

Operation ZAPATA:

The "Ultrasensitive" Report
and Testimony of
the Board of Inquiry
on the Bay of Pigs

Introduction by LUIS AGUILAR
Professor of History
Georgetown University

Operation
ZAPATA

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ULTRA AND THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

STRATEGIC AIR FORCE IN EUROPE vs.

THE GERMAN AIR FORCE

Operation **ZAPATA**

The "Ultrasensitive" Report
and Testimony of
the Board of Inquiry
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Introduction

American historians have not given the Bay of Pigs disaster the attention it deserves. Books on the subject have been written by journalists (Karl Meyer and Tad Szulc, 1962; Peter Weyden, 1979) usually concerned more with the “inside” story than with its historical dimensions. This scholastic lack of interest is rather surprising in light of the prominent role Cuba has played in American foreign policy. It could be plausibly argued, a trifle dramatically perhaps, that the rise and decline of American imperialism can be traced through Cuban events. That era, which began in 1898 with the Rough Riders’ charge on San Juan Hill, ended in 1961 in the swamps of the Bay of Pigs. There is more than a grain of truth in Castro propaganda that his victory at “Playa Girón,”¹ which shattered the myth of American invincibility, was a turning point for America’s international image. In this sense, the Bay of Pigs disaster is a minor prelude to Vietnam.²

Without a historical background, the following “chronicles of disaster” might be confusing. Some brief remarks may give these documents a clearer historical perspective.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, specifically with the OAS meeting in Rio de Janeiro in 1948, United States Latin American policy was essentially aimed at “defending” the Western Hemisphere from Communist threats. In 1954, when Guatemala’s “leftist” government, headed by Juan Jacobo Arbenz, seemed to be impairing the American bloc, an expedition of Guatemalan exiles

¹ Cuban writers prefer the name “Playa Giron” (Giron’s Beach) to the less heroic “Bahia de Cochinos” (Bay of Pigs). For a lengthy and quite uneven Cuban version of the invasion, see *Playa Giron, Derrota del Imperialismo*, 4 vols. (Habana: Ediciones R, 1961).

² Significantly, Recommendation No. 6 of the Cuban Study Group (p. 53 of this volume) states: “Action against Castro must be related to the probable course of events in such other places as Southeast Asia and Berlin which may put simultaneous claims on our resources.”

which had been armed and supported by the CIA invaded that nation and toppled the government. Two years later, Russian tanks effectively crushed Hungary's uprising. By 1959 the respective Soviet and American zones of influence seemed firmly established and mutually respected. That year dictator Batista fled Cuba and a triumphant Fidel Castro entered Havana.

Castro was initially hailed in Cuba and Latin America as the heroic leader of an antidictatorship rebellion and champion of justice and democracy. His increasing control of the regime, progressive elimination of the opposition, and growing Communist influence were thus resisted by many sectors of the Cuban population and even by influential figures inside his own 26th of July movement.

Not fully understanding Cuba's revolutionary situation, Washington did recognize two aspects of the new regime: a trend toward a socialist police state and an increasingly anti-American position. Relations between the two countries deteriorated rapidly. Castro blamed the United States for everything that went wrong in Cuba, confiscated all American properties, and began to purchase large quantities of arms from the Soviet bloc. The United States retaliated first by cutting Cuba's sugar quota and later, in July 1960, by suspending sugar imports. In August, a meeting of the Organization of American States in San José, Costa Rica, condemned Sino-Soviet intervention in the Western Hemisphere but, in spite of American pressure, refused to mention Cuba. Finally, on January 3, 1961, following Castro's demand that the U.S. reduce its embassy staff in Havana, the Eisenhower administration broke diplomatic relations with Cuba.

More drastic measures were quietly being considered in Washington. As early as March 10, 1959, a meeting of the National Security Council discussed ways to "bring another government to power in Cuba." When Castro visited the United States in April he met with Vice President Richard Nixon. Convinced that Castro was "either incredibly naive about Communism or under Communist discipline," Nixon decided something had to be done to stop him. CIA officials considering minor sabotage operations against the Cuban government (including some fanciful ways to assassinate Castro) received official support to expand their plans. By early 1960, the future "Operation Zapata" was rapidly evolving into one of the most ambitious projects of the CIA.

Several events by the fall of 1960 had the Cuban regime deeply worried. The CIA was trying to organize an anti-Castro military

operation. The imprisonment of revolutionary hero Major Hubert Matos had stirred opposition in the Rebel Army, several underground anti-Communist movements became active, and guerrilla groups had appeared in the central mountains of Escambray.³ The looming threat of an American-backed exile invasion, of which the Cuban dictator was fully aware, added an ominous haze to Castro's horizon. A cautious Soviet Union, by then testing American will with the Berlin Wall, refrained from any serious military commitment in Cuba. Apparently the Russian leaders doubted an anti-American regime could survive ninety miles from the United States.

In April 1961 the situation had completely changed. The invasion had been totally defeated and, as a consequence, internal resistance crushed. Russian military aid (which eventually culminated in the installment of missiles) poured into the island, and Castro's prestige as the leader of a small nation which had beaten an imperialist attack soared to unexpected levels internationally. How could an invasion mounted under such apparently favorable circumstances end in such a disaster? The answer lies partially in the documents gathered in this book, and partially in factors not even mentioned in these documents. Among these latter, perhaps the most important was the influence of the previous Guatemalan experience. Blindly clinging to its "success" formula, the CIA disregarded the vast differences between Cuba and Guatemala and set the stage for the disaster.⁴ But the documents themselves are quite eloquent. They contain visions of petty bickering among government agencies, plans changed for no valid reason, self-defeating secrecy (see, for example, p. 38), ill-handled urgency, improvisation, and callousness. The end result is bewilderment about how such a muddy operation could have been attempted with any hope of success. President Kennedy's subsequent words come to mind: "How could I have been so stupid to let them go ahead?"

³ The history of the Escambray's guerrillas, who were for a while a vital focus of anti-Castro resistance, has not yet been written. In these documents they are alternatively mentioned as a "hope" for the invasion success, or as a "failure" at challenging Castro's regime. But according to certain testimonies, months before the landing the CIA had decided the guerrillas were politically unreliable and had refused to aid them. Attacked by vastly superior forces at the time of the invasion the Escambray's guerrillas had practically ceased to exist. For one of such testimonies see the declaration of Air Force Colonel Fred D. Stevens, "J.F.K. Muzzled Me," *Miami Herald*, 1 December 1961.

⁴ To mention just one factor, in Guatemala the professional army was unwilling to fight for Arbenz; in Cuba the Rebel Army and the militias were a creation of Castro's regime. The difference between a victorious revolutionary leader and a president with few resources at his disposal requires no comment.

The contradictions and admissions within these testimonies are too numerous to single out in this introduction. Some of them, however, are so illustrative of the *modus operandi*, so glaringly erroneous, or so obviously attempts to distort the truth, as to deserve special mention.

First, consider the organizer's assumption (p. 9) that "ultimate success will depend upon political factors, i.e., a sizeable popular uprising. . . ." This was a correct evaluation: without the active support of important sectors of the Cuban population, the small landing force had no chance of success. Considering that Castro's hold on the masses was based on revolutionary prestige, "charisma," and a formidable propaganda which linked all critics of the revolution with the worst elements of Batista's dictatorship, an uprising could be expected only with well-planned counter-propaganda assuring the people that the objective of the invasion was not to nullify popular revolutionary laws but to free Cuba from Communism.⁵ Having correctly assessed the decisive importance of political propaganda, the invasion's organizers proceeded as if their own evaluation lacked importance. With the pretext of secrecy,⁶ no clear explanation of the expedition's objectives was given to the Cuban people, and no appeal was made to their anti-Communist feelings. Left in darkness about what was happening, anti-Castro elements were supposed to risk their lives for an operation of which they knew nothing. "The first knowledge that the Cubans had of the actual operation," admits one source (p. 104), "was on the night of 14 April," one day before the expedition landed! To make matters worse, the pretense of secrecy had not deceived Castro. Four days before the invasion, before they had time to learn what was happening, Castro's suspected opponents were arrested by the thousands. Nevertheless, in these documents the failure of the expected uprising was blamed on the Cubans. It is a "notorious fact," states one testimony, "that 80 percent of the Cubans will never join an insurrection until they are sure that it is winning" (p. 158).

⁵ The Communist party was far from popular in revolutionary Cuba. Legalized by Batista in 1938, the party enthusiastically supported him from 1940 to 1944, and opposed Castro as a "petty bourgeois adventurer" until a few weeks before his victory. Consequently, the argument that Castro's Communist tendencies represented a betrayal of the true revolution stirred many Cuban revolutionaries. Nevertheless, this thesis of "the betrayed revolution" was totally rejected by CIA propaganda.

⁶ Not even Edward R. Murrow, director of the United States Information Agency, was allowed to know about the operation. "There is no evidence of any effort at any higher level to guide and coordinate the overall propaganda effort. . . . Word of the landing received over the wire services on D-Day caught the USIA unprepared and without guidance" (p. 19).

There is an astounding contradiction between the unanimous conviction that total air control was essential for victory and the decision to order the landing after learning that Castro's air force had survived the insufficient preinvasion attacks and remained powerful enough to dominate the air.

Equally mystifying is the totally unfounded assurance given to President Kennedy by Admiral Burke and by Allen Dulles, head of the CIA, that Castro could not "concentrate all his troops on one spot," or that, at any event, the landing force could "hold their position but if they could not . . . they would then become guerrillas" (p. 86). This last assertion is nothing short of ludicrous. At the time of the invasion, Escambray's guerrillas had been decimated (see footnote 3), the invaders had not been trained for guerrilla warfare, and the area selected for the landing precluded such a type of campaign. The Zapata Peninsula where the Bay of Pigs is located is a swampy, isolated, uninhabited area, deprived of the classical elements for guerrilla warfare. There are no means of communication, no mountains or hills, and not enough food to provide a sustained resistance. The subsequent statement that the region had been chosen because "the Zapata area has traditionally been an area for guerrilla operations" is absolutely false. Not only had the area never been used for that kind of operation, but Máximo Gomez, the master tactician of guerrilla warfare during Cuba's war for independence, expressly avoided the peninsula as a "geographical and military trap." Obviously, knowledge of Cuba's history was not one of the strong points of the CIA planners.

Finally, the documents provide at least a glimpse of what moved these men to insist on launching an expedition under the worst possible conditions. They had seen the initial small sabotaging operation grow into a full military landing, but as complications and obstacles mounted, they faced a dilemma: to act against formidable odds or to accept failure. The Cuban Brigade became a liability; it had to be used or disbanded. But, as they perceived it, their prestige and the prestige of their nation was at stake. "The consequences of demobilizing the Brigade and the return of the trainees to the USA, with its implication that the United States had lost interest in the fight against Castro, played a part in the final decision" (p. 41).

Thus, the fateful decision was taken. America's prestige was on the line in a battle in which its military power was not allowed to intervene. An expedition without sufficient air support, reinforcements, propaganda, or contacts with the population it was sup-

posed to liberate, was sent against a popular, fully alerted, revolutionary government. The consequences went beyond the most somber warnings. Castro became an international hero, Cuba was transformed into a socialist base for continental agitations, and an emboldened Soviet Union moved into the Caribbean. While Russia's zone of influence remained intact, America's had been deeply and dangerously penetrated. The Bay of Pigs disaster tilted the international balance in favor of the Soviet Union.

The momentous consequences of such a small battle bring to mind an apposite poem, published at the time by a keen British observer. When President Kennedy announced that America was not "involved" in what was happening in Cuba, the anonymous poet wrote these winged words:

If you are not involved,
you should have been . . .
and if you are involved,
you better win!

Luis E. Aguilar

Publisher's Note

The Narrative and Memoranda of the Taylor Committee are presented here with minimal editorial changes from the actual declassified documents. The only changes have been those necessary to insure uniformity of capitalization, italicization, and other points of style.

Obvious spelling and typographical errors have been corrected. Minimal punctuation changes have been made and only when such changes were deemed essential to clarity. Some of the original transcript's paragraph indentations were eliminated and in some cases run-on paragraphs were broken up into shorter paragraphs, again with the purpose of clarity.

Because the meetings were held at different locations and recorded by different stenographers, the style tends to vary from one meeting to the next. In some cases the names of the participants precede their comments; in other cases a STATEMENT/RESPONSE or QUESTION/ANSWER format is used; in still other cases, a summary rather than a verbatim record is provided; and in many cases, different combinations of format are employed for the same meeting. The formats which appear in the documents themselves have been retained in this edition, even at a considerable cost in uniformity. In no case was a name omitted if it appeared in the original, and no effort was made to investigate the likely source of statements not definitely attributed to individual participants.

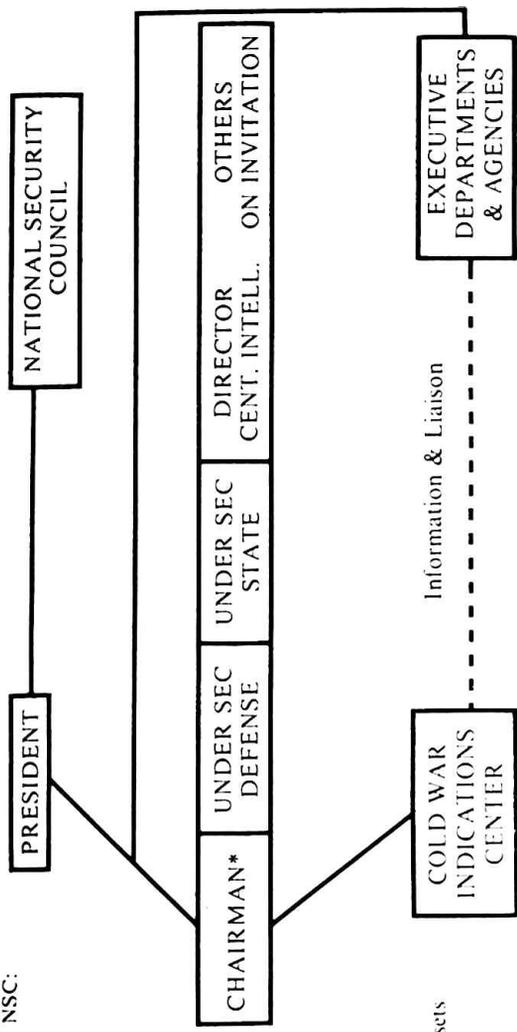
All sanitized (still classified) sections and names in the original documents have been indicated by insertions: names or less than one line of transcript have been replaced by brackets showing the length of the deletion; deletions of more than one line have been replaced by bold insertions stating precisely how many lines of the original transcript are yet sanitized.

As a convenience to the readers, the publisher has provided explanations for the many military acronyms used throughout both the Narrative and the Meetings. These appear in brackets immediately following the initial appearance of the acronym in the text. A complete list can be found at the end of the book.

THE STRATEGIC RESOURCES GROUP

APPROVES IN CONSULTATION WITH NSC:

- a. Cold War policy
- b. Specific concepts & plans



****STRATEGIC RESOURCES GROUP**

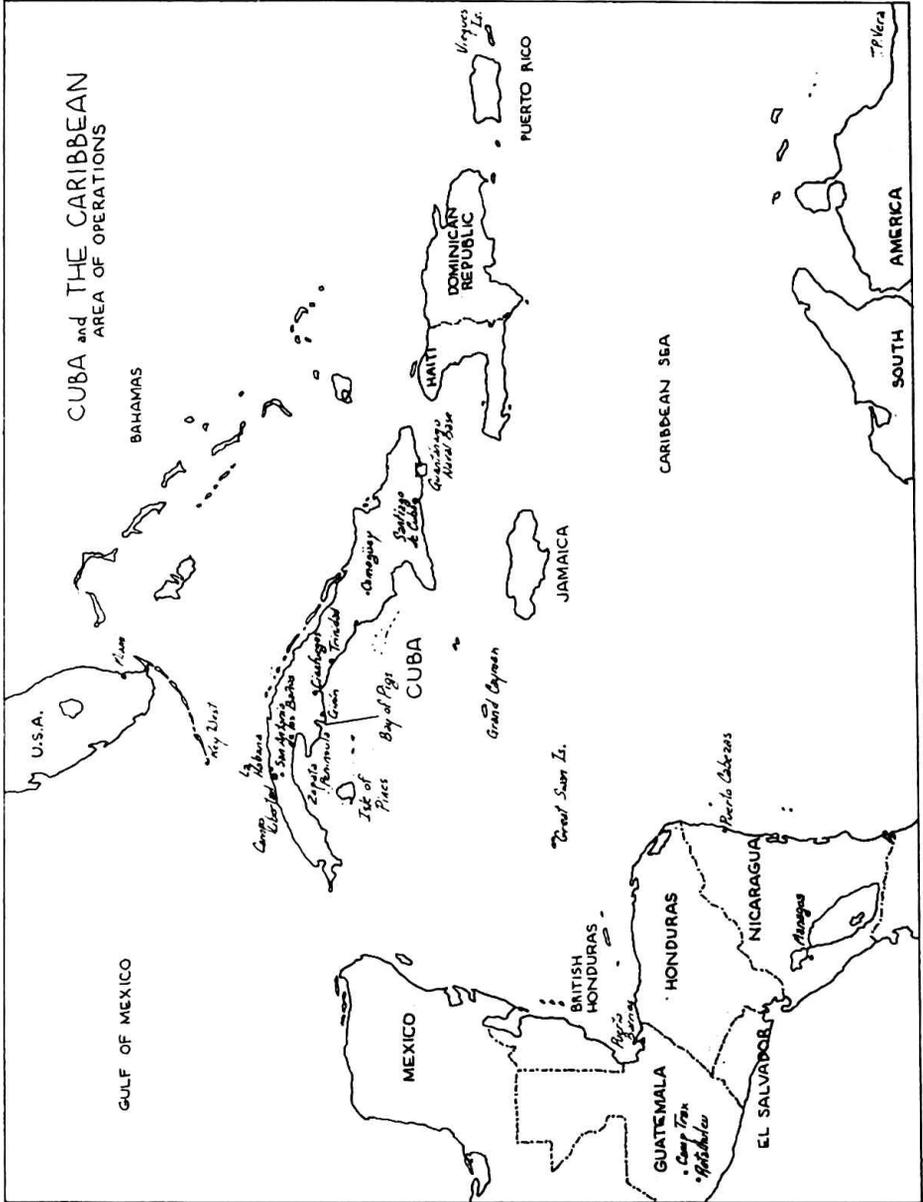
- a. Develops concepts & outline plans
- b. Monitors approved operation plans
- c. Obtains Presidential decisions
- d. Replaces 5412 Committee

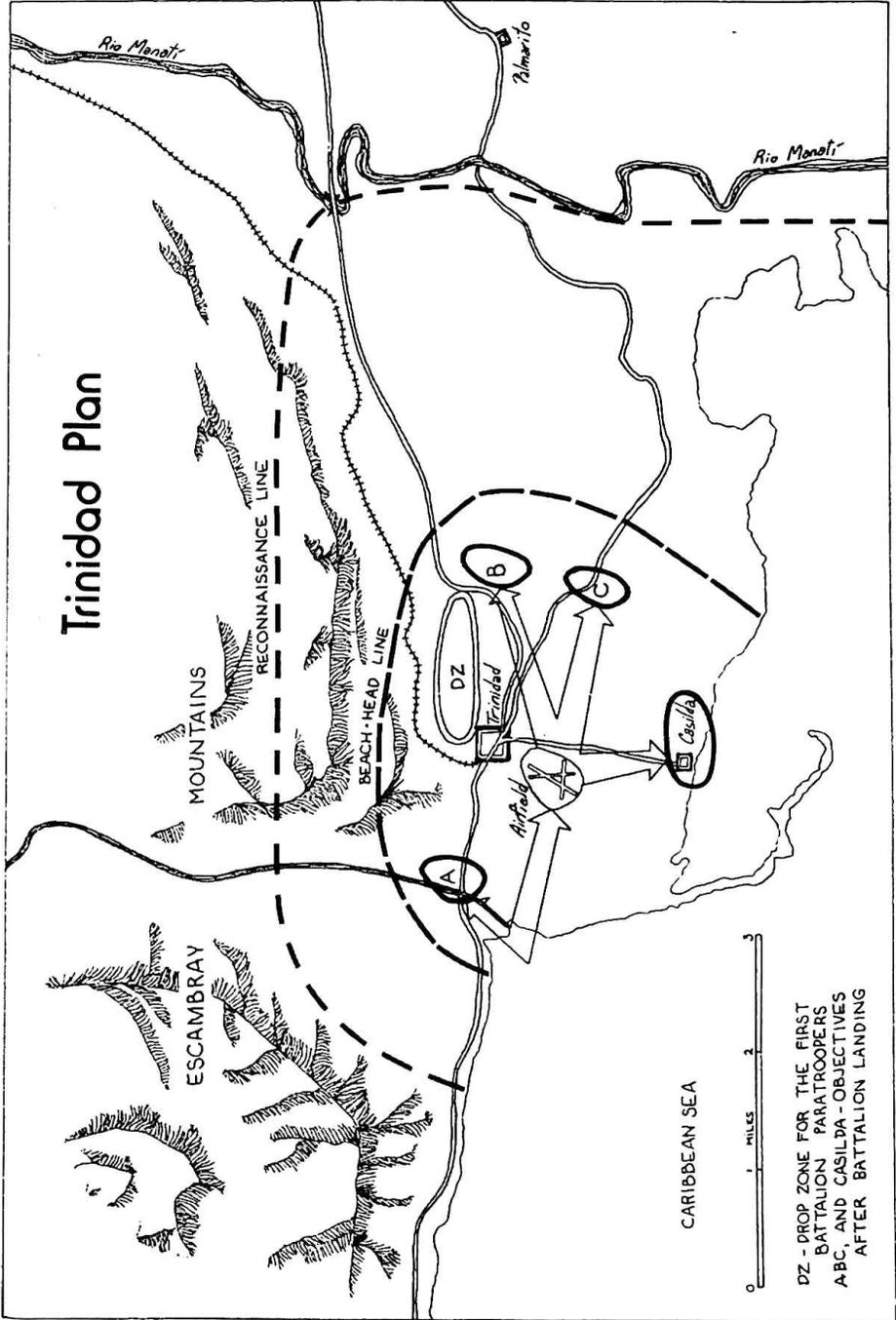
CWIC FOR AREAS ASSIGNED SRG

- a. Keeps Cold War areas under survey.
- b. Maintains basic data on Cold War assets and liabilities.
- c. Evaluates criticality.
- d. Recommends tasks.
- e. Reviews and reports results.

****SRG issues no orders in its own name. It undertakes planning and coordination of interdepartmental activities only when specifically directed by the President.**

*Presidential designee giving full time to SRG
Advisory Member NSC





Trinidad Plan

MOUNTAINS

ESCAMBRAY

RECONNAISSANCE LINE

BEACH-HEAD LINE

DZ

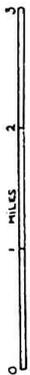
B

C

Airfield

Trinidad

CARIBBEAN SEA



DZ - DROP ZONE FOR THE FIRST BATTALION PARATROOPERS
 A, B, C, AND CASILDA - OBJECTIVES AFTER BATTALION LANDING

Room 2E980, The Pentagon
Washington 25, D.C.
13 June 1961

Dear Mr. President:

By your letter of April 22, 1961, you charged me in association with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Admiral Arleigh Burke and Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles to study our governmental practices and programs in the areas of military and paramilitary, guerrilla and anti-guerrilla activity which fell short of outright war with a view to strengthening our work in this area. You directed special attention to the lessons which can be learned from the recent events in Cuba.

On May 16, our Cuban Study Group submitted to you an interim oral report of our conclusions as of that date. We are now prepared to make our final report to you orally, supported by the following memoranda:

Memorandum No. 1

“Narrative of the Anti-Castro Operation Zapata”

Memorandum No. 2

“Immediate Causes of Failure of the Operation Zapata”

Memorandum No. 3

“Conclusions of the Cuban Study Group”

Memorandum No. 4

“Recommendations of the Cuban Study Group”

In your letter of April 22, you invited me to submit an individual report subject to the review and comment of my associates. As we have found no difficulty in reaching a unan-

imous view on all essential points under consideration, we are submitting this view as a jointly agreed study.

