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17 Apr 63
CUI - 73

PROSPECTS FOR AND LIMITATIONS OF A MAXIMUM COVERT ACTION PROGRAM AGAINST THE CASTRO COMMUNIST REGIME

Outline

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Comment

This paper was prepared by the CIA in response to a request made by the President and the AG at the April 3 meeting that CIA "survey all possibilities for aggressive action in Cuba over the next six months assuming that the Agency could be given a free rein to proceed." The paper is not responsive. The "program" discussed has undesirable elements of inflexibility (if undertaken and then halted, it "cannot be resumed," p. 8) and is not subject to adequate control. Mr. Fitzgerald realizes that the paper is not responsive, but he apparently considers the preparation of a responsive paper meaningless at this time.

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18 Apr 63
Prepared by Mr. Galifanos for Mr. Galifanos' use at mtg of Spec Op on 18 Apr 63. JRP

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USO File - FNC 7 - 0181
Spec Op - JRP

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17 APR 63

**From the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs
to the Special Group**

**SUBJECT: Prospects for and Limitations of a Maximum Covert
Action Program Against the CASTRO Communist Regime**

1. CIA has been requested to submit a covert action program directed against the CASTRO Communist regime, assuming "unlimited policy and funds." The parameters of this program have been set by the following terms of reference and assumptions:

a. The program deals exclusively with covert action operations unrelated to any broader U.S. policy. It does not, therefore, consider the obvious alternative of deliberately creating a situation by means of covert action which can be used as a pretext for overt military intervention by U.S. armed forces.

b. The program excludes actions which, though covertly inspired and unattributable to the United States, could escalate into a direct confrontation between U.S. and Soviet forces.

c. The proposals contained herein, particularly those involving paramilitary action and sabotage, are confined to a size and character which can reasonably assure unattributability or at least

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MIR prepared by CIA for
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draft text attached. JKP

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plausible denial by the U.S. Government. Thus, operations on or approaching the scale of the Cuban Brigade invasion of April 1961 are not considered in this program.

d. A mass popular uprising is neither likely to occur within the foreseeable future nor should it be encouraged under present circumstances.

2. In addition to the terms of reference and assumptions noted in paragraph 1 above, the following estimate with regard to the internal Cuban situation has influenced the scope and content of the program:

a. Barring CASTRO's death or a decisive change in the U.S. posture, the CASTRO regime is likely to be more firmly established a year hence, despite possible economic setbacks. The mere passage of time tends to favor CASTRO as the population and elite groups in Cuba become accustomed to the idea that he is here to stay and as his regime gains in administrative experience and the security organs become more efficient. Over the longer run, the existence of an organized party apparatus as well as a stable governmental machinery could reduce the indispensability of CASTRO's personal leadership and provide the

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Moscow-oriented Communists with an opportunity for a non-violent takeover of Cuba.

b. The critical point in Soviet-Cuban relations, brought about by the missile crisis, seems to have passed and they have probably reached at least a short term accommodation on major internal and international issues. Above all, CASTRO and the Soviets have probably agreed on the need for a period of relative calm in U.S.-Cuban relations in order to permit time for the consolidation and stabilization of the internal Cuban political, economic and security situation. Their overall immediate objective, it would appear, is to demonstrate, principally for the benefit of Latin Americans, that a Communist revolution supported by the Soviet Union cannot be reversed by the United States. Additionally, it would serve CASTRO's immediate interests to stimulate and maintain unrest in Latin America, in only to present to the world a Cuban facade of relative security, order and stability in contrast to the chaos that exists in those countries of Latin America not yet "liberated" from imperialism.

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3. Based on the assumptions in paragraph 1 above and the estimate of the situation in paragraph 2 above, it must be emphasized at the outset that a program dependent exclusively on covert action operations cannot be predicated on the assumption that it can bring about the overthrow of the CASTRO Communist regime, even with maximum utilization of manpower and resources and "unlimited policy and funds." Thus, any covert action program submitted for consideration must have limited albeit valid objectives. If the estimate is correct that barring a decisive change in U.S. posture, the CASTRO regime will be stronger a year hence, we believe that a valid and realistic objective of a covert action program over the next year is to attempt through harassment and internal disorder to obstruct or slow down the pacification of the population and the consolidation and stabilization of the CASTRO Communist regime.

4. It should be noted that execution of this program is not contingent upon the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Cuba. The operations contemplated can proceed without regard to the presence of Soviet military personnel in Cuba. In fact, the presence of Soviet "occupation" forces in Cuba can be exploited politically and propagandistically and perhaps serve as a catalyst to convert passive

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disaffection to more active forms or opposition to CASTRO by the population at large and, more importantly, by key officers in the Cuban armed forces.

