

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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1997

INSPECTOR GENERAL'S SURVEY
of the
CUBAN OPERATION
and
ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Part 2 of 2 Parts

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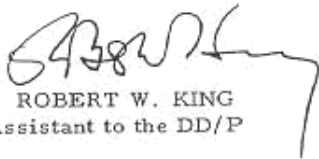
DD/P-2-0779
23 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the DCI, Mr. Chapin

SUBJECT : Return of Available Copies of "An Analysis of the Cuban Operation by the Deputy Director (Plans), " TS #181884.

1. Transmitted herewith are all the completed copies available to us of subject document. Included are copy 5 and copies 7 through 20.

2. To confirm our original understanding: Copies 1, 2, and 3 went to the DCI on 18 January; copy 4 went to Mr. Dulles on 18 January; copy 6 went to the Inspector General on 19 January; and copies 21 through 25 are unassembled, with the pieces residing in the DD/P Registry. We will destroy these latter materials if you have sufficient copies without assembling the last five.


ROBERT W. KING
Assistant to the DD/P

Attachments:
As stated

*DD/P Registry (Margaret Porter) advised that these copies were being destroyed.

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE CUBAN OPERATION

BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (PLANS)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

18 January 1962

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u> (Indicated by Blue Tabs)	<u>PAGE</u>
I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY	1-33
A. Organization and Execution	3
B. Errors of Judgment	6
C. The Decisions that Led to Failure	9
D. Washington Decision Making	13
E. Agency vs. Government Responsibility	16
F. Why an "Overt" Operation	19
G. Government vs. Agency Decisions	22
H. Conclusions	23
I. Lessons for the Future	25
II. THE SURVEY'S STATEMENTS OF THE OPERATIONAL CONCEPT	1-4
III. WHY A MILITARY-TYPE INVASION	1-4
IV. THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS	1-10
<u>Annex A</u> - Memorandum dated ²³ 31 March 1961 for Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Director of Central Intelligence Agency, "Tasks, Para- Military Plan, Cuba."	
V. THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ADEQUACY OF THE PLAN	1-18
<u>Annex A</u> - Cable from C/WH/4/Paramilitary dated 13 April 1961 to CIA Headquarters.	

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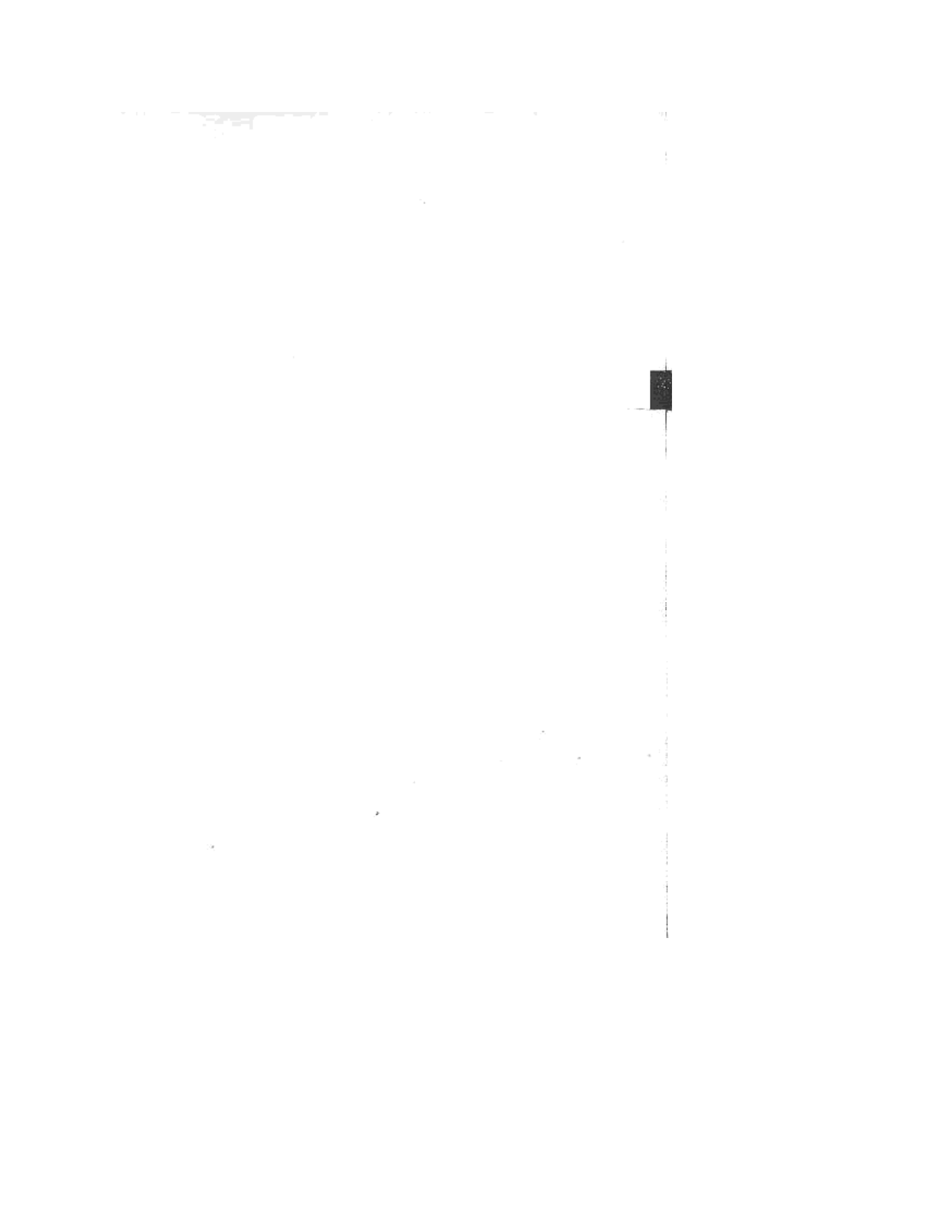
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<u>SECTION</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
VI	ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS	1-28
	Annex A - Memorandum dated 24 October 1960 for A/DDP/A, <u>et. al.</u> , Procedures for Cuban Overflights.	
	Annex B - Memorandum dated 12 October 1960 for Chief, WH/4, "Organization and Command Relationships - WH/4 and Development Projects Division."	
VII	PERSONNEL	1-14
	<u>Annex A</u> - Biographic Summary of Certain Senior Officials.	
	<u>Annex B</u> - Memorandum dated 16 May 1960 for Chiefs of All Special Staffs and Operating Divisions, "Clerical Assistance for WH Division."	
VIII	THE POLITICAL FRONT AND RELATIONS WITH THE CUBANS	1-18
IX	AIR MARITIME OPERATIONS	1-18
	A. Air	1
	B. Maritime	7
	C. Training Underground Leaders	15

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to an understanding of the nature of and the reasons for the failure of the Cuban operation and in so doing to suggest what are the correct lessons to be learned therefrom. It is prompted by and is, for the most part, a commentary on the IG Survey.

That document gives a black picture of the Agency's role in this operation. It makes a number of different kinds of allegations.

First, there are numerous charges of bad organization and incompetent execution, including specifically criticisms of: command relationships; the quality of personnel; the internal operational planning process; the conduct of maritime and air operations; and the collection and evaluation of intelligence. These deficiencies are portrayed as responsible for the failure to build up and supply resistance organizations under rather favorable conditions.

Second, and more serious is the allegation of major errors of judgment, notably (a) the decision to convert the project into what rapidly became an overt military operation beyond the Agency's capability, (b) the treatment of the Cuban exiles as "puppets", (c) the inadequacy of the military plan for the invasion, and (d) the failure "to appraise the chances of success realistically".

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- 2 -

Third, the Survey is critical of the Agency's failure to insure that the decision making process in the Executive Branch was orderly and effective. The Agency, it is alleged, "failed to keep the national policy makers adequately and realistically informed of the conditions considered essential for success, and it did not press sufficiently for prompt policy decisions in a fast moving situation". As a corollary of this judgment, the Survey attributes the blame for incompetence of execution and for errors of judgment essentially to this Agency alone.

It is almost self-evident that some of these allegations are true, at least in part. In any large and rapidly organized undertaking there are certain to be errors of organization and of execution. In all likelihood major errors in judgment were committed. Similarly, the decision making process in the Executive Branch of the Government operated in a manner that left something to be desired. Nevertheless, this paper argues: that a large majority of the conclusions reached in the Survey are misleading or wrong; that the Survey is especially weak in judging what are the implications of its own allegations and, therefore, that its utility is greatly impaired by its failure to point out fully or in all cases correctly the lessons to be learned from this experience. This generalized rejection can be made more meaningful by an elaboration

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- 3 -

at this point, which will at the same time serve the purpose of outlining the structure of this paper and summarizing certain of its main conclusions.

A. Organization and Execution

As to the first set of allegations, there is not too much that can be said short of detailed discussion which is contained in later sections, except to make the obvious point that perfection in organization and execution is never attained and that the real question is whether the mistakes that were made were worse than they reasonably should have been and justify blanket condemnation. Stated flatly, the conclusions reached here on the main substantive points are:

- a. That Agency command and organizational relationships were what they should have been.
- b. That any shortcomings in the internal planning process reflected, for the most part, the difficulty of securing clear policy guidance from outside the Agency and prompt, willing, support based on that guidance.
- c. That the failure of most air operations in support of the resistance was the result of circumstances completely beyond the control of the air arm and probably not remediable by any action that the Agency could have taken.
- d. That the intelligence on the Castro regime and on the internal opposition thereto was essentially accurate.

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- 4 -

The greatest operational weaknesses were in the early phases of maritime operations and, possibly, in the failure to place trained paramilitary agents with resistance groups, although it must be recognized that major efforts were made to accomplish this result and even with hindsight it is not clear that any different operational procedures or any greater effort could have achieved greater results.

The ultimate test of any project such as this is, of course, its outcome but if a judgment of the effectiveness of organization and execution is to be made, the deficiencies need to be balanced by the accomplishments. As even the Survey remarks, "There were some good things in this project". After a slow start, a sizable number of small boat operations were run efficiently and a large number of persons and volume of cargo were infiltrated successfully into the Island. In the last weeks before the invasion, a political organization was formed which covered a remarkably broad spectrum of political opinion and brought together what was described by a State Department officer at the time as the best group of exile leaders that could be assembled and that left outside no important politically acceptable element. In the military build-up, a force was created that was twice as large as originally envisaged and larger than any paramilitary force ever developed by the Agency. It was brought to a high state of combat

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- 5 -

effectiveness with a remarkably low percentage of individuals who had to be eliminated for unsuitability and with high morale later proven in combat. This force was airlifted to a staging base, the location of which was never revealed until after the finish of the operation. It was loaded on ships which sailed on dispersed courses and achieved complete surprise five days later. The Brigade then successfully carried out what had been described as the most difficult type of military operation, a landing on a hostile shore, carried out largely at night. Finally, as the battle was joined, adequate supplies of all sorts were available within a few hours of the beaches, had conditions permitted their off-loading. These various results were accomplished in such a way that only a small number of Agency staff officers were ever exposed to the Cuban participants and the true identities of these Americans have never been revealed. Moreover, the entire build-up was accomplished under the limitation that it contemplate no use of Americans in combat and no commitment of American flag shipping. As the event proved (and the Survey remarks), "This was not enough". Nevertheless, a recital of affirmative accomplishments suggests that whatever shortcomings there were in organization, personnel, and execution were not the decisive reasons for failure. It will be necessary to return to this point later.

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- 6 -

B. Errors of Judgment

The second set of criticisms, those described above as allegations of major errors of judgment and the third, relating to the Agency's relationships with the rest of the Executive Branch, are more complex. Their validity is discussed in separate sections below (Section III on Why a Military Type Invasion and IV on The Decision Making Process, Section VIII on The Relationships with the Cubans, and Section V on The Assessment of the Adequacy of the Plan and on the Appraisal of its Success.) Summarized in flat statements, the conclusions there reached are these:

a. The basic reason for placing increasing emphasis as the build-up progressed upon the planned military operation and decreasing emphasis on the internal resistance is that for a number of reasons the capacity of the resistance to achieve an overthrow without a significant assist from the outside appeared to be diminishing rather than growing despite the best efforts of which the Agency was capable to support it. Moreover, preparation for the military operation was not intended to reduce support of the resistance and the two efforts became truly competitive only in the last week before the invasion was mounted.

b. The decision to deny the Cuban political leadership control of or close contact with the Brigade and to withhold from them knowledge

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- 7 -

of the impending invasion was based on two considerations. First, it was believed at the time that if the Brigade was to achieve unity and esprit de corps, it must not be split by political rivalries and its officers must be chosen on professional grounds. This clearly precluded control of the Brigade, or even free access to it, by the political leaders. Second, the insecurity of the Cubans was notorious. It was quite inconceivable that they could know the details of times and places without the gravest risk that the essential advantage of surprise would be lost. It was clear at the time that the Agency assumed a significant risk in denying responsibility to the Cubans and inevitably assuming this responsibility itself. No evidence that has come to light during or since the invasion suggests that military effectiveness and security could have been obtained without paying that price.

c. The conclusions of this paper on the adequacy of the military plan are really too complex to be summarized in a sentence or two. All that can be said here is that (1) there was solid reason to believe that it had a good chance of at least initial success; (2) the last minute cancellation of the D-Day air strike significantly reduced the prospects of success; (3) there was never a test of whether internal support for the invasion would materialize on the scale and in the manner anticipated; and (4) the main deficiencies in the plan and in the capabilities of the

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- 8 -

Cuban force which may have contributed to the defeat have not been touched on in the Survey.

d. The appraisal of the chances of success may well have been faulty. The intelligence was generally good but it may have underestimated the skill with which the Castro forces would be directed, the morale of the militia units he would deploy against the Brigade and the effectiveness of any T-33's that remained in operation. There was some exaggeration of the capabilities of both ground and air forces of the invasion. It is impossible to say how grave was the error of appraisal since the plan that was appraised was modified by elimination of the D-Day air strike. Had the Cuban air been eliminated, all of these estimates might well have been accurate instead of underestimated. Probably, therefore, the primary fault lay in having one factor (i. e., the elimination of Cuban air) achieve so vital a significance to the whole plan. Although the D-Day air strikes were essential to the destruction of the Cuban air, no guaranty of such destruction was possible even had there been authority for the strikes.

