

**TOP SECRET**THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.DECLASSIFICATION BY JOINT STAFF  
DATE: SEP 29 2000CM-85-62  
2 November 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

*Copy 1-3 Resubmitted  
by Gen Taylor***SUBJECT: Evaluation of the Effect on US Operational Plans  
of Soviet Army Equipment Introduced Into Cuba**

1. Recently you expressed an interest in the possible effect upon our Cuban invasion plan of the presence in Cuba of the large quantities of modern army equipment found in recent photography. This equipment included T-54 tanks (the best Soviet medium tank), at least one FROG (Free Rocket Over Ground) surface-to-surface missile which has an atomic capability, armored personnel carriers and vehicles mounting anti-tank missiles.

2. Up to the present time, it has seemed probable that in an attack we would probably find some of these weapons manned by Soviet soldiers. Intelligence has reported that four tank battalions are indeed so manned and have as their mission the protection of IRBM and MRBM units against ground attack. In light of recent events, we are not so sure that we would encounter Soviet military personnel, particularly if invasion occurred after the departure of the Soviet missiles. However, it is possible that Soviet military technicians may be left in Cuba in some numbers to complete the training of Cubans in the more sophisticated weapons, such as SAMs.

3. The Joint Chiefs have sought the views of Admiral Dennison as to the need for modifying our current invasion plan because of the presence of this new equipment. He was asked to include consideration as to whether tactical nuclear weapons, both air and ground, should be included in the arsenal of our invasion and supporting forces in view of the atomic capability assumed to be present in some of the Cuban weapons. He has replied indicating that no change in the plan or in the forces committed to the plan is necessary at this time. Since nuclear capable delivery vehicles, e. g., carrier and shore based aircraft and 8-inch howitzers are already a part of CINCLANT's forces, he proposes to insure that nuclear munitions can be provided to these forces, when and if required.

**TOP SECRET***21895-091 CUBA (2 Nov 62)*

**TOP SECRET**

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered the foregoing factors and conclude that since there are nuclear capable delivery systems in Cuba, we must accept the possibility that the enemy may use nuclear weapons to repel invasion. However, if the Cuban leaders took this foolhardy step, we could respond at once in overwhelming nuclear force against military targets.

5. In the more likely case that atomic weapons would not be used by either side, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that despite the very substantial increase in Cuban conventional combat capability, provided that we exploit to a maximum our great air superiority, our present plan of invasion is adequate and feasible. As you know, that plan calls for a six-day preliminary air attack on Cuban defenses prior to landing. We think that such a period of preparation will probably be enough. However, we would verify the adequacy of the air operation, before going ashore and be prepared to extend the softening-up period until we are sure that both the landings and the following ground operations can be conducted speedily and surely at minimum cost in casualties.

6. You have asked us to estimate the casualties which we might anticipate in this operation. Assuming that atomic weapons are not used, our medical plans are drawn to accommodate up to 18,500 casualties in the first ten days of operation. This figure is based on casualty experience from past operations of this type. However, I must caution against its being accepted as an accurate prediction of reality, as the nature of the resistance may range from passive to fanatic and we would expect it to be on the passive side, while remaining prepared for a sterner reaction. If atomic weapons were used, there is no experience factor upon which to base an estimate of casualties. Certainly, we might expect to lose very heavily at the outset if caught by surprise, but our retaliation would be rapid and devastating and thus would bring to a sudden close the period of heavy losses.

7. Our plans to deal with this threat have been reviewed and are judged to be both adequate and feasible. The experience and military intelligence which we have acquired in recent weeks will

**TOP SECRET**

**TOP SECRET**

permit further assessment of the size and composition of our forces. This is a continuous process which the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider one of their most important duties. I will inform you of any adjustment in balance or any increase in forces that the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider desirable.

~~(Sgt)~~ MAXWELL D. TAYLOR

**MAXWELL D. TAYLOR**  
**Chairman**  
**Joint Chiefs of Staff**

cc: CMI File - copy 4  
FILE 0 - copy 5  
~~Xtra~~ copy 6 - OJS  
7 - SJCS  
Xtra 8

**TOP SECRET**