In closing, may I express our view of the great importance of a prompt implementation of our first recommendation to establish a Strategic Resources Group supported by a Cold War Indications Center which will allow our government readily to focus its resources on the objectives which you set in the so-called Cold War. We feel that we are losing today on many fronts and that the trend can be reversed only by a whole-hearted union of effort by all Executive departments and agencies of the Government under your guidance.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR

The President

The White House

13 June 1961

MEMORANDUM NO. 1

Narrative of the Anti-Castro Cuban Operation Zapata

I. Development of the Concept and Plan

1. Although the Cuban situation had been the subject of serious study in the Special Group,* Central Intelligence Agency and other government agencies since 1958, this study takes as its point of departure the basic policy paper, "A Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime," approved by the President on 17 March 1960. (See Annex 1)** This document, developed by the Central Intelligence Agency and indorsed by the Special Group, provided a program divided into four parts to bring about the replacement of the Castro regime by covert means:

- a. The creation of a responsible and unified Cuban opposition to the Castro regime located outside of Cuba.
- b. The development of means for mass communication to the Cuban people as a part of a powerful propaganda offensive.

* The Special Group, sometimes called the 5412 Committee, consists of a Deputy Under Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Director, Central Intelligence and the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and meets weekly to consider covert operations conducted by the CIA under the authority of NSC 5412/2.

** Annexes not yet declassified.

c. The creation and development of a covert intelligence and action organization within Cuba which would be responsive to the orders and directions of the exile opposition.

d. The development of a paramilitary force outside of Cuba for future guerrilla action.

2. Since the primary purpose of this study is to examine the paramilitary actions growing out of this program and its successive modifications, the paragraph referring to the paramilitary aspects of the plan is quoted in its entirety:

d. Preparations have already been made for the development of an adequate paramilitary force outside of Cuba, together with mechanisms for the necessary logistics support of covert military operations on the island. Initially a cadre of leaders will be recruited after careful screening and trained as paramilitary instructors. In a second phase a number of paramilitary cadres will be trained at secure locations outside of the United States so as to be available for immediate deployment into Cuba to organize, train and lead resistance forces recruited there both before and after the establishment of one or more active centers of resistance. The creation of this capability will require a minimum of six months and probably closer to eight. In the meanwhile, a limited air capability for resupply and for infiltration and exfiltration already exists under CIA control and can be rather easily expanded if and when the situation requires. Within two months it is hoped to parallel this with a small air supply capability under deep cover as a commercial operation in another country.

3. It is apparent from the above excerpt that at the time of approval of this document the concept of paramilitary action was limited to the recruitment of a cadre of leaders and the training of a number of paramilitary cadres for subsequent use as guerrillas in Cuba.

4. The CIA began at once to implement the decisions contained in the policy paper on 17 March 1960. A target of 300 men was set for the recruitment of guerrillas to be trained covertly outside the United States. "Radio Swan" was installed on Swan Island and ready for broadcasting on 17 May 1960. (See Annex 2) Steps were taken to develop the FRD (*Frente Revolucionario Democrático*) as the Cuban front organization composed of a broad spectrum of Cuban political elements other than Communists and Batistianos. (See Annex 3) On August 18th, a progress report was given to the President and the Cabinet, at which time a budget of some \$13 million was approved, as well as the use of Department of Defense personnel and equipment. However, it was specified at this time that no United States military personnel were to be used in a combat status.

5. Sometime in the summer of 1960 the paramilitary concept for the operation began to change. It appears that leaders in the CIA Task Force set up in January 1960 to direct the project were the first to entertain the thought of a Cuban strike force to land on the Cuban coast in supplementation of the guerrilla action contemplated under the March 17, 1960 paper. These CIA officers began to consider the formation of a small force of infantry (200-300 men) for contingency employment in conjunction with other paramilitary operations, and in June began to form a small Cuban tactical air force. Eventually it was decided to equip this force with B-26 aircraft which had been widely distributed to foreign countries including countries in Latin America.

6. There were ample reasons for this new trend of thought. The air drops into Cuba were not proving effective. There were increasingly heavy shipments of Communist arms to Cuba, accompanied by evidence of increasingly effective control of the civilian population by Castro. The Special Group became aware of these adverse factors which were discussed repeatedly in the Committee meetings during the fall of 1960. The minutes of the conferences indicate a declining confidence in the effectiveness of guerrilla efforts alone to overthrow Castro.

7. In this atmosphere the CIA began to implement the new concept, increasing the size of the Cuban force in training and reorienting the training toward preparation for its use as an assault force on the Cuban coast. On November 4th, CIA in Washington dispatched a cable to the project officer in Guatemala describing what was wanted. (See Annex 4) The cable directed a reduction of the guerrilla teams in training to 60 men and the introduction of conventional training for the remainder as an amphibious and airborne assault force. From that time on, the training emphasis was placed on the assault mission and there is no evidence that the members of the assault force received any further preparation for guerrilla-type operations. The men became deeply imbued with the importance of the landing operation and its superiority over any form of guerrilla action to the point that it would have been difficult later to persuade them to return to a guerrilla-type mission. The final training of the Cubans was done by

1½ lines deleted

in Guatemala where 400-500 Cubans had been assembled.

8. As mentioned in paragraph 5 above, in order to prepare for this operation, the CIA had been obliged early to organize a task force for planning the operation, and then later was to adjust that organization to the execution phase. (See Annexes 5 and 6) In both phases the Task Force commander, [] reported upward through Mr. R. M. Bissell, Deputy Director, Plans, to General C. P. Cabell, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, and the Director, Mr. Allen Dulles. The latter, while accepting full responsibility for the operation, generally did not inject himself into military operational matters.

9. During the early months of the development of the plan, the Director, CIA looked to the 5412 Committee (Special Group) for guidance and approval of his covert plans for Cuba. In the period December 10, 1960 to February 8, 1961, former Ambassador Whiting Willauer and Mr. Tracy Barnes of CIA were charged with keeping the President and the Secretary of State informed. By the end of January following the change in administration, the President assisted by a

restricted group of advisors from the National Security Council took over the function of approval and the 5412 Committee tended to recede from a position of responsibility. However, the Director of Central Intelligence continued to keep the Committee informed of the covert aspects of the plan.

10. The Director of Central Intelligence briefed the President on the new paramilitary concept on 29 November 1960 and received the indication that the President wished the project expedited. The concept was formally presented to the Special Group on December 8, 1960. At this meeting, [] in charge of the paramilitary section for the Cuba project, described the new concept as one consisting of an amphibious landing on the Cuban coast of 600-750 men equipped with weapons of extraordinarily heavy fire power. The landing would be preceded by preliminary air strikes launched from Nicaragua against military targets. Air strikes as well as supply flights would continue after the landing. The objective would be to seize, hold a limited area in Cuba, maintain a visible presence, and then to draw dissident elements to the landing force, which hopefully would trigger a general uprising. This amphibious landing would not entirely eliminate the previous concept for infiltrating guerrilla teams. It was expected that some 60-80 men would be infiltrated prior to the amphibious landing.

11. The Special Group was also briefed on the quality of the Cuban force in training in Guatemala.

1 line deleted

in charge of training, described the superior characteristics of the individuals, particularly as to motivation, intelligence, and leadership qualities. He expressed the opinion that such a force would have no difficulty inflicting heavy casualties on a much larger militia force.

12. There is no evidence that the Special Group formally approved this plan at the time but the CIA representatives were encouraged to continue in its development. A comment was made at the meeting that the existence of the U.S.-backed force of Cubans in training was well known throughout Latin America.

13. During this period the CIA Task Force Headquarters for the project was developing a detailed operation plan to support the new concept. It is referred to in this study as Operation Trinidad, named after the Cuban town on the southeast coast which was to be the site of the amphibious landing. On January 11th, Ambassador Willauer representing State and Mr. Barnes of CIA first discussed with representatives of the Joint Staff the overall problem of effecting the overthrow of Castro. As a result, a working committee including representation of CIA, State, Defense, and the JCS was formed to coordinate future actions in pursuit of this objective. At this meeting the Trinidad Plan as such was not discussed.

14. At about this time, the change in the national administration produced a break in the continuity of the development of the plan. On January 22nd, several members of the new administration including Mr. Rusk, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bowles, and Mr. Robert Kennedy were introduced to the Cuba project at a briefing at the State Department. General Lemnitzer and Mr. Dulles were also present. A Joint Staff concept was presented by General Lemnitzer of the U.S. directed or supported actions in ascending order necessary to overthrow Castro.

15. Early in January, the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that there was need for an overall United States plan of action for the overthrow of Castro and produced a paper, JCSM-44-61 (See Annex 7), in which they recommended the institution of an interdepartmental group to consider various courses of action in ascending degree of U.S. involvement, which, after approval by the President, would become an overall plan to be supported by subordinate plans prepared by the agencies concerned. This recommendation reached the Secretary of Defense, but appears to have been lost in the activities arising out of the change in administration.

16. On November 18, 1960, President-elect Kennedy had first learned of the existence of a plan for the overthrow of

Castro through a call on him at Palm Beach by Mr. Dulles and Mr. Bissell. He received his first briefing on the developing plan as President on January 28 at a meeting which included the Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Assistant Secretary Mann, Assistant Secretary Nitze, Mr. Tracy Barnes, and Mr. McGeorge Bundy. (See Annex 8) After considerable discussion, the President authorized the following:

a. A continuation and accentuation of current activities of the CIA, including increased propaganda, increased political action, and increased sabotage. Continued overflights of Cuba were specifically authorized.

b. The Defense Department was to review CIA proposals for the active deployment of anti-Castro Cuban forces on Cuban territory and the results of this analysis were to be promptly reported to the CIA.

c. The State Department was to prepare a concrete proposal for action with other Latin American countries to isolate the Castro regime and to bring against it the judgment of the Organization of American States. It was expected that this proposal

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17. Following this meeting, the Joint Chiefs of Staff undertook to evaluate Plan Trinidad in the form developed by the CIA up to that point. The Chiefs approved and forwarded to the Secretary of Defense on 3 February 1961, JCSM-57-61, "Military Evaluation of the CIA Paramilitary Plan—Cuba." (See Annex 9) The evaluation was summarized in paragraphs 1p and 1q as follows:

In summary, evaluation of the current plan results in a favorable assessment, modified by the specific conclusions set forth above, of the likelihood of achieving initial military success. It is obvious that ultimate success will depend upon political factors, i.e., a sizeable popular uprising or substantial follow-on forces. It should be noted that assessment of the

combat worth of assault forces is based upon second- and third-hand reports, and certain logistic aspects of the plan are highly complex and critical to the initial success. For these reasons, an independent evaluation of the combat effectiveness of the invasion force and detailed analysis of logistics plans should be made by a team of Army, naval and Air Force officers, if this can be done without danger of compromise of the plan. Despite the shortcomings pointed out in the assessment, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that timely execution of this plan has a fair chance of ultimate success and, even if it does not achieve immediately the full results desired, could contribute to the eventual overthrow of the Castro regime.

18. Because of the feeling of lack of direct knowledge expressed by the Chiefs, it was decided to send a team of three officers from the Joint Staff to examine and report on the military effectiveness of the Cuban Expeditionary Force at its Guatemala base. This visit was made in the period 24-27 February and resulted in a report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (See Annex 10) which included the estimate that because of the visibility of activities at Retalhuleu in Guatemala and Puerto Cabezas in Nicaragua, the odds against surprise being achieved was about 85 to 15. The JCS air evaluation pointed out that if surprise were not achieved, the attack against Cuba would fail, adding that one Castro aircraft armed with .50 caliber machine guns could sink all or most of the invasion force. The Joint Chiefs in approving this report on 10 March 1961 commented to the Secretary of Defense that,

Based upon a general review of the military portion of the plan, an evaluation of the combat effectiveness of the forces and an analysis of the logistics plan from a military standpoint, since the small invasion force will retain the initiative until the location of the landing is determined, the plan could be expected to achieve initial success. Ultimate success will depend on the extent to which the initial assault serves as a

catalyst for further action on the part of anti-Castro elements throughout Cuba.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff in their forwarding memorandum to the Secretary of Defense recommended that, "A military instructor experienced in the operational logistics be assigned to the training unit immediately for the final phase of the training." Such an officer, [] was dispatched from Washington and remained with the CEF (Cuban Expeditionary Force) for some time, assisting in correcting some of the logistics deficiencies previously noted by the inspection team.

19. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff supported the Trinidad Plan as one having "a fair chance of success" the plan encountered difficulties in other quarters. From its inception the plan had been developed under the ground rule that it must retain a covert character, that is, it should include no action which, if revealed, could not be plausibly denied by the United States and should look to the world as an operation exclusively conducted by Cubans. This ground rule meant, among other things, that no U.S. military forces or individuals could take part in combat operations. In due course it was extended to exclude pre-D-Day air strikes in support of the landing since such strikes could not have the appearance of being launched from Cuban soil before an airstrip had been seized by the landing force. This effort to treat as covert an operation which in reality could not be concealed or shielded from the presumption of U.S. involvement raised in due course many serious obstacles to the successful conduct of the operation which will be the subject of subsequent comment.

20. The President and his advisors were thoroughly aware of the difficulties of preserving the covert character of an operation as visible as a landing on a hostile shore and from the outset viewed the Trinidad Plan with caution. In particular, the State Department representatives opposed features of the plan because of the difficulty of concealing U.S. participation and also because of their fear of adverse reactions to the United States in Latin American countries and in

the United Nations. They objected in particular to the conduct of any tactical air operations unless these aircraft were either actually or ostensibly based on Cuban soil.

21. On the other hand, working to overcome this reluctance to approve the Trinidad Plan was the need to decide quickly what to do with the Cuban Expeditionary Force. The President was informed that this force must leave Guatemala within a limited time and that, further, it could not be held together long in the United States if it were moved there. If the decision were taken to disband the force, that fact would soon become known and would be interpreted as a renunciation by the U.S. of the effort to free Cuba from Castro. Faced with two unattractive alternatives, the President and his advisors asked the CIA to come up with various proposals for the use of this force as alternatives to Trinidad.

22. These proposals were the subject of detailed consideration on March 11th when the President and the National Security Council met to consider the various plans then being entertained for Cuba. Mr. Bissell of CIA presented a paper entitled, "Proposed Operation Against Cuba" which summarized the action to date and presented four alternative courses of action. (See Annex 11) It concluded by recommending the Trinidad Plan which he described to be an operation in the form of an assault in force preceded by a diversionary landing as the action having the best chance of achieving the desired result. The assault in force was to consist of an amphibious/airborne assault with concurrent (but no prior) tactical air support, to seize a beachhead contiguous to terrain suitable for guerrilla operations. The provisional government would land as soon as the beachhead had been secured. If initial military operations were successful and especially if there were evidence of spreading disaffection against the Castro regime, the provisional government could be recognized and a legal basis provided for U.S. logistic support.

23. The military plan contemplated the holding of a perimeter around a beachhead area. It was believed that initial attacks by the Castro militia, even if conducted in considera-

ble force, could be successfully resisted. The scale of the operation, a display of professional competence and determination on the part of the assault force would, it was hoped, demoralize the Castro militia, cause defections therefrom, impair the morale of the Castro regime and induce widespread rebellion.

24. After full discussion of this plan the President indicated that he was willing to go ahead with the overall project, but that he could not endorse a plan so "spectacular" as Trinidad. He directed that the CIA planners come up with other alternative methods of employing the Cuban forces. An acceptable plan should provide for a "quiet" landing, preferably at night, without having the appearance of a World War II-type amphibious assault. The State Department requested that any beachhead seized should include an airfield capable of supporting B-26 operations, to which any tactical air operations could be attributed.

25. During the period 13-15 March the paramilitary staff of CIA worked intensively to devise a plan or plans having the desired characteristics, and presented a briefing to the JCS Working Group late in the morning of March 14. They produced for consideration three such alternatives as general concepts. They were based on three possible landing areas: (1) the Preston area on the north coast of Oriente Province; (2) the south coast of Las Villas between Trinidad and Cienfuegos; and (3) the eastern Zapata area near Cochinos Bay.

26. On March 14th these three alternatives were referred to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their evaluation. The Joint Staff prepared this evaluation, the results of which the respective service action officers presented to their respective Chiefs prior to the JCS meeting on 15 March. At this meeting, following a briefing by the Joint Staff Working Group, the Joint Chiefs approved the evaluation and reported to the Secretary of Defense that of the three, the Zapata concept was considered the most feasible and the most likely to accomplish the objective. They added that none of the alternative concepts were considered as feasible and likely to accomplish the

objective as the Trinidad Plan. (See Annex 12) This preference for the Trinidad Operation seems to have been overlooked in the subsequent consideration of the plan by some of the senior civilian officials, including the Secretary of Defense to whom the views of the Chiefs were addressed.

27. An important question developed in the course of this study is the extent to which the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the Zapata Plan as it finally took form. The action on March 15th merely indicated a preference for the Zapata concept as opposed to the two other concepts considered (neither of which was the original Trinidad Plan). However, the record is clear (See Annex 13) that the Chiefs subsequently took active part in considering changes to the plan as it developed into final form, did not oppose the plan and by their acquiescing in it gave others the impression of approval. They considered the plan as a body four times after March 15th while the plan was in the formative stage, but did not review the plan in its final form because of the shortness of time between the submission of the plan to the JCS, April 15, and the actual landing. While individual Chiefs gave it considerably more personal attention than the above record suggests, they did not and probably could not give the plan the same meticulous study which a commander would give to a plan for which he was personally responsible. Also, individual Chiefs had differing views as to important aspects of the operations which in turn differed from those held by senior civilian officials.

28. On the same day as the Chiefs' action, March 15th, the President was briefed at the White House on the three alternative courses of action which the Chiefs had considered. After full discussion, the President again withheld approval of the plan and directed certain modifications to be considered. The CIA returned on the following day, March 16th, and presented a modification for the landing at Zapata which Mr. Bissell considered on balance more advantageous than the Trinidad Plan, wherein there would be airdrops at first light instead of the previous day in the late afternoon, with the landing in the night and all the ships withdrawn from the

objective area by dawn without completing the unloading at that time. The President authorized them to proceed with the plan, but still without giving it his formal approval.

29. As the Trinidad Plan developed, the question of air strikes became a matter of extended discussions. On January 4th, [] wrote a memorandum to the Chief, WH/4 [] [CIA Western Hemisphere Division, Branch 4] entitled, "Policy Decisions Required for Conduct of Strike Operations Against Government of Cuba." (See Annex 14) The paper includes the statement,

The Cuban air force and naval vessels capable of opposing our landing must be knocked out or neutralized before our amphibious shipping makes its final run into the beach. If this is not done we will be courting disaster.

The memorandum further recommended that the air preparation commence not later than dawn on D-1 and that a maximum number of aircraft be employed for this purpose. The State Department consistently resisted this kind of air preparation because of its "spectacular" nature and because of the inability to attribute pre-D-Day strikes to airplanes in Cuba. They also opposed the use of jets, although former Ambassador Whiting Willauer, who with Mr. Tracy Barnes monitored the plan in the period December 10-February 8, 1961 at the request of Secretary of State Herter, had pointed out the need for jet cover to protect the landing in discussions of the Special Group in January. It was felt that the range of jets would obviously require them to operate from U.S.-controlled bases and hence could not be brought within the requirements of nonattribution.

30. In the end a compromise was reached with regard to the air plan. Early in April, it was decided to stage limited air strikes on D-2 at the time of a diversionary landing of 160 men to be made in eastern Cuba. These strikes were for the purpose of giving the impression of being the action of Cuban pilots defecting from the Cuban air force and thus support the fiction that the D-Day landing was receiving its air support

from within Cuba. The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not favor these D-2 air strikes because of their indecisive nature and the danger of alarming prematurely the Castro force. Mr. Bissell of CIA also later stated at a meeting on April 6 that CIA would prefer to conduct an all-out air strike on the morning of D-Day rather than perform the D-2 defection strikes followed by limited strikes on D-Day. Nevertheless, the political advantages led to their inclusion in the plan but with the realization that main reliance for the obstruction of the Castro air force must be placed on the D-Day strikes.

31. At the time of the meeting with the President on 16 March, preparations in the field were proceeding on the assumption that the landing would take place. The President agreed to this procedure but reserved the right to call off the plan even up to 24 hours prior to the landing. He approved the establishment of an interdepartmental Working Group to carry forward the work begun in January (see paragraph 13 above) and to assure closer coordination within the Executive Branch. On 23 March this Working Group produced a paper containing agreed tasks prepared by the Joint Staff for assignment to the various agencies of the federal government. (See Annex 15) This paper was the first successful action to formalize the interdepartmental coordination which up to this point had depended largely upon ad hoc committees and meetings at presidential level. Because of the high security classification of the operations, few if any records were kept at these meetings and decisions were rarely in written form. Papers bearing on the operation were normally distributed at the start of a meeting and gathered up at the end.

32. Initially, the Zapata Plan had a D-Day of 5 April. By 29 March it was apparent that no such D-Day could be kept and the President on that day advanced it to 10 April. This date later became infeasible for political reasons so that it slipped again to 17 April, the date of the actual landing.

33. On 12 April an important conference took place with the President, the Secretary of State, the JCS, and other NSC officials, in which Mr. Bissell of the CIA presented a paper

which outlined the latest changes in the Zapata Operation, including the defections, the air strikes on D-2 and D-Day (See Annex 16), and the following timetable:

D-7	Commence staging main force—staging completed night of D-5
D-6	First vessel sails from staging area—last vessel departs early morning D-4
D-2	B-26 defection operation—limited air strikes
D-2	Diversionsary landing in Oriente (night of D-3 to D-2)
D-Day	Main landings (night of D-1 to D)—limited air strikes. Two B-26s and liaison plane land on seized airstrip.
D to D+1	Vessels return night of D to D+1 to complete discharge of supplies.
D+7	Diversionsary landing in Pinar del Río.

The President did not give final approval to the plan at this meeting. However, he was informed that the decision could not be delayed much longer as the no-go time for preliminary operations would be 12 o'clock Friday, 14 April, and for the main landing, 12 o'clock Sunday, 16 April.

34. [] went to Puerto Cabezas to attend the final briefing of the Brigade and Battalion commanders of the CEF. (See Annex 17) While there, on 13 April he was asked for a final evaluation of the quality and readiness of the Brigade. He replied in most enthusiastic terms (See Annex 18), praising the combat readiness of the Brigade and the Cuban air force, and expressing confidence in the success of the project. His views were circulated in Washington and reached the President.

35. Meanwhile, the ships of the invading force were approaching Cuba. The first operational event scheduled to

occur was a diversionary landing 30 miles east of Guantánamo by a group of 160 men planned for the night of 14-15 April. The landing failed to take place, probably because of weak leadership on the part of the Cuban officer responsible for the landing. This failure may have had a considerable effect on the main landing as the diversion was intended to draw Castro's forces to the east and confuse his command.

36. At dawn on 15 April, the D-2 air strike took place against three Cuban airfields, a total of eight B-26s being employed for the purpose. Initial pilot reports indicated that 50 percent of Castro's offensive air was destroyed at Campo Libertad, 75-80 percent aircraft destruction at San Antonio de los Baños, and that the destruction at Santiago included two B-26s, one DC-3, one Lodestar and one T-33 or Sea Fury. Subsequent photographic studies and interpretation have assessed a greatly reduced estimate of the damage, amounting to five aircraft definitely destroyed and an indeterminable number of other planes suffering some damage. The attacking force lost one aircraft and crew to antiaircraft fire.

37. At about midday on D-1, 16 April, the President formally approved the landing plan and the word was passed to all commanders and officials involved in the operation. The frame of mind at that moment of the senior officials responsible for the approval of this operation seems to have been about as follows. It offered what appeared to be a last chance to overthrow Castro by Cubans before the weapons and technicians acquired from the Communists and repressive internal measures would make the task too hard without overt U.S. intervention. It was recognized as marginal and risky, but the Cuban Brigade, if not used quickly, would become a political liability, whereas used in a landing it might achieve important success before Castro became too strong. Even if unable to hold the beachhead, something would have been accomplished as the Brigade could turn guerrilla and provide a strong reinforcement to the resistance movement in the island.

38. CIA authorities had developed an elaborate propaganda program (See Annex 19) to support the military action

against Castro. This was based on the use of the clandestine Radio Swan, the programs of eleven CIA-controlled radio stations and extensive leaflet drops. The program was executed as planned, except for the D-Day leaflet drops for which no means of delivery was available. The plan had been to drop the leaflets from B-26s and other aircraft involved in the support of the landing, but the military situation did not permit the diversion of effort. The content of the propaganda program was developed and approved within CIA.