The conclusions summarized above bear on the correctness of the Survey's allegations of deficiencies of execution and major errors of judgment but for the purposes either of understanding what happened or of learning how to avoid such a failure in the future, it is far from

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- 9 -

sufficient to know that certain activities were (or were not) incompetently performed and certain mistakes were (or were not) made. With many of the deficiencies it is essential to understand why they existed. And with all of them it is important to know what part they played in causing the outcome to be what it was. The central weakness of the Survey is that it is often misleading in its implications as to why certain things were done and it is grossly incomplete in its analysis of the consequences of mistakes alleged to have been made. Accordingly, before proceeding to the detailed discussion beginning in Section ~~III~~^{II} of this paper which supports the conclusions summarized here, it has been felt necessary to make good in some degree these errors of omission by commenting on the nature and causes of the failure in a manner which will be in part alternative and in part supplementary to the Survey.

C. The Decisions That Led To Failure

It has been suggested not only in the Survey but elsewhere that the operation against the Castro regime should never have been allowed to take the form that it did of a military invasion. It ultimately did take this form, however, and it was in this form that it failed. The military failure has been analyzed far more exhaustively and with greater authority by General Taylor and others than this paper can pretend to do.

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- 10 -

Nevertheless, certain conclusions as to the nature of the military failure must be restated here if its causes are to be understood.

There is unanimous agreement that the proximate cause was a shortage of ammunition on the beachhead and that this shortage was directly traceable, in turn, to the effective interdiction of shipping and air resupply by the Castro Air Force. It has been less emphasized that Castro's command of the air deprived the Brigade of its capability for battlefield reconnaissance, of the equivalent of field artillery, and of close air support against enemy ground forces. It deprived it, too, of the possibility of "strategic" strikes against enemy lines of supply and communications. Finally, reliance had been placed on daytime and virtually unopposed air and sea resupply as a necessary condition for the activation of resistance groups throughout the Island. It is incontrovertible that, without control of the air, and the air crews and aircraft to exploit that control of the air, the whole military operation was doomed. Even with control of the air it might have failed but without it there could not have been any chance of success. If, then, one wishes to learn what actually caused the military operation to fail, rather than what might have done so, the starting point must be an inquiry into why control of the air was lost and never regained. Of equal significance

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-11-

for an understanding of the whole operation is an awareness of the circumstances that did not contribute to the failure in the air.

Fortunately, it is possible to list without much possibility of controversy the circumstances that led to the outcome in the air. First, the nearest real estate that could be used was Puerto Cabezas in Nicaragua a distance of over 800 miles from the target area. The only way to avoid this severe limitation on the capability of any but the most modern aircraft would have been to use a base on U.S. territory. Second, in choosing types of aircraft, no sort of plausible denial could be maintained unless the project limited itself to the kinds of obsolete aircraft that might plausibly be found in the hands of a privately financed Cuban force. There was the further argument that it was desirable to use types of aircraft that could have defected from the Castro Air Force. The choice was thus rapidly narrowed down to B-26's. Third, policy guidance throughout the project was to the effect that no U.S. air crews could be committed to combat or placed where they might be involved in combat. This restriction was not relaxed until the second day of the invasion and then only in desperation. This had implications not only for the quality of the air crews but also for the number that could be assembled, screened for security, and trained within the time period available.

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-12-

Given these limitations, the only way in which there was the slightest possibility of achieving control and maintaining control of the air was by destruction of the Castro Air Force on the ground before the dawn of D-Day when vulnerable shipping would be exposed to air strikes. The one air strike on D-2 was not expected to be, and in fact was not, sufficient to accomplish this purpose. Only one other strike was planned for this purpose and that was cancelled. Moreover, in the interests of making the air strikes appear to have been done by the Castro Air Force, a restriction was placed on the number of aircraft that could be committed to these strikes by the invasion force.

Even after the very considerable damage done on D-Day itself by enemy air, it is possible that a determined and major strike on the night of D/D+1 would have crippled the Castro Air Force, the final destruction of which might have been completed the following night. By the evening of D-Day, however, the Cuban air crews were exhausted and dispirited and the opportunity could not be fully exploited.

Even if things had gone better on D-Day, it is questionable whether the 17 Cuban air crews that constituted the air arm of the strike force would have been adequate to accomplish all of the tasks for which reliance was placed on the air arm. The chance of success would have

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-13-

been greater (with or without the D-Day strike) if it had been possible to assemble and commit to action more trained Cuban or U.S. air crews.

D. Washington Decision Making

These, then, were the circumstances which together led to defeat in the air and made inevitable a defeat on the ground. Several things are notable about them. In the first place, it should be emphasized that these all trace back to Washington decisions. The defeat in the air cannot be blamed on bad maintenance at Puerto Cabezas, or on a shortage of spare parts or fuel. It cannot be blamed on a shortage of B-26's, inasmuch as it proved possible rapidly to replace losses from the U.S. It cannot be blamed on the cowardice or lack of skill of the Cuban air crews, who by and large gave a good account of themselves. Nor can it be attributed to bad tactical decisions made either at Puerto Cabezas or in the Washington command post. The crucial defeat in the air was to no significant degree the result of bad execution. It was directly and unambiguously attributable to a long series of Washington policy decisions.

Before exploring the touchy question of whose decisions these were and how they were made, the implications of this conclusion deserve emphasis and elaboration. It suggests that the bad organization, improperly drawn lines of command, low quality personnel and operational

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-14-

inadequacies alleged by the Survey were not in the actual event responsible for the military failure. If organization and execution had approached perfection, the invasion would still have failed in the absence of more and larger pre-D-Day air strikes or the use of more modern aircraft from U.S. bases.

To be sure, this conclusion derives from an analysis only of the failure to gain control of the air. It is arguable that even if control of the air had been achieved, maintained, and exploited, the beachhead would not have been consolidated nor the Regime ultimately overthrown. Without arguing that point here, however, the evidence strongly suggests that if the Brigade had been defeated by ground action under these more favorable circumstances, it would have been because of errors of planning and conception rather than by errors of execution. The Brigade fought long enough to prove its determination and tactical skill. It appears to have been well handled by its officers. There were ample supplies at hand to support continued ground action. And Castro himself has admitted that the terrain was well chosen. Given control of the air, the Brigade might ultimately have been defeated by a complete failure of any resistance to materialize under conditions which would have

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-15-

encouraged it and permitted air support coupled with continued effectiveness in the face of heavy casualties of the Castro militia. Either of these possible developments would have confirmed the errors of intelligence and assessment that are alleged but would have given no support to the view that errors of organization and execution in the build-up phase were responsible for the military defeat. Despite whatever mistakes of this character there were, the Agency did after all (with the invaluable help of the Department of Defense) build up, train, equip, and deploy a force that proved itself in combat to be of high quality.

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-16-

E. Agency vs. Government Responsibility

Another notable feature of the decisions that together were responsible for failure to achieve control of the air (in addition to the fact that they were all Washington policy decisions) is that they were all interdepartmental decisions. Other elements of the Executive Branch were involved along with the Agency in making them. This is not to imply that in all cases they were imposed on the Agency. Regardless, however, of how blame should be assessed between the Agency for accepting restrictions and the policy makers outside the agency for imposing them, it is necessary to have clearly in mind the nature of the decision making process in a project of this sort in order to understand how the ultimate failure came about.

Inherent in this situation was a clear conflict between two goals, a conflict of the sort familiar in recent American history. One objective was that, mainly through the various activities comprised in this project, the Castro regime should be overthrown. The other was that the political and moral posture of the United States before the world at large should not be impaired. The basic method of resolving this conflict of objectives that was resorted to was that of attempting to carry out actions against Castro in such a manner that the official responsibility of the U. S. Government could be disclaimed.

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-17-

If complete deniability had been consistent with maximum effectiveness, there would theoretically have remained no conflict of goals but in fact this could not be (and never is) the case. The most effective way to have organized operations against the Castro regime, even if they would have been carried out exclusively by Cubans, would have been to do so perfectly openly, on the largest scale and with the best equipment feasible. Practically every departure from this pattern of behavior imposed operational difficulties and reduced effectiveness. Inherent in the concept of deniability was that many of these restrictions would be accepted but at every stage over a period of many months questions had to be answered in which operational effectiveness was weighed against the political requirement of deniability.

As these decisions presented themselves week after week, the Agency as the executive agent for the conduct of the operation was usually and naturally the advocate of effectiveness. The State Department and, with respect to certain matters, the Department of Defense were the guardians of the correctness of the country's political posture and thus the advocates of deniability. There was obviously no way in which a generalized policy could have been laid down which would have furnished guidance as to the way the many successive decisions ought to be made. There was no quantitative

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-18-

measure of either the improvement in the chances of success that would have resulted from say, permission to use American air crews in overflights or of the decrease in deniability that would have resulted therefrom. Each of many such decisions had to be discussed and made on its own merits, and in almost all of them several agencies had to take part.

One of the consequences of this state of affairs was that prompt decisions were hard to obtain. Another was that, like so many interdepartmental decisions, these were subject to differing interpretations by different participants in the process. Delays and differences of interpretation were compounded by the constantly changing situation both of Cuba and the Castro regime on the one side and of the opposition on the other, which would have rendered rigid and entirely orderly planning difficult under the best of circumstances.

The nature of the decision making process had other consequences as well. It explains in large measure the failure to write tidy and comprehensive plans and have them properly approved in writing by competent authority well in advance. It explains why there was a long succession of alternate plans and of modification to plans under consideration. Above all, the constant weighing of costs and benefits in the effort to satisfy the military requirements for success without excessive

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impairment of the political requirement of deniability explains why the final plan (and most of the variants considered in the last six weeks) was a compromise.

F. Why An "Overt" Operation

Against the background of these remarks on the way decisions were made and on the nature of policy issues involved, it is worth commenting briefly on one of the major errors of judgment alleged by the Survey: the decision to "convert the project into what rapidly became an overt military operation beyond the Agency's capability." In part this "decision" was compelled by the failure of the internal resistance the reasons for which are discussed in later sections and are not germane to the current context. As for the Agency's capability, enough has already been said to suggest that the operation was not so much beyond the Agency's capability as it was beyond the scope of activities judged to be acceptably deniable. The question that is highly relevant to the policy making process is how and why the project was allowed to become overt and, when this had happened, why it remained the responsibility of the Agency.

That it did become "overt" in the sense that there was extensive public discussion of the preparations for invasion and that the military action was widely attributed to the United States Government, both before and after it took place, there can be no doubt. Nor is there any mystery as to why this happened. It was quite out of the question

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-20-

to infiltrate men and arms by sea and air for months, recruit, train and arm a strike force of some 1800 Cubans, to organize the political fronts, first the FRD then the CRC and run a major propaganda campaign, without at least reports and rumors of these activities becoming widespread. Nor were there any illusions either in the Agency or elsewhere in the Executive Branch as to the degree to which the facts were surmised and accepted as true by journalists and other informed persons. Why, then, would anyone continue to regard the involvement of the United States as plausibly deniable and why was the undertaking not converted into an overt operation, which presumably would have become the responsibility of the Department of Defense?

The answer to the first part of this question is that up to and through the invasion itself the operation remained to an extraordinary degree technically deniable. Funds were disbursed in such a way that their U. S. Government origin could not be proved. No Agency case officer who played an active role was publicly revealed as such by true name. No Americans were captured (although the bodies of an American B-26 crew were probably recovered after its loss on the second day of the invasion). In short, even the best informed correspondents in Miami who published what purported to be detailed, factual reports could substantiate them only by quoting Cubans who themselves were often not well informed.

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-21-

This limited and purely technical maintenance of deniability was less important to the decisions of the Executive Branch, however, than the fact that no one in the Executive Branch was ready at any point until after the defeat officially to avow U. S. support. Indeed, this alternative was never seriously considered. Even the most inadequate fig leaf was considered more respectably than the absence of any cover whatsoever. Indeed, the final changes in the operational plan made in March, the official announcement in April that the United States would not give support to the rebels, and the cancellation of the D-Day strike were all last minute efforts to shore up the plausible deniability of an enterprise for which Governmental support was bound to be conclusively surmised even if it could not be proved. These decisions were made by the senior policy makers of the Government who were reading the newspapers every day and knew well to what degree the project had in fact become "overt". These men simply were not willing to state officially either that the United States itself was about to make war on Cuba or that the U. S. Government was openly supporting a group of Cubans, not even recognized as a Government in exile, in a military invasion. In the aftermath of failure this decision may have seemed a wrong one. Had the operation succeeded reasonably quickly and without too much bloodshed, the decision would probably have seemed a correct one. Be that as it may,

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-22-

it was not the Agency's decision and, as the above cited actions suggest, the pressure to strengthen deniability in the last few weeks came from outside the Agency and led to decisions which were unwelcome to the Agency. To suggest, as the Survey seems to do, that the Agency was responsible for this clinging to deniability is demonstrably false.

G. Government vs. Agency Decisions

The same comment applies in some degree to the three other alleged major errors of judgment. (These have to do respectively with the treatment of the Cuban exiles, the adequacy of the military planning, and the appraisal of the chances of success. They have been touched upon above and are discussed at some length in Section V below.) In the context of the decision making process, the most important conclusion that emerges is that, whether they were wise or unwise, they were Governmental decisions in a very real sense. As to the handling of the Cubans, this was a matter of the most intimate consultation with the State Department, especially in the two months preceding the invasion when the CRC was in process of formation. As to military planning, the record clearly shows that there was detailed consultation with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that the JCS considered the successive plans both formally and informally, and that these were the subject of review and discussion at the highest

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-23-

levels of Government. The chances of success were assessed favorably by the Joint Chiefs (minus, of course, the last minute cancellation of the D-Day strike) as well as by the Agency. The Agency must accept a sizable share of the blame for whatever mistakes were made in these three areas but no one who studies the record with care can assert (and no one who has done so has asserted) that the responsibility was narrowly focused on any one of the participants in the decision making process.

