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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Action
INFORMATION
April 28, 1970

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Cuba

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky
SUBJECT: Cuban Developments--Some Cause for Concern

The following combination of circumstances raises problems:

- On April 17 Alpha-66, a Miami-based Cuban exile organization, mounted an infiltration raid on Cuba (A CIA report on the operation is at Tab A). This was the first such raid in almost a year, and was relatively successful in that some of the infiltrators survived for a week. It has now been completely crushed. The incident stimulated the exile community in the US, and Alpha 66 has propagandized its activities and begun to organize for possible future raids. (See FBI report of 24 April, Tab B.) All of this is against a backdrop of efforts to unify various exile organizations and adopt a more belligerent posture.
- A possible hint of Cuban sensitivity to this raid and the level of exile activity was contained in an intelligence report collected by Guantanamo (see Tab C), on April 17, the day of the raid and apparently before the scope of the landing was clear to the Cubans. The report indicated that if the situation 'got out of hand' the Cubans might attack the Guantanamo base in retaliation. How accurate this report was is not clear. There is some feeling it may have been deliberately intended to get to us simply as a tactical warning that if the exile efforts succeed the US can expect a confrontation with Cuba (see Comment on report at Tab C).
- The April 17 raid also occasioned a public blast from Castro, against the United States during a funeral speech for soldiers killed combatting the raiders. It may have influenced a rather significant foreign policy speech given at Lenin Centennial ceremonies in Havana, in which Castro again lashed out at the US, glorified the revolution in Latin America, and said warm things about the Soviets and their leadership in the Communist world.

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-- Raul Castro, as Commandant of the Armed Forces, and other high Cuban officials have been touring the Soviet Union the past several days. This follows a visit ^{to Cuba} some weeks ago by the Soviet Defense Minister. Obviously some talks about something related to military matters have been going on, and relations seem warm.

-- Two Soviet Bear D naval reconnaissance aircraft flew into Cuba on 18 April and again on 25 April. This is the reconnaissance version of the TU-95 heavy strategic bomber. It appears that these flights are connected with the current Soviet naval maneuver, "Okean" now underway in the North Atlantic. These maneuvers are ending this week-end. It will be interesting to see if the TU-95 flights continue. This is the first time since the missile crisis that Soviet strategic aircraft have been in Cuba.

Castro's rhetoric seems to be an effort to renew the siege mentality in order to revitalize Cuban enthusiasm for sacrifice and excuse domestic problems--an effort that was helped and possibly even occasioned by the exile raid. Increased exile activity could also have been perceived by Castro as a hardening of the US position, and a possible renewal of US supported exile paramilitary activity. He may thus have intended his rhetoric to be a warming to us or an effort to discourage us.

It is not clear what precisely the Cubans and the Soviets are doing in the military field but the Raul Castro visit and the flights of Soviet reconnaissance bombers raise questions as to what the future thrust of Castro's external policy may be, and what he may have been planning when the Alpha-66 activity cut across his vision.

All the foregoing raises the following concerns:

- a) The need for a further assessment of Castro's intentions and the Soviet-Cuban relationship. I am asking the intelligence agencies for their estimates.
- b) The need to decide what we are to do about heightened exile activity. Present activity is a technical violation of US law and of international law. If we disregard it, it may be seen by Castro as a deliberate USG tactic to increase pressure.

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Aside from many other factors, uncontrolled exile activity is an unguided missile; we can find ourselves unwittingly sucked into a confrontation we do not want and are not prepared for.

- c) The need to review contingency plans for something like an attack on Guantanamo. The ones we have are at least three years old. Shouldn't the WSAG look at this?

yes ~~no~~
no

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