5. The covert action program will concentrate on two principal categories of operations, such of which is already underway or in the planning stage:

a. General Sabotage and Harassment -

The objective of these activities is threefold:

(1) To weaken the regime economically by attacking a variety of industrial, transportation, public utilities, and communication targets.

(2) To provide a favorable operational climate more conducive to the conduct of covert operations and to the growth of internal resistance by weakening the economic, military and internal security controls of the regime.

(3) To give hope and meaning to internal resistance by demonstrating that determined opposition to the regime not only exists, but is also willing and able to act, and thus inducing the Cuban populace to cooperate to the maximum with opposition elements.

The operation will be conducted either by externally held assets now available or by existing internal assets or those to be developed.

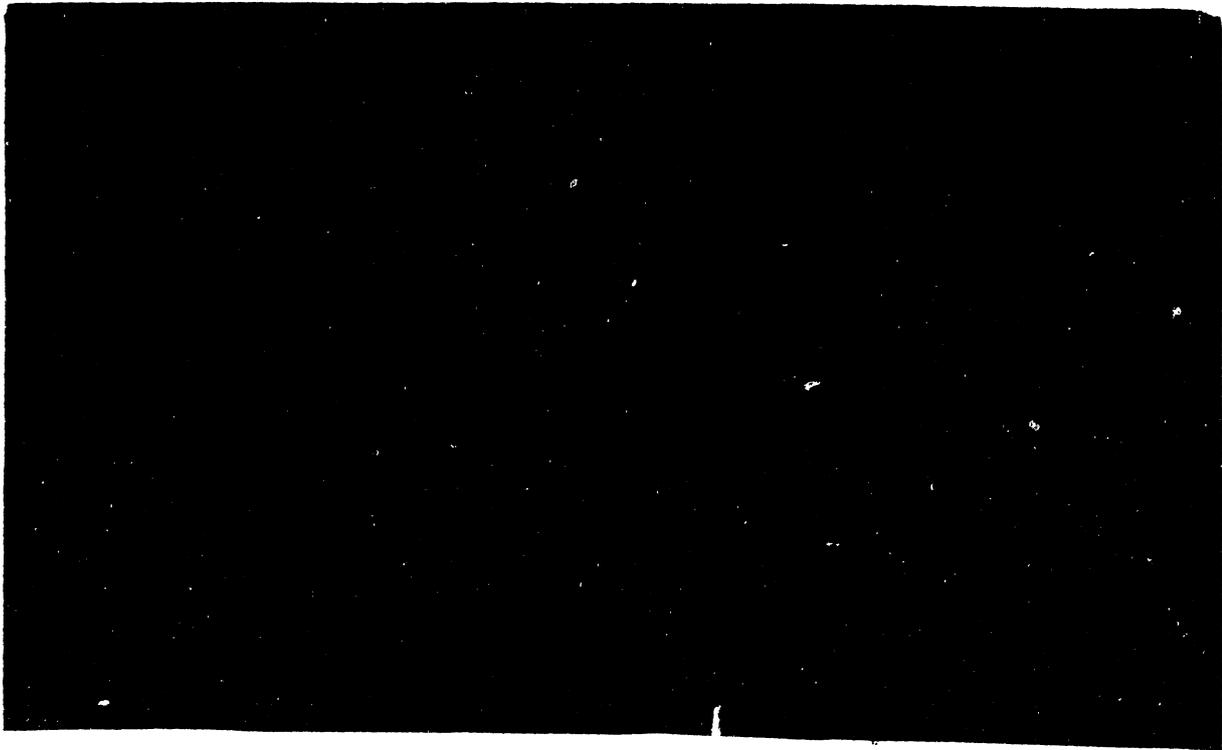
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Assets trained and controlled by CIA will be used as will selected exile groups over which we may only be able to exercise nominal influence. Initially the emphasis will be on the use of externally held assets with a shift to internal assets as feasible.

The operational details of this category of activity are being treated in separate papers submitted to the Special Group via the Inter-departmental Committee on Cuba.