39. There is no evidence of any effort at any higher level to guide and coordinate the overall propaganda effort. In particular, the United States Information Agency was left in the dark with regard to the operational plans. On 5 April, Mr. Edward R. Murrow, Director of the United States Information Agency heard from a *New York Times* reporter that operations were underway for a landing in Cuba, backed and planned by the CIA. The reporter indicated that the *Times* had a very full story on the operation which, however, they did not intend to print but he did hope to persuade USIA to authorize briefings of the press in Miami following the landing. (See Annex 20)

40. Armed with this information, Mr. Murrow called on the Director of Central Intelligence who informed him that preparations were indeed underway, but did not give him details of the magnitude or the time of the landing which, indeed, had not been determined at that time. Under the terms of the interdepartmental coordination paper referred to in paragraph 31 above, the Department of State undertook to provide policy guidance beginning D-3 to the USIA in support of the plan, but this guidance was apparently not given. Hence, word of the landing received over the wire services on D-Day caught the USIA unprepared and without guidance.

41. **9¼ lines deleted**

42. With regard to agent, guerrilla, and dissident assets, the preinvasion reports differed somewhat but suggested considerable strength. (See Annex 20A, Cuban Internal Situation 18 May 1961, and Annex 20B, map showing agents and assets)

It had been estimated by the CIA that from 2,500 to 3,000 persons supported by 20,000 sympathizers were actively engaged in resistance in Cuba, and that some 25 percent of the Cuban populace would actively support a well-organized, well-armed force which was successful in establishing a stronghold on the island. At a CIA briefing on April 3, the view was expressed that the percentage of the Cuban population opposed to Castro at that time was much higher than the foregoing estimate, but that many would probably remain neutral until there was a strong indication of which side was winning.

43. At about 9:30 P.M. on 16 April, Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President, telephoned General C. P. Cabell of CIA to inform him that the dawn air strikes the following morning should not be launched until they could be conducted from a strip within the beachhead. Mr. Bundy indicated that any further consultation with regard to this matter should be with the Secretary of State.

44. General Cabell, accompanied by Mr. Bissell, went at once to Secretary Rusk's office, arriving there about 10:15 P.M. (See Annex 21) There they received a telephone call from [] who, having learned of the cancellation of the D-Day strikes, called to present his view of the gravity of the decision. General Cabell and Mr. Bissell then tried to persuade the Secretary of State to permit the dawn D-Day strikes. The Secretary indicated that there were policy considerations against air strikes before the beachhead airfield was in the hands of the landing force and completely operational, capable of supporting the raids. The two CIA representatives pointed out the risk of loss to the shipping if the Castro air force were not neutralized by the dawn strikes. They also stressed the difficulty which the B-26 airplanes would have in isolating the battlefield after the landing, as well as the heavier scale of air attack to which the disembarked forces would be exposed. The Secretary of State indicated subsequently that their presentation led him to feel that while the air strikes were indeed important, they were not vital. However, he offered them the privilege of telephoning the

President in order to present their views to him. They saw no point in speaking personally to the President and so informed the Secretary of State. The order cancelling the D-Day strikes was dispatched to the departure field in Nicaragua, arriving when the pilots were in their cockpits ready for takeoff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff learned of the cancellation at varying hours the following morning.

45. Realizing the seriousness of this cancellation, the CIA officials set about to try to offset the damage. The invasion force was informed, warned of likely air attacks and the ships told to expedite unloading and to withdraw from the beach by dawn. A continuous cover of two B-26s over the beach was laid on. General Cabell arranged with the JCS to alert the fleet to a possible requirement for air cover and early warning destroyers. At 0430, he called on the Secretary of State at his home, reiterated the need to protect the shipping and by telephone made the request to the President. The request for air cover was disapproved but the early warning destroyers were authorized, provided they remained at least 30 miles from Cuban territory.

II. *The Battle for the Beachhead,* *D-Day to D+2*

(See Annex 22 entitled, "Sequence of Events D-2 to D+2 and Organization and Operation of the Command Post"; Operation Maps 1-3; and Annex 23,

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D-Day ***Blue Beach***

46. The ships in which the Cuban Expeditionary Force was embarked reached the objective area generally on time in the night of D-1 and the morning of D-Day. At Blue Beach the Brigade commander, José Perez San Román, went ashore at 0115 and immediately commenced the unloading of troops and supplies. (See Annexes 24, 25 and 26) The landing was

discovered at once by local militia, some firing occurred, and the alarm was transmitted to troop and air headquarters throughout the island. In view of the situation, it was decided to give up the planned transshipment of the force earmarked to Green Beach and to put this force ashore at Blue Beach.

47. Castro's forces, though tactically surprised, reacted with speed and vigor. At dawn they began air attacks against the shipping and the beaches. In spite of these attacks, all vehicles and tanks at Blue Beach were unloaded from the LCUs [landing craft, utility] by 0730, and all troops were ashore by 0825.

48. At 0930 an enemy Sea Fury hit and sunk the freighter *Río Escondido*, which carried in it ten days' supply of ammunition for the Brigade and other valuable supplies. All crew members were rescued and transferred to the *Blagar*.

49. In the face of continuous air attacks, at 10 o'clock [] the contract skipper in charge of the shipping, radioed CIA Headquarters that if jet air support were not immediately available, the ships would put out to sea. By this time, not only had the *Río* been sunk at Blue Beach, but the *Houston* had been hit at Red Beach. CIA Headquarters approved the movement of the vessels to the south which began at once. The freighters *Atlántico* and *Caribe* preceded the two LCIs [landing craft, infantry] and three LCUs which followed the cargo ships at a slower speed imposed by the presence of the LCUs.

50. After landing, the troops ashore pushed out from the beach as planned. Parachutists of the First Battalion dropped at 0730, seized the important road center of San Blas ten miles northeast of Blue Beach, and established outposts to the north and east to cover the routes of ingress into the beachhead. They were quickly reinforced by the Third Battalion and a heavy weapons (4.2 mortar) detachment. They made contact with Castro forces in the afternoon which pushed back their outpost situated to the east. Starting at about 1700 and intermittently thereafter, San Blas was under attack from forces coming down the road from the north.

51. Radio communications within Blue Beach were non-existent during the entire operation. In going ashore, the troops had been obliged to wade through fairly deep water with the result that most of the portable radios got wet and never functioned thereafter.

Red Beach

52. The Second Battalion at Red Beach ran into militia units almost immediately upon landing, but cleared them from the beach area. The landing of the Battalion was slowed down by motor trouble with the aluminum ships' boats which were the only landing craft available. Out of nine, only two boats were usable for the 20-minute run from the *Houston* to the beach. The Fifth Battalion which was to follow the Second never did get ashore, partly because of the boat troubles, partly because of lack of initiative on the part of the Battalion commander. Very few supplies were got ashore, other than those carried by the Second Battalion while debarking.

53. At daybreak, Red Beach was attacked by enemy aircraft, and at about 0630 the *Houston* was hit. Somewhat later, the ship went aground on the west shore of the Bahía de Cochinos about five miles from the landing beach. At that time it still had on board about 180 men of the Fifth Battalion who landed but never got into the fight at Red Beach. Later, many worked their way south to be picked up on the swampy keys by the U.S. Navy after the operation. In this air attack, the LCI *Barbara J* was also damaged by machine gun fire which disabled two of its engines, and a near miss, which caused it to take water. The damage to the *Barbara J* was not reported to CIA Headquarters until the next day at about 1700.

54. After cleaning up the beach area, the troops of the Second Battalion pushed north about four miles but soon encountered militia forces which prevented them from reaching the southern exit of the road across the swamp which they were to block. Fighting went on astride the road throughout

the day, enemy tanks appearing in midafternoon and enemy artillery becoming active at about 1800.

Air Action

55. The parachute drops made by five C-46s and one C-54 took place at 0730 on D-Day. Indications are that the drops were reasonably accurate but considerable ammunition was lost near San Blas. The parachutists north of Red Beach apparently landed in the presence of the enemy and were not heard from thereafter. A total of 172 parachutists took part in the drops.

56. B-26 aircraft rotated over the beachhead through D-Day, sank one gunboat, and made effective strikes against enemy ground troops at Red Beach, inflicting several hundred casualties, according to report. In all, a total of 13 combat sorties were flown on D-Day, in the course of which four B-26s were lost to enemy T-33 action. In the same period, the Castro air force lost two Sea Furies and two B-26s to anti-aircraft fire.

57. Impressed by the ease with which the T-33 aircraft could destroy the obsolete B-26-type aircraft, the CIA leaders decided to attempt, by a bombing attack, to destroy the remaining Castro aircraft at night on the ground. Six aircraft were scheduled to strike San Antonio de los Baños, believed to be the main base of operations, in two waves of three each during the night of 17-18 April. The mission was flown but was unsuccessful because of heavy haze and low clouds over the target.

58. Because of the developing shortage of ammunition in the beachhead at the end of D-Day, an air supply drop was arranged consisting of four C-54s and two C-46s. Of these drops, five were successful, but in one case most of the supplies drifted into the water from which only a part could be salvaged.

D+1

59. During the night of D-Day-D+1, the invasion shipping departing from the landing area for the south proceeded to a point about 50 miles off the Cuban coast. Here the two LCIs and three LCUs rendezvoused as directed, but the two freighters, the *Atlántico* and the *Caribe* continued south without pausing. They did not turn back until intercepted and encouraged to return by the United States Navy, the *Atlántico* some 110 miles to the south, and the *Caribe* 218 miles south of the Cuban coast. Thus, the *Caribe* was never available for resupply operations while the fight on the beach lasted and the *Atlántico* did not get back to the rendezvous point until 1645 on D+1, 18 April.

Red Beach

60. The troops north of Red Beach came under heavy attack during the early hours of D+1. At 0300 enemy tanks were reported approaching from the north and by 0730 the situation was so difficult that the decision was made to move the force to Blue Beach. This movement began at 0900 and was completed about 1030. By that time, ammunition was low in the Red Beach force, but casualties, about 20, were comparatively light.

61. After reaching Blue Beach, the retreating force was allowed about two hours of rest, after which they were given additional ammunition and ordered back toward Red Beach in order to block the coast road to the movement of the force with which they had been engaged in the Red Beach area. They encountered this force somewhere west of Blue Beach and heavy fighting ensued. Exactly what occurred is not known, but it is assumed that the invaders eventually succumbed to the superior numbers of Castro forces moving down from the south.

Blue Beach

62. Enemy artillery fire began falling on the troops in the

San Blas area at 0400 and continued most of the day. In the absence of radio communication, it was necessary to send officer couriers from the San Blas area to Blue Beach in order to communicate with the Brigade commander who had set up his command post on the beach. At 0730 Roberto San Román, brother of the Brigade commander, went back to the beach for this purpose, reporting the situation around San Blas and seeking information. The Brigade commander at that time indicated that the situation at Red Beach was critical. In order to cover Blue Beach, he had stationed some of his reserve forces to the east blocking the coast road coming from that direction and others to the northwest to cover the approaches from that quarter.

63. During the day artillery fire and enemy pressure on the San Blas forces compelled a gradual contraction of their position around the town. They attempted a counterattack to the north in the afternoon, but it soon bogged down in the face of superior forces.

64. By the end of the day, ammunition was very low throughout the beachhead. Only M-1 ammunition seems to have been reasonably plentiful, although the commander of the Heavy Weapons Company indicates that he was never out of 4.2 mortar ammunition. He indicates, however, that it was necessary to ration it carefully. In spite of the heavy fighting, there appeared to have been surprisingly few casualties among the invaders.

65. In the evening, the Brigade commander was asked by CIA Headquarters via the *Blagar* whether he wished evacuation. He replied, "I will not be evacuated. We will fight to the end here if we have to."

Air Action

66. On D+1 it became necessary to utilize some American civilian contract pilots to protect the beachhead area because some of the Cuban pilots either were too tired to fly or refused to do so. Six sorties were flown during the afternoon

of D+1, attacking a long column of tanks and vehicles approaching Blue Beach along the coast road from the north. The attack was reported to have been very successful with an estimated 1,800 casualties inflicted on the enemy and the destruction of seven tanks. Napalm was used in these attacks, as well as bombs and rockets.

D+2

67. As events turned out, the night of D+1/ D+2 offered the last opportunity to get ammunition to the beach. The *Atlántico* had returned from its trek to the south, rendezvousing with the other ships about 50 miles off the coast at 1645 on D+1. It began discharging cargo at once into the LCUs, completing the transfer at 2200, at which time [] reported to CIA Headquarters that the LCI *Blagar* would escort the LCUs to Blue Beach unless otherwise advised. He indicated that his estimated time of arrival on the beach would be 0630, that is to say, dawn on D+2.

68. The *Blagar* began to move northward with the three LCUs, reporting to CIA Headquarters, however, that if low jet cover were not furnished by first light, the captain believed that he would lose all the ships. Prior to this time he had requested the escort of a U.S. Navy destroyer. At 2145 CIA Headquarters wired the *Blagar* that a destroyer escort was not possible, to which message the captain replied that if he could not get destroyer escort in and out of Blue Beach, his Cuban crew would mutiny. At CIA Headquarters in Washington these messages were discussed and the critical decision was taken to stop the northern movement of the ammunition ships and direct them to rendezvous some 60 miles south of the Cuban coast.

69. The reasons for this decision appear to have been as follows. The CIA leaders in Washington were aware of the liberal amount of ammunition (three days' supply) which had been taken ashore on D-Day and also of the airdrops on the night of D+1. (See Annex 27) Further, they had ordered

additional drops on the night of D+1/D+2. Considering the climate in which this operation had been planned in Washington, the CIA leaders apparently felt that it was hopeless to ask for either destroyer escort or jet cover for the ammunition convoy. Without this overt U.S. support, it was felt that the loss of the ships would be inevitable if they tried to run in, in daylight—if, indeed, they could get the Cuban crews to make the attempt. Under these circumstances, they felt justified in calling off the sea resupply effort and made no further attempt beyond an arrangement for another airdrop to get in ammunition before the final surrender. Except for one C-46 which landed on the Blue Beach airstrip, the attempt to resupply by air was unsuccessful because of enemy control of the air over the beachhead.

70. Although permission was not sought for jet escort for the ammunition ships, Mr. Bissell of CIA sought and received presidential authority to have the Navy to fly CAP [combat air patrol] over the beachhead from 0630 to 0730 on the morning of D+2. The purpose of this mission was to allow the B-26s to provide close support to the troops in the beachhead and cover for air resupply. This CAP was flown but, as indicated below, was of no avail.

71. Within the beachhead, the troops in the San Blas area began a general retreat in the morning of D+2. The last message received from the Brigade commander by the *Blagar* at 1432 read: "Am destroying all equipment and communications. I have nothing left to fight with. Am taking to the woods. I can't wait for you." Units and individuals arriving at Blue Beach shortly thereafter found the Brigade Command Post gone and heavy artillery fire falling in the vicinity. Pressure on the beachhead was coming from the north and the northwest. The last known report on the situation indicates that at 1700 Blue Beach was still clear of the enemy. It appears that fighting ceased shortly thereafter and by nightfall resistance in the beachhead had ended.

Air Action

72. On the morning of D+2 American pilots were again used for the protection of the beachhead. The morning sorties were directed to arrive over the beachhead in the period 6:30 to 7:30 A.M. to take advantage of the one-hour period of Navy cover. For an undetermined reason, they came in almost an hour early with the result that two B-26s were destroyed by the T-33s. A total of seven sorties were flown on this occasion with undetermined results.

73. As indicated above, three cargo aircraft tried to fly in ammunition on the morning of D+2 but were turned back by the presence of enemy air. A fourth C-46, succeeding in landing on the Blue Beach airstrip in the hours of darkness, unloaded ammunition and picked up a B-26 pilot who had been shot down, departing at daylight. (See Annex 28)

74. These sorties ended the action of the invasion force which began standdown activities thereafter with a total of 21 aircraft still in commission. It is difficult to be sure of the losses suffered by the Castro air force. The D-2 air strikes positively destroyed five Castro aircraft, with undetermined damage to others, and four other combat aircraft were destroyed in the beachhead area.

75.* It may be asked how near the landing ever came to

* Admiral Burke and Mr. Dulles consider that there is insufficient evidence to support the conjectures in this paragraph. 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, an increasing support from the populace and eventual success of the operation.

success. Had the ammunition shortage been surmounted, which is to say, had the Castro air been neutralized, would the landing force have accomplished its mission? Considering their lack of experience, the Cubans ashore fought well and inflicted considerable losses on the Castro militia while they had ammunition. Contrary to the view held prior to the landing that with control of the air the CEF could have maintained themselves for some time, with the rapid appearance of the vastly superior Castro forces on the scene, the ultimate success of such a small landing force became very unlikely. The limited number of B-26 crews, if forced to continue to operate from Nicaragua, would have been strained to provide continuous daylight air support to the beachhead. An attempt by the landing force to exercise the guerrilla option and take to the hills would have been virtually impossible because of the presence of the encircling Castro forces and of the instructions which the Cuban invasion units had received to fall back on the beaches in case of a penetration of the beachhead. Under the conditions which developed we are inclined to believe that the beachhead could not have survived long without substantial help from the Cuban population or without overt U.S. assistance. Although under these conditions the guerrilla alternative did not exist, with control of the air the CEF might have been able to withdraw wholly or in part by sea.

III. *Involvement of the U.S. Navy*

(See Annex 29, Subject: Rules of Engagement Operations "Bumpy Road")

76. As originally planned, the only involvement of the U.S. Navy in Operation Zapata was the requirement for one destroyer to escort the CEF ships on D-2 and D-1 to the transport area about three miles off-shore, and for one LSD [landing ship dock] to deliver landing craft (three LCUs and four LCVPs [landing craft, vehicles and personnel]) to the transport area. Also, there was the requirement for U.S. naval

air cover over the CEF ships during the hours of daylight on D-1.

77. As the date for the invasion approached, there were numerous discussions of the rules of engagement which would govern the use of naval units. In final form, the approved rules of engagement allowed the U.S. naval forces to open fire only if they or the CEF were attacked while under escort, and the escorting destroyers were not to approach within 20 miles of Cuban territory. If it became necessary for U.S. forces to intervene to protect the CEF ships, the operation would then be automatically cancelled, and the CEF ships would withdraw to a port to be designated by the CIA. Because of concern over the possible abandonment of the operation as the result of U.S. intervention, the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the request of CIA dispatched the following message on April 13 to CINCLANT [Commander in Chief, Atlantic], Admiral Dennison: "In summary, hope is that overall operations will not need to be aborted because of U.S. military intervention and to this end CEF prepared to take substantive risks."

78. With the cancellation of the D-Day air strikes and the subsequent landing and combat on the beach, the requirements placed upon the U.S. Navy progressively increased. The rules of engagement indicated above remained in effect until 0422R, 17 April, when CINCLANT was directed by JCS 994221 to be prepared to provide CAP [combat air patrol] for CEF shipping outside territorial waters and early warning for CEF ships. This was an anticipatory action by the Joint Chiefs of Staff while the request was being made to the White House for CAP following the cancellation of the D-Day air strikes. Only the employment of an EW [early warning] vessel was authorized and these instructions were dispatched to CINCLANT at 0550. The rules of engagement for U.S. naval forces remained the same, except that the EW destroyers were not to close within 30 miles of Cuban territory (i.e., ten miles farther away than previously authorized).

79.

22 lines deleted

80. At 1337R, 18 April, based upon a call from Admiral Burke from the White House, the JCS directed CINCLANT to conduct a photo and visual reconnaissance using unmarked naval aircraft as soon as possible to determine the situation on the beach. The aircraft were authorized to protect themselves from attack and were to take all precautions to avoid being identified as U.S.

81. Based upon a call from Admiral Burke at the White House, the JCS at 1449R, 18 April, directed CINCLANT to prepare unmarked naval planes for possible combat use. The number to be left to CINCLANT's discretion. CINCLANT was advised in this same message that there was no intention of U.S. intervention. These aircraft were made ready but permission was not given to use them.

82. At 1957R, 18 April, the JCS informed CINCLANT of the possibility that C-130 aircraft with U.S. Air Force markings removed might be used for night drops on Blue Beach the night of 18-19 April. These airdrops by C-130 were never conducted because the aircraft would have been unable to reach the beachhead prior to dawn.

83. Upon the request of CIA and with the approval of the President after a conference at the White House, the JCS at 0334R, 19 April directed CINCLANT to furnish air cover of six unmarked aircraft over CEF forces during the period 0630 to 0730 local time 19 April to defend the CEF against air attack from Castro planes. He was directed to not seek air combat but to defend CEF forces from air attack. Further to not attack ground targets. (Note: The purpose of this CAP was to provide cover to CEF transport and B-26 type aircraft which were due at the beachhead during this period.) In this same message CINCLANT was directed to be prepared to conduct evacuation from Blue Beach using unmarked amphibious craft with crews in dungarees, and that if the evacuation by U.S. ships were ordered he was to furnish air cover to protect landing craft.

84. At 1157R the JCS confirmed a telephone call to CINCLANT made by Admiral Burke at 1020R upon orders

from the White House directing CINCLANT to send two destroyers to a position off Blue Beach to determine possibilities for evacuation. CINCLANT was also directed to fly reconnaissance over the beach to determine the situation. No ground attacks were authorized but active air-to-air combat was authorized.

85. On 19 April at 1312R, based upon a call from Admiral Burke from the White House, the JCS directed CINCLANT to have destroyers take CEF personnel off the beach and from the water to the limit of their capability: Use CEF boats and craft as practicable; provide air cover; if destroyers fired on they are authorized to return the fire to protect themselves while on this humanitarian mission. (Note: The reason that amphibious force craft were not used was that *Phieron II* had not yet arrived off the objective area.)

86. At 2052R, 19 April, the JCS informed CINCLANT that existing instructions in respect to air and surface protection for CEF ships remain in effect. This was the safe haven for CEF ships 15 miles or more offshore. No further requirement for an air CAP in the beachhead area.

87. On 20 April, upon direction of the President to Admiral Burke the JCS at 1946R directed CINCLANT:

a. Take charge of CEF ships and personnel and get them safely to Vieques. Navy on scene commander can relay message to CEF ships via me.

b. Conduct destroyer patrols off Blue Beach tonight of possible evacuation of survivors and instruct CO [commanding officer] he is authorized to ground his ship if it will facilitate mission. Use of amphibious ship and craft authorized in addition to DD [destroyer] if desired. Repeat patrol tomorrow night approaching area in sight of land but outside gun range prior to darkness. Provide air cover. Rules of engagement during patrols same as before.

These rules are to open fire only in self-defense.

IV. *Exercise of Control in Washington*

5 lines deleted

manned the Command Post around the clock, making those operational decisions which they felt within their authority and seeking higher approval from the Secretary of State or the President for those matters beyond their authority. Mr. Bissell and General Cabell, who were immediately available for consultation, were usually the emissaries sent to obtain this latter kind of approval.

89. There was formal and continuous liaison between the CIA Command Post and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This was effected by an exchange of liaison officers between the Command Post and the Joint Staff [] In addition, the Command Post transmitted messages and selected operational cable traffic to the Joint Staff by telephone and TWX [teletypewriter exchange service]. There was telephone and cable contact with CINCLANT.

90. Within the Pentagon, [] had a situation briefing in the Joint Staff at 0730 and 1600 daily which the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, JCS attended. The other Chiefs maintained liaison officers in [] section who kept their seniors informed.

91. The technical performance of the CIA communications net was reported to have been excellent. There was an impressive volume of traffic transmitted over it. Nevertheless, the President, the Secretary of State and others had insufficient knowledge of the situation to react in time and to make the needed decisions. This inadequacy resulted from many factors: the loss of important signal equipment in the sinking of the *Río Escondido*, the wetting of the portable radios carried ashore and the resulting failure of radio communications within the Brigade net ashore, the lack of information on the part of the Brigade commander himself, and, most importantly, the absence of an experienced American officer or headquarters in the combat area with the re-

sponsibility to summarize and present the changing situation to the authorities in Washington.

92. As a result of these factors, the President and his advisors were generally in the dark about important matters as to the situation ashore and were uninformed of the flight of the cargo ships. To clarify the situation, the U.S. Navy was directed to fly a reconnaissance mission over the beach on the afternoon of D+1, reporting about 1900 that there was no evidence of fighting at Blue Beach where the beachhead apparently had a depth of about ten miles. This was the last indication of the situation ashore which the President received until the following morning when he received the message that the beachhead had collapsed and that men were fighting in the water.

93. In the urgency to obtain reliable information, it was proposed on the morning of D+2 to send an American observer ashore with a radio and [] on the LCI *Barbara J* was chosen to go. However, the fall of the beachhead voided the mission.