H. Conclusions

This introductory and summary section began with a re-statement of the main allegations of error made in the Survey and it followed with a summary of the conclusions reached in this paper (partly in the foregoing discussion but principally in the later more detailed sections) with respect to these allegations. For the most part the allegations are rejected. In concluding this section it may be useful first to list, for comparison and contrast with the Survey, what in the judgment of this paper do appear to have been the strengths and weaknesses of this undertaking and second to suggest some of the lessons to be drawn therefrom. The list is as follows:

- 1) Small boat infiltration and exfiltration operations were slow to start (but by and large were effective and well run in the last three months). Moreover, due to the existence of the U. S. Embassy

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-24-

in Havana, defectors and legal travel, the need for illegal infiltration was comparatively slight until January 1961.

2) Partly for this reason, the effort to place trained communicators, paramilitary types, and other agents with resistance groups inside the Island, and thereby to create a reception capability for air and maritime resupply, never caught up with Castro's improving security measures. This impaired the build-up not only of guerrilla groups but of intelligence nets. It is doubtful, however, whether significantly more could have been accomplished in building up an effective internal resistance particularly in view of the timing of the whole operation and the lead time involved in recruiting and training.

3) Aside from these weaknesses, alleged defects of organization and execution had little to do with the unsuccessful outcome. In particular, the limiting factor on air operations in support of the resistance was not bad management but the limitations of the reception parties and competence of Cuban air crews.

4) The air arm should have been stronger by the time of the invasion in numbers of air crews, type of equipment, availability of U. S. bases, or some combination of all these. If relief could not have been obtained from any of the politically motivated restrictions, and if a larger number of competent Cuban air crews could not have been recruited, the Agency should on its own responsibility have

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-25-

assembled more U. S. nationality air crews in the hope that their commitment would be permitted in an emergency.

5) There should have been more pre-D-Day air strikes and they should have employed the full strength of the air arm. The D-Day strike should not have been cancelled.

6) The military plan was a good one (except for the restrictions on, and possible inadequacy of, the air arm). It was properly worked out as between the Agency and the Joint Staff and was a product of highly competent, professional military planning.

7) The appraisal of the chances of success was probably faulty for reasons summarized above (para. d, page 8).

8) The important decisions were Governmental not those of one Agency. It was frustrating but of little practical consequence that the decision making process was at times cumbersome and did not promote tidiness. It was inevitable that the whole shape of the operation was determined as a compromise between the conflicting goals of deniability and effectiveness.

L Lessons For The Future

What are the lessons for the future to be drawn from this unhappy experience? Perhaps the main one is that the U. S. should not support an operation such as this involving the use of force without having also

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-26-

made the decision to use whatever force is needed to achieve success. If the political decisions necessary to facilitate the effective use of force on an adequate scale, up to and possibly including the overt commitment of U. S. military forces, are too difficult to make, then the operation should be called off unless the odds in favor of success within the politically imposed restrictions are very great.

It is a fact of life that the use of force by the U. S. (or any major Western nation--the Communists seem to be judged by a different standard) in an effort to influence the course of events in another country is deeply unpopular with an important body of opinion. Most of the damage to the political posture of the U. S. that is done by such action occurs when the action is identified, whether on the basis of evidence or of pure surmise, with the U. S. Once this point of identification has been passed, it will almost invariably be true that ultimate failure not only means loss of the original objective but further exaggeration of the political damage. Ultimate success, on the other hand, is the only way partially to retrieve and offset the political damage. It is, therefore, only the part of wisdom to reassess an undertaking of this sort when identification of the U. S. Government with it has begun to occur or appears imminent and to determine at that time either to insure success or to abandon it.

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-27-

The feeling has been widespread that another major lesson to be learned has to do with respect to the decision making process in the Executive Branch. In any major operation involving the actual exercise of power by the U. S. Government (as distinguished from the threat to exercise power), some branch of the Government will be responsible for execution, preoccupied with the achievement of success, and therefore generally the advocate of a massive and effective exercise of power. At the same time, the U. S. will always be in pursuit of a variety of essentially political objectives which will impose a requirement to maintain a certain public posture (notably in the UN). This requirement, in turn, will imply limitations on the manner in which and the scale on which power can be exercised. The guardian of the public posture whose primary responsibility it will be to devise and support restrictions on action will typically be the Department of State, or policy makers outside the action organization. In such a situation there is almost bound to be a succession of operational decisions that present (or appear to the participants to present) major issues of policy and, since there is an inevitable, and in a sense legitimate, conflict of interests between departments reflecting the conflict of objectives, there will typically have to be an arbiter who is himself neither the activist operator nor the statesman-like guardian of the country's political posture.

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-28-

Such issues are continuously brought to top levels for resolution. The result is a very human tendency on the part of the decision makers to decide not only the policy matters which only they can handle but also operational matters in which they have little of the expertise necessary for judgment and can rarely acquire through briefings enough depth of factual detail for a full understanding. Admittedly, expert advisors can be used but under pressure of time compounded by the unavoidable ambiguity of committee considerations, decisions are often made by the policy makers without full concurrence of the experts based on an inadequate understanding of the issues or their implications.

These are of course eternal problems of high level decision making and minor changes in governmental structure will not cause them to disappear. Nor are they in any sense unique to clandestine operations conducted by this Agency. Whenever something like the Cuban situation arises, what seem to the operators to be operational decisions will in fact raise policy issues. The issues will be real because they arise out of a real conflict of objectives. The decision making process could be tidier than it usually is and a meticulous written record would minimize recriminations after the fact, but tidiness and a good written record will have little bearing on the substantive wisdom of the decisions

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-29-

themselves. Whether in important matters of this sort any one other than the President himself can resolve the conflict between the requirements for effectiveness of action and acceptability of the political consequences remains to be seen. Perhaps the most useful lesson about Government decision making to be learned from the Cuban case is that one must be prepared for and philosophical about this process.

A third lesson of lesser generality has to do with the covertness or deniability of paramilitary and other large scale operations. An operation can be said to be covert only so long as the knowledge that it is being performed can be restricted to authorized individuals. This is possible if an activity can really be concealed (e. g. , photography of a document without the knowledge that the document has been reproduced) or if that part of the activity which is observable by unwitting people can be made to appear to them to be perfectly normal (the black movement of bodies or cargo from place to place through the use of false documentation). Unfortunately, a good many large projects including notably most paramilitary operations cannot be covert in this sense. Journalists and other unwitting people are almost certain to learn that something untoward is afoot. The only

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-30-

aspect in which such operations can be kept clandestine is by successfully concealing the part played by the U.S. Government.

It is a necessary condition for the preservation of such deniability that no unwitting individual acquire hard evidence of Governmental participation but this is by no means a sufficient condition. If it comes to be widely believed even in the absence of hard evidence that the U.S. Government is assisting or participating in an illegal activity, then a considerable part of the benefit that accrues from deniability has already been lost. After all, the effect on public opinion depends on what is believed by that part of the public with which the policy makers are for the moment concerned. There may still remain, however, a benefit to be derived from deniability after the public has decided that the denials are false because the Government can still maintain a formally "correct" posture. The Soviets frequently derive advantage from this limited official deniability. As a rule, however, the advantages that accrue to a Western Government, with a lively and at least partly hostile press and with statesmen who shrink from the utterances of flat untruths, are limited.

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-31-

The lesson suggested by these remarks is that in future clandestine operations of any size, it behooves all concerned to assess realistically the degree to which the operation is, and is likely to remain, clandestine. If the very scale of the activities makes it impossible to conceal them, can they be made to appear to suspicious journalists and others to be perfectly normal? If it is becoming apparent that something newsworthy is going on, can suspicion of Government involvement be kept to an acceptably low key? Or is the only option that remains open that of firm, repeated, public official disclaimer of a responsibility which will generally be attributed to the Government anyway? A corollary is that the advantages of whatever degree of deniability that remains feasible should not be overestimated. With hindsight, the U.S. did not buy very much political advantage with all the restraints imposed on air activity in the Cuban operation. Had it been decided even ten days before the invasion that responsibility for the operation would be unanimously attributed to the U.S. and that only official deniability could be preserved, consideration might have been given to recognizing the Cuban Revolutionary Council as a government in exile and allowing it to make as many and as powerful

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-32-

air strikes as it could. Another possibility might have been to use U.S. aircraft for a night strike. No one proposed either course of action at the time. They are mentioned here as theoretical possibilities only to illustrate the kind of conclusion that might have flowed from a more realistic assessment of the achievable degree of covertness and of the benefits to be obtained by maintaining only that limited degree of covertness.

There may be a fourth lesson to be drawn with respect to the assessment of the chances of success of any inherently risky operation. As stated above, a conclusion of this paper is that the assessment may have been faulty. Generally, this has been attributed, both in the Survey and elsewhere, to the circumstance that those responsible for conducting the operation were doing the appraising and exhibited a predictable bias. But this diagnosis ignores the role of the JCS who were directed by the President to review the prospects for the operation: principally so that there would be an independent and professionally competent judgment. It is also true that in judging the temper of the Cuban people, principal reliance was placed on a National Estimate. Nevertheless, it is probably true that the views

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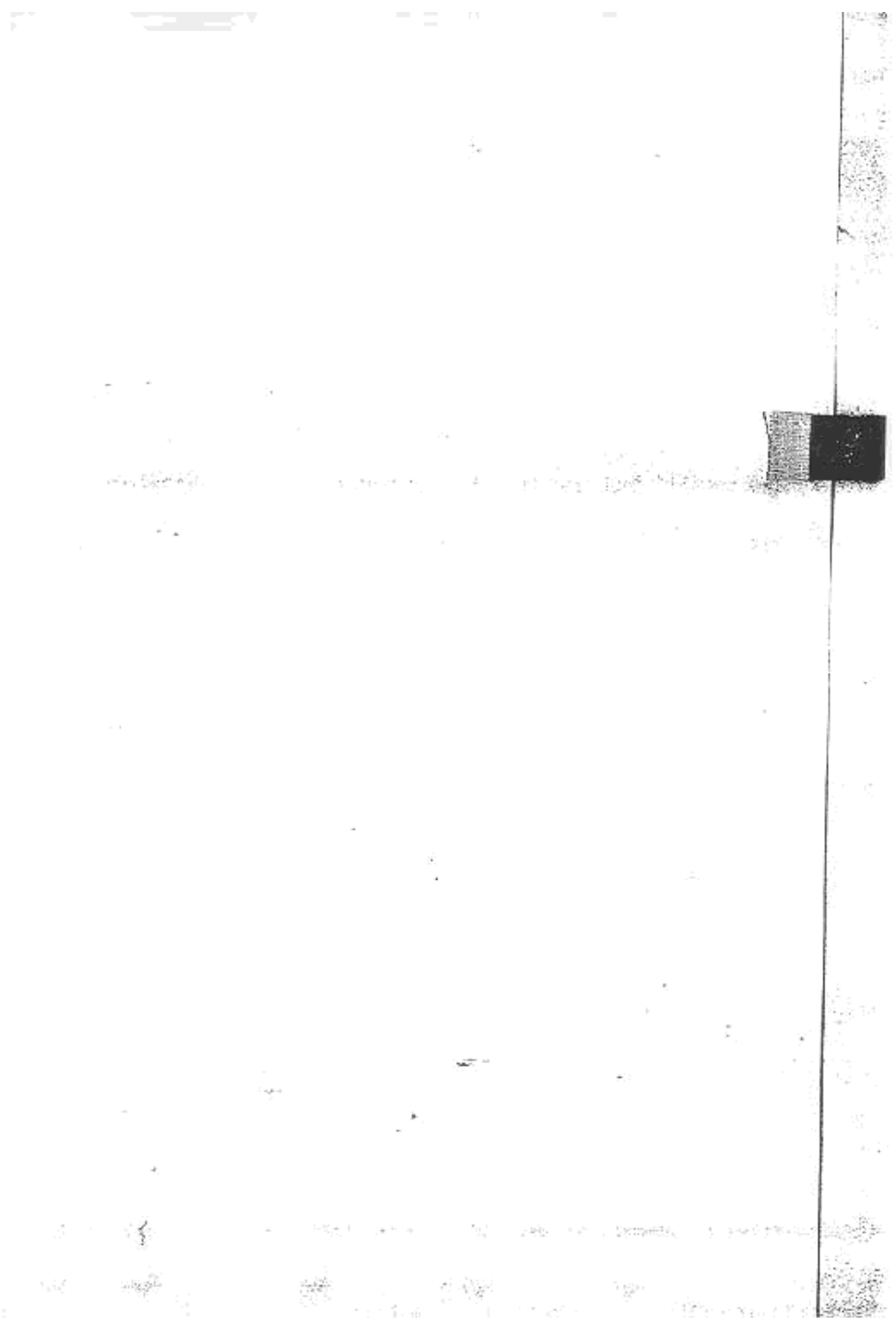
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of men deeply involved in the operation received too much weight in the assessment of the probable outcome, though it is far from clear where and how additional skeptics could have been introduced into the process of judgment without simply adding to the confusion. The only clear lesson is that policy makers should not make mistakes, which is scarcely helpful.

Finally, there are various lessons to be drawn with respect to Agency organization, procedures, and resources. No attempt will be made here to elaborate them, partly because to do so would require rather detailed exposition and partly because these are not among the really important lessons. It must be repeated still again that errors of execution did not have much to do with the failure and it must be emphasized that ways were found of bringing to bear on the conduct of the operation professional talent of a high order, especially in the military field. The mistakes were mainly those of judgment which a different organization would not have forestalled.

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II. THE SURVEY'S STATEMENTS OF THE OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

The Survey quite accurately refers to changes in the "military" plan which occurred on a number of occasions prior to the adoption of the final plan (i. e., the Zapata plan). The final plan, however, is the only one here considered except that earlier plans will be discussed to the extent that they are relevant to it.

