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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

*Bundy*

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1 May 1963

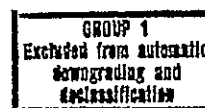
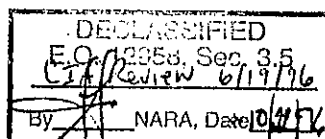
*P. Row*

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence.

SUBJECT : Interview of U.S. Newswoman with Fidel Castro Indicating Possible Interest in Rapprochement with the United States

1. On 30 April 1963 Liza Howard, U.S. newswoman associated with the American Broadcasting Company, returned to Miami from Cuba where she had interviewed a number of high-ranking Cuban officials, including Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Vilma Espin de Castro, Raul Roa, and Rene Vallejo. Her conversations with Fidel Castro totaled about ten hours and included one session on 22 April which lasted from 12:45 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. Following is an account of those conversations and Liza Howard's observations concerning the present Cuban situation.

2. It appears that Fidel Castro is looking for a way to reach a rapprochement with the United States Government, probably because he is aware that Cuba is in a state of economic chaos. The October blockade hurt the Cuban economy. Liza Howard believes that Castro talked about this matter with her because she is known as a progressive and she talked with him in frank, blunt, honest terms; Castro has little opportunity to hear this type of conversation. Castro indicated that if a rapprochement was wanted President John F. Kennedy would have to make the first move. In response to the statement that Castro would probably have to make the first move, Castro asked what the U.S. wanted from him. When a return to the original aims of the revolution was suggested, Fidel said that perhaps he, President Kennedy,



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and Premier Nikita Khrushchev should discuss this. Liza Howard said that she thought it was a more likely topic for Castro to discuss with President Kennedy. Castro said that he doubted that President Kennedy would talk with him without Khrushchev being present. When Howard pressed Castro for further information on how a rapprochement could be achieved he said that steps were already being taken. Pressed further, he said he considered the U.S. limitation on exile raids to be a proper step toward accommodation. It is Liza Howard's opinion that Castro wants to pursue the discussion of rapprochement with proper progressive spokesmen. Based on her discussions with the following persons Liza Howard feels that Guevara, Raul Castro, and Vilma Espin oppose any idea of rapprochement; Roa and Vallejo favor these discussions.

3. Castro asked Howard, who had previously interviewed Khrushchev, for an appraisal of him. When Howard said that Khrushchev was a shrewd politician who would break and dispose of Castro when the Soviets no longer needed him, Castro made no comment but only nodded his head as if in skeptical agreement. Liza Howard had no insight or advance notice on Castro's travel to Moscow.

4. Castro appears healthy, has no visible nervous twitches or tics, and was calm, rational, humorous, and non-argumentative during all discussions. Vallejo, Castro's personal physician, also acts as secretary, interpreter, and confidant.

5. Castro is in complete control in Cuba. No major decision is made without him. Neither Guevara nor Raul Castro would be able to rule Cuba if Fidel were assassinated.

6. In discussions with Castro about terror and secret police methods Liza Howard received the impression that he was not completely aware of the extent to which terror has gripped Cuba.

- 2 -

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7. Castro refers to Soviet troops in Cuba as "technicals" and indicated that they have a training mission in Cuba. He made the point, however, that if an internal revolt takes place in Cuba Soviet "technicals" would fight with Castro to put down a counterrevolution.

8. Liza Howard said that Emil Stadelhofer, Swiss Ambassador to Cuba, is an overworked, timid man who does not have Castro's ear. She believes that the Swiss need a larger staff in Habana and that Stadelhofer needs recognition for a job well done. Howard also said that in her opinion the Western diplomatic community in Habana has no influence on Castro or his government.

9. While discussing a possible rapprochement Castro asked for full assessments of President and Mrs. Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy, and wanted to know if Adlai Stevenson had power in the U.S. and if his voice was heard in President Kennedy's councils. Castro commented that James Donovan was a good man; it was Liza Howard's impression that Donovan had not talked politics with Castro but that Donovan had a platform from which he could launch political discussions on the philosophy of revolution.

10. Liza Howard said that she was willing to undertake further discussions with Castro concerning a possible rapprochement. Other possible candidates whom she suggested were Edwin M. Martin, Adlai Stevenson, and Luis Munoz Marin. She also mentioned Donovan but was not quite certain that he was progressive enough. Liza Howard is willing to arrange a meeting for any U.S. Government spokesman with Castro through Vallejo, who will be the point of contact.

11. Liza Howard definitely wants to impress the U.S. Government with two facts: Castro is ready to

- 3 -

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discuss rapprochement and she herself is ready to discuss it with him if asked to do so by the U.S. Government.



Richard Helms  
Deputy Director (Plans)

CSDB-3/654,439

Orig: The Director of Central Intelligence

cc: Special Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

The Director of Intelligence and Research  
Department of State

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Attorney General  
The Department of Justice

The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Deputy Director for Intelligence

Assistant Director for National Estimates

Assistant Director for Current Intelligence

- 4 -

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