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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 1, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The Cuban Task Force met at the White House on Thursday, August 31. Present were Under Secretary Ball, Assistant Secretary Woodward, two members of the ARA Bureau, Dick Bissell, Tracy Barnes and myself.

The following decisions were made:

1. We would proceed immediately to discuss with other Caribbean governments the possibility of organizing a Caribbean Security Force. This could be organized on the basis of informal understandings within the framework of existing treaty arrangements, as a series of new bilateral treaties, or a formal, multilateral treaty. It was thought that the basis of organization would depend on the judgment of other Caribbean countries as to how they could accomplish the objective of establishing the force without running serious internal political risks. The United States, for its part, would prefer the formal multi-lateral arrangement. Such a Caribbean Security Force would have at least four major aspects:

- (1) Advance commitment to come to the aid of other signatories threatened by Castro revolutions and, perhaps the designation of specific units for participation in necessary multi-lateral actions.
- (2) The establishment of a pool of intelligence information concerning subversive activities with provision for exchange of such information.
- (3) The establishment of a Caribbean air and sea patrol to watch for suspected infiltration of Castro arms or agents.
- (4) A training program in combatting subversive tactics, police organization and procedure, etc.

It was conceded that the substantive aspects of this arrangement could, if necessary, be achieved informally. However, the decision to seek a more formal arrangement was primarily arrived at on the basis of internal political considerations in the United States.

JFKL: JFKP: NSF: Country File, b. 35,
f: "Cuba: General, 6/61-12/61."

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By MME NARA, Date 4/19/95

2. It was decided that our public posture toward Cuba should be as quiet as possible -- trying to ignore Castro and his island.

3. Our covert activities would now be directed toward the destruction of targets important to the economy, e.g., refineries, plants using U.S. equipment, etc. This would be done within the general framework of covert operations -- which is based on the principle that para-military activities ought to be carried out through Cuban revolutionary groups which have a potential for establishing an effective political opposition to Castro within Cuba. Within that principle we will do all we can to identify and suggest targets whose destruction will have the maximum economic impact.

4. We will intensify our surveillance of Cuban trade with other countries and especially U. S. subsidiaries in other countries; and then employ informal methods to attempt to divert this trade -- depriving Cuba of markets and sources of supply. I understand that we have already had a few successes in this effort.

5. We will establish next week -- in the State Department -- a psychological warfare group. This will be a full-time group of three or four people charged with the responsibility of assembling all available information on the Sovietization of Cuba, repression of human rights, failure of the Cuban economy, etc. -- much of which has been hitherto classified -- putting this information into readable, popularized form, and developing methods of disseminating it through Latin America. Such dissemination would be primarily through USIA channels but would include feeding it to Latin papers for "exclusive" stories, helping to prepare scripts for Latin American broadcasts, perhaps a direct mailing list of intellectuals and government officials to be handled by a front group, etc. The basic idea is to get this stuff into channels of Latin American communication, instead of treating it as official U. S. propaganda. We have selected someone to head this effort -- Jim O'Donnell of George Ball's office who was a free-lance magazine writer (including work for the Saturday Evening Post) for many years and who Ball highly recommends.

6. The CIA was asked to come up -- within the week -- with a precise, covert procedure for continuing the below-ground dialogue with the Cuban government. The object of this dialogue -- to explore the possibility of a split within the governmental hierarchy of Cuba and to encourage such a split -- was fully detailed in my last memorandum to you. This is an effort to find an operational technique.

Dick
Richard N. Goodwin

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CU-228

50 Memorandum From the President's Assistant Special Counsel (Goodwin) to ~~the~~ President Kennedy

19 Washington, September 1, 1961.

The Cuban Task Force met at the White House on Thursday, August 31. Present were Under Secretary Ball, Assistant Secretary Woodward, two members of the ARA Bureau, Dick Bissell, Tracy Barnes and myself.