As described by the Survey, the attack involved about 1500 "combat-trained and heavily armed soldiers" in an "overt assault-type amphibious landing" (page 46, para. 4) on certain beaches on the Zapata Peninsula on the south coast of Cuba. The troops had been moved by air on three successive nights from a Guatemalan training camp to the staging area in Nicaragua where they embarked on ships which had been pre-loaded at New Orleans.

"The ships had moved on separate courses from Nicaragua, under unobtrusive Navy escort, to the rendezvous 40 miles offshore in order to avoid the appearance of a convoy. From there they had moved in column under cover of darkness to a point 5000 yards from the landing area, where they met the Navy LSD. These complicated movements were apparently accomplished in a secure manner and without alerting the enemy."
(Page 29, para. 87).

The intention was to seize a "coastal strip about 40 miles long, separated

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from the interior by an impassable swamp penetrated only by three roads from the north and flanked by a coastal road from the east." (Page 30, para. 89).

The landing which occurred during the night of April 16-17 was substantially unopposed. In addition, shortly after daylight an "airborne infantry company was successfully parachuted from C-46 aircraft to four of the five scheduled drop zones where its elements were given the mission of sealing off approach roads." (Page 30, para. 91).

Air support prior to the landing was given by raids by eight B-26's on three Cuban airfields on 15 April and "destruction of half of Castro's air force was estimated on the basis of good post-strike photography". (Page 27, para. 81). Air strikes planned for dawn on 17 April in order to knock out the rest of the Cuban air force were "called off... late on 16 April". (Page 28, para. 83).

Early morning enemy air attacks on 17 April resulted in sinking a supply ship and beaching a transport as well as damage to an LCI. (Page 30, para. 92). Ground attacks by Cuban militia occurred during the day of 17 April. "While ammunition lasted, these attacks were beaten off with heavy enemy casualties, and several of Castro's tanks were halted or destroyed by ground or friendly air action. On the morning of 18 April, the Red Beach Force, nearly out of ammunition, retired in good order to

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- 3 -

Blue Beach without being pressed by the evening." (Page 31, para. 94).

Adequate resupply (whether by sea or air) became increasingly difficult and finally impossible due to enemy air action (page 31, para. 96) with the inevitable collapse resulting. The Survey, referring to air support attempted for the Brigade on 18 and 19 April:

"In spite of this air action, however, and in spite of a reported 1800 casualties suffered by the Castro forces, the Brigade's ability to resist depended in the last resort on resupply of ammunition, which had now become impossible."

(Page 32, para. 98).

[NB: No mention has been made of a separate landing planned for D-2 at a point 30 miles east of Guantanamo. Nino Diaz, who had a following in Oriente Province, was to land with 170 men with the idea of starting a fairly large scale diversion by drawing to him his followers and the resistance known to exist in Oriente. Although the Diaz group put to sea and reached its Cuban landing area on schedule, it never in fact landed due to a number of factors beyond U.S. control. Since the group played no role, no further discussion seems warranted.]

[NB: By letter, dated 22 April 1961, the President charged General Maxwell D. Taylor with the responsibility of investigating among other things the Cuban operation and of reporting the lessons to be learned therefrom. General Taylor, in association with Attorney General Kennedy, Admiral Burke and Mr. Allen Dulles (known as the Cuban

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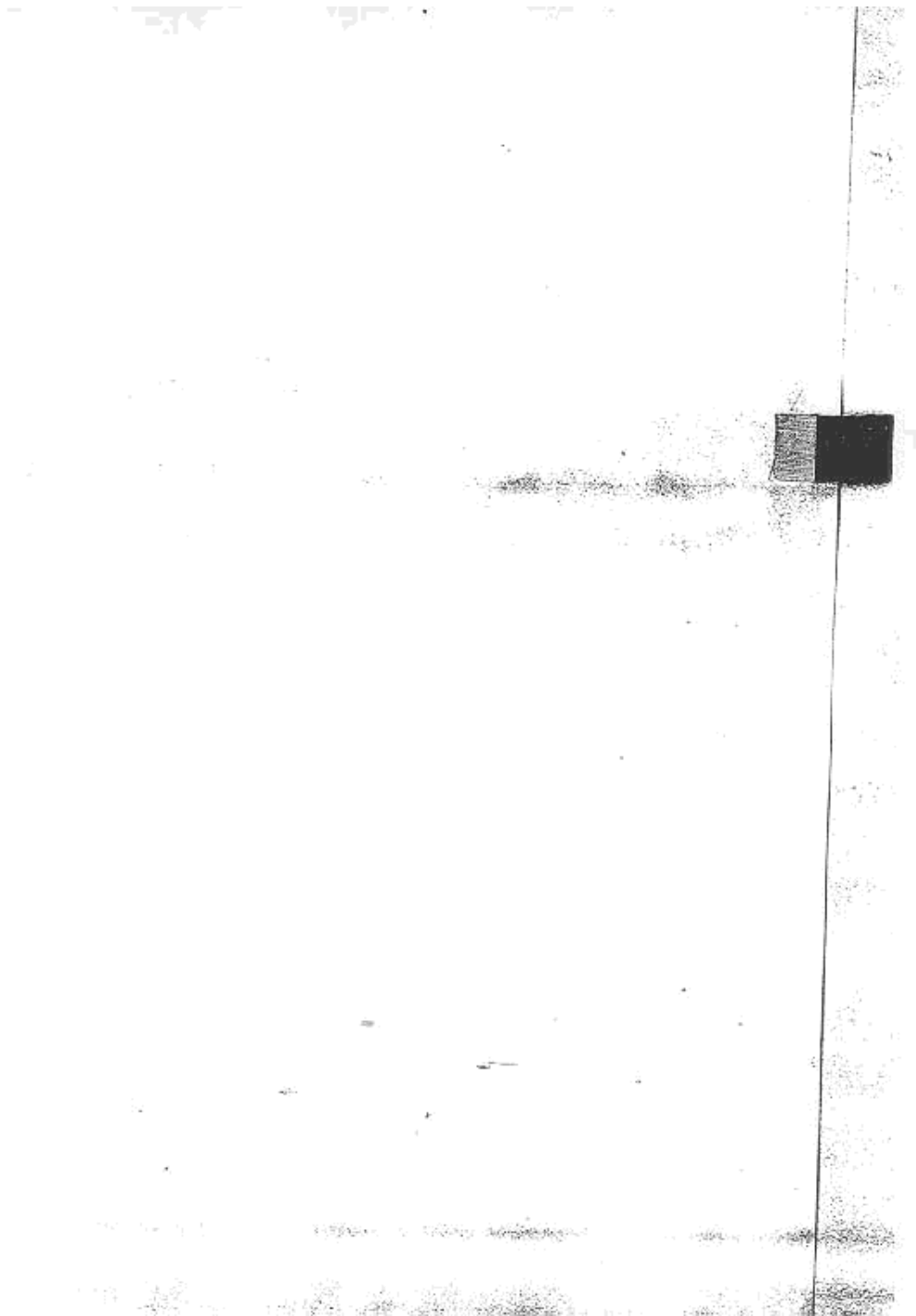
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Study Group) immediately held continuous hearings receiving testimony from all possible informed witnesses including a number of individuals who had been on the Zapata beachhead. General Taylor filed no written report but gave the President an interim oral report on 16 May 1961 and wrote the President on 13 June 1961 that he was ready to make his final report orally, which he did thereafter. The oral reports were supported by four memoranda which are here referred to as they provide a far more complete review of all aspects of the military portion of the operation than given above or in the Survey. Brief references to certain of these memoranda are made hereafter.]

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III. WHY A MILITARY-TYPE INVASION.

The answer is based on a number of factors. First, it became clear through the summer of 1960 that Castro was more firmly settled as Chief of State than had originally been hoped. Moreover, it became apparent that he was receiving and would continue to receive significant support from the Soviet Bloc (including the Chinese) economically, in military materiel, and in much needed advisers, e. g., military, internal security, positive intelligence and communications (to name the main fields). Thus, it was recognized that it was becoming more and more difficult to organize and maintain internal opposition, and, moreover, it was daily becoming more apparent that forceful evidence of outside support was needed to cause the internal opposition to show its hand.

During the summer and fall of 1960, some guerrilla resistance continued in the Escambray Mountains and in some of the provinces. Although poorly fed and equipped, this resistance was respected by the militia which despite vast superiorities in number would not engage the resistance in direct combat. Rather, the militia surrounded resistance pockets, staying on the main roads away from the hills; kept food and supplies out of resistance areas; and captured the guerrillas when they came out of the hills singly or in small numbers seeking food or other aid. Nevertheless, until the morale of the militia could

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be shaken, it seemed clear that, due to its vast superiority in numbers, it could continue at least to contain the resistance. Moreover, it became evident through the fall and early winter that the outside force to be successful needed to be self-sustaining since small bands or elements would, due to numerical inferiority in all likelihood, be cut off, surrounded and overwhelmed or rendered harmless by the militia.

In addition, difficulties of supplying the opposition soon became apparent. Air drops were rarely successful which is not an unusual operational experience. Under much simpler conditions approximately the first 12 or 13 drops in support of Castillo Armas were wholly unsuccessful in Guatemala. Thereafter, slight improvement occurred but mainly due to the fact that the drops were made in daylight and directed to terrain held by the invaders who were in open conflict and not in hiding. Even in France during WW II at a time when experienced pilots were dropping to experienced reception committees in vastly more favorable terrain than available in most of the attempted Cuban drops the rule of thumb was that only 50% success should be expected. At any rate the lack of success by air and the difficulty of distributing within Cuba the substantial amount of materiel landed by boat (plus, of course, the restrictions imposed by the constantly increasing and improving internal security) made it clear that no internal resistance buildup could achieve adequate size to eliminate

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- 3 -

the regime without substantial outside support.

As early as November, therefore, the Government decided to continue to aid the internal resistance as much as possible but to begin to plan for the introduction into Cuba of a trained force from the outside. Unquestionably, Castillo Armas in Guatemala was an analogy and precedent. Over the period from November until April the possibility - indeed the probability - of a military type invasion was continuously a generally approved part of the concept. In addition, by common consent of all involved, the size of the Brigade was increased bit by bit until the final 1500 total was reached. (Page 65, para. 54). There was no magic in any particular number. Nevertheless, factors such as features and size of terrain to be attacked desired fire power and logistics were carefully weighed by officers experienced in guerrilla and special force actions with the result that a minimum basic force of 750 was decided in December 1960 to be the proper size for the requirements. Thereafter, the increase was undertaken to provide extra strength on the simple theory that as long as flexibility was retained more men and guns would inevitably be useful.

Although the decisions involving size and use of the Brigade were in general based on its employment as a single force, the possibility of piecemeal use through infiltrations in small groups was seriously studied. Obvious political advantages would have been gained with such use rather than the larger "invasion" type landing. Nevertheless, the considered

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- 4 -

military judgment (i. e., of both Agency and JCS staff and military officers) was that small groups would not be able to prevent the large numbers of militia from either isolating or gradually eliminating them. Moreover, it was felt that the state of the internal opposition was such that they would not respond aggressively to the undramatic and, at best, slow impact of small bands of this sort. Consequently, such a plan could only result in a wasting of assets and a failure to use effectively the trained manpower of the Brigade. The military-type concept of introducing the entire Brigade into Cuba as a single force, therefore, emerged as the most feasible possibility.

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IV. THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

In order to place the Agency's role in the proper perspective and to indicate the general participation of the Executive Department, it is essential to examine the planning process that was involved. The Survey is highly critical of this aspect but it should be noted that the Survey is particularly incomplete in the discussions of decision-making and planning.

Regarding the planning process, for example, the Survey comments that in January 1961 "the Agency was driving forward without knowing precisely where it was going." (Page 50, para. 13). What is meant is unclear, particularly as in the next paragraph the Survey states:

"At this meeting (28 January 1961) there was a presentation, largely oral, of the status of the operation, and President Kennedy approved their continuation." (Page 50, para. 14).

In the same connection, the Survey states that at the end of November 1960, the Agency presented a revised plan to President Eisenhower and his advisors and "President Eisenhower orally directed the Agency to go ahead with its preparations with all speed." (Page 48, para. 8).

Some direction, therefore, was visible to two Presidents even though no definitive decisions were made until the very last minute. The fact, however, that the Survey could make such a statement and at the same time include only the barest facts suggests a lack of understanding of the decision-making process.

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The Special Group prior to 20 January 1961 (Messrs. Dulles; Gray; Herter until appointed Secretary, then Merchant; Douglas, with Irwin sitting for him on occasion) reviewed the entire situation on numerous occasions and considered special issues on others. Cuban discussion in the Special Group started in 1959 when concerns about the political situation and the undesirability of Castro were aired. Covert actions (e. g., radio broadcasting, economic actions, possible sabotage) were discussed at several meetings in January, February and March 1960 including the examination of a detailed "General Covert Action Plan for Cuba" on 14 March 1960. This plan was approved by the Special Group, then partially rewritten and finally approved by President Eisenhower on 17 March 1960. (Page 46, para. 3., and the Survey's Annex A).

Between mid-March and 20 January 1961, the Special Group had discussions of Cuba at 37 meetings, of which at least 8 to 10 in the period during and following November 1960 were detailed discussions. Gordon Gray, as the President's representative on the Special Group, reported to the President regularly on such Special Group activities. Moreover, at a general briefing on the project at the Special Group meeting of 8 December 1960, Assistant Secretary Mann and Mr. Joseph Scott of State also attended as did General Lansdale from Defense. In addition, C/WH regularly held weekly meetings with the Assistant Secretary of State at which Cuba was often discussed; liaison with Mr. Scott's office

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in State by A/DDP/A and others was almost on a daily basis on Cuba alone; and members of WH/4 also had substantially daily contact (on Cuba) with General Erskine's office in Defense (General Lansdale, the Deputy) regarding Defense support and details of the preparation for the possible "invasion".

