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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

20 February 1962

EYES ONLY
EYES ONLY OF ADDRESSEES

FROM: Brig. Gen. Lansdale *Ed*

SUBJECT: The Cuba Project

Transmitted herewith is the projection of actions to help Cubans recapture their freedom. This total plan is EYES ONLY. The lives of many brave people depend on the security of this paper entrusted to you. Any inference that this plan exists could place the President of the United States in a most damaging position.

This is a specific plan, with time phases. It responds to the request of the Special Group (5412) for such a paper. I urge that this paper not be made known, in this complete form, beyond yourself and those named as addressees.

The Attorney General
Special Group: General Taylor
State: Secretary Rusk, Alexis Johnson, Richard Goodwin
Defense: Secretary McNamara, Deputy Secretary Gilpatric,
 Brig. Gen. Craig **Gen. Lemwitzer**
CIA: John McCone, Richard Helms, William Harvey
USIA: Ed Murrow, Don Wilson
White House: President + Bundy

Declassified under the provisions
of the JFK Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992 (PL102-526)

By MME NARA, Date 8/17/98

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JFKL JFKP NSF: M & M, b. 319, F: "Sp Gp (Augmented), 1/61-6/62."

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20 February 1962

Program Review
by Brig. Gen. Lansdale

THE CUBA PROJECT

SANITIZED COPY

The Goal. In keeping with the spirit of the Presidential memorandum of 30 November 1961, the United States will help the people of Cuba overthrow the Communist regime from within Cuba and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace.

The Situation. We still know too little about the real situation inside Cuba, although we are taking energetic steps to learn more. However, some salient facts are known. It is known that the Communist regime is an active Sino-Soviet spearhead in our Hemisphere and that Communist controls inside Cuba are severe. Also, there is evidence that the repressive measures of the Communists, together with disappointments in Castro's economic dependency on the Communist formula, have resulted in an anti-regime atmosphere among the Cuban people which makes a resistance program a distinct and present possibility.

Time is running against us. The Cuban people feel helpless and are losing hope fast. They need symbols of inside resistance and of outside interest soon. They need something they can join with the hope of starting to work surely towards overthrowing the regime. Since late November, we have been working hard to re-orient the operational concepts within the U. S. government and to develop the hard intelligence and operational assets required for success in our task.

The next National Intelligence Estimate on Cuba (NIE 85-62) promises to be a useful document dealing with our practical needs and with due recognition of the sparsity of hard facts. The needs of the Cuba project, as it goes into operation, plus the increasing U. S. capability for intelligence collection, should permit more frequent estimates for our guidance. These will be prepared on a periodic basis.

Premise of Action. Americans once ran a successful revolution. It was run from within, and succeeded because there was timely and strong political, economic, and military help by nations outside who supported our cause. Using this same concept of revolution from within, we must now help the Cuban people to stamp out tyranny and gain their liberty.

On 18 January, the Chief of Operations assigned thirty-two tasks to Departments and Agencies of the U. S. government, in order to provide a realistic assessment and preparation of U. S. capabilities. The Attorney General and the Special Group were apprised of this action. The answers received on 15 February provided the basis for planning a realistic course of action. The answers also revealed that the course of action must contain continuing coordination and firm overall guidance.

The course of action set forth herein is realistic within present operational estimates and intelligence. Actually, it represents the maximum target timing which the operational people jointly considered feasible. It aims for a revolt which can take place in Cuba by October 1962. It is a

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By [Signature] NARA, Date 5/17/97 Additional material has been released as a result of this review.

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series of target actions and dates, not a rigid time-table. The target dates are timed as follows:

Phase I, Action, March 1962. Start moving in.

Phase II, Build-up, April-July 1962. Activating the necessary operations inside Cuba for revolution and concurrently applying the vital political, economic, and military-type support from outside Cuba.

Phase III, Readiness, 1 August 1962, check for final policy decision.

Phase IV, Resistance, August-September 1962, move into guerrilla operations.

Phase V, Revolt, first two weeks of October 1962. Open revolt and overthrow of the Communist regime.

Phase VI, Final, during month of October 1962. Establishment of new government.

Plan of Action. Attached is an operational plan for the overthrow of the Communist regime in Cuba, by Cubans from within Cuba, with outside help from the U.S. and elsewhere. Since this is an operation to prompt and support a revolt by the people in a Communist police state, flexibility is a must for success. Decisions on operational flexibility rest with the Chief of Operations, with consultation in the Special Group when policy matters are involved. Target actions and dates are detailed in the attached operational plans, which cover:

- A. Basic Action Plan Inside Cuba
- B. Political Support Plan
- C. Economic Support Plan
- D. Psychological Support Plan
- E. Military Support Plan
- F. Sabotage Support Plan
- G. Intelligence Support Plan

Early Policy Decisions. The operational plan for clandestine U.S. support of a Cuban movement inside Cuba to overthrow the Communist regime is within policy limits already set by the President. A vital decision, still to be made, is on the use of open U.S. force to aid the Cuban people in winning their liberty. If conditions and assets permitting a revolt are achieved in Cuba, and if U.S. help is required to sustain this condition, will the U.S. respond promptly with military force to aid the Cuban revolt? The contingencies under which such military deployment would be needed, and recommended U.S. responses, are detailed in a memorandum being prepared by the Secretaries of State and of Defense. An early decision is required, prior to deep involvement of the Cubans in this program.

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Distribution:

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 (through Deputy Under Secretary Johnson)
5. **The Secretary of Defense**
 (through Deputy Secretary Gilpatric)
6. **The Director, Central Intelligence Agency**
7. **The Director, U. S. Information Agency**
 (through Deputy Director Wilson)
8. **State (Mr. Goodwin)**
9. **Defense (Brig. Gen. Craig)**
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- 11.-12. **Chief of Operations (Brig. Gen. Lansdale)**

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