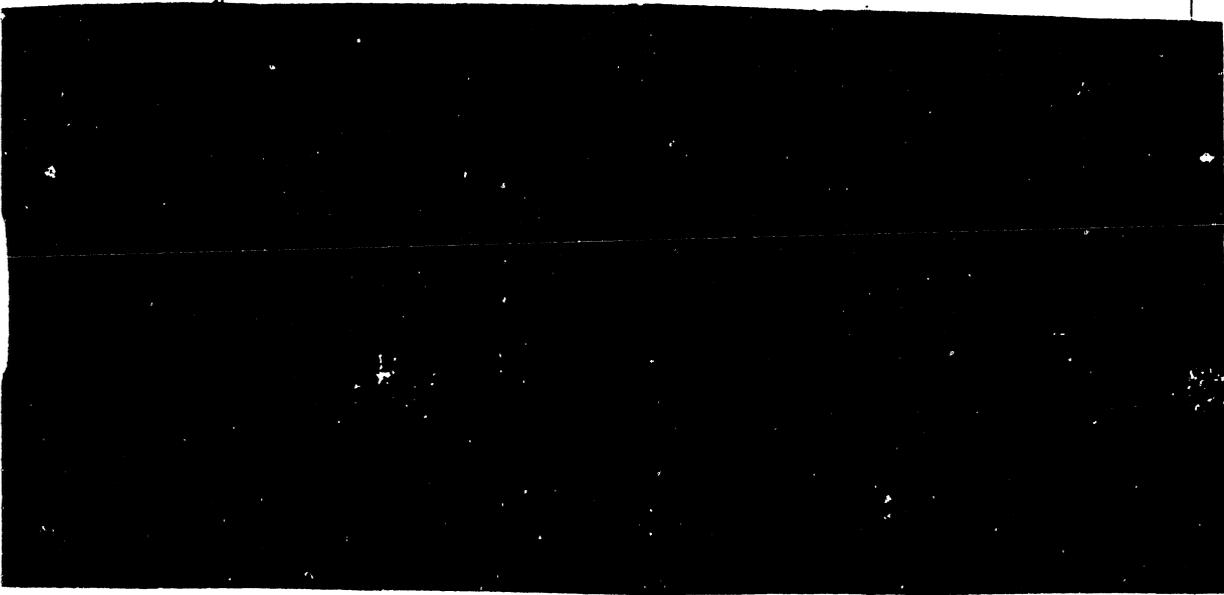
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Part I - Special Group

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8. Heretofore, CIA has utilized only fully controlled and disciplined agent assets as a safeguard against unilateral and irresponsible action by Cuban exiles intent upon the liberation of their country. Because of the need for selectivity and the high investment of experienced manpower, training facilities and logistic support required for CIA controlled operations, these are only possible on a relatively small scale, certainly not of the magnitude needed to accomplish even the limited objective stated in paragraph 3 above. If, therefore, it is desired that these activities be undertaken on a larger scale, it will necessitate acceptance of the risks involved in utilizing

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autonomous Cuban exile groups and individuals who will not necessarily be responsive to our guidance. If policy clearance is granted for the mobilization of such groups and individuals, CIA proposes the following "rules of engagement" to govern the conduct of these autonomous operations:

a. It is a keystone of autonomous operations that the acts proposed are performed by Cubans and that CASTRO can only be overthrown by Cubans. The United States, therefore, must be prepared to deny participation in these acts no matter how loud or even how accurate may be the rumors or accusations of United States complicity or may be charged even within the United States.

b. Recognition that although these operations would be influenced by CIA, they are not completely controlled by the Agency and therefore, it is inevitable that acts will be performed which are not in conformity with current U.S. policy. If it is deemed that the purpose of the proposal is in U.S. interests, relatively minor deviations from the details of U.S. policy must be condoned.

c. The program proposed will cost Cuban lives, probably many. If this cost in lives becomes unacceptable to the U.S. conscience, we are in the

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position to halt the program, over a period, by entirely withdrawing support; but once halted, it cannot be resumed.

d. It is probable that the more successful the operation becomes, the more the United States will be pressured to intervene. Before entering into an operational relationship with a group, the United States representative would make it clear that his Government has no intention of intervening militarily except to counter intervention by the Soviets.

e. Any such autonomous operation would be mounted outside the territory of the United States. A Latin American country which furnishes a base for these operations will also attempt to secure additional U.S. support for its purposes; such support should be confined to only that which has been indicated above.

7. Within these "rules of engagement," it is envisaged that autonomous operations would have the following characteristics:

a. Personnel engaged would be Cuban nationals exclusively, preferably led by individuals with established reputations for active resistance

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against the CASTRO regime after it became clear that the idealistic aims of the revolution had been betrayed by CASTRO.

b. The groups operating from bases outside the United States would have to be given wide latitude to carry out their projects even if their operational methods do not measure up to CIA standards.

c. The United States presence and direct participation in the operation would be kept to an absolute minimum. An experienced CIA officer would be assigned to work with the group in a liaison capacity. He would provide general advice as requested as well as funds, training, technical advice and logistic support to the extent that the latter is not available on the open or black market. He could not be responsible for the conduct of operations or for controlling the behavior of the group.

d. These operations would not be undertaken within a fixed time schedule. To the extent that the CIA liaison officer can influence the decisions of the group leaders, the operations would be executed only when training and equipment requirements have been met and operational conditions are right.

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