President Eisenhower, in addition to the 29 November 1960 meeting referred to in the Survey, held a further detailed meeting on 3 January 1961 so that with these plus the reports which he received from Mr. Gray and others he was personally familiar with the status of the project at the time he left office.

Also as the result of an understanding first worked out with General Bonesteel of the JCS and later adopted by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the DCI, a Task Force (or committee) was created chaired by Ambassador Willauer with representatives of State (Assistant Secretary Mann and his deputy, Mr. Coerr); JCS (General Gray and other military members of his staff); and CIA (A/DDP/A and C/WH/4 or when absent, his deputy). Later William Bundy of Assistant Secretary of Defense Nitze's office joined the Task Force. The Task Force was responsible for examining the project with a view to determining what actions should be considered which were either not covered by existing plans or necessary to support existing plans. Ambassador Willauer reported to the Special Group at its meetings of 12 and 19 January 1961.

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-4-

The work of this Task Force resulted in the creation of a special JCS team headed by General Gray (discussed below) to review military planning and a committee to keep track of non-military aspects of planning consisting of Defense (General Gray), State (Mr. Braddock, last Charge in Havana prior to the break in relations) and CIA (A/DDP/A). This latter committee met regularly from about mid-February and prepared a list of tasks to be discharged by the Agency and each Department. This paper was approved by the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and the DCI and was used as a check list. A copy is attached as Annex A. As noted, it contained no reference to the military or Brigade action.

The new Administration was brought into the picture as soon as possible. President Kennedy was given a general briefing by the DCI and the DD/P on 18 November 1960 and Secretary of State Rusk was briefed by the DCI prior to inauguration on 17 January 1961. Rusk was again briefed on 22 January by the DCI and the DD/P in a group including the Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General.

Thereafter, there were a number of meetings with the President at which the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the JCS, the Attorney General, the DCI were present. In addition, Messrs. McGeorge Bundy and Schlesinger from the White House Staff; Berle and Mann from State; Nitze and William Bundy from Defense;

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General Gray from the JCS; and the DD/P were present. Such meetings were held on:

28 January
17 February
11 March
14 March (smaller meeting)
15 March
4 April
12 April

(Special communications regarding action under the Plan were also held with the President on 14 and 16 April via McGeorge Bundy and the Secretary of State).

In addition to the foregoing, the President on 7 March met with the Ambassador from Guatemala to the U.S. and the Ambassador's brother, a special emissary from President Ydigoras, who presented President Ydigoras' views. Numerous meetings also were held with Messrs. McGeorge Bundy, Berle and Mann, and Mr. Berle met with Miro Cardona, President of the Cuban Revolutionary Council. Also in the second week in April due to attacks in the UN by Foreign Minister Roa of Cuba and stories in the press, mainly the New York Times, a substantial amount of time had to be spent with the State Department preparing material for use by the USUN delegation including a briefing of Ambassador Stevenson. It is fair to say, therefore, that the senior members of the Administration were personally and intimately familiar with the status of the project and the issues and problems involved.

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-6-

On the military side, General Lemnitzer with the approval of the Secretary of Defense designated General Gray of the JCS on 4 January 1961 as the chief military liaison for the project. General Gray, thereafter, became closely associated with the military planning. From 31 January to 6 February a complete, detailed review of the operations plan was made by General Gray and a team of officers. This involved a thorough briefing by Esterline, Chief/WH/4 and Colonel Hawkins, Chief/WH/4/PM, and officers of their staffs plus several days of study by the JCS team. The Trinidad plan was the one reviewed on this occasion. During the review a memorandum was prepared by the team, approved by the JCS, and sent to the Secretary of Defense. (JCS Memo 57-61 of 3 February 1961, to Secretary of Defense, Subject: Military Evaluation of the CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba).

This memorandum reached a favorable assessment of the plan. It stated, however, that it was unable to evaluate the combat capabilities of the Cuban Brigade and Air Force except on the testimony of others since the Team had not seen these themselves. As a result, a team of 3 officers, a Special Forces Colonel, a Marine Colonel, and an Air Force Colonel, were selected by General Gray from among the officers briefed and sent to Guatemala from 25 through 27 February to examine the air and ground forces personally. A subsequent report to the Secretary of Defense confirmed their finding that the forces were capable. (JCS Memo 146-61 of 10 March 1961, to Secretary of Defense; Subject: Evaluation of CIA Cuban

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-7-

Volunteer Task Force). This latter report recommended that an instructor "experienced in operational logistics" be assigned to the training unit "immediately for the final phase of training." A Marine Colonel with these qualifications was so assigned.

Thereafter, General Gray and his team were intimately connected with all plans and moves of Colonel Hawkins' PM Section. In fact, it would not be inaccurate to say that General Gray and his team were the equivalent of a full partner of the Agency in this phase from mid-February 1961 until 17 April. (This did not, of course, affect the primary CIA responsibility). During this period General Gray briefed General Lemnitzer at frequent intervals and also briefed the JCS at formal JCS meetings.

When DD/P headquarters elements went on 24-hour duty on 13 April 1961, General Gray's staff did likewise and assigned a full time liaison officer to sit with Colonel Hawkins' section in order to be able to brief General Gray fully each day. General Gray, in turn, briefed General Lemnitzer.

The Trinidad Plan was always the plan preferred by the military, i. e., the JCS, General Gray and Colonel Hawkins and his staff. It was, however, considered unacceptable in certain aspects for political reasons so that on or about 11 March 1961. President Kennedy decided that it should not be executed. A further study of the entire Cuban shore line was then conducted by CIA, mainly WH/4, from 13 through 15 March. As indicated in the Survey, this study resulted in a shift from Trinidad to Zapata. Two alternate concepts

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-8-

were sketched out but the Zapata area concept was the only one which met the political requirements and provided a reasonable chance of success. This concept was fully described to General Gray and his team and passed on by the JCS as the best alternate to the Trinidad plan (JCS Memo 166-61 of 15 March 1961 to Secretary of Defense; Subject: Evaluation of Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts of CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba.) The covering memorandum from General Lemnitzer as Chairman of the JCS states in part:

"3. The conclusions of the evaluation of the military aspects of the three alternative concepts are as follows:

. . .

"c. Alternative III" (substantially the final Zapata Plan) "has all the prerequisites necessary to successfully establish the Cuban Voluntary Task Force, including air elements, in the objective area and sustain itself with outside logistic support for several weeks; however, inaccessibility of the area may limit the support from the Cuban populace.

"4. It is recommended that:

"a. the Secretary of Defense support the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as expressed in the above conclusions."

After 15 March, the JCS reviewed the Zapata plan as a body four times. The final plan was reviewed by individual Chiefs since it was only

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-9-

presented to the JCS on 15 April which was too late for its review by the JCS as a body.

The only reference in the Survey to JCS participation states that "members of the JCS" have stated "in the course of another inquiry (1) that the final plan was presented to them only orally, which prevented normal staffing; (2) that they regarded the operation as being solely CIA's with the military called in to furnish various types of support and the chief interest of the JCS being to see to it that every kind of support requested was furnished; (3) that they went on the assumption that full air support would be furnished and control of the air secured and on the Agency's assurances that a great number of insurgents would immediately join forces with the invasion forces; and (4) that, in the event the battle went against them, the Brigade would at once 'go guerrilla' and take to the hills."

Neither the "members of the JCS" nor the other "inquiry" are identified nor is there any citation supporting the alleged testimony. Being unable, therefore, to locate the full text from which the quotation was taken, it is not possible to analyze or clarify the points made. Presumably the "inquiry" referred to was that conducted by General Taylor although no verbatim minutes were kept. At least no transcript or full report of these hearings is available to the writer. In response, therefore, it can only be repeated that the JCS, as indicated, did review the Zapata

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-10-

plan and continued to be closely associated through their representatives and briefings with all actions taken thereon.

It is quite clear from the four memoranda supporting General Taylor's oral report mentioned above that the Cuban Study Group considered the operation to be one by the United States, not by the Agency, even though the Agency was the Executive Agent. Memorandum No. 2., entitled "Immediate Causes of Failure of Operation Zapata", says on this point:

"The Executive Branch of the Government was not organizationally prepared to cope with this kind of paramilitary operation. There was no single authority short of the President capable of coordinating the actions of CIA, State, Defense and USIA." (Memorandum No. 2., Para. 11, page 4).

As far as the concurrence of the JCS is concerned, Memorandum No. 3, entitled "Conclusions of the Cuban Study Group", concluded:

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff had the important responsibility of examining into the history of the operation. By acquiescing in the Zapata plan, they gave the impression to others of approving it..." (Memorandum No. 3, para. 1.h., page 3).

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23 March 1961

EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR: Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense
Director of Central Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: Tasks, Para-Military Plan, Cuba

1. The Working Group assigned to work out the detailed tasks for the planning and conduct of the CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba, and act as members of a Central Office for the operation, has agreed upon the tasks to be accomplished by the representatives of your respective departments and agency. The tasks are set forth for three phases: Pre-D-Day Phase; D-Day and Post-D-Day Phase until Recognition; and Post-Recognition Phase.

2. The tasks for the Pre-D-Day Phase are set forth in Enclosure A hereto.

3. The tasks for the D-Day and Post-D-Day Phase until Recognition are set forth in Enclosure B hereto.

4. The tasks for the Post-Recognition Phase are set forth in Enclosure C hereto.

5. The proposed time schedule for the Pre-D-Day Phase is attached as Enclosure D hereto.

Department of State Representative
Department of Defense Representative
CIA Representative

Atts: Encls. A-D as stated

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ENCLOSURE A

PRE-D-DAY PHASE

1. Department of State representatives will:
 - a. Prepare White Paper for Presidential approval.
 - b. Provide assistance to Mr. Schlesinger in preparation of material for Presidential statements.
 - c. Provide Working Group with Policy Statement as to what "recognition" really means.
 - d. Determine action, if any, to be taken regarding disclosures to Latin American countries - e.g.,
 - (1) Guatemala
 - (2) Nicaraguaand other countries, e.g.,
 - (1) United Kingdom
 - (2) France
 - e. Provide policy guidance for all aspects of the development of the Free Cuba Government.
 - f. Prepare plans for overt moral and other possible nonmilitary support prior to recognition of the Free Cuba Government of the objectives of the Cuban Volunteer Force and of the Revolutionary Council, including possible action in the United Nations or in the Organization of American States.
 - g. Prepare plans for overt moral and other possible nonmilitary support of the objectives of the Free Cuba Government when established.
 - h. Provide policy guidance to USIA to support this plan.
 - i. Prepare plans for Post-D-Day actions.

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- 2 -

Enclosure A

2. Department of Defense representatives will:

- a. Continue to provide training and logistic support to the Cuban Volunteer Force as requested by CIA.
- b. Prepare logistics plans for arms, ammunition, and equipment support beyond the capabilities of the initial CIA logistics support.
- c. Prepare plans for provision of support from operational forces as required.
- d. Prepare letter of instruction to the Services, CINCLANT and CONAD for support of this operation.
- e. Keep CINCLANT planners informed.

3. CIA representatives will:

- a. Establish a Central Office from which Executive Department and Agency representatives will coordinate planning and conduct operations.
- b. Continue to supply guerrilla forces in Cuba as feasible and required.
- c. Assist in the organization of a Free Cuba Government.
- d. Conduct an interrogation of two or three members of the Cuban Volunteer Force to determine full extent of their knowledge of actual facts and provide information to the President as soon as possible.
- e. Finalize detailed plans for the employment of the Volunteer Force in Cuba and follow up plans. Execute these plans on order.
- f. Continue to recruit, train and equip the Cuban Volunteer Force.
- g. Prepare detailed plans for establishing contact with the internal opposition, establishing such control, coordination and support of this opposition as may be desirable and feasible.
- h. Exert effort to arrange defection of key Cuban personnel.
(N.B: The defection of the military commander of the Isle of Pines, or at least officers who could control the Isle, would be particularly desirable.)

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Enclosure A

- i. Continue detailed intelligence collection on Castro activities throughout Latin America particularly his efforts to export revolution.
- j. Support the preparation of a White paper to be issued by the Free Cuba Government.
- k. Review cover plans.
- l. Coordinate with DOD representatives logistic follow-up support requirements.
- m. Review and implement a pre-D-Day psychological warfare plan.
- n. Review Psychological Warfare Plan for D-Day and Post-D-Day Phase.
- o. Intensify UW activities in Cuba.
- p. Prepare contingency plan for the disposition, if necessary, of the Cuban Volunteer Force.
- q. Prepare final briefing on entire operation.

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ENCLOSURE B

D-DAY AND POST-D-DAY PHASE UNTIL RECOGNITION

1. Department of State representatives will:
 - a. Take such steps as may be feasible for the protection of U. S. citizens in Cuba.
 - b. Execute plans for support of the Revolutionary Council or Free Cuba Government in the United Nations or Organization of American States and to counter communist and/or Castro charges in the United Nations or Organization of American States, as appropriate.
 - c. Lend support to the objectives and actions of the Cuban Volunteer Force and the Free Cuba Government.
 - d. Revise plans as necessary for support of the Free Cuba Government.
 - e. Recognize Free Cuba Government as appropriate.
2. Department of Defense representatives will:
 - a. Provide follow-up logistic support as requested by CIA and/or in accordance with logistics plan.
 - b. Provide support from operational forces as directed.
 - c. Prepare detailed plans to support the U. S. aid plan for the Free Cuba Government for implementation when overt support is given.
 - d. Coordinate support by DOD agencies and commands.
3. CIA representatives will:
 - a. Execute and support over-all paramilitary plan.
 - b. Inform DOD representatives of logistics requirements.
 - c. Continue execution of psychological warfare plan.
 - d. Be responsible for the continuous operation of the Central Office and present briefings of the situation as required or directed.

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Enclosure B

e. Introduce representatives of the Revolutionary Council and of the Free Cuba Government into Cuba at an appropriate time.

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ENCLOSURE C

POST RECOGNITION PHASE

The Departments and the Agency will prepare, coordinate and execute, as appropriate, such contingency plans as may be required and will, moreover, plan for the resumption of their regularly assigned functions in relation to the new Cuban government.

