lansdale withdraw the memo independent of McCone's request?
"	Harvey memo to McCone noting he called Lansdale's office and told Frank Hand of the "stupidity" of including in the Lansdale memo as a topic to be considered "liquidation of leaders." CIA would not participate in preparation of such documents pertaining to liquidation and urged that Hand recommend to Lansdale that phrase be excised. Lansdale called back to say that it had been done.	Why was Harvey so concerned? He had carried out full-scale operation against Castro in April of 1962. Was it simply the fear of having something in writing?
"	Harvey memo to DDP (CIA) notes that matter of assassination brought up in Rusk's office by McNamara. "I took careful note from the comments...and the SGA is not expecting any written comments or study on this point."	Were they expecting unwritten comments or studies on this point?
August 20	Taylor memo to SGA received by Lansdale which notes "attached papers were read and approved by higher authority today." Papers were Taylor guidelines for phase two. President told SGA favors more aggressive program. Sabotage was to be employed on selective basis under guidelines.	

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August 30 SGA requests CIA to submit list of possible sabotage targets. "The group by reacting to this list could define the limits within which the Agency could operate on its own initiative."

Was this an abdication of control?

September 6 At SGA meeting where Lansdale was present Bundy notes re agricultural sabotage that release of chemicals must be avoided unless it could be completely covered up.

October 4 Lansdale present at SGA meeting when AG questioned whether we were going down the right road or whether "more direct action" is not indicated. AG says President dissatisfied with lack of action in the sabotage field.

October 11 Lansdale recommends early approval of CIA plans for sabotaging Cuban shipping vessels.

October 26 Lansdale disavows any responsibility or support for the proposed infiltration of 9 teams into Cuba. "Mr. Harvey's defense of the plan was not conclusive." All teams were to be withheld. This is the Matahambre copper mine sabotage operation.

Was Lansdale kept in the dark about these operations? Numerous Harvey memos have marked as a footnote on them re Matahambre "not in Lansdale's memo." What does this mean?

October 30 McCone tells Lansdale President has decided to hold back Operation Mongoose during negotiations on Soviet missile crisis. No more sabotage of any form.

November 21 Harvey memo says that Lansdale's statement that Operation Mongoose "had had no information on this operation (Matahambre) since early October was patently false."

This was part of an escalating debate over how much Lansdale either knew or did not know about that operation. Was Harvey covering his tracks?

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

May 16

Lansdale tells Rockefeller Commission he tried to stop sabotage. Admits, however, that there were discussions in the SGA concerning the possibility of plans to assassinate foreign leaders. He denies, however, that any such plans were ever actually formulated.

May

Washington Post story says Lansdale "Hinted strongly, but refused to confirm, that the orders to draw up plans (that may have included Fidel Castro's assassination) came from the late Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy." Lansdale insisted however, that "neither President Kennedy or any other Kennedy ever gave me any orders to plan the assassination of Castro."

May 31

In a New York Times story Horrock reports that "yesterday General Lansdale said that in November, 1961, AG Robert F. Kennedy ordered him to prepare a secret contingency plan to depose Mr. Castro. General Lansdale confirmed that Robert Kennedy was acting on behalf of President Kennedy." Assassination may have been considered as one of the means of removing Castro. He never received specific orders from JFK or RFK to prepare a plan to assassinate Castro.

July 3

Washington Star story by O'Leary reports that Lansdale "has named Robert F. Kennedy as the Administration official who ordered him in 1962 to launch a CIA project to work out all feasible plans for 'getting rid of' Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro." The word assassination was never used by anyone Lansdale said, but there was no doubt that the plans envisioned this as one of the means. Lansdale relayed the orders directly to William Harvey.

"

Lansdale gives statement to Select Committee stating that Washington Star story is a distortion of his remarks. "I can say that I never did receive any order from President Kennedy or from the Attorney General...no order about taking action against Castro personally."

TO: Fritz O Schwarz and Curt Smothers
FROM: Joseph E. Digenova
DATE: July 6, 1975
SUBJECT: Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale Summary Chronology

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Biographical Background

1941-1945 U.S. Air Force

1945-1963 Became regular officer in the Air Force (ultimately retired as Major General)

Eisenhower Administration Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations (Secretary Thomas Gates)

1960-1961 In Vietnam doing a survey for the Secretary of Defense.

1961 Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations (Secretary Robert McNamara)

1965 Special Assistant to the United States Ambassador to South Vietnam (Lodge)

Chronology of Events

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

1960

November 3 Lansdale present at Special Group meeting when Merchant prompted discussion of "taking direct positive action against Fidel, Raul, and Che Guevara." (SG Minutes) Cabell said that kind of program not practical and group decides not to adopt such a plan.

Yet CIA had already made contact with the Mafia. Was Cabell not informed or was he being disingenuous?

1961

Oct 6

SGA told by Parrott of 2 "other contingency plans in connection with possible removal of Castro from the Cuban scene..." (Minutes of SGA).

November 3

Lansdale memo discusses major sabotage action. Indicates that present means NOT likely to cause overthrow of Cuban regime.

Before the Rockefeller Commission Lansdale denies that he was involved in sabotage and said that he and JFK and RFK tried to stop sabotage. Clearly not the case.