13 June 1961

MEMORANDUM NO. 2

Immediate Causes of Failure of the Operation Zapata

Summary

1. The proximate cause of the failure of the Zapata Operation was a shortage of ammunition which developed from the first day of the landing, April 17th, and became increasingly critical until it resulted in the surrender of the landing force about 1400 on April 19th.

2. There were three primary reasons for this shortage of ammunition. The logistical plan for the landing made ample provision for ammunition with the men and in floating reserve. However, upon landing there is evidence that the Cubans wasted their ammunition in excessive firing, displaying the poor ammunition discipline which is common to troops in their first combat.

3. Far more serious was the loss of the freighters *Río Escondido* and *Houston* through air attack at about 0930 on the morning of April 17th. The *Río* was a particular loss as it had ten days of reserve ammunition on board, as well as other important supplies. The *Houston* should have been able to land most of its supplies before being hit, but the unloading was delayed by trouble with the outboard motors of the ships' boats as well as by the apparent lethargy of the 5th Battalion charged with the unloading.

4. The air attack which sunk these ships caused all others in the landing area to put out to sea, as the only available protection in the absence of control of air, with the order to rendezvous 50 miles off the coast. The freighters *Atlántico* and *Caribe* headed south and never stopped until intercepted by the U.S. Navy at points 110 miles and 218 miles, respectively, south of Cuba.

5. The *Caribe* was so far away that its cargo, principally aviation supplies, was never available for movement to Blue Beach while the fight lasted. The *Atlántico*, which had considerable ammunition on board, did rejoin the other ships of the expedition at 1816, April 18th, at a point about 50 miles south of the beach and transferred her supplies to the waiting two LCIs and three LCU's for a night run to the beach.

6. By the time the supplies were transferred and the convoy had started north it was too late to hope to resupply the beach under cover of darkness. The convoy commander asked CIA Operational Headquarters, Washington, for destroyer escort and U.S. Navy jet cover without which he believed that he would lose his ships to air attack the next morning. He added that without U.S. Navy support the Cuban crew would mutiny if sent back to the beach.

7. As a result of these messages, CIA Headquarters, feeling that it would be futile to order these ammunition craft to attempt a daylight unloading, called off the mission and the attempt to get ammunition to the beach by sea ended. The President was not requested for specific authority to extend the air cover to protect the ammunition convoy.

8. These causes for the ammunition shortage rested in turn on others which lay deeper in the plans and organization of this operation and the attitude toward it on the part of government officials. The effectiveness of the Castro air force over the beach resulted from a failure to destroy the airplanes on the ground (particularly the T-33s whose importance was not fully appreciated in advance) before or concurrently with the landing. This failure was a consequence of the restraints put on the anti-Castro air force in planning and executing its

strikes, primarily for the purpose of protecting the covert character of the operation. These restraints included: the decision to use only the B-26 as a combat aircraft because it had been distributed widely to foreign countries; the limitation of prelanding strikes to those which could be flown from non-U.S. controlled airfields under the guise of coming from Cuban strips, thus eliminating the possibility of using jet fighters or even T-33 trainers; the inability to use any non-Cuban base within short turnaround distance from the target area (about nine hours were required to turn around a B-26 for a second mission over the target from Nicaragua); prohibition of use of American contract pilots for tactical air operations; restriction on ammunitions, notably napalm; and the cancellation of the strikes planned at dawn on D-Day. The last mentioned was probably the most serious as it eliminated the last favorable opportunity to destroy the Castro air force on the ground. The cancellation seems to have resulted partly from the failure to make the air strike plan entirely clear in advance to the President and the Secretary of State, but, more importantly, by misgivings as to the effect of the air strikes on the position of the United States in the current UN debate on Cuba. Finally, there was the failure to carry the issue to the President when the opportunity was presented and explain to him with proper force the probable military consequences of a last-minute cancellation.

9. The flight of the *Caribe* and *Atlántico* might have been prevented had more attention been paid in advance to the control of the ships to include the placing of some Americans aboard. The CIA officer responsible for all the ships involved was a [] who was aboard the LCI *Blagar* with no means to control the freighters, or, indeed, to locate them after they disappeared. Only the initiative of the U.S. Navy in the vicinity brought them back to the scene of action. The absence of Americans on board these vessels was an application of the general order to keep Americans out of the combat area. This order had been violated in a few cases, but it was apparently not considered important to do so in the case of the freighters.

10. The lack of full appreciation of the ammunition situation at the end of D+1 in the CIA Operational Headquarters was largely the result of the difficulty of keeping abreast of the situation on the beach, and the location and movement of the ships at sea from the distance of Washington. Also, there was a confidence in the supply of the beach by air which turned out to be unjustified. Had there been a command ship in the sea area with an advance CIA Command Post on board, a more effective control would have been possible.

11. 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. Top level direction was given through ad hoc meetings of senior officials without consideration of operational plans in writing and with no arrangement for recording conclusions and decisions reached.

13 June 1961

MEMORANDUM NO. 3

Conclusions of the Cuban Study Group

1. It is concluded that:

a. A paramilitary operation of the magnitude of Zapata could not be prepared and conducted in such a way that all U.S. support of it and connection with it could be plausibly disclaimed. Accordingly, this operation did not fit within the limited scope of NSC 5412/2. By about November 1960, the impossibility of running Zapata as a covert operation under CIA should have been recognized and the situation reviewed. The subsequent decision might then have been made to limit the efforts to attain covertness to the degree and nature of U.S. participation, and to assign responsibility for the amphibious operation to the Department of Defense. In this case, the CIA would have assisted in concealing the participation of Defense. Failing such a reorientation, the project should have been abandoned.

b. Once the need for the operation was established, its success should have had the primary consideration of all agencies in the government. Operational restrictions designed to protect its covert character should have been accepted only if they did not impair the chance of success. As it was, the leaders of the operation were obliged to fit their plan inside changing ground rules laid down for non-military considerations, which often had serious operational disadvantages.

c. The leaders of the operation did not always present their case with sufficient force and clarity to the senior officials of the government to allow the latter to appreciate the consequences of some of their decisions. This remark applies in particular to the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the D-Day strikes.

d. There was a marginal character to the operation which increased with each additional limitation and cast a serious doubt over its ultimate success. The landing force was small in relation to its 36-mile beachhead and to the probable enemy reaction. The air support was short of pilots if the beach was to require cover for a long period. There were no fighters to keep off such Castro airplanes as might escape the initial air strikes. There were few Cuban replacements for the battle losses which were certain to occur on the ground and in the air. It is felt that the approval of so marginal an operation by many officials was influenced by the feeling that the Cuban Brigade was a waning asset which had to be used quickly as time was against us, and that this operation was the best way to realize the most from it. Also, the consequences of demobilizing the Brigade and the return of the trainees to the USA, with its implication that the United States had lost interest in the fight against Castro, played a part in the final decision.

e. The Cuban Expeditionary Force achieved tactical surprise in its landing and, as we have said, fought well and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. Although there had been considerable evidence of strong pockets of resistance against Castro throughout Cuba, the short life of the beachhead was not sufficient to trigger an immediate popular reaction, and Castro's repressive measures following the landing made coordinated uprisings of the populace impossible. The effectiveness of the Castro military forces, as well as that of his police measures, was not entirely anticipated or foreseen.

f. In approving the operation, the President and senior officials had been greatly influenced by the understanding that the landing force could pass to guerrilla status, if

unable to hold the beachhead. These officials were informed on many occasions that the Zapata area was guerrilla territory, and that the entire force, in an emergency, could operate as guerrillas. With this alternative to fall back on, the view was held that a sudden or disastrous defeat was most improbable. As we have indicated before, the guerrilla alternative as it had been described was not in fact available to this force in the situation which developed.

g. The operation suffered from being run from the distance of Washington. At that range and with the limited reporting which was inevitable on the part of field commanders absorbed in combat, it was not possible to have a clear understanding in Washington of events taking place in the field. This was particularly the case on the night of D+1 when an appreciation of the ammunition situation would have resulted in an appeal for U.S. air cover and an all-out effort to supply the beach by all available means.

h. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had the important responsibility of examining into the military feasibility of this operation. By acquiescing in the Zapata Plan, they gave the impression to others of approving it although they had expressed their preference for Trinidad at the outset, a point which apparently never reached the senior civilian officials. As a body they reviewed the successive changes of the plan piecemeal and only within a limited context, a procedure which was inadequate for a proper examination of all the military ramifications. Individually, they had differing understandings of important features of the operation apparently arising from oral briefings in the absence of written documents.

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

j. The planning and conduct of the operation would have been improved if there had been an initial statement of governmental policy, assigning the mission and setting the guidelines within which it was to develop. Thereafter, there

was a need for a formalized procedure for interdepartmental coordination and follow-up with adequate record-keeping of decisions.

2. In the light of the foregoing considerations, we are of the opinion that the preparations and execution of paramilitary operations such as Zapata are a form of Cold War action in which the country must be prepared to engage. If it does so, it must engage in it with a maximum chance of success. Such operations should be planned and executed by a governmental mechanism capable of bringing into play, in addition to military and covert techniques, all other forces, political, economic, ideological, and intelligence, which can contribute to its success. No such mechanism presently exists but should be created to plan, coordinate and further a national Cold War strategy capable of including paramilitary operations.

13 June 1961

MEMORANDUM NO. 4

Recommendations of the Cuban Study Group

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

A Mechanism for the Planning and Coordination of Cold War Strategy

1. The overall problem in conducting Cold War operations is to be able to coordinate, foster and focus all available and necessary assets on the achievement of objectives approved by the President. These assets are found in many departments of the government, but particularly in the Department of State, the Department of Defense and the CIA. To use them effectively requires planning and coordination across departmental lines without disturbing departmental responsibility for the execution of agreed tasks arising from the Cold War programs.

2. In the past, the requirements of Cold War actions have often been met by weekly meetings of the 5412 Committee or by ad hoc task forces organized to cope with a particular situation. This method is clumsy and lends itself to a proliferation of short-lived committees which come and go without building up experience in a permanent staff and accumulating a body of knowledge needed for improved future performance. The present proposal is to set up a permanent committee of representatives of under-secretarial rank from State,

Defense and CIA under a full-time chairman reporting directly to the President. This new organization (herein called tentatively the Strategic Resources Group and abbreviated SRG) would guide and coordinate Cold War strategy and maintain a Cold War Indications Center where useful Cold War data would be assembled and the world Cold War situation kept under constant review. (See Inclosure A—Chart of SRG) The SRG would replace the 5412 Committee, would assume the review of important covert operations now being conducted or to be conducted under NSC 5412/2, and would undertake the development and recommendations of Cold War plans and programs for those countries or areas specifically assigned to it by the President for that purpose.

3. A Cold War plan or program would usually have its inception in the approval by the President of a concept submitted to him by the SRG. Thereafter, the SRG with the staff of the Cold War Indications Center would produce an outline plan containing an assignment of primary responsibility and supporting roles for further development of the concept. At this point, it may often be desirable to set up an interdepartmental task force to expand the plan and coordinate execution. The chairman, SRG, or its representative, would be the chairman of such a task force and would keep records of all meetings. If the execution of the plan fell generally within the capability of a single agency no task force would be necessary. In either case, the outline plan would be expanded by this task force or by the agency of primary responsibility to include the assignment of specific departmental tasks.

4. Upon the elaboration of the supporting departmental plans to carry out these tasks, the SRG would assemble and review all parts of the plan, submitting it or a summary thereof to the President for approval and for authorization to implement. At this point, as well as at earlier stages, it is anticipated that the President would consult the NSC or members of it.

5. The foregoing procedure shows in outline the possible treatment of a completely new project. In practice, the proce-

cedure would be compressed and short-circuited when preliminary work had been done prior to consideration of a project by the SRG. The full procedure is shown in the following tabulation.

Procedure for Planning and Coordinating Interdepartmental Cold War Operations

	<i>Developed By</i>	<i>Approved By</i>	<i>Executed By</i>
Concept of a Cold War operation	SRG or other governmental agency	SRG President	
Outline plan including assignment of primary responsibility and basic tasks	SRG or other designated agency	President	
Development of departmental tasks	Task Force or department of primary responsibility	SRG	
Departmental plans	Departments and agencies involved	SRG President	Departments and agencies involved, often under coordination of an interdepartmental task force of which the Chairman, SRG, or his representative would be a member
Evaluation of progress and final results		SRG	Data provided by departments and agencies involved

6. a. The Cold War Indications Center (CWIC), under the Strategic Resources Group, could, if fully developed, eventually serve as the governmental Command Post for the Cold War, organized and staffed to operate around the clock. Initially, it would perform the following functions for the countries and areas assigned to the SRG:

(1) Constant study of the situation to determine progress toward the approved goals of U.S. foreign policy.

(2) Maintenance of basic data for each country showing assets and liabilities affecting U.S. policy.

(3) The timely determination of "criticality," that is, where and when there is a danger of defeat or opportunity

for victory in a given country or area. When a country is determined to be "critical," it would normally be assigned by the President to the planning and coordination jurisdiction of the Strategic Resources Group.

(4) Determination of requirements to fill the gap between assets and liabilities, and recommendations to correct the imbalance.

(5) Recommendation of tasks which should be assigned to the executive departments and agencies.

(6) Follow-up on decisions and actions taken and recording of results achieved.

b. The staff of the CWIC would consist of a director assisted by a technical advisor for the display of data within the Center. He would have two principal assistants: (1) the chief, Foreign Information, charged with the assembly and display of basic data; (2) the chief of Plans and Review, charged with the evaluation of criticality, the determination of requirements, the recommendation of tasks and the review of results. The Center would be supported by a small working staff including specialists from State, Defense, JCS, CIA, and USIA on loan or detail from their departments and agencies of origin.

7. It should be clear that the SRG would not operate and would issue no orders in its own name. At the Washington level, it would collect data, keep the Cold War situation under review and anticipate future requirements. It would not get into interdepartmental activities except when specifically directed by the President and then only for overall planning, coordination and review. Responsibility for coordination overseas would remain as at present, although it may become desirable to have miniature Cold War Indications Centers in some embassies.

8. It is recommended that appropriate action be taken at once to set up a Strategic Resources Group and a Cold War Indications Center in accordance with the foregoing concept.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2

Responsibility for Paramilitary Operations

1. For the purpose of this study, a paramilitary operation is considered to be one which by its tactics and its requirements in military-type personnel, equipment and training approximates a conventional military operation. It may be undertaken in support of an existing government friendly to the U.S. or in support of a rebel group seeking to overthrow a government hostile to us. The U.S. may render assistance to such operations overtly, covertly or by a combination of both methods. In size these operations may vary from the infiltration of a squad of guerrillas to a military operation such as the Cuban invasion. The small operations will often fall completely within the normal capability of one agency; the large ones may affect State, Defense, CIA, USIA and possibly other departments and agencies.

2. In order to conduct paramilitary operations with maximum effectiveness and flexibility within the context of the Cold War, it is recommended that current directives and procedures be modified to effect the following:

a. Any proposed paramilitary operation in the concept stage will be presented to the Strategic Resources Group for initial consideration and for approval as necessary by the President. Thereafter, the SRG will assign primary responsibility for planning, for interdepartment coordination and for execution to the Task Force, department or individual best qualified to carry forward the operation to success, and will indicate supporting responsibilities. Under this principle, the Department of Defense will normally receive responsibility for overt paramilitary operations. Where such an operation is to be wholly covert or disavowable, it may be assigned to CIA, provided that it is within the normal capabilities of the agency. Any large paramilitary operation wholly or partly covert which requires significant numbers of militarily trained personnel, amounts of military equipment which exceed normal CIA-controlled stocks and/or military experience of a kind and level pecu-

liar to the armed services is properly the primary responsibility of the Department of Defense with the CIA in a supporting role.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

Improvement of Effectiveness in the Paramilitary Field

1. It is considered that the adoption of Recommendation 1, the creation of the Strategic Resources Group, will provide the organizational mechanism for improving interdepartmental effectiveness in the paramilitary field. Assuming the existence of such a group, we consider that the problem then is to inventory paramilitary assets, determine probable paramilitary requirements and then make provision for any deficit between assets and requirements. Under the terms of Recommendation 2, the Department of Defense is regarded as usually having the primary interest in planning and executing paramilitary operations, whereas State will be the principal beneficiary (since paramilitary operations are undertaken to achieve political ends) and CIA an expert collaborator in maintaining the covert character of such operations as required.

2. It is recommended that the President direct the Department of Defense, working with State and CIA, to inventory the paramilitary assets available to the U.S., overt and covert, U.S. and foreign, at home and abroad. After discussion with State and CIA, Defense will thereafter provide an estimate of paramilitary requirements and will recommend ways and means to meet any deficit existing between assets and requirements. Defense will transmit the results of these actions with recommendations to the President with information to the Strategic Resources Group.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4*

Relations of the JCS to the President in Cold War Operations

1. In the face of the threat of the Cold War, we feel that the JCS should be brought to feel as great a sense of responsibility for contributing to the success of the Cold War as to the conventional military defense of the country in time of war. They should be encouraged to express the military viewpoint clearly and directly before the President and other high officials of the government. The latter, in turn, should be aware of the need of getting the considered views of the Chiefs before taking important decisions affecting Cold War programs and operations.

2. It is recommended that the President inform the Joint Chiefs of Staff essentially as follows:

a. The President regards the Joint Chiefs of Staff as his principal military advisor responsible both for initiating advice to him and for responding to requests for advice. He expects their advice to come to him direct and unfiltered.

b. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have a similar responsibility for the defense of the nation in the Cold War as in conventional hostilities. They should know the military and paramilitary forces and resources available to the Department of Defense, verify their readiness, report on their adequacy, and make appropriate recommendations for their expansion and improvement. The President looks to the Chiefs to contribute dynamic and imaginative leadership in contributing to the success of the military and paramilitary aspects of Cold War programs.

c. The President expects the Joint Chiefs of Staff to present the military viewpoint in governmental councils in such a way as to assure that the military factors are clearly understood before decisions are reached. When only the Chairman or a single Chief is present, that officer must

* Mr. Dulles only participated in the preparation of the paragraphs of this recommendation which relate to the relationship of the JCS to Cold War activities.

represent the Chiefs as a body, taking such preliminary and subsequent actions as may be necessary to assure that he does in fact represent the corporate judgment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

d. While the President looks to the Chiefs to present the military factor without reserve or hesitation, he regards them to be more than military men and expects their help in fitting military requirements into the overall context of any situation, recognizing that the most difficult problem in government is to combine all assets in a unified, effective pattern.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5

1. It is our feeling that every effort should be made to draw all lessons from the Cuban operation, particularly those which point up the errors made and the reasons therefor. For this purpose all the principal participants in the decision-making process should be informed of what took place so that the operation can be viewed objectively in its totality. Because of the tight security which surrounded the operation in governmental circles, probably no one official now knows all the important facts concerning it. We believe that the Cuban Study Group should give an oral presentation to the participants of the highlights of their study.

2. We also feel that the occasion offers the President the opportunity to express to his principal assistants and advisors his sense of the need of a changed attitude on the part of the government and of the people toward the emergency which confronts us. The first requirement of such a change is to recognize that we are in a life and death struggle which we may be losing, and will lose unless we change our ways and marshal our resources with an intensity associated in the past only with times of war.* To effect this change, we must give imme-

* Mr. Dulles agrees with the estimate given in this paragraph 2 as to the gravity of the situation facing the country and with the various recommendations in Memorandum No. 4 relating to improving our operations under NSC 5412/2. He did not participate in the recommendations in this paragraph 2 following the asterisk.

diate consideration to taking such measures as the announcement of a limited national emergency, the review of any treaties or international agreements which restrain the full use of our resources in the Cold War, and the determination to seek the respect of our neighbors, without the criterion being international popularity, and a policy of taking into account the proportioning of foreign aid to the attitude shown us by our neighbors. In the light of the strained situation in Laos and the potential crisis building up over Berlin, we should consider at once affirmative programs to cope with the threat in both areas. There should be a re-examination of emergency powers of the President as to their adequacy to meet the developing situation.

3. The President might link these remarks to our Recommendation No. 1 which is the need to set up a governmental machinery for better use of our Cold War assets, and conclude on the note that any Cold War operation, once started, must be carried through to conclusion with the same determination as a military operation.

4. It is recommended that a critique of the Cuban operation, accompanied by a statement of the views of the President, be held with at least the following present: the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs and General Taylor.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6

In the course of its work, this Group has been exposed to the views on Cuba of many U.S. officials and of individuals, Cuban and U.S., who have been close to the Cuban problem. We have been struck with the general feeling that there can be no long-term living with Castro as a neighbor. His continued presence within the hemispheric community as a dangerously effective exponent of Communism and anti-Americanism constitutes a real menace capable of eventually overthrowing the elected governments in any one or more of weak Latin

American republics. There are only two ways to view this threat; either to hope that time and internal discontent will eventually end it, or to take active measures to force its removal. Unless by "time" we are thinking in terms of years, there is little reason to place reliance on the first course of action as being effective in Castro's police state. The second has been made more difficult by the April failure and is now possible only through overt U.S. participation with as much Latin American support as can be raised. Neither alternative is attractive, but no decision is, in effect, a choice of the first.

While inclining personally to a positive course of action against Castro without delay, we recognize the danger of dealing with the Cuban problem outside the context of the world Cold War situation. Action against Castro must be related to the probable course of events in such other places as Southeast Asia and Berlin which may put simultaneous claims on our resources.

It is recommended that the Cuban situation be reappraised in the light of all presently known factors and new guidance be provided for political, military, economic and propaganda action against Castro.

FIRST MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: First Meeting of General Maxwell Taylor's Board of Inquiry on Cuban Operations Conducted by CIA

Time and Place: 1400-1800 hours, 22 April 1961, Quarters Eye

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Maxwell D. Taylor
Attorney General Robert Kennedy
Admiral Arleigh Burke
Allen W. Dulles

Department of Defense
Major General David W. Gray
Colonel C. W. Shuler
Commander Mitchell

Other Participants
General C. P. Cabell
C. Tracy Barnes
Richard M. Bissell, Jr.

[]
[]

1. After a discussion of procedural matters, it was decided that all papers and documents stemming from the inquiry would be retained by General Maxwell Taylor. [

] Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, was designated recorder of the first meeting.

2. Mr. Dulles, in his opening remarks, cited the document which authorized CIA to conduct paramilitary operations. This document, NSC 5412, was described as one of the most secret documents in the U.S. Government. Mr. Dulles said that under this authority CIA is directed to engage in activities such as the Cuban operation under the general supervision of the National Security Council. General Taylor indicated that he wanted a copy of this document to be made available to him for his study. General Gray indicated he had a copy and would give it to General Taylor.

3. [] was then asked to describe Agency activities on the Cuban problem prior to the establishment of the Task Force, i.e., Branch 4 of the Western Hemisphere Division on 18 January 1960. In his remarks [] stated that in late 1958 CIA made two attempts (each approved by the Department of State) to block Castro's ascension to power. The first attempt was made in November 1958 when contact was established with Justo Carrillo and the Montecristi Group. The second attempt was made on or about the 9th of December 1958 when former Ambassador William D. Pawley, supported by the CIA Chief of Station in Havana, [], and [], approached Batista and proposed the establishment of a Junta to whom Batista would turn over the reins of government. [] was queried by the Attorney General as to the approximate date that the Agency concluded that Castro was unacceptable to the U.S. politically, if not actually a Communist, and when this conclusion reached the Secretary of State and the President. [] commented that there were reports as early as June or July 1958 during the period that sailors from Guantánamo were held by Castro forces which indicated beyond a reasonable doubt that the U.S. was up against an individual who could not be expected to be accepta-

ble to U.S. Government interests. Admiral Burke also made reference to the fact that he had been in at least one meeting with [] on or about 29 December 1958 in which officials of the Department of State, except for Undersecretary Robert Murphy, appeared to feel that Castro was politically compatible to U.S. objectives. Considerable discussion involving all members of the Investigating Committee followed on this point with the Attorney General requesting assurance that Agency reports at that time reached the highest authority.

4. Reference was made to the first few days of January 1959 in Havana when a primary target of the advance guard was the Communist files in BRAC [Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities].