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ENCLOSURE D

TIME SCHEDULE

D-14

a. Department of State Representatives:

(1) Complete White Paper for Presidential approval.

(2) Provide policy guidance for all aspects of the Free Cuba Government (continuous).

b. Department of Defense Representatives:

(1) Continue to provide training and logistic support to the Cuban Volunteer Force as requested by CIA.

c. CIA Representatives:

(1) Establish a Central Office.

(2) Continue to supply guerrilla forces in Cuba as feasible and required (continuous).

(3) Assist in organization of Free Cuba Government.

(4) Continue to train and equip the Cuban Volunteer Force.

(5) Coordinate with DOD representatives logistic follow-up support requirements (continuous).

(6) Intensify UW activities in Cuba.

2. D-11

a. Department of State Representatives:

(1) Provide assistance to Mr. Schlesinger in preparation of material for Presidential statements (continuous).

(2) Complete plans for overt moral and other possible non-military support of the objectives of the Free Cuba Government when established.

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Enclosure D

3. D-10

a. DOD Representatives:

(1) Complete letter of instruction to the Services, CINCLANT and CONAD for support of this operation.

4. D-9

a. Department of State Representatives:

(1) Provide Working Group with Policy Statement as to what "recognition" really means.

(2) Have approved policy position regarding action, if any, to be taken regarding disclosures to foreign countries.

(3) Complete plans for overt moral and other possible nonmilitary support prior to recognition of the Free Cuba Government of the objectives of the Cuban Volunteer Force and of the Revolutionary Council, etc.

(4) Complete plans for Post-D-Day actions.

b. DOD Representatives:

(1) Complete logistics plans for DOD follow-up support.

c. CIA Representatives:

(1) Finalize detailed plans for the employment of the Cuban Volunteer Force.

(2) Complete detailed plans for establishing contact with the internal opposition and for establishing such control, coordination and support of this opposition as may be desirable and feasible.

(3) Initiate effort to arrange defection of key Cuban personnel.

(4) Complete review and implement a pre-D-Day psychological Warfare Plan for D-Day and post-D-Day phase.

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Enclosure D

(5) Complete review of Psychological Warfare Plan for D-Day and post-D-Day phase.

5. D-8

a. CIA Representatives:

(1) Complete support of a white paper to be issued by the Free Cuba Government and arrange to have that Government issue same.

6. D-7

a. CIA Representatives:

(1) Complete review of cover plans.

7. D-6

a. CIA Representatives:

(1) Conduct an interrogation of two or three members of the Cuban Volunteer Force to determine full extent of their knowledge of actual facts and provide information to the President as soon as possible.

8. D-5

a. DOD Representatives:

(1) Brief CINCLANT and CONAD planners.

b. CIA Representatives:

(1) Complete contingency plan for the disposition, if necessary, of the Cuban Volunteer Force.

(2) Complete preparation of final briefing on entire operation.

9. D-3

a. Department of State Representatives:

(1) Provide policy guidance to USIA to support this plan.

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Enclosure D

b. CIA Representatives:

(1) Complete detailed intelligence collection on Castro activities throughout Latin America.

10. D-2

a. DOD Representatives:

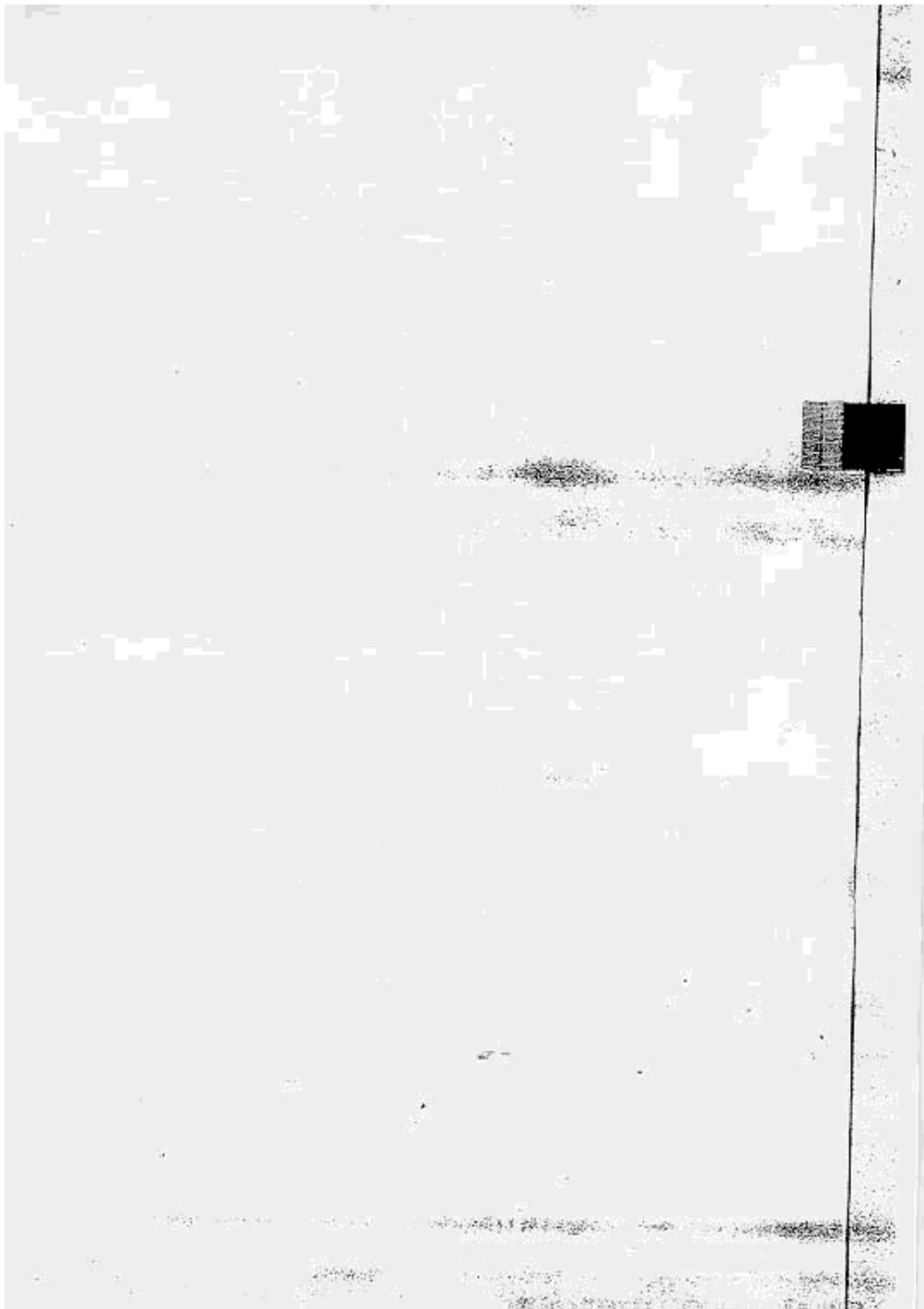
(1) Complete plans for provision of support from operational forces as required.

b. CIA Representatives:

(1) Present final briefing on entire operation (if not given prior to this date).

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V. THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ADEQUACY OF THE PLAN

As stated above one of the considerations raised by the Agency's capability to perform the operation is the question of what it thought the chances of success to be and if, as was the case, these were thought to be good, how reasonable this conclusion was in the light of the known facts. An examination of the adequacy of the military plan is essential to a resolution of this latter point.

Whatever conclusions or inferences may be drawn from the defeat of the Brigade, no one can deny that, in the absence of the planned D-Day dawn air strikes, the operational plan was never tested. Perhaps these air strikes would have had no significant effect but in view of the essentiality of eliminating Castro's air force, it can be asserted that without these air strikes the plan never had a chance. No issue has received more thorough analysis since the failure of the operation than the decision to cancel. Although the Survey fails to tell the full story, it is felt that nothing can be gained from further review. There is no doubt, however, that the informed military view without exception and at all times was that complete control of the air was absolutely vital.

(N. B. The Survey's statement indicating that "two of the President's military advisors, both members of the Joint Chiefs" did not understand this principle is considered inaccurate.)

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- 2 -

To the extent that there was a failure to communicate this to the appropriate political levels, blame should be attached. Quite candidly, it is unknown where this failure occurred, if, in fact, it did.

Before analyzing the reasonableness of the view that the D-Day air strikes could have changed the result it is important to examine the basic theory of the operation and what was accomplished, what failed and what was not tested. As to the last the only possible judgments are whether the theory based on existing evidence was sensible. The operational theory in outline was:

- a. To destroy the enemy air force. Not tested though partially accomplished.
- b. To land the Brigade on the Zapata beachhead achieving surprise. Accomplished successfully.
- c. To maintain the Brigade on the beachhead perhaps for several weeks. Not tested.
- d. To persuade the Cuban populace (both private individuals and governmental, including military) actively to oppose the regime. It was never expected that this would happen until the populace was convinced that an opposition force supporting democratic leadership receiving outside support was able to maintain itself on Cuban soil. How long this would take was unknown. Not tested.

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- 3 -

The failure to knock out Castro's airpower (particularly his T-33 jets) was fatal. How reasonable was the assumption that the D-Day strikes would have eliminated this airpower or at least made it non-operational for a period of time?

The best estimates based on all sources, including photography, (later confirmed as substantially accurate) were that prior to D-2 Cuban combat aircraft strength was 36 aircraft, i. e.:

17 B-26's
13 Sea Furies
5 T-33's
1 F-51

All of these were at three airfields - San Antonio, Libertad, and Antonio Maceo. The in-commission rate was assumed to be 50% (believed to be slightly high) so that presumably 18 combat aircraft were operational at the time of the initial D-2 strikes.

Based on all sources reports, including COMINT and photography, the Cubans subsequent to the D-2 strikes were able to launch only 7 aircraft against the beachhead, namely:

2 B-26's
2 Sea Furies
3 T-33's

Photography, of course, cannot determine serviceability but photography of aircraft movements post D-2 were consistent with, and it is fair to say, confirm the above figures.

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In addition, these operational aircraft were concentrated by the Cubans at San Antonio with the possible exception of 1 B-26 at Libertad. With the potent fire power carried by the B-26's flown by the Brigade, and based on the results of the D-2 strikes, the elimination of these seven aircraft could reasonably have been anticipated assuming surprise. Since the landing achieved surprise and since the Cubans had no effective anti-air warning system, surprise would almost certainly have been achieved.

With regard to the ability of the Brigade to maintain itself once ashore (assuming the elimination of hostile aircraft), the theory was that the Zapata area was so difficult of access via only three exposed roads across swamps that a small force could easily defend it against vastly superior forces for "several weeks" as stated by the JCS. Hostile concentrations and artillery would have been almost impossible to conceal from the air due to the terrain and the B-26 fire power would have been devastating against these. This is confirmed by the one actual encounter of B-26's against Cuban tanks. The Brigade's fire power was also heavy and could have prevented passage of any Cuban troops or equipment down the narrow access roads. As long as the ammunition lasted the Brigade actually succeeded in doing this. Supplies, absent

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- 5 -

hostile air, could have been landed in large quantities since ships could have been brought in to the beachhead.

The accuracy of this conclusion depends, of course, on technical considerations and must be based on experienced military judgments assessing such matters as the terrain involved; the size and capacity of friendly and opposing weapons involved; and the capacity particularly of the attacking force to maintain logistic support. Such an analysis could again be made but it would seem sufficient to support the reasonableness of the judgment reached in April by reference to the judgments reached by the Agency military planners and supported by the JCS and its staff.

Although it was believed that the Brigade under the assumed conditions could maintain itself on the beachhead almost indefinitely, still for ultimate success internal support was obviously needed. The concept of the plan was as indicated that at some point (not immediately) the existence of the Brigade would be recognized and Castro's quiescent opposition would become active.

As far as internal opposition was concerned, there was essentially general agreement regarding the situation. Such disagreement as has existed has been with respect to the accuracy of the prognosis regarding internal support the Brigade might expect after landing.

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- 6 -

The December 1960 U. S. estimate regarding the internal situation was that Castro was firmly in control; that his regime had consolidated its hold; that Cuban internal security was being rapidly built up; that Bloc assistance in the form of military technicians and instructors was about 200; that Cuban pilots and other specialists had been taken overseas by the Bloc for training; that the Cuban Communist Party controlled key positions; and that no one group or combination of the regime's enemies seemed well enough organized or sufficiently strong to offer a serious threat without outside help to Castro's authority (SNIE 85.3-60: Prospects for the Castro Regime).

Essentially the same facts were presented in the pamphlet released in early April by the State Department on Cuba, the facts in which were worked on jointly by all interested departments and agencies, (Department of State publication 7171, Inter-American Series 66, entitled "Cuba", pages 19-25).

Again the same conclusions were stated by the Agency in its presentations. An example is the memorandum, dated 17 February 1961, Annex B of the Survey which sets forth the view on these points consistently presented by the Agency throughout this period and up to 17 April 1961.

What then was the Agency prognosis? The Zapata plan took the view that there was evidence to justify the conclusion that once it could be

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- 7 -

shown to the Cubans that a Cuban force in opposition to Castro, having Cuban political leaders of political stature and democratic views, was capable of maintaining itself on Cuban soil, there would be substantial defections from the Castro regime in all walks of life, private and governmental.

In December the USIB had estimated that, despite the hold established by Castro and his regime, "Internal resistance to the Castro regime has risen sharply in the last six months."

"The Catholic Church, the only major institution not brought to its knees by the regime, has taken an increasingly firm stand against Castro."

"The middle and professional classes are now for the most part disaffected. Some campesinos are disgruntled, notably over the regime's failure to redistribute large landholdings as it had promised; thus far only token allotments have been made."

"A number of anti-Castro guerrilla groups are operating in the Sierra Escambray area and in Oriente Province, but the regime has demonstrated its ability to contain these bands."

"Within the Army, Navy, and Air Force, there probably remains a measure of dissidence and probably considerable resentment at the regime's decided preference for the civilian militia, but this may decline as more Bloc equipment is made available to them."

