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29 March 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Executive Committee Meeting - 12:30 p.m. - 29 March 1963

IN ATTENDANCE: All present, plus Cottrell, Kaysen, Dungan and others

The President raised the question of what should be our policy on hit-and-run raids and asked my views. I reported my views as per the attached memorandum of 29 March. Secretary Rusk stated that the United States would be blamed for unauthorized raids, the Soviets would expect that we could stop them and they would immediately take counter actions such as escorting ships, etc. On a minimum, we should act to disassociate ourselves and do all possible not to permit the continuance of unauthorized raids.

Dillon stated that we could not stop them because of the number of ports, small ships, inadequate coast guard facilities, etc. McNamara countered by saying that we could stop them by utilizing military resources. As a second alternative he suggested we might explore modifying our course of action and finally, should disassociate ourselves from responsibility. The Attorney General outlined various steps that could be taken to identify the leadership of the various groups and to either prosecute them or exclude them from the country through immigration procedures. Thompson and Harriman expressed particular concern over the reported airplane that was ready to bomb Soviet ship. Practically all in attendance thought that we should try and guide the operation away from attacks on Soviet ships because of obvious reaction of the Soviets. The Vice President felt that we would be criticized either from letting them go on the one hand, or stopping them on the other. He felt the military should immediately study that which should be done to stop them and all actions should be taken to halt the unauthorized raids.

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Unauthorized Cuban Raids

1. Organizations such as the Second Front of Escambrey, Alpha 66, and Lamba 66 are well-known in the Cuban colony in Florida and Puerto Rico. Their plans are discussed openly, are picked up by CIA and reported almost daily in our CIA bulletins.

2. There is no doubt that the individuals are in and out of Florida and Puerto Rico. The boats, outboard motors, guns, ammunition and explosives originate in the United States from legally licensed or unlicensed sources (of which there are many). We believe that the operations are staged out of the Bahamas and other non-U.S. areas.

3. The operations are skillfully executed by men of obvious courage and dedication. Apparently the organizations are building up and we can expect more rather than fewer instances in the future.

4. Obviously raids of this type will exasperate problems with Castro and more particularly the Soviet Union and, from that standpoint, are undesirable. However, successful harrassment will create very considerable annoyance, will stimulate internal dissension, will complicate Castro's problems and will have very considerable effect in discrediting Castroism in Latin America. Inability of Castro to deal with these raids might cause the Soviets to question the strength of his position and therefore reappraise their own position in Cuba. It is impossible to predict the result of such reappraisal. On the one hand it might cause them to question their presence in Cuba; on the other to reinforce it; and finally, might cause them to open up a discussion of their presence with the United States.

5. Finally, although it is outside of the competence of the Intelligence Community, it is my personal view that a concerted and publicized effort to "stand down" these operations would probably draw more public and press criticism in the United States than would result from tolerating these acts while officially disassociating the government from them through denial of both responsibility and control.

JOHN A. McCONE
Director

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The President then suggested a meeting be held this afternoon to determine a number of matters.

1. We should establish what our contacts are with the groups so that we can guide them effectively, whether we can stand down the operations.
2. A policy statement which State is undertaking.
3. The question of prosecution which the AG would undertake.
4. Discussing with UK since there is evidence that much of this originated in the Bahamas.
5. The question of any informal discussion with the Soviet Union.

At the meeting attended by AG, McNamara, McCone, Cottrell, Douglas Dillon, it was decided to send a group to Miami this afternoon for discussion with the Miami representatives of the FBI and CIA, ~~Immigrat~~ ~~immigration~~ officials, Coast Guard, etc. Principal purposes would be to:

1. Find out all we know about the groups, who they are, where they are, and what can be done about them.
2. Lateral transfer of information between CIA and FBI Miami. Apparently there is not sufficient exchange between CIA and FBI in Miami.
3. Ways and means of using Customs and Coast Guard for some of this.
4. Warning the unauthorized groups in advance of actions we intend to take against them. Also warning the suppliers of explosives, arms, etc.
5. FCC shut down illicit radio stations, provide a truck equipped with DF-equipment to locate the stations.
6. Explore what could be done to influence the groups away from Soviet targets. In this connection, the AG favored a complete standdown before any attempt was made to guide the groups.
7. Alexis Johnson expressed greatest concern over the plane matter and asked that the group take immediate action to immobilize the plane.

"Secret" Addendum to McCone taped note of Mar 29, 1963

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