24 lines deleted

6. The Cuban situation continued to deteriorate rapidly and in December 1959, it was decided that CIA needed to consider urgently the activation of two programs:

a. The selection, recruitment and careful evaluation (including medical, psychological, psychiatric and polygraph) of approximately [] Cubans, preferably with previous military experience, for an intensive training program which would qualify them to become instructors in various paramilitary skills, including leadership, sabotage, communications, etc.

b. The instructor cadre would in turn, in some third country in Latin America, conduct clandestinely a training of additional Cuban recruits who would be organized into small teams similar to the U.S. Army Special Forces concept, and infiltrated with communicators, into areas of Cuba where it had been determined numbers of dissidents existed who required specialized skills and leadership and military supplies.

At this time, the basic Agency concept of operations was that the members of the instructor cadre would never be committed to Cuban soil. The members of the paramilitary leadership groups would be introduced covertly into the target area.

8 lines deleted

8. [] outlined the organization of the Task Force and the steps which led to the paper presented to the President on 14 March 1960 and approved 17 March 1960, which was the first authorization to mount an operation to get rid of Castro. General Taylor requested the original T/O [table of organization] of that Task Force. He also requested other T/Os, including the present one, which will illustrate the build-up of the force.

9. Mr. Bissell discussed the 17th of March approval. The concept then presented persisted for approximately ten months. There were four major courses:

a. Creation of a political opposition. This took four to five months and during that period it was found less and less possible to rely on the Cuban politicians.

b. Mass communications to the Cuban people.

c. Covert intelligence and action originating inside Cuba.

d. The building of an adequate paramilitary force outside Cuba which called for cadres of leaders.

10. The original budget did not provide for the mounting of an organization of the type which eventually developed.

11. General Taylor then requested that the exact procedure followed in the clearance in this basic paper of 17 March 1960 be described.

12. Through 1958, 1959, 1960 and so far in 1961, weekly meetings have been held with the Assistant Secretary of State, his Deputy, Special Assistant, and a representative from the Office of Special Operations in State, for the purpose of briefing them on the highlights of intelligence. Since the approval of the paper, they have also been kept informed in general terms of major operational aspects.

13. Mr. Bissell said that the language of the basic paper was general as we did not know then how large a force would be built up. During the autumn months of 1960, the military force took shape and the original concept went through subtle changes.

ex-officers of the Cuban army were recruited and as complete a breakdown as possible of personnel.

20. Mr. Barnes stated that beginning about mid-November 1960, there were weekly discussions in the Special Group. Mr. Dulles said recommendations from the Task Force were considered at these meetings. Special Group references show that on 16 November 1960, the changing concept of the operation was noted by Undersecretary Livingston Merchant. By November 1960, it was recognized that guerrilla warfare operations in the Escambrays were not going well; we were having difficulty with air drops and some change in approach was needed.

21. Mr. Bissell said that one of the problems at this time was the Department of State's concern about tainting Guatemala and Nicaragua if the size was augmented. The Agency was asked to consider withdrawing from Guatemala and setting up an American base. After further consideration, the use of a base in the continental U.S. was ruled out.

22. In answer to General Taylor's question as to what bottlenecks existed, it was stated that there were no bases immediately available for the training of large numbers of the troops and that recruits came in at a trickle until the political base was broadened.

23. The Attorney General asked what was the purpose of a strike force, to which Mr. Bissell replied they would administer a strike which could lead to a general uprising or a formation of larger guerrilla units in the mountains with which dissidents could join forces. The strike force was not in repudiation of the guerrilla concept but in addition to it.

24. [] stated there never was a clear-cut decision in his mind policy-wise to use a strike force.

25. Mr. Bissell read excerpts from a memorandum of 8 December 1960 of a meeting of the Special Group where a changing concept had been presented by various members of the Task Force. General Taylor said that all members of the board want a copy of this paper.

- g. Data on both American and Cuban personnel.
- h. Supply plan.
- i. Training plan.
- j. Intelligence aspects.
- k. Reconstitution of facts and intelligence available when plans were approved.

32. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 1000 hours on Monday, 24 April 1961, in the Director's conference room.

[]

Distribution:

- Original—Copy #1—General Maxwell D. Taylor
- Copy #2—Admiral Arleigh Burke
- Copy #3—Allen W. Dulles
- Copy #4—Attorney General Robert Kennedy
- Copy #5—Major General D. W. Gray
- Copy #6—Richard M. Bissell, Jr.
- Copy #7—[]
- Copy #8—[]

SECOND MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Second Meeting of the Green Study Group

Time and Place: 1020-1700 hours, 24 April 1961, CIA Administration Building

Participants: *Study Group Members*
General Maxwell D. Taylor
Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy
Admiral Arleigh Burke
Mr. Allen W. Dulles,
Director of Central Intelligence

Department of Defense
General David W. Gray
Commander Mitchell

[]
Colonel Ingelido

Other Participants
General C. P. Cabell
Mr. Richard M. Bissell, Jr.

[]
Mr. C. Tracy Barnes
[]
[]

NOTE: The note at the top of page 81 before paragraph 48 refers to a 45-minute period when the CIA secretary was not present at the meeting. Although a duplication for the most part, in order to assure coverage of this 45-minute period, a copy of the Memo for Record of the afternoon meeting at CIA starting at 1350 on 24 April 1961, prepared by the Study Group assistant from General Taylor's office, has been appended to the original report.

1. Minutes of the first meeting held on Saturday, 22 April 1961, as prepared by [] were passed to all members of the Committee and read by them prior to the opening of today's session.

2. General Taylor suggested that since the President did not consider this study of the Cuban project to be either an "inquiry" or an "investigation," that some other title for the group be agreed upon. []'s suggestion that it be called the "Green Study Group" was agreed to and General Taylor suggested that the first page of the 22 April minutes be amended to reflect this change of title in the heading of those minutes.

3. General Taylor referred to the top of page five of the minutes of the first meeting in which a "Special Group" is mentioned and asked the identity of this special group. Mr. Barnes said that this was a special group that got into the activity at the change of phase (?) and that it was not the 5412 Special Group. Mr. Bissell promised to deliver to General Taylor by the end of the day, copies of all memoranda prepared by the Special Group on Cuba.

4. General Taylor said that he had asked the JCS to provide a recording secretary to keep a record of the proceedings of the Committee and that Colonel Ingelido would make his appearance during the course of the morning meeting. It was agreed [] would keep a record of the morning session and that Colonel Ingelido would thereafter take over.

5. The question of whether the meeting should be recorded was brought up and it was decided not to record the

meeting unless a particular speaker wished to have his remarks taped.

6. Mr. Kennedy asked that notes on the meeting be provided all members. Otherwise, only one copy of the actual record of the proceedings, and documents presented in connection therewith, would be kept.

7. Mr. Bissell then commenced the discussion by resuming the chronological account of the development of the project. He said on Saturday, 22 April, a review had been made of November and December 1960 developments. By early January, the original concept of a 300-man force broken up into small teams for infiltration—after possible training in the United States—became shifted to the concept of a much stronger strike force. To General Taylor's query as to whether this shift was covered by a formal paper, Mr. Bissell replied that there was no formal recording of the shift. The expansion of the forces in Guatemala was accelerated and on 12 January 1961, we received []. Following the arrival of these officers at the camp, the character of the training changed.

8. At the end of January, 28 January to be precise, the President was briefed on our Agency plan. At this time, little more was involved than a presentation, largely oral, of the status and a decision was obtained to continue with the activities but there was no implication that military action would be undertaken. General Taylor asked if this was the first time the plan had been presented to the President and Mr. Bissell said yes, but added that the President did not offer an opinion concerning it. Mr. Bissell said we were seeking authority to continue all our activities—overflights, etc. and to call attention to the fact that we were recruiting and moving men and accumulating material and expending money against mere contingencies, and that we were anxious to present our plan to General Lemnitzer. (General Gray was asked to provide a copy of this plan from his file. He remarked that this was the plan which the JCS had approved on 3 February 1961.)

9. Mr. Bissell stated that on or about 17 February 1961,

another meeting, including the President, was held. By this time the JCS had evaluated the military plan which had been developed by []. General Taylor asked if this plan was considerably different from the final plan adopted and was answered affirmatively. At this February meeting, we felt a sense of urgency as the military plan called for a D-Day of 5 March. At the 17 February meeting, it became clear that there would be no immediate decision and that the plan would have to "slip" by one month. It was recalled that the President, the Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, Mr. Bissell, Mr. Barnes, General Gray, [], Mr. Mann and Mr. Berle and possibly others, were present. General Taylor asked if the outcome of that meeting was to decide to let D-Day slip and Mr. Bissell answered affirmatively adding that certain questions had been raised with respect to military implications.

10. Mr. Bissell then read from a paper he had prepared on 11 March which was a statement of the status of preparations, actions, timing and possible alternate courses of actions. This was presented at a meeting attended by much the same persons who attended the 17 February meeting. At this juncture, Mr. Dulles called to the attention of the Committee a copy of Mr. Bundy's record of action of the 28 January meeting (of the NSC?). He stated he had no authority to disseminate copies but he would read it, which he did. The paper reported that the Director of Central Intelligence had reported on the situation in Cuba, that Cuba was rapidly becoming a Communist state and that the United States had undertaken a program of covert action, propaganda, sabotage and assistance to exiles. The paper reported that the present estimate of the Department of Defense was that no program existed at this time which had capability of correcting the situation. The President, according to the document, authorized the continued activities of the Agency, including overflights. The Department of State was instructed to propose actions which could be taken in concert with other countries of the hemisphere, such as Brazil and Colombia. Mr. Dulles read the paper in full and stated it was available at any time to members of the Committee.

11. Mr. Bissell read from a memorandum of the 11 March meeting concerning the status of immediate alternative courses of action:

- a. Use of force in such a way as to minimize appearance of an invasion, including amphibious infiltrations by night.
- b. Commit the PM [paramilitary] force to a surprise attack, accompanied by use of tactical air force.
- c. Employ two successive landings—one a diversionary force to be followed by landing of the main force 24 hours later.
- d. Send the force into an inaccessible area where it could hold the beachhead for considerable time.

“A” and “D” were included because at the 17 February meeting, the President and the Secretary had urged an examination of all possible alternatives. No affirmative decision came out of the 11 March meeting.

12. Mr. Dulles then proceeded to read the statement of action of the meeting of 8 February. (A discussion of the two February dates ensued—8 February and 17 February—with Mr. Bissell conceding that there was no meeting on 17 February, but that the paper had been prepared for a meeting which had been cancelled or postponed.) Mr. Dulles stated that the President was not present at the 8 February meeting but the discussion resulted in a decision by the President to authorize the encouragement of the establishment of an exile Junta and Revolutionary Council and discussion with exile leaders looking toward such a development. No other action pending further word from the President was authorized.

13. Mr. Dulles then read from a paper covering the 11 March meeting, noting the President had decided on the following courses of action:

- a. Every effort should be made to assist the Cubans to form a political organization. This is to include publicity for the leading political figures.
- b. The United States Government should prepare a “white paper” on Cuba and assist the Cubans to do the same.

c. The Department of State would explore possibilities of a *de marche* in the United Nations (?).

d. President expects to offer United States' support for Cubans to return to their homeland. However, best plan for achieving this has not yet been presented. New proposals for action should be submitted.

General Taylor commented that it would appear the President was favorable to the concept but was not satisfied with the proposals to date.

14. Mr. Bissell then read an account of a 15 March meeting. According to this paper the plan for the Cuban operation submitted on 7 March 1961 was unacceptable as it was not a program of infiltration but a World War II-type of assault. That in order for a plan to be politically acceptable it must:

a. Be an unspectacular landing at night in an area where there was a minimum likelihood of opposition.

b. If ultimate success would require tactical air support, it should appear to come from a Cuban air base. Therefore, territory seized should contain a suitable airfield.

The paper contained a brief outline of a second military plan prepared by [] which was approximately the plan later adopted.

15. Mr. Bissell next read from notes on a meeting held on 16 March, at which time two operations were proposed:

a. Trinidad—probably an opposed landing in daylight with air support required.

b. Zapata—unopposed landing with no tactical air until opposed.

Consequently, as of 16 March, there were two plans still under consideration as indicated above. Between the 16th of March and the end of March another postponement was called due to the visit of Prime Minister MacMillan. The target for action was postponed to 10 April, later to 15 April and finally to 17 April.

16. Mr. Bissell then read from a paper covering a meeting held on 12 April. By this time, the plan had crystallized and this covered the concept of the operation:

a. Modification of air plans to provide for air operations limited basis on D-2, and again on D-Day. Shortly after the first strike on D-2, Cuban pilots would land at Miami. Other details not discussed.

b. Diversion or cancellation. Not feasible to halt embarkation but if necessary, ships could be diverted.

General Taylor asked why it was not feasible to halt the embarkation and Mr. Bissell replied that the staging and loading of the troops was already underway. Mr. Bissell said that approval was given on continuing stages but that on April 12, D-5, the President still had the power to stop it. Staging started D-7 and two-thirds had already been moved from camps and first vessel sailed on D-6 and the last on D-4. Mr. Kennedy commented that the plan appears to have been approved but the "GO" signal not given. He asked with whom the plan had been coordinated. Mr. Dulles stated that an interdepartmental task force had been set up early in March 1961 and various tasks were assigned to the separate departments. The IDTF was composed of representatives from State, Defense and CIA, specifically, Mr. Braddock, former charge at Havana representing State, General Gray representing Defense, and Mr. Barnes, representing CIA. At the end of the 16 March meeting agreement was reached to set up the IDTF. Mr. Bissell said it was the sense of the 16 March meeting that the Zapata plan was preferable. Admiral Burke commented that the JCS did not agree at that time. Mr. Bissell stated there was a review of the plan by the JCS and that General Gray would later elaborate on that.

17. Mr. Bissell stated that by 12 April the plan had crystallized but we still had no "go ahead" signal, whereupon Mr. Kennedy asked how we came to that conclusion and how was it actually worked out. He asked if anyone formally presented a plan for approval. When actually did the President and others examine the plan and give it their approval? General Gray stated that 16 March was the date. General Taylor asked if it was approved on that date and Mr. Bissell stated it was approved as the plan to be implemented but that no "go ahead" signal was given. General Taylor inquired as to

what the JCS had done with respect to the plan and Admiral Burke replied that on 15 March 1961, the JCS was briefed on the alternate plans and that the evaluation concluded that the alternate Zapata Plan was considered the most feasible. He then started to discuss the three alternatives when General Gray interrupted with the suggestion that the discussion was getting out of step; that the Trinidad Plan should be discussed first and then the three alternative plans.

18. [] *Presentation.* Before going into the details of the Trinidad Plan, [] said he would like to provide background information showing what factors were available and factors not available in connection with planning of that project. He stated that when one is confronted with the requirement for nonattributability you introduce tremendous difficulties for a covert plan. For example, in a regular military operation, you know what forces you have, bases, state of training, etc., but in a PM covert plan you don't know much of anything. He said that last September when he joined the project, the question of bases for the Strike Force and for supplying guerrillas in the mountains was not resolved. The only bases available were two bases in Guatemala. These were training bases, a shelf on the side of a volcano with room for 200 men at most (we ended up with 1,400). These were the training facilities—which were very poor.

19. The air base in Guatemala was 750 miles from central Cuba—too far for supply operations. C-46s could not reach eastern Cuba with satisfactory loads. C-54s could. The distance was too great for tactical air operations using B-26 or smaller planes. All sorts of studies were made to locate a satisfactory base. The United States was ruled out but [] did not agree with the reasoning therefore.

1 line deleted

Consequently, we had no base from which to conduct satisfactory operations. However, we later learned that President Somoza of Nicaragua would cooperate and we selected Puerto Cabezas as the site since it had an airfield, dock

facilities, and other advantages. We were still 500 miles from central Cuba, still far but feasible.

20. Late in the autumn of 1960 we feared we would lose Guatemala bases and recruiting stopped, and we looked around for other bases. We could never be sure how many troops we could get as the recruiting was often slowed down due to political infighting of exile leaders.

21. *Training.* We did not have facilities for PM training. Last fall we only had four CIA personnel. On 28 October, [] requested three

2½ lines deleted

We were facing amphibious operations, the most difficult of all military operations, and we had no ships. The question was: Should we buy ships, recruit crews, or should we charter ships? We finally bought two LCIs in Miami, not fitted for landing troops but we modified them. We recruited Cuban crews. It took months (until January 1961) to get the ships to sea. The crews were made up of former Cuban navy personnel. We also recruited American contract personnel for these ships, the two LCIs. These two ships could carry only 150 men so this did not answer our problem. We had to charter ships. We contacted a Cuban ship owner named García who had six small freighters of the 1,500-2,000 ton variety. This man, García, offered the most and asked the least of all the Cubans we were in touch with. He asked that we cover the operating expenses. At first we wanted two ships for our 750-man force. We armed the LCIs and kept them as command ships. We also used them for other operations such as the raid on the Santiago refinery.

22. *Air Picture.* This was a problem in the autumn of 1960. We had few trained crews. There was always the question of whether the Cubans would measure up. We didn't know whether the air force was adequate. The covert approach is extremely difficult. PM operations of any size at all cannot be covert. [] commented that we may have to adjust our thinking to the need for coming out in the open as our enemies are doing.

23. *Policy Questions.* Policy questions had a bearing on our plans. Some unanswered questions by early January were these:

- Will a strike be conducted?
- Will an air operation be permitted?
- Will American pilots be used?
- Will Nicaragua be used as a base?

[] then read from a paper dated 4 January 1961, which he had prepared. This paper outlined the current status of our operation and set forth policy questions which had to be resolved. ([] provided a copy of this paper for inclusion in the record. Consequently, no attempt is made to reproduce it in these minutes.)

24. From the above-mentioned paper, [] outlined the concept of the strike operation:

a. Securing of a small lodgement on Cuban soil by 750-man force.

b. This to be preceded by tactical air strike which would destroy the air force, naval vessels.

c. Following this, other military targets would be attached, such as tank parks, artillery parks, motor transports, etc.

d. Close air support for strike force on D-Day and thereafter.

e. The initial mission was to seize a small area preferably with an airfield and access to the sea, with contingency plans for airdrops if field and port not available.

f. Force should try to survive and not break out until time opportune or U.S. intervened.

g. Expected widespread popular support and general uprisings.

h. If this did not develop, there was the possibility that the fighting might bring on assistance from other Latin American countries and the U.S. with the resultant fall of Castro.

i. Plan called for continuation of regular PM operations: sabotage, guerrillas, etc.

j. If driven from the beachhead, the force would continue guerrilla operations.

25. General Taylor stated that this concept raised fundamental questions. What was the magnitude of the air cover you expected and did you expect to stay on shore indefinitely, and if so what size force did you plan to employ? [] said that the force was to have been composed of 750 men and that they expected to have an air force of 15 B-26s, whereupon General Taylor questioned whether 15 B-26s could have done all that was expected. [] explained that the plan was to eliminate the enemy air force. We anticipated that he had 12 operational planes, including six B-26s, four T-33s, and from two to four Sea Furies. This turned out to be a fairly accurate estimate. We felt that 15 B-26s could do the job.

26. General Taylor asked on what intelligence did we base our belief that there would be popular uprisings. [

] said that we had our own agents up and down the length of Cuba—some [] agents including [] radio operators—who gave us a picture of large numbers of people begging for arms in order to fight Castro. We had difficulty supplying the arms via the airdrops. The Cuban pilots were not sufficiently qualified for this work. The flights were rarely opposed but the aircraft encountered difficulty in finding the drop zones. ([] commented that at no time were our surface craft interdicted by Cuban navy craft and surface deliveries were much more successful.)

27. [] then quoted other extracts from his paper of January 4, summarizing the size of our air force—ten B-26s, but only five pilots; seven C-54s; a few C-46s—with grossly inadequate transport crews. Five hundred Cubans training in Guatemala. FRD (Frente) recruitment not going satisfactorily. Special recruiting teams being sent from camps to Miami to assist. Expect to have 750 men in time but unless Special Forces training they could not be ready before late 1961. All this time, [] said, Castro was building up his military capability and in September we thought he still had 75 percent of the population behind him, although his popularity was then declining. General Taylor asked in retro-

spect what would have been the best timing (for the strike to have occurred?) and [] replied early March.

28. [] said at the time of the preparation of his paper of 4 January we did not know whether the new administration would approve the project and this needed to be resolved immediately in order that the operation could be stopped and considerable expense saved. He therefore recommended that the Director of CIA attempt to get a decision from the President-elect. [] felt that if the decision was made in mid-January the force could be ready to move by the end of February. We were then under pressure from the Guatemalan government. Time was not entirely in our favor. We anticipated that Castro would soon have a jet capability. Heavy equipment was being assembled throughout the country and the establishment of a police state was advancing rapidly. In his paper he recommended that the operation be carried out not later than 1 March 1961.

29. [] terminated reading his paper. Mr. Dulles asked what disposition was made of it and [] said it was directed to Chief of WH/4 (Chief of the Cuban operation). [], C/WH/4, said he directed it to higher authority. General Taylor asked for the identity of the higher authority and was told it went to the Chief of the Division [], the Assistant Deputy for Plans (Mr. Barnes), and the Deputy for Plans (Mr. Bissell). Mr. Bissell stated that the paper did not go much further than his office, and added that we did eventually get the air crews, the B-26s, etc. [] American contract pilots were readied. He stated that with respect to the major policy decisions raised by [], these issues will emerge when limitations on use of the tactical air force are discussed. []

[] commented that we battled with State for months and we only got watered down more and more for our efforts.

30. Mr. Kennedy asked why, if [] presumptions and conclusions were correct, and if State and others felt it wasn't feasible or desirable, wasn't the project called off? Mr. Bissell explained that what actually happened was that

[] position was stated and first there was agreement on air strikes on D-2, D-1, and D-Day; and then later an absolute minimum calling for strikes on D-1 and D-Day. And what finally was called for was a maximum effort on D-Day.

31. Mr. Kennedy asked [] if he would have approved the operation as it ultimately came to occur—that is, would he have or did he approve of the watered-down plan? [] replied that he did not approve but must say this with qualifications. He said he always maintained that we must get rid of the opposing air force. He insisted the three major airfields must be attacked. He was not in favor of limiting the number of aircraft (he eventually got the number raised)—he was not satisfied with the limited application of air power and he thought we would have had a satisfactory sweep on D-Day of all the Cuban airfields. General Taylor asked how many planes we had on D-Day and [] stated 15. Admiral Burke asked if all the factors raised by [] were ever listed in check-off form—and were they checked off as achieved? The reply was that we had no formalized check list but we knew where we stood as we went along. [] said we had the capability on the morning of D-Day with the 15 B-26s but we weren't given an opportunity to do the job.

32. [] stated that prior to D-Day we had an accurate count of the enemy air force and knew where every craft was kept. He had a total of 36. [] described them by category. We estimated 50 percent of these planes were in flying condition. On the D-2 strike we destroyed over 70 percent of their air power. We had 15 planes left to employ to knock out the remainder. [] showed the enemy planes were concentrated at San Antonio. On D-Day one Sea Fury was knocked out and another fell into the ocean. They were down to three T-33s. General Taylor asked then why did the strike fail? [] replied that we had strikes planned for San Antonio, Libertad, and 11 other targets, but were not permitted to carry them out. General Taylor commented that we had done well with our air force and [] replied that we had them pinned down and we

based this belief on [] and photography. He added that every aircraft we lost was due to the T-33s. Mr. Kennedy asked how many aircraft did Castro have on D-Day. [] said he had two Sea Furies, B-26s, and three T-33s. [] repeated that we had planned a 15-plane raid at dawn on D-Day but were not permitted to carry it out. Mr. Dulles asked if subsequent events bore out the correctness of our air O/B [order of battle] and [] replied in the affirmative.

33. Mr. Kennedy asked for information on the report that MIGs were in the air. [] said that MIGs did not appear until the final date. They may have been in crates and quickly assembled. Mr. Dulles commented that aerial photography never picked up any MIGs. Mr. Bissell said we had no reports from agents of MIG air flights. General Taylor asked concerning the characteristics of the T-33s and was told they are jet trainers armed with two .50 caliber machine guns. General Gray said that on D+1 a request was made of our destroyers to attempt to locate the field. [] said the report of MIGs in crates indicated San Julian air base. [] terminated his remarks by saying that as of D-Day the air picture was in our favor.

34. *Trinidad Plan.* [] then proceeded to discuss the Trinidad Plan. He utilized charts showing the composition of the Strike Force and maps of the areas discussed. First he described the composition and organization of the assault force and how it was trained. He said at first there was no one to train the troops so he sent [] and [] with directives to conduct individual training, small unit training, etc., and an eight-week course was provided. With large influx of recruits, concurrent recruit, small unit and combined training had to be conducted. General Taylor asked where they found room in view of []

[] previous statement of the small shelf on the volcano side, and [] explained that we finally got permission to use a *finca* belonging to Mr. Alejos of Guatemala for training purposes. However, firing practice was done in the mountains.