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- 8 -

(The above quotations are all from SNIE 85-3-60, page 5).

The militia numbering at least 200,000 was estimated to have been drawn largely from the lower income peasants and urban workers.

"Thus far, the militia's overall combat efficiency is low; many units are still on a part time training basis. However, a basic cadre of well organized well equipped, and trained units is emerging and on a number of occasions the militia has been used effectively to control mobs and to perform other security duties."

"The regular forces are still disrupted as a result of successive purges, and rehabilitation has been delayed by the employment of substantial army and navy detachments in construction and other public works. At present, the combat effectiveness of the air force is virtually nil, that of the navy poor, and that of the army at best fair, although it probably now exceeds that of all but the best militia units."

(Above quotes from SNIE 85-3-60, pages 3-4. For similar conclusions approved by the USIB on 7 February 1961, see "A report prepared by an Ad Hoc Committee of the USIB." OCI No. 0592/61-C, Part I, para. 6, page 3, and Part I, para. 8, page 4.)

Further evidence of the instability of the Castro regime was apparent in the constantly growing list of individuals once close to Castro who were defecting from him. Many of these were referred to in the State

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- 9 -

Department pamphlet referred to above. Some significant examples (and only examples) are:

Dr. Jose Miro Cardona, once Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government.

Dr. Manuel Urrutia y Lleo, hero of the Revolution, Provisional President of the Revolutionary Government. Under house arrest after being forced to resign.

Manuel Ray Rivero, organized anti-Batista underground in Havana. Castro's Minister of Public Works.

Humberto Sori Marin, Castro's first Minister of Agriculture.

Major Huber Matos Benitez, hero of Sierra Maestra, revolutionary commandante of Camaguey Province, then thrown in jail.

Manuel Artime)
Nino Diaz) Sierra Maestra heroes.
Justo Carrillo)

Raul Chibas, fund raiser for the Revolution and fought with Castro in the hills.

Felippe Pazos, represented the 26th of July on the Junta of Liberation, and was appointed by Castro as President of the National Bank of Cuba.

Pedro Diaz Lanz, chief of the Cuban air force and Castro's personal pilot.

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- 10 -

David Salvador, labor leader, "anti-Yanqui" pro-Castro secretary general of the Cuban trade union federation. Castro intervened on the Communist side against Salvador's free labor movement and jailed Salvador.

Miguel Angel Quevedo, editor of Bohemia.

Luis Conte Agüero, radio and television commentator.

Jose Pardo Llada, radio official famous for attacks against U. S. on Castro's behalf.

Further available evidence supporting the conclusion that internal support would be forthcoming if an effective internal opposition force could be established was:

a. Many requests for aid during the period 22 March to 17 April were received through Agency communications channels, some of which are noted in the Survey at pages 108-109. The issue discussed by the Survey as to why aid was not given is not here involved. The messages, however, do emphasize the number of groups anxious to engage in active opposition. For example, between 22 March and 17 April there were 15 unfulfilled drop requests in support of a claimed total of 5,000 men. Even after the landing between 17 and 22 April seven groups totaling about 3,350 men begged for support in order to fight. These groups were in Oriente (2,500 men);

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-11-

Camaguey (two groups totaling 400 men); Las Villas (three groups totaling 400 men); and Pinar del Rio (50 men).

b. Manuel Ray Rivero, the organizer of the anti-Batista underground and a member of the Cuban Revolutionary Council took the view that the internal resistance was so strong that Castro could be overthrown without an "invasion" from the outside. His view was not officially accepted but represented the informed view of an individual experienced in this field regarding the opposition potential. The disagreement with his conclusion had to do with what action was necessary to persuade the opposition to rebel, not as to its existence.

c. Sabotage from October 1960 to April 1961 was evidence of internal opposition activists even though aside from psychological benefits to the opposition, the sabotage caused insignificant damage in and of itself to the regime. Examples were:

1) Approximately 300,000 tons of sugar cane destroyed in 800 different fires.

2) Approximately 150 other fires, including the burning of 42 tobacco warehouses, two paper plants, 1 sugar refinery, two dairies, four stores, twenty-one Communist homes.

3) Approximately 110 bombings, including Communist Party offices, Havana power station, two stores, railroad

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-12-

terminal, bus terminal, militia barracks, railroad train.

4) Approximately 200 nuisance bombs in Havana Province.

5) Derailment of six trains, destruction of microwave cable and station, and destruction of numerous power transformers.

d. The view of many of the Brigade who had been members of the militia which confirmed the official estimate mentioned above, i. e., that only a small percentage of the militia would fight against a resolute opposition with strong fire power. This hard core was considered to number 5,000 - 8,000 at the most. The Army was considered to have been too disrupted to fight.

e. Students and their professors were in revolt, e. g., two thirds of the faculty of the University of the Oriente in December 1960 openly condemned Castro in a public statement. Other students were actively engaged in acts of disruption and subversion working with groups supported by the Agency.

f. Labor was in opposition. Not only was David Salvador in jail as indicated above, but open acts of opposition occurred, e. g., the electrical workers in December 1960 marched from union headquarters in Havana to the Presidential Palace to protest reductions, while on 18 January 1961 workers' wives were attacked by Castro's strong arm squads for demonstrating against the execution of workers

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-13-

(as "traitors") alleged to have sabotaged the Havana power plant.

Since the issue of what the internal reaction would have been under the conditions assumed necessary for effective internal support never arose, it is impossible to evaluate the accuracy of the prognosis. It can be said that no one expected an immediate uprising; no advance warning was given to the internal resistance, as a security precaution, to avoid any disclosure of D-Day; ample supplies existed to support uprising had groups showed themselves; communications existed that could have identified areas of resistance (though no communicator was able to join the resistance in the Escambray); no one expected the resistance to join the Brigade on the beach in anything but very small numbers; and it was estimated that the psychological impact of unopposed heavily armed B-26 aircraft flying up and down the island would be significant - an assumption based, of course, on control of the air.

Whatever the correct conclusion, in fact, might have been, the situation was such as to render the judgment (mentioned above) regarding internal support a reasonable one. Surely it was one painfully reached by many informed observers.

Post-invasion planning did exist contrary to the Survey's contention. Some of it has been discussed above. In addition plans for a breakout from the beachhead had been generally worked out recognizing that precise details

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-14-

had to await knowledge of the exact situation. As indicated, the Brigade, it was considered, could maintain itself on the beachhead for a substantial period assuming no hostile air. Consequently, large reserves of supplies and materiel could have been landed; air attacks against enemy concentrations could have been flown; and an attack following heavy air strikes could have been executed when the time was considered most propitious. Such attack could also have been supported by concurrent air strikes, plus, if desired, the dropping of a small airborne force back of the enemy lines to cause disruption. Similarly, air drops of individuals or teams plus supplies could have been made to any active resistance throughout the island.

A further possibility was overt U.S. support in the form of supplies on the basis that the opposition government (the Cuban Revolutionary Council) would have landed on the beachhead, declared itself as the rightful government of Cuba, and requested and received recognition from the U.S. Such recognition could have been accorded on the theory that Castro's regime was a Soviet-dominated dictatorship and, therefore, not representative of or the choice of the Cuban people while the opposition government was democratic, as representative as possible, and offered a program for choice by the Cuban people, if it attained power. Conversely, the Castro regime by its dictatorial actions had removed from the people

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-15-

all methods of effecting a change except forceful overthrow. Such U.S. recognition, it was believed, would justify U.S. materiel support, if not active support to an offensive. It should be emphasized that U.S. recognition was not considered an essential part of the plan (useful as it would have been) since materiel support could have been provided anyhow.

The planning for failure was, it is believed, all that was possible.

If, as happened, the failure occurred before the consolidation of the beachhead, there was little that could be done except an effort to salvage what little was possible. Had the beachhead been established, a number of possibilities were planned, none too satisfactory because a failure of the beachhead was at any time a serious blow. If the Brigade or parts thereof could move together, they were to attempt to reach the Escambray. Assuming some help from the country people, this might well have been feasible. Another possibility was the removal of individuals, conceivably units, by air and sea while teams and materiel could have been airdropped in other parts of Cuba, if resistance had become apparent.

As to the Agency's capability and the adequacy of the plan, the best answer - since the military aspects are the sole consideration - is to refer to the supporting military judgments which were based on full knowledge of the facts. Some evidence of attitudes just prior to D-Day

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-16-

is the message sent by Colonel Hawkins from Puerto Cabezas regarding the desirability of despatching the Brigade. (Attached as Annex ^A~~B~~).

This message is significant as it received wide circulation at the time in Washington, including the White House, and was accepted as essentially accurate.

The allegation of failure to appraise the chances of success realistically may be accurate but it is submitted that the available facts at least made the judgments reasonable. Moreover, what actually occurred supports these judgments. The Brigade landed with the benefit of surprise; it held its own while ammunition lasted (even though it failed to land some of its firepower); the B-26's when they got a shot at the Cuban tanks demolished them; and the attitude of many of the militia during the early states of the fight was favorable to the Brigade, including defections by militia men to the Brigade even at this early indecisive moment of the engagement. All serious damage was inflicted by the Cuban's air, essentially the three T-33 jets.

The supporting memoranda to General Taylor's oral report are relevant on these points. Memorandum No. 1, in discussing the operation expresses the view in paragraph 75 on page 26 that "the beachhead could not have survived long without substantial help from the Cuban population or without overt U.S. assistance." Two of the Cuban Study Group

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(Admiral Burke and Mr. Dulles), however, differed with this statement on the grounds that there was "insufficient evidence to support the conjectures of this paragraph."

A footnote on their views at the foot of page 75 went on to say:

"The well motivated, aggressive CEF fought extremely well without air cover and with a shortage of ammunition. They inflicted very severe losses on the less well trained Cuban Militia. Consequently, it is reasonable to believe that if the CEF had had ammunition and air cover, they could have held the beachhead for a much longer time, destroyed much of the enemy artillery and tanks on the roads before they reached the beachhead, prevented observation of the fire of the artillery that might have been placed in position and destroyed many more of the local Militia en route to the area. A local success by the landing party, coupled with CEF aircraft overflying Cuba with visible control of the air, could well have caused a chain reaction of success throughout Cuba with resultant defection of some of the Militia, increasing support from the populace and eventual success of the operation."

Therefore, even in retrospect the Brigade's inability to hold the beachhead for some time was not clear to well-informed individuals who had soaked themselves in all the available evidence. A prospective judgment in favor of success prior to the event would, therefore, seem understandable.

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-18-

Finally, regarding the question of intelligence failures, the supporting memoranda to General Taylor's oral report state that the effectiveness of the Castro military forces, as well as that of his police measures, was not entirely anticipated or foreseen. Memorandum No. 3, however, setting forth conclusions says:

"Although the intelligence was not perfect, particularly as to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the T-33's, we do not feel that any failure of intelligence contributed significantly to the defeat."

(Memorandum No. 3., para. 1.i., page 3).

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Section V-Annex A

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~~V~~
- Annex # A

TIDE 519
(IN 3197)

13 April 1961

1. MY OBSERVATIONS LAST FEW DAYS HAVE INCREASED MY CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY THIS FORCE TO ACCOMPLISH NOT ONLY INITIAL COMBAT MISSIONS BUT ALSO ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF CASTRO OVERTHROW.

2. REF* ARRIVED DURING FINAL BRIEFING OF BRIGADE AND BATTALION COMMANDERS. THEY NOW KNOW ALL DETAILS OF PLAN AND ARE ENTHUSIASTIC. THESE OFFICERS ARE YOUNG VIGOROUS INTELLIGENT AND MOTIVATED WITH A FANATICAL URGE TO BEGIN BATTLE FOR WHICH MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN PREPARING IN THE RUGGED CONDITIONS OF TRAINING CAMPS FOR ALMOST A YEAR. I HAVE TALKED TO MANY OF THEM IN THEIR LANGUAGE. WITHOUT EXCEPTION THEY HAVE UTMOST CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITY TO WIN. THEY SAY THEY KNOW THEIR OWN PEOPLE AND BELIEVE AFTER THEY HAVE INFLICTED ONE SERIOUS DEFEAT UPON OPPOSING FORCES THE LATTER WILL MELT AWAY FROM CASTRO WHO THEY HAVE NO WISH TO SUPPORT. THEY SAY IT IS CUBAN TRADITION TO JOIN A WINNER AND THEY HAVE SUPREME CONFIDENCE THEY WILL WIN ANY AND ALL ENGAGEMENTS AGAINST THE BEST CASTRO HAS TO OFFER. I SHARE THEIR CONFIDENCE.

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- 2 -

TIDE 519
(IN 3197)

3. THE BRIGADE IS WELL ORGANIZED AND IS MORE HEAVILY ARMED AND BETTER EQUIPPED IN SOME RESPECTS THAN U. S. INFANTRY UNITS. THE MEN HAVE RECEIVED INTENSIVE TRAINING IN THE USE OF THEIR WEAPONS INCLUDING MORE FIRING EXPERIENCE THAN U. S. TROOPS WOULD NORMALLY RECEIVE. I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE SERIOUS ATTITUDE OF THE MEN AS THEY ARRIVED HERE AND MOVED TO THEIR SHIPS. MOVEMENTS WERE QUIET DISCIPLINED AND EFFICIENT AND THE EMBARKATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH REMARKABLE SMOOTHNESS.

4. THE BRIGADE NOW NUMBERS 1400 A TRULY FORMIDABLE FORCE.

5. I HAVE ALSO CAREFULLY OBSERVED THE CUBAN AIR FORCES. THE AIRCRAFT ARE KEPT WITH PRIDE AND SOME OF THE B-26 CREWS ARE SO EAGER TO COMMENCE CONTEMPLATED OPERATIONS THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY ARMED THEIR AIRCRAFT. GERMOSEN INFORMED ME TODAY THAT HE CONSIDERS THE B-26 SQUADRON EQUAL TO THE BEST U. S. AIR FORCE SQUADRON.