The following decisions were made:

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1. We would proceed immediately to discuss with other Carribean governments the possibility of organizing a Carribean Security Force. This could be organized on the basis of informal understandings within the framework of existing treaty arrangements, as a series of new bilateral treaties, or a formal, multilateral treaty. It was thought that the basis of organization would depend on the judgment of other Carribean countries as to how they could accomplish the objective of establishing the force without running serious internal political risks. The United States, for its part, would prefer the formal multi-lateral arrangement. Such a Carribean Security Force would have at least four major aspects:

- 10 (1) Advance commitment to come to the aid of other signatories threatened by Castro revolutions and, perhaps the designation of specific units for participation in necessary multi-lateral actions.
- 10 (2) The establishment of a pool of intelligence information concerning subversive activities with provision for exchange of such information.
- 10 (3) The establishment of a Carribean air and sea patrol to watch for suspected infiltration of Castro arms or agents.
- 10 (4) A training program in combatting subversive tactics, police organization and procedure, etc.

119 It was conceded that the substantive aspects of this arrangement could, if necessary, be achieved informally. However, the decision to seek a more formal arrangement was primarily arrived at on the basis of internal political considerations in the United States.

43 Source: Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, Cuba, General, 6/61-12/61. Secret.

North Security Archive: Cuba [1961-63] collection

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- 2. It was decided that our public posture toward Cuba should be as quiet as possible -- trying to ignore Castro and his island.
- 3. Our covert activities would now be directed toward the destruction of targets important to the economy, e.g., refineries, plants using U.S. equipment, etc. This would be done within the general framework of covert operations which is based on the principle that para-military activities ought to be carried out through Cuban revolutionary groups which have a potential for establishing an effective political opposition to Castro within Cuba. Within that principle we will do all we can to identify and suggest targets whose destruction will have the maximum economic impact.
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- 5. We will establish next week in the State Department a psychological warfare group. This will be a full-time group of three or four people charged with the responsibility of assembling all available information on the Sovietization of Cuba, repression of human rights, failure of the Cuban economy, etc. as much of which has been hitherto classified -- putting this information into readable, popularized form, and developing methods of disseminating it through Latin America. Such dissemination would be primarily through USIA channels but would include feeding it to Latin papers for "exclusive" stories, helping to prepare scripts for Latin American broadcasts, perhaps a direct mailing list of intellectuals and government officials to be handled by a front group, etc. The basic idea is to get this stuff into channels of Latin American communication, instead of treating it as official U. S. propaganda. We have selected someone to head this effort -- Jim O'Donnell of George Ball's office who was a free-lance magazine writer (including work for the Saturday Evening Post) for many years and who Ball highly recommends.
- 6. The CIA was asked to come up within the week with a precise, covert procedure for continuing the below-ground dialogue with the Cuban government. The object of this dialogue -- to explore the possibility of a split within the governmental hierarchy of Cuba and to encourage such a split -- was fully detailed in my last memorandum to you. This is an effort to find an operational technique.

17 Dick 89/98
 Richard N. Goodwin

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
 Cuba - Remained (after) 12/91

93 ✓ Document ¹⁻m.

~~An apparent reference to Document~~

CV-228/3 list 8/22

~~memo from Goodwin to Kennedy)~~

93 ✓ In a telephone conversation with Ball on September 7, Goodwin said that he had gone over the results of the Cuban task force meeting with the President. The President had reviewed the memorandum ^{that} which Goodwin had prepared concerning the meeting, and had "agreed with all of the things that we are doing." Goodwin said that the President wanted "to play it very quiet with Castro" because he didn't want to give Castro the opportunity to blame the ^{United States} U.S. for his troubles. President Kennedy asked for a study of the current economic situation in Cuba and a prognosis of future developments. Ball indicated that he would get Hilsman and INR started on such a study. (Kennedy Library, Ball Papers, Subject Series, Cuba, 1/24/61 ¹/_N 12/30/62)

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