35. Noting that tanks appeared on the chart, Mr. Kennedy asked if tanks did get ashore and if they were camouflaged or disguised. [] said that tanks were put ashore and General Gray added that these were the same type of tanks given to other countries. [] stated that we trained the tank crews at Ft. Knox and we had no trouble whatsoever. The Cubans knew where they were being trained and [] said that was a good example of how our own soil is better suited for training from security and other standpoints.

36. In arriving at the Trinidad Plan, [] said that he studied the entire island carefully. He then decided that the Trinidad area with the nearby Escambray Mountains was the place. General Taylor asked if he had the benefit of photography in reaching his decision and [] said he had no photography until one flight was flown in November with not too satisfactory results. He then proceeded to describe the Trinidad area—the town of some 18,000 population, the nearby port to the south, named Casilda—with its docks—many good beaches for our purposes—good guerrilla country nearby with hills of 2,500-4,000 feet in which from 600-1,000 guerrillas were reported to be active who had been able to maintain themselves for six months, but were eventually eliminated. Although these were small groups with little equipment and poor supplies, it nevertheless took Castro six months to eliminate them. Therefore in considering the Trinidad Plan it was felt that the force could if necessary move to the mountains and could exist in such terrain indefinitely. There were no approaches from the north that Castro could use, only other main road was from Santa Clara—this had a bridge over a river and a railroad bridge—and we were planning to knock out these two bridges. Other approach was from Cienfuegos—with bridges. The area was suitable for isolation. Also there was reason to believe that the Trinidad population was friendly. They had been supporting the guerrillas in the hills. We expected to pick up recruits from the Trinidad civilian population and we planned to bring in arms packs for 4,000 men and rapidly expand our forces. Another advantage if the force succeeded in maintaining itself and eventually

breaking out was the possibility that we could have severed Cuba in the middle, creating great problems for Castro.

37. General Taylor inquired as to the date of the plan. [

] said it was written in January and the JCS was briefed on the plan on 31 January. He remarked that the JCS, in an independent study, had also selected the Trinidad site as the most suitable for this type of operation. General Taylor asked how did the JCS get into this matter and General Gray replied that the JCS had already been asked to come up with a likely spot and that they had in mind a small invasion force.

38. [] then reviewed the strike plan as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| D-Day | landing |
| Prior D-Day | destruction air force |
| D-1 | attack aircraft on ground—also tank parks, artillery, etc. |
| H-6 | feinting operation off the west coast of Pinar del Rio—destroy bridges |
| H-Hour | assault force lands on beaches—seizes high ground—another company moves inland and establishes self on forward slopes—another company on a separate beach — clear Casilda — airborne troops drop in heights over Trinidad. |

39. General Taylor inquired as to the known presence of Castro forces in the area. [] said we could never pin down the exact location of his forces. There were some 40,000 militia in the general area—with about 5,000 militia encircling the Escambray Mountains. These were not making an aggressive effort to join battle with the guerrillas but would catch them as they came out for food. We evaluated the militia fighting qualities on what they did in the Escambrays and this was very low. He then went on describing the plan by saying that after seizure of the objectives we would enlist and arm civilians, we would use the hospital and other buildings for the force—we would coordinate with local civilian leaders and make contact with local guerrillas. We would use the local

airport for resupply—but the airport could not take a B-26. In the event Trinidad could not be held, the plan was for the force to withdraw to the Escambrays where they would be supplied by air drops. This, [] said, was the beauty of the Trinidad Plan—it provided an alternative and safe area to move into if the original plan failed to achieve its objectives. General Cabell commented that the concept called for a dawn landing. [] said the air strike called for attack on three airfields and the Managua military base, which had tanks and equipment which would have easily been destroyed by use of napalm but we were not authorized to use napalm in the operation. General Taylor asked who said napalm could not be employed and [] replied that it was a decision of the national government. [] listed in detail all the targets which we had selected for air attack—which included in addition to obvious military targets—the Havana power plant, microwave stations, refineries, etc.—and said all these things we wanted to do. General Taylor asked if the air requirement varied with the change of plans and [] replied no.

40. General Taylor asked aside from terrain what else was favorable and [] repeated his references to friendly population, nearby guerrillas, beaches as good as those of Zapata. He said the presence of enemy forces was a disadvantage of this plan as compared with the Zapata Plan. We did not think there was anyone at Zapata. General Gray said that as far as could be determined there was only a police battalion at Trinidad. Admiral Burke commented that the size of the airfield at Trinidad was another disadvantage—the field at Zapata being larger. [] reiterated that the principal advantage was being able to fall back into the mountains. At Zapata we presupposed an uprising but the beachhead did not last long enough. At Trinidad we might have had favorable civilian reaction—one agent told us he had 2,500 men wanting arms.

41. Mr. Kennedy asked if we had any communications from the island after D-Day indicating a desire on the part of the people to rise, and [] said yes there were re-

quests for arms but airdrops without the use of American pilots had never been successful. General Taylor asked if there was an annex to the plan for supplying arms to anyone who did rise. Mr. Bissell stated that we had airplanes and supplies and were ready to respond to agent calls. We could have responded—there were 19 requests—most of them before D-Day. Mr. Kennedy asked if there were any after D-Day and [] said yes, but we couldn't service them since our aircraft were committed to try to deliver supplies to the Strike Force which had lost its supply ship.

42. General Gray recalled that the Agency had prepared a summary of agent radio communications received—and messages from the beaches—on D+2 and asked that a copy of that summary, which he found quite impressive, be furnished for the record.

43. Mr. Bissell said that we had anticipated domination of the air and therefore could have made daylight deliveries of arms in response to the many calls we had received. As it turned out we did not have the means with which to respond.

44. [] then informed the Group that we had on hand one of the American pilots who survived the morning raid, and since he was planning to leave the city tonight, asked if the Committee would like to hear his story this afternoon. General Taylor said he would like to hear him after we finish the actual scenario and this should be sometime after lunch. The hour of 4:00 P.M. was set.

45. General Taylor asked what happened to the Trinidad Plan. [] replied that it was always opposed by the State Department—also the President wanted something that was less like an invasion. Mr. Bissell read from the record of the 15 March meeting which reported that Trinidad was not acceptable since it appeared like a WWII assault operation. General Taylor asked if the plan was rejected on 15 March and Mr. Bissell replied no, on 11 March. Admiral Burke commented that on 3 February the JCS had generally this same plan. Mr. Bissell said that the JCS first evaluated this plan early in February and Admiral Burke said that the JCS had

made a number of recommendations aimed at strengthening the plan.

46. Mr. Bissell stated that we considered a variety of alternatives—one suggestion was that we seize a remote area and build an airfield from which to operate. [] then described the ground rules which had been established for the next plan:

a. It must call for a quiet, night landing operation—nothing that might be viewed as spectacular.

b. It must include seizure of an airfield that would accommodate up to B-26 planes in order that air strikes which were to commence at dawn could be attributed to that field.

[] said we looked all over for an airfield in Oriente Province but could find none that could handle a B-26. We built up the concept for an operation at Preston but the field would not support B-26s. We reconsidered the Isle of Pines—but rejected it because there were from 7,500-15,000 troops there and there were no suitable beaches for night landings. We thought of another plan for Trinidad involving landing troops who would go directly into the mountains—but there was no airfield. Finally, through photography, we found what we thought was a usable field—this was in the Zapata area—and this is what led us to this area. The plan was hastily put together. We got started about 15 March—after the 11 March meeting. An error in photographic interpretation had occurred. We believed there were 4,500 usable feet of runway in northern Zapata. One of the disadvantages was the 18-mile bay which meant we would have trouble getting people up there in daylight hours. We found a 4,100-foot field at Playa Girón. We would never have adopted the Zapata Plan if we had known that he had coordinated forces that would close in and fight as they did. The airfield requirement was what led us into Zapata.

47. [] then described the moving of the troops from Guatemala to Nicaragua which was accomplished on three successive nights without incident. We were employing four merchant ships and two LCIs. They fanned out upon leaving Puerto Cabezas and later rendezvoused at

approximately 40 miles off the coast. [] paid tribute to [] for his performance in handling the fleet. The ships formed convoy and proceeded to a point 5,000 yards off the beach.

AFTERNOON SESSION **24 April 1961**

NOTE: This account of the afternoon session is not complete inasmuch as the recording secretary was not present during the first portion of the session, having missed approximately 45 minutes of the meeting. However, the notes prepared by Colonel Ingelido, who was present during the entire afternoon session, should cover this missing period.

48. (General Gray was in the midst of discussing the JCS evaluation of the Trinidad Plan when note taking was resumed.) He said the scheme of maneuver was basically sound. There was a need for civil officer-type people to coordinate with the population, etc., and this was done. The original idea was that the guerrillas would join up with the Strike Force. The JCS thought it best to maintain a corridor and establish a link—he pointed out that one road runs from Santa Clara to the area—and a secure route for moving up into the hills. Without interference from the air, we estimated the Cuban army could move men and materiel to the scene by D+2. At time of assessment there was one regiment of Cuban army near Santa Clara. We also were told the Cuban army was not concentrated but spread out. We figured it would take them a day to concentrate and another day to move the 100 miles to the scene.

49. General Gray indicated that the publicity which developed during the final weeks of the project, much of it centering around the Revolutionary Council and its alleged plans, gave Castro notice that something was in the wind and time to mobilize his forces. [] explained that we were given the requirement of establishing a broad-based

revolutionary council. He said Cubans cannot keep quiet and before you knew it we had a Roman circus on our hands—leaks to press, etc., both in Miami and New York. General Taylor asked if the Revolutionary Council was aware of the operation. [] stated that the first word they had that the operation was going was on the evening of Friday, 14 April. [] and Mr. Barnes had gone to New York City to brief Dr. Miró—had met with the group—had dinner—and at midnight [] told Dr. Miró that at dawn on the following day some action would take place. [] cautioned Dr. Miró that there always seems to be a leak and that in the interests of the sons of some of the members of the Council, including Miró, and other relatives—[] told Dr. Miró to keep this information very much to himself. Dr. Miró said he would not even tell Dr. Varona, another member of the Council, and added he would keep all members of the Council together the entire night.

50. General Taylor said that what was inferred was that all this hoopla made execution of the plan more difficult and General Gray said yes—that this permitted Castro to prepare—but if the target had been the Trinidad area he would not have been ready until the afternoon of D-Day. Mr. Barnes said that there was a great deal in the press—Tad Szulc and others—guessing as to dates—and all this developed during the last week—and this could not have been anticipated. [] commented that one or two of Mr. Reston's articles in the *New York Times* two or three days before the date were not at all helpful. He said that despite this we were able to move people from Guatemala to Nicaragua and the first anyone knew about the invasion was when they hit the beaches.

51. General Gray said that another miscalculation was that the Cuban army was not coordinated and thus we expected the Strike Force would be able to resist attack. In this respect Trinidad would have been difficult terrain for launching of attacks. While the Cuban army could eventually have reduced the beachhead, it was General Gray's opinion that the beach could have been held for seven days. In consid-

ering the Trinidad Plan it was not considered that U.S. overt intervention would be necessary since the force could get to the hills. The ships were loaded with supplies on D-21, but it was always clearly understood that the President could always call off the plan. The ultimate success of the plan depended on political factors—uprisings, possible OAS action, etc.

52. General Taylor asked what provisions, if any, had been made for follow-up support. General Gray said that CIA was training additional personnel. He said Mr. Berle had sounded out certain South American countries but got no promise of military support. The plan called for the arming of local volunteers who were expected to join up with the force. [] said we had approximately 300 additional untrained troops—about 167 in Guatemala and the balance in Miami. General Cabell pointed out that the original concept called for a 750-man force but that we actually committed in advance all our 1,400 men rather than hold out for follow up. General Gray said the key to the plan was popular uprisings all over the island—which would pin down the militia in other areas. The militia in this area had proved to be friendly to the guerrillas and for this reason Castro had to bring others in from elsewhere.

53. General Taylor asked General Gray concerning the 30/70 evaluation they had given to the plan. General Gray said this referred to the Trinidad Plan—that the percentages were roughly 30/70 and never ran more than 40/60. He then said that about this time Mr. Berle was appointed coordinator of Latin American affairs and Ambassador Willauer faded out of the picture. He said he had had meetings with the Berle group. General Taylor asked if Mr. Berle got into the military aspects of the plan and General Gray said not to any important degree—that he was mostly concerned with the political aspects. [] said that Mr. Berle was given one briefing on the Trinidad Plan.

54. General Gray then stated that on 23 February a JCS evaluation team went to Guatemala to assess the troops and summarized their conclusions as follows: Based on general

review of the military portion of the project and evaluation of the combat efficiency of the forces, such forces could attain the initiative—but the ultimate success of the operation would depend on the extent the Strike Forces served as a catalyst. General Taylor said this new evaluation of the plan expected them to get ashore all right but success depended on their serving as a catalyst to a general uprising. General Gray answered affirmatively. General Gray stated that Colonel Tarwater thought the air force was very well prepared but made certain suggestions for improvement.

55. *Evaluation of the Zapata Plan.* General Gray said that the JCS first saw the Zapata Plan on 15 March and gave it a favorable evaluation as an alternate plan. This, he said, was done hurriedly. The JCS was briefed on the plan on 13 March; prepared its evaluation on the 14th of March, presented it on the 15th March and submitted it to the President on the 16th of March.

56. Mr. Bissell said three other alternatives were considered: (1) the Isle of Pines; (2) the Preston area; (3) alternate Trinidad Plan: landing at night, into the hills and at daylight attack backwards to the beachhead. With respect to no. (3), [] said the plan really was for the force to move into the hills—and not attack backwards—and was a modification of the original Trinidad Plan.

57. General Gray said that of the alternatives mentioned it was considered that the Zapata Plan was the most feasible but not as feasible as the original Trinidad Plan. Zapata depended on control of the air and the ability to secure the exits to make difficult the movement of enemy forces into the area. The plan called for the mining of all approaches but this was not executed. The evaluations were the essential part of the JCS contribution—however, we attended most meetings. General Taylor asked if the evaluation which General Gray had summarized was approved by the JCS and General Gray responded affirmatively. Of the three alternatives the Zapata Plan was the best.

58. Mr. Kennedy said wouldn't you say that the JCS had approved this plan? Admiral Burke responded by saying that the paper does not say so—but in effect the JCS approved this plan—felt it had a reasonable chance of success. Admiral Burke added that the original plan had the area they would have selected—Trinidad. General Gray stated that at no time did the JCS say that the Zapata Plan should not be carried out. Mr. Bissell said that the 16 March meeting summed it up as follows:

Trinidad Plan would provide more decisive results at greater initial risk.

Zapata Plan provides less decisive results—and slower results—with less initial risk.

Mr. Bissell commented that we felt and hoped the Zapata Plan would be less risky but recognized its limitations—less chance of a build-up from friendly population.

59. General Taylor said there appeared to be two points: At no point did the JCS recommend doing it—it merely commented on three alternatives—but where we made our mistake—we should have said—but did not—that this plan was or was not feasible. We had an opportunity to do more and we were responsible for approving it. Mr. Dulles stated that all the plans were exposed at high level. Admiral Burke commented that one difficulty was that General Lemnitzer was there by himself—then corrected himself to say that General Gray was with General Lemnitzer at the high level meetings.

60. General Gray stated that as we became associated we became more interested in trying to make it go. Mr. Kennedy asked if this wasn't the key to the whole thing—this wanting it to go? Mr. Dulles said we had these alternatives—we could carry out the plan or we could demobilize the Strike Force. General Gray said that if we had ever written a national concept—we would have had to rewrite it continually. Admiral Burke said that there naturally was confusion during the change of administration. We should have formalized this thing much earlier and in greater detail. The trouble was that only a few people of the admiral's staff knew about it.

61. General Taylor asked if the possibility of uprisings was discussed among all of you and Mr. Dulles answered yes. Mr. Dulles said the first plan was the shock plan—and in this plan we hadn't counted on immediate uprisings—this was longer range. He said there were objections on the political side to the shock effects—and we couldn't count on it succeeding.

62. Mr. Kennedy asked what the objective was on landing 600-1,000 men on the shore. Mr. Dulles said to obtain a beachhead which could be built up. Mr. Kennedy then asked how a beachhead could be held against 300,000 troops—or against even 30,000 or 25,000. Mr. Dulles said the enemy would not have been able to concentrate all his troops on one spot. Mr. Kennedy then said that he thought that uprisings were an essential part of the JCS evaluation. General Gray said that it did not anticipate immediate uprisings—but uprisings on a slower basis. Mr. Kennedy then directed a question to Admiral Burke asking if it was the admiral's understanding that 1,400 men could land—and without benefit of uprisings—could maintain their position for several weeks. Admiral Burke said they thought they might be able to hold their position but if they could not, that they would then become guerrillas. General Gray said that we thought the Cuban air force would be knocked out. He said the men demonstrated they could fight effectively at night. Mr. Bissell added that we expected a landing in Pinar del Rio on D+7. [] added that we had reports of men wanting to join but reiterated that the real key was control of the air.

63. General Taylor then asked where is the concept? General Gray said it is in the plan. The objective did not change. Here is the mission: To invade island of Cuba—with amphibious force—hold beachhead—provide catalyst for uprising—move in as guerrillas if beachhead not sustained. General Taylor (checking language of mission) read: “Alternative III has all the prerequisites necessary and would be able to sustain itself for several weeks but inaccessibility of population would effect support of Cuban population . . .” General Cabell remarked that we meant joining-up of forces and not

necessarily civilian uprisings. General Taylor stated it still becomes a choice between III—but with Trinidad preferred.

64. Mr. Bissell stated that the language about sustaining for several weeks indicates a change of thinking—a slower development with less prospect of initial success. If the area could have been held for two weeks there was a good probability of ultimate success—for with no air opposition we could have knocked out his microwave and forced him to voice—we could have learned his plans—we could have reinforced the Brigade with another 500 men—the logistic problem would not have been difficult—but we did not knock out his air. General Cabell stated that maritime resupply would have been a factor—with no air opposition—and would have had an effect on the outcome.

65. General Gray stated that following the decision on 16 March that the Zapata Plan should be pursued, the inter-departmental group on 22 March developed and finalized an agreed list of tasks. For example, the State Department would take care of recognition, etc. This paper served the useful purpose of coordinating our planning.

66. On 28 March the JCS approved letters of instructions to CINCLANT and CONAD [Continental Air Defense] and we implemented the plan to improve the Miami defenses. We tested the plan and had planes, etc., to move in to protect the Miami area. Naval support was carried out by the carrier *Essex* and seven destroyers. Destroyers escorted the invading ships—close at night but at a distance during the day. General Taylor asked if they were authorized to engage. They were authorized to engage if attacked but under these circumstances the whole force was to have been diverted—since we were protecting shipping and not assisting an invasion. The rules of engagement changed several times as the operation proceeded. Our job was mostly one of support during two phases:

Covert support—D-Day to D-3

Logistic support—during build-up phase

67. CIA was in a position to double and quadruple the force. We planned logistic supply as part of this build-up. If

things went well they might have built up in the Cienfuegos area in D+30. We provided arms packs for 30,000 men in addition to CIA planning for 5,000 packs. Packs for 15,000 men were actually loaded on ships and headed for the area. Also recoilless rifles, mortars, jeeps, trucks, etc. We were also providing for the overt phase under several conditions. For example, if the U.S. recognized this force (one of the Council members, Captain Artime, went in with the Brigade). State was planning on recognizing the government but no State or diplomatic representative would have been sent in until Havana was taken. We also considered possibility of supporting the force in the event a third country recognized them before we did. In addition we had one Marine hospital to move to Vieques.

68. General Taylor asked about the evacuation plan and General Taylor said it was planned to employ the LCIs and planes from the airstrip. General Gray said a separate war room was set up in the JCS—the regular war room was cut out. Only a limited number were cut in—this list included Admiral Dennison. [] of the Agency was on the *Essex*. It was a cumbersome type of organization but it worked. There was good commo. There was good liaison. Decisions were implemented quickly.

69. Admiral Burke stated that the trouble was the delays—commo from there to Washington and back was fairly good—but there were always delays—sometimes of several hours—what was needed was a commander on the spot to make decisions. Another thing—although the commo was good from CEF (?) to Washington—there was not enough between the naval forces and the ships—took a couple of days to find out that two ships were one and the same—that different names were being used for the same ship.

70. General Gray said that there should have been an inter-departmental group working on the concept and keeping the President informed in writing. This would have eliminated the fact that up to the last date there was not a meeting of minds. It was not clear whether there was going to be an air strike or not. Mr. Barnes said it could not have been achieved

the way it went along—after the Trinidad Plan was scrapped we were forced to come up with new concepts and new approaches to meet objections which were being raised.

71. Admiral Burke said that politically it could not have been done. We made our mistake in not drawing up what we thought the concept was and presenting it to the State Department and CIA. We did not grab it hard enough—partly because we were holding it so tight—therefore General Gray's group couldn't get advice from the people who could have given it—because they weren't cut in. If he had been working under an agreed concept it could have been done better.

72. Mr. Bissell said that what he had read from the April 12 paper came near to this. Many of the suggested acts that came up involved political policy decisions of great import and these had been made in advance. Example, question whether Navy jets in the air would give protection to B-26s giving close ground support. Decision was made that support should be given—this required high-level policy and was a reversal of policy re-engagement of U.S. forces. We could have had a concept of use of U.S. forces. General Taylor said: You talk of concepts but the concepts didn't change. Admiral Burke stated we would have task for example to cover by naval air—this came very late so that by the time we were supposed to execute this we were at some distance from the area. General Gray said that if we had had an agreed national plan we would have had to face up to the decisions which we got piecemeal—re rules of engagement. It should have been in an overall plan.

73. General Taylor asked how can we do better—about the political restraints—how can we do this? General Gray replied: by putting the political factors into the plan at the beginning. Admiral Burke commented that the President must have been confused by the many different people who were advising him. General Gray said that once we got State in on agreed plans, Mr. Braddock came up with the answers. We should get State into the plan at the outset.

74. General Taylor remarked that after the rejection of

the Trinidad Plan we were racing against the clock. General Gray said that he had wanted to war-game the plan and that that is what should have been done. General Taylor then asked what were the factors that necessitated speed. General Gray said the rainy season was approaching and this would affect not only ground fighting but flying conditions. There was the problem of the jets which Castro was supposed to be receiving soon. Info that some jet trainees had returned from Czechoslovakia. [] said there were other factors: We were holding 1,400 men in impossible conditions. The President of Guatemala was pushing us. Also American newsmen were after the story and some of the troops and airmen were threatening to desert.

75. *Interrogation of* [] .

At this juncture [] and a contract flyer who participated in the project, was received by the Committee. [] said that he had drawn up a small resume and that if the Committee was agreeable he would half-read and half-comment on that resume. (Presumably the resume will become a part of the record.) Consequently only the questioning will be recorded here.

76. [] asked [] what happened to the original plan for D-Day. He replied that he was exposed to the targets. He thought the people were familiar with the original plan. It changed 180 degrees. We were to use maximum effort against airfields, microwave stations, (forcing use of radio voice)—we hoped this chaos—plus propaganda would do the job. [] asked what were the orders. [] replied that they were ordered to use two aircraft on each target except that only one would be used on air base near Guantánamo. Request was granted late for use of other aircraft. We were pushed for briefing of crews—we didn't have time for target study—the whole situation was cramped. After D-Day it was obvious that not all enemy aircraft was destroyed—we thought we knew how many he had but he was turning them around quickly—our turnaround time was seven hours round trip with 30 minutes over the target.

77. Mr. Kennedy asked if these pilots were Americans or Cubans and [] replied they were both Americans and Cubans. They got along well together and both were motivated by patriotic reasons.

78. [] said that the first attack (D-2) only served to make Castro mad and gave him time to regroup his forces. Some of the flyers saw Navy protection—others did not. At Puerto Cabezas there was uncertainty as to whether they were enemy or friendly. Admiral Burke stated that on D-1 and D+1 the Navy fliers were over and that on D+2 authority was given for one hour of coverage. [] was asked if MIGs were involved. He said that as much as he would like to he can't say that MIGs were involved. He said he did not believe they were. He said he debriefed B-26 and other pilots and they saw none. The reports of Navy intervention may have helped in air battles but as far as Cuban personnel were concerned they took it for granted that they had Navy cover.

