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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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5 July 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL GROUP (AUGMENTED)

From: Brig. Gen. Lansdale *SL*

Subject: Progress, Operation Mongoose

President in Mexico. State reported that President Kennedy's visit to Mexico greatly enhanced U.S. good-will in Mexico, was marked by the absence of pro-Castro propaganda, and fulfilled U.S. plans to impress upon Castro that Mexico, upon whom the Castro regime counts as an ally, is solidly with the United States and the West. In discussions about Cuba, President Lopez Mateos expressed the Mexican view that Castro was in trouble and that his regime would fall of its own weight. President Kennedy expounded the U.S. view of the Cuban problem; State believes this should ease the way for future discussions about Cuba with the Mexicans.

Joint Communiqué. The joint communiqué issued by President Kennedy and President Lopez Mateos, included a topic of interest to Operation Mongoose: "Both presidents reaffirmed the dedication of their countries to the ideals of individual liberty and personal dignity which constitute the foundation of a civilization which they share in common. In consonance with their dedication to these ideals and acting always as sovereign and independent countries, which decide their own policies and their own courses of action, they propose to respect and maintain the principles of non-intervention -- whether this intervention may come from a continental or extra-continental state -- and of self-determination of peoples."

The FBI reported that the Mexican press and political observers hailed this joint message as evidence of President Kennedy having "surrendered" to Mexico's policy of "hands off Cuba." In response to my query, the Department of State said: "There were no developments resulting from the President's trip to Mexico, including the text of the joint United States-Mexico Communiqué, which alter the basic guidelines governing the Cuba project."

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Operations. My visit to the Miami area included discussions with the operations staff of the CIA station, which carries the brunt of current work on Operation Mongoose. I was pleased to note that CIA has built a team which has a number of people experienced in operations into Communist-controlled areas (Europe and Asia), whose know-how strengthens the operations of people with Latin American experience. They have some problems, most of which are being resolved on the operating level. Some problems involve policy matters, which are being staffed for presentation to you.

Overall, this is a splendid effort by CIA within present guidelines. On intelligence-collection, the magnitude of the special emphasis given the operation is indicated by the presence of 45 agents now in the Habana area alone (a rather remarkable accomplishment in a Communist capital where there is no official U. S. presence). In addition, there are agents and teams in the provinces; efforts are being made to complete the provincial coverage at an early date, since there are some areas insufficiently covered now.

"Voice of Cuba." The separate CIA weekly report noted the successful initial broadcasts [REDACTED] the U. S. publication of the fact that such broadcasts were heard in the U. S., and the replay of this news back into Cuba for the general public. It is noted that UPI carried this news item, but spiced it up with added stories of Castro's use of militia against guerrillas in Matanzas. The two stories put together by UPI have no relationship in reality, and the "Voice of Cuba" broadcasts are being closely directed to fit in with other operations and to keep within Mongoose guidelines.

Diplomatic. State reports that diplomatic efforts are being made to block Cuba's application for accreditation to the European Economic Community. Similarly, efforts are being made to exclude Cuba from the proposed Latin American Free Trade area.

Contingency Planning. Rumors in mid-June of a Cuban uprising led to my tasking Defense for further contingency planning, including an inter-departmental plan. Defense reports this planning is progressing well. As an interim report, [REDACTED]

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You will be informed, when this planning is completed.

Defense Intelligence. Defense is reviewing actively its responsibilities for intelligence collection in Cuba, with a view of strengthening the effort considerably, [REDACTED]

Voice of America. USIA reported that VOA concentrated mostly on the President's trip to Mexico. Other telling news items were a Costa Rican labor union condemnation of the Castro tyranny, interviews with Cubans who had escaped from a concentration camp and who gave minute details of the terrible conditions, a quote from Castro's own press about chaotic administration (367 days to answer a letter from a Cuban asking permission to acquire industrial equipment), the story of Cuban students disappointed with Russian agricultural schools (VOA pointed out that Russia, with its own agricultural failures, was not in a position to teach others), and an interview with a person from Cardenas where the recent hunger demonstration led to a big Castro military show of force.

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