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

- November 31 President Kennedy in memo to Special Group summarizes major decisions re Cuba Project and appoints General Lansdale as acting Chief of Operations.
- December 1 R. Kennedy tells SG that "Higher authority" *i.e., the President) has given priority to Cuba project and Lansdale is to develop long range plan to be reviewed by SG and submitted to higher authority for approval.
- December 8 Lansdale presents outline of program designed to overthrow Castro regime. Uses Cubans as nucleus.
- 1962
January 18 Lansdale sends R. Kennedy a copy of his program review of same day and notes on an attached paper: "My review does not include the sensitive work I have reported to you. I felt that you preferred informing the President privately.
- January 20 Lansdale memo reflecting on 1/19/62 meeting with AG. Reflects L's own view of the severity and the importance of the remarks of the AG re pushing forward vigorously with Cuba Project. "We are in a combat situation -- where we have been given full command."
- January 24 Lansdale memo for Special Group notes it is difficult to control indigenous nationals if the movement develops its own impetus.

What was the nature of this sensitive work? All plans were supposed to go to the SG-2hy not these? Was there a separate secret plan that only Lansdale, the President, and AG and a few others knew of? Was this a manner of avoiding a "reporting" requirement?

Did this reflect the pressure that Helms testified to that created what he called a feeling that "anything goes?" Yet McCone continually complained not enough being done, Why?

Was there concern that these nationals if armed would assassinate Cuban leaders? Were they concerned that they could unleash something they could not control? Was this dangerous because we couldn't control what followed assassination?

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

Jan. 24

Lansdale briefs the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Memo for record says "From the outset, General Lansdale has emphasized paramilitary operations in connection with this project."

These are inconsistent with his claim to Rockefeller Commission that he tried to stop sabotage operations.

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HARVEY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

26 April 1962

SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL GROUP (AUGMENTED)

From: Brig. Gen. Lansdale *Σa*

Subject: Operation Mongoose, 20-26 April

The following are the significant highlights of Operation Mongoose for the week:

May Day. World-wide attention focused upon May Day by the Communists, as "their day," is expected to be exploited by Castro promoters throughout Latin America. CIA and USIA hope to counter this propaganda play and possibly to encourage public opinion favorably for Cuban freedom. The plight of Cuban workers especially will be a theme injected into statements, speeches, meetings, and parades on 1 May. It is hoped to have prominent Cuban exiles make statements and, if possible, appearances in key Latin American cities to attract news pick-up and impress their case most favorably.

Agents. The past 3 weeks have been marked with bad luck in CIA's infiltration and exfiltration of agent teams. Most of the operations aborted. Bill Harvey is now in Florida initiating a new series of agent infiltrations and is hopeful of closing up with the schedule in May. He will be back in Washington 30 April.

Special Press Interest. The increased play given by the U. S. press to possible liberation projects and the Cuban refugees makes the security of operations more difficult and important. An item pertaining to intelligence in the Wall Street Journal, which appeared 20 April, was called to the attention of General Taylor by the Chief of Operations as warranting special attention. At General Taylor's request, copies of the item were sent to members of the Special Group (Augmented) to note possible security implications. Such news projects as Dave Brinkley's scheduled coverage of Guantanamo for a TV documentary underline the need for being alert to publicity affecting Operation Mongoose.

SENSITIVE

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Information. USIA continued its strong play that Castro-Communism, despite all its promises, has failed to achieve progress. Special stories were prepared on Castro's sending 7,000 more army troops into the sugar cane fields. There also were stories of the Cuban people's refusal to turn in old silver coins for the new low-value alloy issue. Commentary material along the lines of "hungry Cuban people get excuses instead of food" was produced, with some cross-play from Latin American newspapers.

Political. State reports it has prepared a position paper, to follow up the Rostow presentation at NATO, for Secretary Rusk's use at the NATO Ministerial Meeting, 3 May.

Studies Scheduled. The preparation of a number of papers desired by the Special Group is in progress, including:

1. Blockade - how to impose physically (Defense)
2. Blockade - effects of total blockade (CIA)
3. Cubans in the U.S. Armed Forces (Defense)
4. List of Cuban anti-Castro organizations (CIA)
5. Security Committee, OAS, activity (State)
6. Joint analysis of evidence on supporting military facilities (Defense-CIA)
7. Census of Hemisphere travellers to Cuba (CIA)
8. "Patrol posts" in Caribbean, with particular reference to Haiti and Dominican Republic (Defense)
9. Feasibility of electronic intrusion (Defense)
10. Feasibility of uses of Guantanamo (Defense).

"Eyes Only" of

Copy	1 - Gen. Taylor	←	5 - Mr. Kennedy
	2 - Mr. Johnson	←	6 - Gen. Lemnitzer
	3 - Mr. Gilpatric	←	7 - Chief of Operations
	4 - Mr. McCone		

00258

26 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (Augmented) on
Operation Mongoose, 26 April 1962

PRESENT: General Taylor; Mr. Kennedy; Mr. Johnson; Mr. McCone;
General Lansdale and General Craig

1. General Lansdale's report of 26 April was distributed.
2. General Taylor asked that Defense give the Augmented Group a report next week on the status of efforts to step up recruitment of Cubans for the U. S. Army.
3. The Wall Street Journal story of the 20th of April was mentioned. Mr. McCone said that the Chief of Naval Operations had ordered a security investigation, but that he himself felt this would be inadvisable, since it would probably have little positive result and might in fact damage the operation. He said that he would talk to the Navy and try to have this investigation called off.

Yap anett
Thomas A. Parrott

cc: General Lansdale

— destroyed 4/9/63 - mn

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THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE

7 May 1962

EXH-#184

DECLASSIFIED FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Report of Progress to Higher Authority

I reported to higher authority the substance of Mr. Harvey's briefing of the Special Group (Augmented) on 3 May 1962, pointing out the very limited progress which has been made and the uncertainty of the ultimate effectiveness of our program. I mentioned the Dupon incident as indicative of the morale problem. It was agreed that we would continue along the present lines until the terminal date of the present phase in August.

John
Director

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