79. Mr. Kennedy asked if the pilots expected they would have help or assistance. Were they ever told they would not have assistance? [] replied that they were not told that they would not have assistance and he did not think they expected military assistance. Mr. Bissell said that on D+2 they were briefed to expect Navy cover and protection and beginning at that time they may have expected assistance. [] said the news was a great morale booster to people in the Puerto Cabezas area and when it did not materialize morale was affected adversely. Cuban crews aborted and without this assurance of assistance American pilots would not have participated.

80. General Taylor asked what targets they found on the beach. [] replied that on D+1 they caught a large column of trucks. An American pilot "bounced" those trucks and from 15 to 20 Russian tanks—three B-26s made passes at the trucks and hurt them badly. This was Tuesday afternoon about 1800 hours local time. [] remarked that [] indicated they suffered 1,800 casualties. Mr.

Kennedy asked if [] was able to tell where the fighting was taking place. He was unable to give a conclusive answer but thought the forces had moved up from Blue and Red beaches but never very far out. He remarked that the enemy had lots of antiaircraft fire. Mr. Kennedy asked if they had this on D-Day. [] said that they did not but that they moved it in very fast. General Taylor asked where they were reporting flack and [] replied: from all over—and with excellent marksmanship. General Taylor asked how the air-ground commo worked and [] said the commo gear went down with the ship that was sunk and that there was no commo.

81. Mr. Kennedy asked if the Cuban pilots did well. [] said they constantly found excuses for not flying. General Taylor asked what percentage failed and [] replied that only 35 percent were “ready to go” and you could count the number of “tigers” on one hand. [] took exception to this saying that on D-2 we had eight aircraft up and that these made more than one pass over the target. [] observed that at that time the sight of victory was present—but when they got thinking that they were losing it was different. He said that on the morning of D-2 he had to beg them to go. He observed that they were good until things started going wrong.

82. Mr. Kennedy asked where was the fighting going on at D+1 and D+2. Admiral Burke said that on D+2 Navy recon could find no infantry—they were all apparently in the bush. [] said he had no information as to where the fighting was.

83. Mr. Kennedy asked if the Castro forces had come down the road on D+1 and General Taylor remarked that he did not see how they could have gotten down there that fast even if they knew where the landing was coming. [] said there were tanks in the Red Beach area on D-Day. [] expressed the personal opinion that there was not much fighting done. General Taylor asked if there was any prearranged plan for use of smoke to identify our own people

on the ground and [] said that the air force was concerned exclusively with taking care of the “heavy stuff” and not attacking troops. Mr. Kennedy asked how long the party lasted on Red Beach and [] thought it wasn’t more than a matter of hours.

84. Mr. Dulles raised the question of the confusion in orders of going after the airfields on D+1. Mr. Bissell said that at some point on D-Day we received permission to strike the airfields that night—and then there was some talk of a strike at dusk—but ultimately it was authorized for that night but bad visibility and other factors prevented them carrying it out. [] asked [] if there was a lack of aircraft and [] replied that they were limited to the number of shells on any given target—we were limited to number of aircraft we could use. When we called it off we thought we were losing the war intentionally. This thought was based on the restrictions which had been placed on us.

85. The meeting terminated at approximately 1700 hours.

[]

Distribution:

- Original—Copy #1—General Maxwell D. Taylor
- Copy #2—Admiral Arleigh Burke
- Copy #3—Allen W. Dulles
- Copy #4—Attorney General Robert Kennedy
- Copy #5—Major General D. W. Gray
- Copy #6—Richard M. Bissell, Jr.
- Copy #7—[]
- Copy #8—[]

SECOND MEETING

Afternoon Session

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Second Meeting Afternoon Session
of the Taylor Committee

Time and Place: 1350 hours, 24 April 1961, Confer-
ence Room (Room 214), Director of
Central Intelligence Agency

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Maxwell D. Taylor
Attorney General Robert Kennedy
Admiral Arleigh A. Burke,
Chief of Naval Operations
Colonel Michael J. Ingelido,
Deputy Secretary, JCS
Major General David W. Gray,
Joint Staff

Other Participants

Mr. Allen Dulles
General C. B. Cabell
Mr. Richard M. Bissell

[]

[]

[]

Mr. Tracy Barnes

[]

[]

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

[]: I made a misstatement in regard to the decision not to employ napalm. This was not a national, high-level governmental decision, but the agency made this decision as they thought that the use of napalm would cause concern and public outcry.

GENERAL CABELL: Yes, that was in regard to its use in the Havana area in advance of the operation. However, it was authorized for use on the beachhead.

[]: Another advantage to the Escambray area is that Castro never used his offensive aircraft against the guerrillas there and, additionally, tanks and artillery cannot be used in that terrain.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Would you summarize all the restraints and restrictions that were put on your operations by policy decisions and considerations?

[]: In regard to the Zapata Plan there is the question of the naval LSD which had aboard it LCUs and LCPs [landing craft, personnel]. These landing craft were to haul troops, tanks and trucks and they were to be put ashore by Cuban crews. Because they did not wish to have the Cuban crews riding aboard the Navy's ship we had to run a rigmarole wherein the LSD rendezvoused with the Cuban Expeditionary Force ships and the Cuban crews went aboard the landing craft after they left the LSD.

MR. BISSELL: Though it was a sizable operation, as far as we know there were no rumors of the ships having left the port of embarkation, there was no outcry made in the press, and we have no indications that the point of landing was known.

GENERAL GRAY: We did receive a report of one airline sighting wherein their aircraft flew over the ships.

[]: Bissell's suggestion in regard to having the ships fan out and then reconverge at a point of rendezvous worked very well.

supposed to be carried out at D-2. The accident took place on D-6.

GENERAL TAYLOR: What objective was this diversionary landing supposed to have?

[]: It was supposed to attract attention and help divert the Cuban forces away from the main landings.

GENERAL TAYLOR: How many men do the Cubans have in this area?

[]: About 90,000 militia men in this province. This diversionary landing had another purpose also in that they were supposed to organize and set up guerrilla forces.

MR. KENNEDY: What happened to this force?

[]: They didn't land. I think the leader lost his nerve as they approached the beach and then withdrew, using rubber boats.

[]: We think they're on their way to Vieques now.

ADMIRAL BURKE: They said they were going to Key West but we intercepted the ship, the *Perka*, and are taking the people to Vieques.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Is that all the people who are at Vieques?

MR. BISSELL: No, there are also some 300 men who had been in training.

MR. KENNEDY: Isn't there anyone at Vieques now who had been in the fighting?

GENERAL GRAY: I believe the landing craft crews are there.

[]: We felt that on D-Day morning we should strike not only the three main Cuban airfields, where we knew aircraft were located, but additionally, should hit all of the Cuban airfields. The two aircraft were also going to hit tanks located in Managua, and on this mission I wanted napalm employed. They were then supposed to come back and land at

the field near the beachhead where the avgas refueling truck should have been located. All this, of course, is predicated on our knocking out the Cuban air force.

GENERAL TAYLOR: How much did they actually get ashore in the way of supplies?

[]: They only got what was on the LCU, plus what was personally carried by the troops going ashore. This turned out to be less than enough for even one day's combat. This ship that was carrying the bulk of the heavy equipment was hit by rocket fire from a Sea Fury and sunk. I want to emphasize that this plan was based on two assumptions: First, that we would have absolute control of the air on D-Day; and second, that Castro's fighting forces would be about as efficient as they were in their Escambray operations. As it turned out, we were wrong on both assumptions. He had well-coordinated fighting troops and he also demonstrated that he had well-trained and aggressive pilots.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Were you supposed to control this beachhead area indefinitely?

[]: No, we had trucks coming in on D-Day and others which were supposed to come in on D+2. These vehicles were to be loaded with the supplies which were being off-loaded, and then the force was going to make a try for a break-out. The Cuban reaction would be checked closely, as we thought that perhaps the militia might refuse to fight; and if so, the landing force, on breaking out from the beachhead would head for Havana. If Castro's forces did fight and the expeditionary force found itself hard-put to cope with them, they were then to try to break out and head for the Escambrays.

GENERAL TAYLOR: How many men did you have to do this?

[]: About 650 men were supposed to land in the Blue Beach area, plus the paratroopers dropping in that vicinity, and we were eventually to have about 400 men at Green Beach.

MR. BISSELL: However the initial landing at Green Beach was about 200 men.

[]: We were supposed to have about 1,400 men total in the three beach areas.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Do you suppose any of them were able to make their way out of there? Can they get around on foot in this swampy terrain?

GENERAL GRAY: That would depend on the state of the rainy season. At its height, they would have up to two feet of water in this area. However, this was just about the beginning of the rainy season, and it should not have been too bad.

[]: We think that some of our men did get out on foot. As you recall, we also dropped some paratroopers above the swampy terrain. As a final point, Castro has only reported the capture of 400 to 500 men and we got over 1,300 men into that area.

MR. BISSELL: You have now been told of these plans, as plans, and I think this would be an appropriate time to have General Gray give you the JCS's view or evaluation of these plans.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Why did we think that this operation would be a "less spectacular landing"?

MR. BISSELL: It was carried out at night, in a very remote area, and we had hoped that the landing might be unopposed. We had had no reports of either police or militia in these beach areas. Finally, we thought that if this force were to land without a big show, the operation could then take on the guise of a rebel infiltration.

GENERAL GRAY: We developed a covert logistics plan for follow-up operations, basing it on the assumption of the most optimistic thing that could happen, as our thought was that if events did not turn out that well, and we had less troops to support it would be that much easier logistically. Besides this logistic support of covert operations, we also developed a logistics support for the transition to overt operations. I have

tion. We prepared such a paper for this Working Group, and it was approved for submission by General Wheeler and General Lemnitzer. In this paper, we said that the only type of operation which could assure complete success would be one which involved overt U.S. intervention.

At this time in the JCS, it was felt strongly that what we needed was a national plan which had presidential approval, and which delineated the tasks to be done by each governmental department. We prepared a paper on this proposition, and it was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and sent by them to the Secretary of Defense. Because of the fact that this was in the changeover period between administrations, as far as I know, nothing happened to that paper. I think that this is an important fact, as we must face up to the realization that in the last stage of this Cuban operation, there was confusion as to what the actual concept was. If a complete national plan had been prepared and approved, this might not have occurred. Unfortunately, we were never able to get this done. Later, Mr. Mann of the State Department read this paper and stated that this is what we should have done.

ADMIRAL BURKE: This was the idea of a complete inter-departmental task force.

MR. BARNES: Something like this was done later.

GENERAL GRAY: What actually happened then was that CIA wrote up all the concepts, we in the JCS got them on an evaluation basis, and the State Department got into the act very informally still later.

GENERAL TAYLOR: The Zapata Plan was apparently put on paper and approved sometime after the 15 March meeting. Was a field order ever put out on it?

[]: This was a rush order after several alternatives had been discussed. I don't know if the JCS ever got a detailed plan, as we worked and reworked this until just before the operation.

GENERAL TAYLOR: As I understand it then, the concept was okayed by the President, and the detailed plan was

worked over for a period of time and finished just before the operation. When was the plan for the landing approved?

MR. BISSELL: The President approved successive steps as we prepared for this, but up until D-1, he reserved unto himself the final decision to go or no go, and up until this time, D-1, he could have diverted the Expeditionary Force from landing, even though it was on its way.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Was there ever an affirming order given to go ahead?

ADMIRAL BURKE: My records show that 1340 hours on the 16th of April was the time that we received the green light.

GENERAL TAYLOR: This was just before the landings which were to take place the next day.

GENERAL GRAY: The first time the new administration came into this was at a 27 January meeting at the White House.

MR. KENNEDY: I attended that meeting, and there was never any discussion of that plan. I do remember that Secretary Rusk brought up the fact of a possible landing on the Isle of Pines.

GENERAL GRAY: That's right. They merely discussed the seven possible courses of action, ranging from straight volunteer forces to straight U.S. overt intervention. We were told to prepare plans for all of these possible courses of action in ascending scale of difficulty.

MR. KENNEDY: One thing sticks in my mind in regard to this meeting. I remember that at that time, we were told that it would be impossible to successfully overthrow Castro because of his control over his armed forces and over the country in general, unless you had the invading force backed up by intervention by U.S. forces.

At this point, 1440 hours, General Taylor was called to the telephone where he talked to McGeorge Bundy at the

White House, who informed him that he had not, as yet, seen the President.

GENERAL GRAY: At this time, we prepared a plan for the Joint Chiefs of Staff which was approved by them and sent to the Secretary of Defense, stating that the U.S. needed an overall national plan of action and the paper then listed all possible seven courses of action.

GENERAL TAYLOR: The Trinidad Plan and the Zapata Plan had not as yet been crystallized then.

GENERAL GRAY: Not as far as we knew.

GENERAL TAYLOR: As I understand, this need for a national plan of action which you were bringing up, what you are actually doing is raising a procedural point.

GENERAL GRAY: On the 27th of January, the President was briefed on the Trinidad Plan, and he was also told that the JCS had not reviewed it, and he directed that they so do.

MR. KENNEDY: That 27 January briefing did not address an operational plan, as such. It was very ethereal.

GENERAL GRAY: I do know that on the 28th of January, we were asked to review the Trinidad Plan.

MR. BISSELL: My notes from that meeting indicate that we asked for authority to continue the build-up of a strike force and that we also go ahead with political and propaganda actions that were underway. We did not mention geography, but my notes do state that [] detail plan would be evaluated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

GENERAL TAYLOR: That does seem to agree then.

GENERAL GRAY: We were given the Trinidad Plan on the 31st of January and we briefed the Chiefs on the 3rd of February. I would like to read the conclusions which were approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

At this point, General Gray read from JCSM-57-61, dated 3 February '61, and its attachment which was a military

evaluation of the CIA Paramilitary Plan—Cuba. A copy of this document will be made available in the file. General Gray read all 17 conclusions made by the JCS and several of his conclusions were interrupted by comments and questions. Following his statement of conclusion no. 6, that the airborne assault should be successful, inasmuch as it was highly improbable that it would be opposed, General Taylor stated:

GENERAL TAYLOR: I'm surprised to hear that. I wouldn't have bet a nickel that it would work.

GENERAL GRAY: Don't forget that this is the Trinidad Plan and not the Zapata Plan.

Later, in referring to conclusion no. 11, that it would take the Cuban army until D+2 to move substantial forces to the beachhead area, even without interference from the air or from guerrillas, General Gray stated:

GENERAL GRAY: The intelligence that was given to us indicated that the nearest Castro military unit was a regiment situated about 100 miles away, and we were also told that the regiment was not concentrated at Santa Clara, but it was scattered throughout the area with the militia. Another thing that had not been developed by CIA, we did not know of the political pressure and advance publicity that would be needed in order to successfully surface this revolutionary government.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I don't understand your reference to advance publicity that was needed.

GENERAL GRAY: It was necessary in order to build up public acceptance of the provisional government and its leaders.

[]: This was done out of Miami and New York and we had a terrible time with it.

[]: The first knowledge that the Cubans had of the

actual operation was on the night of 14 April, just before the D-2 air strikes, when Barnes and I talked to Cardona. I told him that every time I had given his council information, there had been a leak; and I pointed out that inasmuch as his own son was going in there, he should keep quiet. He said that he would not tell anyone.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I guess that all this hoopla in the press made this operation just that much harder.

GENERAL GRAY: Yes, though this is not an excuse. I don't think it had any effect on the actual military operation.

MR. BARNES: None of us anticipated the reaction by the press, particularly by that Miami press during the period when the U.N. was hearing Roa's complaints. All sorts of guesses were printed, including one which had the right date for the operation. Notwithstanding, we did move our people from our training area to the port, and onto the ships without the dope getting out.

GENERAL GRAY: Somoza put a very effective clamp on in Nicaragua.

At this point, after reading through the thirteenth conclusion that the Cuban army could eventually reduce the beachhead, General Gray stated:

GENERAL GRAY: In our view we thought that the invasion forces could hold the beachhead about seven days.

On reading the fifteenth conclusion that a decision of the execution of this operation must be made by D-21, General Gray stated:

GENERAL GRAY: This decision was made at that time, but the President reserved the right to stop the operation at every meeting which was held up to the day before the actual landing.

General Gray then read from the sixteenth conclusion in regard to the fact that ultimate success would depend on political factors, that is a sizable popular uprising or substantial follow-on forces.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I don't quite see what you mean by follow-on forces and your follow-on support. The time capability which we give for these forces to hold the beachhead for a period of only seven days would not allow for this.

GENERAL GRAY: That's right. This should have been planned for. It was just about this time that [] began to sound out the other Latin American governments in regard to their support of this operation.

[]: We also had an additional 300 people in the Miami area who were to be flown into Nicaragua and embarked.

[]: Yes, we actually flew about 162 of these out of Miami.

GENERAL CABELL: We committed some of these people in advance rather than deliberately holding them off in order to have a follow-on force in training.

GENERAL GRAY: The militia in this area of the island were reported to be friendly to the guerrillas. Therefore, we figured that Castro would have to go clear back to the west end of the island in order to get any effective militia to send against the invading forces.

General Gray then read the last conclusion which stated that despite the shortcomings, the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered that timely execution of the plan had a fair chance of ultimate success and even if it did not achieve immediately the full results desired, it could contribute to the eventual overthrow of the Castro regime.

GENERAL TAYLOR: This was the JCS evaluation of the Trinidad Plan.

GENERAL GRAY: Yes sir.

MR. KENNEDY: Did I understand you to say earlier that your answer as to the possible degree of success of this plan was 30/70?

GENERAL: Yes sir. This was a general numerical guess made in a discussion with General Wheeler. I heard others saying that the chances might be 40 to 60, which is the highest guess that I heard. I might point out that at about the time of this evaluation paper, Ambassador Willauer faded out of the picture and we began to have meetings with [] group.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Did they get into the military aspects of this?

GENERAL GRAY: No. Mostly the political aspects.

[]: One briefing on the Trinidad Plan was given to the [] group about the second week of February.

GENERAL GRAY: About the 24th of February the Joint Staff Team went to Guatemala to evaluate the military effectiveness of the CIA-Cuban Volunteer Task Force.

At this point, General Gray read from JCSM-146-61, dated 10 March 1961, a memorandum for the Secretary of Defense by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in regard to the evaluation of the CIA-Cuban Volunteer Task Force. This document with attachment will be made available in the file. After reading some of the more specific conclusions in the evaluation, General Gray concluded by stating the general JCS conclusion that from a military standpoint, since this small invasion force will retain the initiative until location of the landing is determined, the plan could be expected to achieve initial success. Ultimate success, however will depend on the extent to which the initial assault serves catalyst for further action on the part of anti-Castro elements throughout Cuba.

GENERAL TAYLOR: This was the Joint Military Team's evaluation of this Cuban force.

GENERAL GRAY: Yes. The team went down there to check the training, the combat effectiveness, and the logistics capabilities of this volunteer force, and they were favorably impressed. Colonel Tarwater, for example, felt that the pilots were very well trained, though he said that they should practice making successive passes on ground targets.

Now to move along to the Zapata Plan. At the 11 March meeting, the President asked for a plan to be prepared which would be less spectacular in execution, and therefore more plausible as an essentially Cuban operation. CIA made up several alternative courses of action, which we heard of on the 13th of March. My staff evaluated it and the JCS reviewed it on the 15th of March and submitted their conclusions to the Secretary of Defense. On the 16th of March, these conclusions were presented to the President.

MR. BISSELL: Do you want to mention the alternative concepts, one of which was the Zapata concept?

GENERAL GRAY: I believe that only three of the seven alternatives were deemed worthy of serious consideration. Some of the other alternatives, for example, dealt with landings on islands near the Isle of Pines.

MR. DULLES: It was felt that such landings would have little impact on the main island of Cuba, as any rebel sympathizers who wanted to join up could not do so unless they swam out to the island.

ADMIRAL BURKE: The three alternatives we considered were: first, a modification of the Trinidad Plan; second, a landing at Preston on the northeast coast; and third, the Zapata Plan.

GENERAL GRAY: The JCS conclusions stated that the Zapata Plan was the most feasible of the three alternatives and the one most likely to accomplish the objective. However, it was also stated that none of the alternative concepts were considered to be as militarily feasible and as likely to ac-

comply with the objective as the original plan, that is, the Trinidad Plan. We thought that with effective air strikes laid on prior to the landing, and with tactical air support available during and after the landing in order to keep the area secure, it would be possible to keep the Cuban forces from getting into the beachhead area. As you will note from my chart, once this evaluation of the alternative concepts was made, the Joint Chiefs of Staff started to get into the operational business, that is of support and logistics.

GENERAL TAYLOR: You say that the evaluation was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

GENERAL GRAY: Yes sir.

At this point, General Gray was reading from the conclusions in JCSM-166-61, dated 15 March, a memorandum from the JCS to the Secretary of Defense, subject: "Evaluation of the Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts, CIA Paramilitary Plan—Cuba." A copy of this document with the appendices will be made available through the file. [Documents and appendices are still classified.]

GENERAL TAYLOR: You say that the Joint Chiefs felt that this plan was not as feasible as the original plan?

MR. KENNEDY: Is that question accurate? Wouldn't it be right to say that the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved this concept?

ADMIRAL BURKE: There is no paper which says that. However, inasmuch as the JCS did not disapprove this concept, it does imply approval, even though there were many factors and reservations that were taken into account.

MR. BISSELL: I have some notes here which were written by [] about the 16th of March, which compares the advantages and disadvantages of the two plans. His final phrase is, "The Trinidad Plan promises more decisive results but at greater risks." One might say that the Zapata Plan had

lesser initial risks but it could be expected to achieve less decisive results. This was because you would expect less opposition to the landing force in this area, and because the approaches to the beachhead area were not as good. At the same time, night landings here would register less of a shock on the Cuban populace, and it would be more difficult for the guerrillas and volunteer recruits from the general public to get into the beachhead area to join up with the landing force.

GENERAL TAYLOR: At no point then, were the JCS asked, "Do you recommend doing it?" I understand now that they only were asked to comment in regard to the several alternative courses.

ADMIRAL BURKE: That is true. However, where we possibly did make a mistake, is in the fact that we did have an opportunity to say that we thought this plan was not feasible and we did not say so.

GENERAL GRAY: The conclusions stated that we did think the concept or plan was feasible.

ADMIRAL BURKE: That's true, even though we did have reservations.

GENERAL TAYLOR: No one ever said flat out to you, Do you recommend doing it, and if not, do you have a better plan?

MR. DULLES: These plans were exposed and discussed in high-level meetings, and this question was asked.

ADMIRAL BURKE: One difficulty here was that General Lemnitzer was by himself at these meetings.

GENERAL GRAY: I was with him at several of these meetings.

MR. DULLES: One thing we mustn't forget is that we were all interested in having this plan turn out to be a success. Not enough emphasis has been placed here on the alternatives that faced us. We either had to go ahead or we had the alternative of demobilizing these people, and to the world, it would have meant that we were not behind these people who were trying to overthrow Castro.

ADMIRAL BURKE: Also, just at this juncture, we were in between administrations, and no one was too sure of his ground. In retrospect, we should have formalized this thing earlier and in detail. We should have had more work done on the plan, and it should have been worked over carefully and scrupulously as is usually done. This we did not do, both because of the time factor and because it was so closely held.

GENERAL TAYLOR: All of these plans seem to contain the critical assumption that there would be an uprising by the Cuban populace. Was this ever discussed?

ADMIRAL BURKE: We did discuss it in the JCS.

MR. DULLES: We didn't count on this so much in the Zapata Plan; whereas the Trinidad Plan was more of a shock treatment which might have brought the Cuban people around to our side. The later plan was not tailored to this, and it was far quieter. Perhaps Castro might have played down the landing instead of blowing it up. As a matter of fact, he only blew it up when it was rather evident that he had licked the invading force.

MR. KENNEDY: Then what was the objective of the operation?

MR. DULLES: Get a beachhead, hold it, and then build it up.

MR. KENNEDY: How could you possibly do that—take a thousand or 1,400 men in there and hold the beachhead against these thousands of militia?

At this point he addressed Admiral Burke.

MR. KENNEDY: When you thought that this was a satisfactory plan, did you understand that these 1,400 men could maintain their position there several weeks, even though there wouldn't be an uprising?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No. I understood that there would be one of two choices. First, if there was no serious opposition, the landing force might hold the beachhead. Secondly, if there

were opposition and they could not hold it, they would slip through and become guerrillas.