6. THE BRIGADE OFFICERS DO NOT EXPECT HELP FROM THE U. S. ARMED FORCES. THEY ASK ONLY FOR CONTINUED DELIVERY OF SUPPLIES. THIS CAN BE DONE COVERTLY.

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TIDE 519
(IN 3197)

- 3 -

7. THIS CUBAN FORCE IS MOTIVATED STRONG WELL TRAINED
ARMED TO THE TEETH AND READY. I BELIEVE PROFOUNDLY THAT
IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO
DETER IF FROM ITS INTENDED PURPOSE.

*Requested if experiences the last few days had in any way changed
Colonel Hawkins' evaluation of the brigade.

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VI. ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

The Survey reaches the flat conclusion that the project was "badly organized." The reasons given are:

"Command lines and management controls were ineffective and unclear. Senior Staffs of the Agency were not utilized; air support stayed independent of the project; the role of the large forward basis was not clear." (Para. 6, page 144).

The Survey directs these criticisms exclusively at the Agency structure making essentially no effort to relate Agency organization and managerial problems to the participation in the project by other elements of the Government. Before responding, therefore, it should be stated that we share the views set forth in one of General Taylor's supporting memoranda and quoted in another section of this paper that "the Executive Branch of the Government was not organizationally prepared to cope with this kind of a paramilitary operation" and that "there was no single authority short of the President capable of coordinating the actions of CIA, State, Defense, and USIA." In other words, it was a U.S. rather than a CIA project.

The real organizational problem is one of the basic dilemmas of the U.S. Government, namely, how to manage military or quasi-military operations in peacetime - a dilemma accentuated in those instances

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Involving an effort to maintain clandestinity. Since most of the operational acts involved in paramilitary projects of this nature raise or could, under certain circumstances, raise significant political issues, they normally require high level political clearance prior to being undertaken. Such clearance involves at least the State Department, often the White House, and, due to military implications, the Defense Department plus one or more of the military services. The description in another section of this paper of the extensive participation by and with other elements of the Government indicates that the Cuban project was clearly of this troublesome type.

The Survey's failure to examine or consider these relationships means that most of its criticisms limited as they are to Agency consideration alone, are too localized or provincial to be realistic or fully understandable. An analysis will, however, be attempted.

The criticism of command lines is, if properly understood, directed essentially at two major defects, one that the project lacked a single, high-level full time commander possessing stated broad powers and abilities sufficient for carrying out the mission; the other that there was a fragmentation of authority between the project chief, the military chief of the project's Paramilitary Staff and several high level officials, whose wide responsibilities elsewhere in the Agency prevented them from giving the project the attention it required. (Para. 5, page 37).

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The DCI allegedly "delegated his responsibility for major project decisions to a considerable extent." (Para. 4, page 37). The Survey appears to support this statement on two grounds, first that the DCI relied on the DDCI "for policy matters involving air operations" and for "military advice he relied on the military officers detailed to the project." The consequence of this "reliance" according to the Survey was that the DCI was deprived "of completely objective counsel."

"Reliance on", according to normal usage, does not mean the same thing as "delegation of responsibility". Whatever the Survey intends to say in this connection, it is a fact that the DCI never delegated any portion of this responsibility at any moment during the project. Naturally he relied on others for many things (he could hardly run the entire project himself) and he even delegated authority (not responsibility) in some limited respects.

He did, for example, authorize within clearly understood limits the DDCI to approve certain aspects of Cuban overflights for him. It should be noted in this connection that the clearance of overflights resided in the first instance with the Special Group or the White House and was requested through briefings by the DCI or the DCI plus one of his people, normally the DDCI, the DD/P or both. Thereafter, whether or not an overflight

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-4-

was within the terms of the top level approval and was operationally sound was cleared by the DDCI on behalf of and at the direction of the DCI.

The DCI never released the authority regarding over-all air planning recommendations. The word "recommendations" is used because final air plans decisions lay at a higher level outside of the Agency. Before presentation to such outside authority (the Special Group or the White House) these recommendations were first passed on within the Agency by the DCI.

As far as reliance on military officers is concerned, the DCI obviously received briefings which were mainly given by the DD/P but often the DD/P presentation was expanded by statements from C/WH/4 (the Task Force Commander) his Paramilitary Chief or other individuals connected with the project as appropriate.

Both with regard to air and ground, the DCI also insisted upon and received the advice and judgment of air and ground military officers assigned by the Pentagon to study project plans and activities; of the JCS as a body, and of individual members of the JCS. This entire process has been explained elsewhere in this paper and is developed in considerable detail in the supporting memoranda to General Taylor's oral report.

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Moreover, the DCI, almost without exception, held three staff meetings a week attended by his senior officials including the DD/P, COPS, and A/DDP/A. When any significant matter relating to Cuba needed approval or clarification, the DCI was briefed after one of these meetings. These briefings and meetings plus continuous telephone communications, plus cable traffic, kept the DCI current on all but the smallest details.

The DD/P is criticized by the Survey for "in fact directing the project, although this was only one of his many responsibilities." (Para. 1, page 36). Presumably the Survey did not mean to suggest that the DD/P should have given up his other duties to be full time Task Force Commander. Consequently, his alleged fault must have been a failure to make a broad enough delegation of authority.

The Survey defines the limitations on the DD/P delegated authority by stating that C/WH/4 had "to apply constantly for the decision of policy questions and important operational problems" to the DD/P. It is suggested that, except in very unusual or certain "hot war" situations, such reservation of authority is the normal one between any unit commander and his next higher echelon. Moreover, until 17 April 1961 (the landing date) urgencies, although great, were never such as to make this sort of review impossible. Undoubtedly it was irksome to C/WH/4

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in the same way that any higher authority is considered a problem to a commander who is anxious to push ahead without hurdles or outside restraint.

Quite apart from these considerations, however, the DD/P, because of the requirement to clear outside of the Agency many issues (including details) as policy questions, had to maintain a close control over the project in order to guard against omissions of such outside clearances and to be in a position to request them through the DCI.

To avoid delays in communications between WH and the DD/P, the A/DDP/A spent substantially full time on the project. His position was thoroughly understood by all involved though a purist chart-maker might have felt some concern as to the proper designation of the job on a chart. A/DDP/A was, in fact, an extension of the DD/P arm. He was physically located next to the DD/P; saw him constantly; had immediate access to him whenever he was available, and, therefore, knew instinctively what the DD/P reaction to most problems was and would be. Consequently, he could act for him in many instances while at the same time being fully aware of those situations which should be brought to the DD/P for decision. If chart terms are necessary, he was a senior special assistant with a perfectly clear and understood delegation of authority on matters which he could decide for the DD/P. This individual's availability plus the

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- 7 -

amount of time accorded the project by the DD/P personally meant that the Task Force was able to obtain decisions from the DD/P level rapidly provided that they were in the DD/P's jurisdictional competence. The many decisions already mentioned which required outside clearance had to be obtained either in accordance with regular procedures as in the case of the Special Group or by special arrangement if some other tribunal such as the White House was involved. The DD/P and the A/DDP/A were both positioned effectively with respect to the senior Agency or non-Agency officers involved to be able to arrange on the most expeditious basis possible whatever high level consideration might be required in given situations.

All existing decision-making procedures were, it is believed, well understood or if a new clearance procedure was needed for recurring activities, a special procedure was created. An example is the procedure for clearance of Cuban overflights, dated 24 October 1960, which is attached as Annex A.

The Survey criticized C/WH because he was "in the chain of command" but "only in a partial sense". (Para. 2, page 36). He signed many outgoing cables, supervised staffing activities and attended some of the meetings of the Special Group. "But the DD/P and his deputy dealt directly with the project chief, and gradually the Chief of WH Division began to play only

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-8-

a diminished role." (Para. 2, page 36). All of this is essentially true (C/WH, however, was not in the chain of command except on certain specified well-understood matters) although the Survey fails to state that C/WH also sat in on substantially all of the DD/P and DCI meetings on the project attended by any WH personnel, and handled many of the policy negotiations with the State Department as well as some of the more difficult special problems with the Cuban political leaders and some other special negotiations, i.e. those involving possible economic sanctions (with the Treasury and some leading U.S. businessmen and lawyers) and those with particular individuals such as William D. Pawley. Also, of course, interrelationships with the many Agency stations throughout the Hemisphere and their activities were supervised by C/WH.

Even in retrospect, this arrangement with C/WH is believed to have been organizationally sound and would again be adopted under similar circumstances. Black and white organizational answers often do not meet the complex interplay of problems in a project involving as many facets as the Cuban one. Granted, each echelon, starting with the DCI, should have one individual in the next lower echelon to hold responsible for all decisions of that echelon but such individual responsibility was quite clearly identifiable in the project.

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C/WH could have been the Task Force Commander but the DCI, having discussed the matter with C/WH, decided that, since C/WH could not be the Commander and also run the rest of WH Division, it was preferable for him to do the latter. Nevertheless, C/WH had long and wide experience in the WH area; connections with many Latin Americans as well as Americans with WH associations; intimacy with the WH Division, its personnel and activities, and had been for many years at a policy level in the Agency. Consequently, his advice and reactions were wanted in the Cuban project and he was asked to stay as close to project activities as he could while performing his other duties. The matters listed above were, therefore, covered by C/WH pursuant to this concept. Actually, C/WH had substantially the same relationship to this project as he had to the Guatemalan anti-Arbenz project which worked well. Nothing new, therefore, was involved.

The Chief of the Task Force (i. e. C/WH/4) is not criticized but his superiors are criticized for selecting for this post only a GS-15 at the fourth echelon in the organization of the Agency. With regard to grade, the C/WH/4 was a senior GS-15 or, in other words, the equivalent of a senior full colonel in the Army. More grade could hardly be required for the top operational command job. As to competence and experience for the post, it is felt that he will compare favorably with any officer in the CS.

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Perhaps the echelon was too low but this is a matter of judgment. Actually the C/WH/4 was at the third not the fourth echelon, the first being the DCI and the DDCI and the second the DD/P. If the Agency alone is considered, it is believed that the echelon was not too low. If all of the Executive Department elements involved are considered, numerous other factors are introduced which involve so different an organizational concept as to make any relative analysis impossible. This overall organizational problem has been mentioned and is now under Governmental study so that it would seem preferable here to discuss only the internal Agency relationships.

At any rate, C/WH/4 for reasons already discussed was obviously not free to make all decisions on his own whatever the Survey may advocate in this respect. He was, however, very much the Task Force Commander. All elements of WH/4 in and out of Washington responded to his command. The extent to which he had to clear decisions with higher authority has been indicated. It is a matter of judgment whether or not the delegation of authority was adequate but it must be re-emphasized that the judgment of most non-delegated items lay outside of the Agency (i. e., as General Taylor's memorandum said, "there was no single authority short of the President capable of coordinating. . ."), and within the

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- 11 -

Agency (once the problem of non-Agency clearances is recognized and accepted) the powers reserved by the DD/P and the DCI were in keeping with normal relationships between command echelons. Moreover, the DD/P, supplemented by the A/DDP/A, was able to expedite decisions so delay was held down as much as possible. Admittedly, the U.S. organizational structure as a whole was not satisfactory for this type of operation. The Government, as indicated, fully appreciates this and is attempting to find a solution.

The Survey makes another point regarding too many echelons, namely, that "the top level had to be briefed by briefers who themselves were not doing the day-to-day work." (Para. 5, page 37). This conclusion is another statement of a troublesome problem of senior governmental management in the complex modern world. How can the individuals informed on details communicate to the top policy decision-makers the relevant parts of their knowledge in a timely and fully informative way? In the Cuban project, it can only be said that the top level saw more of the detail people than is usual. The DCI and the DD/P brought C/WH/4 or the project's Paramilitary Chief with them to substantially all the Presidential meetings on Cuba. Moreover, the Chairman of the JCS brought General Gray (and often another member of his team) with him. Detail knowledge was, therefore, represented.

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Moreover, of course, briefings at high levels within each interested element were numerous. General Lemnitzer and the Secretary of Defense received daily briefings in the period immediately prior to 17 April. The Assistant Secretary of State (ARA) and the Secretary of State were constantly briefed throughout the project. McGeorge Bundy, Rostow and Schlesinger had almost daily contact with the DD/P or the A/DDP/A. The DCI and the DDCI, of course, also were kept current on details. In view of this and the extensive interdepartmental coordination involved in this project and described in another section, the amount of top level detailed information was unusually complete. Admittedly, however, this does not mean that it was satisfactorily complete on all issues and this is one of the problems involved in the above-mentioned Governmental study on organization for projects of this nature.

Three other Washington Headquarters factors are described as "extraordinary" by the Survey, namely, that:

- 1) COPS played "only a very minor part in the project". COPS also allegedly "declined to involve himself with the project" although on at least two occasions he was given "express warning that the project was being perilously mismanaged";
- 2) The DD/P Senior Staffs, the Agency's top level technical advisors, "were not consulted fully" but "they allowed themselves to be more or less ignored"; and

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3) The Project Review Committee did not review the project.

(Para. 6, page 38).

These allegations are so "extraordinary" (to borrow the Survey's word) that it is difficult to accept a serious intent on the part of the Survey's authors. Quite naturally COPS spent little time on the project. The DD/P office was a three-man office, one of whom (A/DDP/A) was spending essentially full-time on the project and another of whom (DD/P) was spending a very substantial part of his time. Consequently, it was only logical, if not essential, that COPS devote his time to the rest of the world as well as to the numerous remaining issues of internal management.

As to the statement about express warnings of perilous mismanagement, it is indeed strange that such a charge should not be identified at least sufficiently to permit some assessment of how responsible the warnings were and of what they consisted. COPS remembers receiving no such warning. Of course, COPS, as well as many other people were told on numerous occasions that some mismanagement as well as other mistakes were occurring in the project. In what project does this not occur, particularly if it is urgent, complex, and disruptive of normal procedures? These "warnings" were given such attention and recognition as the facts in each instance warranted. Actually, the Survey is unclear as to what it believes COPS should have done though the inference is that he should have used the alleged "warnings" as a basis for taking the project away from the DD/P.