[]: We had a call from our agents saying that if we would give them arms, they would go with us, otherwise they were being called up to the Cuban militia and would have to go.

GENERAL TAYLOR: (Addressing General Gray) Would you repeat again what you said in regard to the feasibility of this plan to accomplish the objective? Also, was a new concept ever written to replace the one of March 17th?

In answer to this question, General Gray read the mission of the Task Force as delineated in the Zapata Plan. Admiral Burke then showed JCSM-166-61 to General Taylor, who read the following extract:

GENERAL TAYLOR: "Alternative III has all the prerequisites necessary to successfully establish the Cuban Voluntary Task Force, including their elements in the objective area and sustain itself with outside logistic support for several weeks. However, inaccessibility of the area may limit the support anticipated from the Cuban populace." I think that the JCS were not predicting success, at least for several weeks, on an uprising by the Cuban populace.

GENERAL CABELL: Support by the Cuban populace was meant to be the recruits who would infiltrate into the area.

At this point, General Taylor read several other recommendations from JCSM-166-61 and then stated:

GENERAL TAYLOR: The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation still seems to be a choice between these three alternatives, but they still state that the Trinidad Plan was preferred.

MR. BISSELL: It still seems to me that if we could have held the beachhead area for a period of several weeks, our aircraft

in working them over, could have first knocked out Castro's microwave lengths and forced him to open-voice communications so that we would have known more about them; and secondly, we could have resupplied our units and the guerrilla units; and third, at the rate recruiting in the United States was going on, we could have sent in reinforcements to the tune of about 500 men with minimum training. Of course, we would have had to assume that we would have knocked out Castro's air force.

GENERAL GRAY: Following the 16 March decision that the Zapata Plan should be pursued, the interdepartmental Working Group was set up, and on the 22nd of March we finalized an agreed list of tasks. For example, the State Department had to define what recognition of the provisional government meant. This delineation of agreed tasks was useful and helped much. On the 28th of March, the JCS approved a letter of instruction to CINCLANT and CINCONAD [Commander in Chief, Continental Air Defense Command]; and CONAD's plan, "Southern Tip," was implemented to improve the air defense of our southern states area. We also had to work out rules of engagement for our naval forces as the carrier *Essex*, and seven destroyers provided escort for the Cuban Expeditionary Force ships.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Did they have authority to attack Cuban forces?

GENERAL GRAY: They could attack Cuban aircraft if they had open bomb bays or they were actually starting an attack. However, if such an engagement did take place, we were then supposed to divert this force to Vieques Island, although some people thought that the Cubans would not divert, but would insist on going in for the landings. I might add that the rules of engagement were changed several times as the operation proceeded. On the 12th of April, the "Southern Tip" Plan was implemented and we were in an operational status. We also developed two logistic support plans, one overt and one covert. The covert had several phases. First the landing phase, D to D+3. Secondly, the build-up phase, D+3 to D+30. During

this phase, the CIA had their plan built up to quadruple the size of their force to about 5,000 men and we had to estimate the numbers of weapons carriers, jeeps and other equipment that would be necessary. Thirdly, we had the D+30 and ON Phase, where we assumed that these forces would have popular support, and we could gradually go to overt logistic support of the operation. We had arms packs for 30,000 guerrillas in addition to CIA plans for a 5,000-man force. This equipment was actually assembled at Anniston, readily available and packs for 15,000 actually were loaded on ship. We also had mobile equipment which was being assembled at Anniston. We also considered the possibility of another Latin American country recognizing the provisional government before we did, and if we would then covertly support these forces through this third government. Beyond that, we had an overt phase, wherein the provisional government was recognized after its people had gone into Cuba. Here a military logistic advisory group would assist the volunteer Cuban forces in providing sustained logistic support, and then following the stabilization of the new government with diplomatic representatives re-entering Cuba, it envisaged the establishment of a military aid program through DOD. I have omitted mention of the fact that we had a U.S. Army field-type hospital set up and ready to go to Vieques.

GENERAL TAYLOR: How did you figure on evacuating casualties?

GENERAL GRAY: We could get them out by air.

MR. BISSELL: We thought that we could do this after H+4.

GENERAL GRAY: We also had a war room set up in the Joint Staff area with all messages exclusive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Admiral Dennison and the Task Force commander, or from them to me. Though the messages from Washington had to be relayed to the Cuban Expeditionary Force's shore through these channels and it was cumbersome, I don't think that you could say the operation failed because of organization.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Don't you think that withholding all this from the staff was an impediment?

GENERAL GRAY: I don't think so, but it took a lot of the time of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

ADMIRAL BURKE: There are always a lot of delays involving anything from a half hour, to one to three hours; and these delays, mostly due to communications, could be fatal. If we had had a naval commander of the Task Force there, he could have made instantaneous decisions. I found myself writing a message to my naval Task Group commander, telling him what to do if he was under fire from the beach. What in the hell was I doing writing this in Washington?

GENERAL GRAY: I don't say that this was the way to do it, but I don't think that you could say that faulty organization defeated the operation.

ADMIRAL BURKE: I agree with that.

GENERAL GRAY: If we had had an interdepartmental set-up, charged with the responsibility of coming up with a concept and with an overall national plan, and then had presented it in writing each time to the President, I think there would have been less confusion as to just what was approved at the end of this operation.

MR. BARNES: That couldn't have been achieved because of the way this operation developed. Though we had a fairly definitive plan in Trinidad, after that we just couldn't do it as we kept changing our plan because of political considerations and changes in the ground rules.

ADMIRAL BURKE: That's where we made a mistake, I think. We should have drawn up a paper stating our concept, our mission, our tasks, our requirements, the status of the plan, etc. The way this developed, General Gray had to come to me with all sorts of questions. For example, what we could use the carriers for? Whereas if we were working under an agreed concept, he would not have had to do so.

MR. BISSELL: Many actions that came up involved the

political considerations of importance. For example, at one time in the operation, a decision was made to authorize Navy jets to give protection to our B-26s when they came in to give close ground support, at least for a limited period of time. This involved a high-level decision and also amounted to a reversal of the policy that had been made that no U.S. forces would be overtly engaged. It's hard for me to see how this could have been worked out in advance.

GENERAL TAYLOR: It depends on what you mean by the use of the word "concept." I don't think that any changes were actually made in the concept.

ADMIRAL BURKE: That task which Bissell just discussed was laid on after we were told that the carriers would get out of there so that Castro's air force wouldn't see them. Later when the decision was made to launch aircraft for beachhead cover, it was pretty late.

GENERAL GRAY: If we had had an agreed-on national plan, it would have forced us to different conditions for our rules of engagement, and to different employment of our tactical air. I think that the rules of engagement should have been in the overall plan, and not in our plan, or CIA's plan, or CINCLANT's plan.

GENERAL TAYLOR: How is it possible to keep from tying the hands of our military men by these political considerations?

GENERAL GRAY: By having all the departments participate in the planning from the very beginning.

[]: And by having this overall plan signed as approved by the President.

GENERAL GRAY: Once we got the State Department in on the agreed tasks, I was surprised in that Braddock took care of every one of them. Until then, it had been difficult to get them to do anything. Another mistake lies in the fact that we said at the beginning we should have war-gamed this operation, yet when it got to be an approved plan, the CIA was going flat out,

racing the clock, and I found that it was impossible to stop them even for a day in order to do this.

GENERAL TAYLOR: What factors caused this rush?

GENERAL GRAY: First, we were trying to beat the rainy season. Second, there was also the matter of jets. We had information that the Cuban jet trainees in Czechoslovakia were coming back.

[]: Also the President of Guatemala told us to get out of the country by early March, and we had about 1,400 men there.

GENERAL GRAY: American newsmen were also getting into the act.

At this point, there was some discussion over a message that Admiral Burke received from McGeorge Bundy in regard to the reception and interrogation party at Vieques. This was terminated when General Taylor declared:

GENERAL TAYLOR: As far as I know, this Vieques business is now a concern of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CIA.

MR. DULLES: I don't think that you should get mixed up in that.

Following this, there was some discussion on this position of the personnel and equipment of the Cuban Expeditionary Force. At the end of this discussion, General Taylor stated:

GENERAL TAYLOR: For our own purposes, it would be useful to screen these people and get the best of them somewhere near here where we could interview them.

At 1618 hours, [], one of the American contract pilots, entered the room, accompanied by [].

GENERAL TAYLOR: We're trying to find out what can be done to improve operations of this type in the future.

[]: I'm prepared to answer questions from a résumé which I have.

[]: Your résumé has not been circulated.

At this point, [] read from a résumé which he had prepared, a copy of which will be made available for the file. Among his pertinent observations was that sufficient preparation had not been made for effective target study by the B26 pilots; also that they were not permitted to use napalm on the B-26s which the planners had considered to be an extremely useful munition. He felt that as a recompense, they had been authorized to employ eight B-26s rather than five B-26s on the initial strike, although there were 14 B-26s available operationally for launch.

[]: Why weren't all of the operational aircraft launched?

[]: Permission was not given by Headquarters.

MR. DULLES: On D-2? There's another reason for that, which I will go into later.

[] then stated that debriefing of the crews after the first air strike on the 15th showed that at most, only 50 percent of the enemy's air capability had been destroyed. The strike was rescheduled for Sunday, and napalm called for again, and again permission for its use was refused. He also stated that while he was getting constant calls for air protection on the beachhead on the 17th of April, Headquarters confused the issue by a call for further requirements for air-field target strikes, and in the resulting confusion, three or four critical hours were lost. Eventually, he said we wound up with split forces, trying to cover both the beachhead and enemy airfields. [] stated that the plan as he knew it, had been changed 180 degrees, in that they were originally

supposed to use 100 percent of their operational capability for strikes at the enemy airfields in an effort to neutralize Castro's air force, and also to hit his microwave communications.

[]: What were your orders on D-Day morning?

[]: We were ordered to put two aircraft each on the two airfields near Havana, and one aircraft each on the airfields near Guantánamo. However, the order to go from five to eight aircraft came in late and it pushed the crew briefing so that they did not have proper target study before the mission. After D-Day it was obvious they had not destroyed the enemy's air capability and there was uncertainty from there on in on the location of the Cuban air force's aircraft. The enemy were "turning around" their aircraft in a very short time at their airfields.

GENERAL TAYLOR: What was your turnaround time?

[]: We had seven and a half hours between our times over target which usually amounted to about 30 minutes. About two of this seven and a half hours was spent on the ground and the rest in flying to and from the target area. We had very good ground maintenance and armament people.

MR. KENNEDY: Were these Americans or Cubans?

[]: These were mainly Americans though we did have some Cubans. The Americans were greatly influenced by General Dossiter, who had pulled these people into the operation and who had excellent control over them.

[] stated that he had felt exactly what Castro had put into words, that the first air attack only served to make Castro angry and also gave him time to rally his forces.

GENERAL TAYLOR: You mean the pause after the D-2 air strikes until the actual landings?

[]: Yes.

[] then stated that some of his crews had reported ragged naval air cover over the beachhead area. There had been some confusion as to whether the cover was friendly or enemy, inasmuch as there had been reports that Castro's air force was using MIGs.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Did they have U.S. Navy aircraft over the beachhead?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Only in the later stages of the operation.

GENERAL CABELL: Permission was given for them to cover the beachhead area for one hour at dawn of D+2.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Did you debrief all of these crews?

[]: Not all of them. I started off with the B-26 pilots and then went to the C-54 and C-46 crews as they could report more because of the nature of their piloting operations. I debriefed them for the purposes of intelligence.

[] then stated that in his opinion the erratic reports of naval intervention may have served as an asset in the air battle.

[]: But as far as the Cuban Volunteer Force was concerned, we had given them something and then had taken it back. A complete cover by naval air was never established.

MR. KENNEDY: Had you or these pilots expected to have this aid or cover?

[]: We were never briefed so.

MR. KENNEDY: Did you ever expect it by inference? Were you ever told that you would *not* get it?

[]: I don't think they ever definitely said that they would *not* get it to the pilots.

MR. KENNEDY: Did you expect such aid?

[]: No sir.

MR. BISSELL: On the early morning mission of D+2, the pilots were briefed to expect naval air protection. They might have expected that protection after that.

ADMIRAL BURKE: Do you know if they were briefed that they would get naval air cover for one hour after dawn on D+2?

[]: Yes sir.

At this point, [] went back to reading points from his prepared résumé. He pointed out that if they had not had the assurance of naval air cover over the area on the morning of D+2, they would not have put American crews in the aircraft. That morning, the 19th, because of lack of Cuban crews, they had scheduled four American B-26 crews. One American crew was shot down that morning, and one was chased off by T-33s. The commander of the second element of the B-26s tried to contact the naval aircraft and when he could not, he elected not to penetrate the coast and he turned back from his mission when he was 35 miles out to sea. One [

] crew member observed another American crew in a B-26 go into the sea after it was shot down at 1200 "Zulu" [reunion point 50 miles south of the Bay of Pigs] during the period when they had been promised naval air cover.

MR. DULLES: Did any of your people see any MIGs?

GENERAL CABELL: They've already said that they would have liked to authenticate that, but they couldn't, that it remained only conjecture.

At this point, [] stressed one point very emphatically, that he thought that one lesson that could be learned was in regard to the inability of the Cuban crews to do an effective job under tough combat conditions. He pointed

out that when the going was easy and morale was high, they did a good job, but that by the end of the operation, when things were very difficult, it had been almost impossible to get them into the air at all.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Why was this naval air cover only to be over the beach for this one special hour?

ADMIRAL BURKE: They didn't want them to be over the beachhead area for a long time, picked up and attributed to the United States. However, because of the serious troubles the landing forces were in, they did want them over the area at first light to protect this first air strike.

[]: One of our pilots reported that on the road west of Blue Beach that there were an estimated 20 large Russian tanks, and some 50 to 60 trucks. Three of our B-26s made passes on the trucks before they could stop and have the men climb out.

GENERAL TAYLOR: When was this?

[]: On D+1, I think.

MR. BISSELL: That was Tuesday afternoon.

2 lines deleted

[]: If we hadn't hurt them badly, they would have moved right on down into the landing area.

MR. KENNEDY: Could you tell where the fighting was going on?

At this point, [], at the chart depicted where targets had been seen at points above Blue, Green, and Red beaches.

[]: They moved in tremendously quickly into the area.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Where did they report that flak from?

[]: They reported flak from all around the area. The Cubans seemed to have excellent coverage and seemed to know what they were doing.

GENERAL TAYLOR: How were the aircraft directed? From the ground by radio?

[]: No, this wasn't possible as the communications went down with the ship that was sunk. They did land an aircraft on the strip and try to do some controlling with their radio. We then tried to have other aircraft land, but the Cuban pilots' fuel control procedures were bad and they had to turn back.

MR. KENNEDY: You say then that you did not find the Cuban pilots to be very good?

[]: No. When the chips were down and the going was tough, they found excuses *not* to do the job.

MR. KENNEDY: What percentage would you say did do their job?

[]: I'd say that not over 35 percent of them did.

[]: In our early missions, we had some Cuban crews making as many as three passes over heavily defended targets.

[]: That was in the early days when they smelled victory. When the going got tough, we had trouble even getting them into the aircraft. On D+2, it took us several hours to get some of their crews in the aircraft, and then they aborted the mission.

ADMIRAL BURKE: When our pilots were over the beach-head on the morning of D+2, they couldn't find any enemy infantry at all.

MR. KENNEDY: Can you tell us where the fighting took place?

[]: I'm getting into an area I really cannot answer.

MR. KENNEDY: You say that they had tanks and trucks west of Blue Beach?

[]: On D-Day morning, there were Cuban tanks hitting our troops on Red Beach.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Were there any attempts made at marking lines by smoke or other means? How did your aircraft know that they were not hitting your own troops?

[]: On our missions in the beachhead area, we were preoccupied with heavy equipment targets. We did not try to put any fire on troops. We always had heavy equipment targets when we were in the area.

MR. KENNEDY: How long did our people last on Red Beach?

[]: It only seemed to be a matter of hours. The DZs [drop zone] where we dropped by C-46s did not seem to be compromised, so there was spasmodic fire in one or two areas. I don't think they knew that we were going in there.

MR. DULLES: I'd like to get more clear your statement on confusion in regard to orders. I didn't think that you had any question at all in regard to going after airfields on D+2.

MR. BISSELL: We did get authority the previous night to strike airfields at dusk, even though we knew that our aircraft were heavily committed. As I recall, we authorized strikes at airfields at dusk that night.

MR. DULLES: That mission was not carried out.

MR. BISSELL: That's correct sir. The crews were tired by then, and the ones that did go in, could not identify the San Antonio targets in the haze.

[]: Our orders to execute the strikes were so different from what we had been told that we would do, that when I saw the orders that we were calling off the war, I really thought we were trying to lose it intentionally, though I didn't say anything aloud in regard to this.

[] left the conference room at 1700 hours, and General Taylor called an executive session of the Committee at this time. The general meeting adjourned at 1701.

The following notes are not verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

31 lines deleted

STATEMENT: One of the greatest problems encountered in developing this force was the difficulty in getting the Cubans to sublimate their petty differences for the common good.

STATEMENT: One fact that misled our estimate of the opposition we would meet was that prior to the Zapata Operation there has never been a pitched battle before between Cubans.

REQUEST: That all professional military people involved [] in training the force be identified.

RESPONSE: CIA indicated this would be provided.

QUESTION: At some point would it be desirable to have the conclusions of all key people involved in the operation?

ANSWER: Yes.

REQUEST: General Taylor requested a rebriefing on the air plan and further information on the reported air ammunition shortage.

RESPONSE: CIA indicated this would be provided.

REQUEST: General Taylor requested the reconstitution of the intelligence that influenced the decisions, this to be presented in such form as to indicate the decisions influenced.

At this point [] briefed on the actual operation. He prefaced his remarks by pointing out that the information on which his report was based was limited and incomplete.

When the 15 April air strikes were originally considered it was suggested that they be conducted for two days without restriction. However, due to political considerations it was decided to conduct limited strikes on D-2 and limited strikes on dawn of D-Day. It was decided to use two B-26 aircraft against each of three airfields on which all Cuban tactical

aircraft were based, San Antonio de los Baños, Campo Libertad, and Santiago de Cuba.

Reconnaissance flights on 8, 11 and 13 April indicated the Cubans had 36 combat aircraft although many of these were not operable. Consequently it was decided to increase the aircraft in the air strikes from six to eight with one additional aircraft assigned as a spare.

The D-2 air strikes were planned to destroy Castro's combat aircraft on the ground. It now appears that these air strikes destroyed all of Castro's tactical aircraft except for two Sea Furies, two B-26s, and three to four T-33s.

Opinions were expressed generally favoring the view that if the D-Day air strikes had been conducted as originally planned all of Castro's tactical aircraft would have been destroyed or at least eliminated to the extent that the invasion force could have survived.

It was pointed out that all but eight or nine operable aircraft had been destroyed and that four of these were eliminated on D-Day by the invasion force.

The question was raised as to why the T-33s had not been destroyed. Several possible answers were given, including the restriction against the use of napalm, self-imposed by CIA, and the possibility that the aircraft on one runway had not been attacked.

QUESTION: Were you surprised at the effectiveness of the T-33s?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What led to the decision to conduct air strikes on D-2?

ANSWER: The strikes were timed to coincide with Niño Díaz landing in the Oriente and it was desired to tie the air strikes in with the defections.

STATEMENT: We knew before the landing that Castro retained operational tactical aircraft.

QUESTION: Why were limitations placed on the air strikes?

ANSWER: In order to reduce the appearance of a major military operation which would indicate U.S. involvement.

STATEMENT: It is a mistake to focus primary attention on one particular decision. We were operating under the very clear instructions to make this operation appear as one the Cubans could conduct without gross U.S. assistance.

STATEMENT: It was not one decision or one thing that caused failure, but many things.

STATEMENT: In covert operations of this kind political considerations always outweigh the military, with a consequent erosion of the military capability to the point that the operation becomes militarily infeasible.

STATEMENT: This raises one of the vital considerations before this Group, the conflict between the desire for political acceptability and military effectiveness.

STATEMENT: The point was made that political considerations must be given their due weight, but if this results in making the operation militarily infeasible the President should be advised that the plan is no longer feasible. He cannot be expected to remember all the details of a plan nor the significance of one seemingly minor change in a military operation.

STATEMENT: The President had frequent consultations with military representatives.

STATEMENT: The DOD was not consulted in the decision to call off the air strikes.

STATEMENT: It is dangerous to conduct meetings where military advice is required when only one officer from one service is present. This was the case during six or eight meetings.

QUESTION: Were the D-Day air strikes previously approved?

ANSWER: The paper setting forth the air strikes was passed around at the April 12th meeting. This paper made clear that

there would be air strikes, but not an all-out effort. However, this document was only passed around at the meeting, read and considered by some, and collected after the meeting. It is doubtful if the President read it or understood the details.

QUESTION: What led to the cancellation of the air strikes?

ANSWER: At 1300 Sunday it was understood that the plan, including the air strikes for dawn of D-Day, had been approved. At about 7:00 P.M. CIA representatives were called to Mr. Rusk's office. He was concerned over the apparent defection of two rather than one B-26 and an additional cargo plane because he felt these additional defections had caused him to mislead Mr. Stevenson. At 10:30 P.M. the CIA tactical commander was advised that the air strikes had been called off. He most strongly urged that this decision be reconsidered and reversed. In debating the air strikes question and in discussing the action to be taken to strengthen Mr. Stevenson's position, the President was contacted. In discussing the air strike question the President said he wasn't aware that there were going to be any air strikes on the morning of D-Day. At 2315 D-1 Mr. Rusk announced that there would be no dawn air strikes. At this time the invasion ships were within 5,000 yards of their landing beaches and it was physically impossible to call off the strikes.

QUESTION: Was a strong position on this issue taken with Mr. Rusk?

ANSWER: Probably not strong enough. It was indicated that the worst would be that the invaders would not have their B-26 support and if the ships were on their way out the force would be denied its resupply capability.

QUESTION: At the 12 April meeting were the air strikes an issue?

ANSWER: No, the plan appeared to have jelled.

STATEMENT: There were only verbal instructions. These were not written, signed directives and the only papers that were available were fuzzy. The issues were never clearly resolved.

STATEMENT: I understood there was to be one final briefing involving all the participants and setting forth the entire plan. This was never done. Had this briefing been held the ultimate decisions might have been different.

STATEMENT: After cancellation of the air strikes an attempt was made to minimize the probable damage. At 0400 D-Day a CIA representative contacted the State Department to see if the Navy's protective CAP could be extended from the 20-mile limit to 15 or preferably a 3-mile limit. The State Department objected and the President, in attempting to prevent U.S. attribution, confirmed that the Navy's protective CAP limit would not be changed. He did approve, however, EW support. Prior to this presidential determination an alerting order had been sent to CINCLANT and he had turned his force around to be in a position to provide CAP and EW support if so ordered.

By the time it became apparent we would not receive air CAP we sent out a message to put the troops ashore and move the ships out to sea. The Brigade troops commenced landing at Blue Beach at 0100.

0300: The *Caribe* had completed unloading.

0330: The troops unloading from the *Atlántico* were under fire.

0430: Troops landed at Blue Beach.

0600: First LCU ashore.

0630: Enemy air attacks against shipping and Blue Beach commenced.

0640: Friendly aircraft arrived.

0730: Three LCUs had discharged vehicles and tanks.

0825: Castro T-33 shot down by *Blagar*.

0930: *Río Escondido* hit and sunk. Crew members rescued and put aboard *Blagar*. Brigade reported airstrip ready for use.

1000: Continuous enemy air attacks against withdrawing ships.

1130: Brigade reported only four hours ammunition left.

During the Blue Beach landings the *Houston* proceeded up the bay led by the *Barbara J*. They sent a reconnaissance

team ashore and it was immediately attacked from the west flank. Two hundred seventy men did land in the vicinity of Red Beach. However, going ashore they saw lights from what appeared to be a construction project which they had not been previously aware of, and when they got ashore they ran into an enemy force estimated to have 800 troops and 12 tanks.

As the *Houston* was proceeding out of the bay it was hit by a bomb and the ship went aground with approximately 130 personnel aboard.

As regards the airborne landing little detailed information is available. However, all the aircraft returned safely reporting that the troops had jumped over their intended landing places. Furthermore, reports indicate some of the airborne personnel were occupying their assigned positions.

During the course of D-Day the decision was made to conduct night air attacks against San Antonio de los Baños and Campo Libertad in an attempt to destroy Castro's air capability. The value of these attacks was negligible.

Also during the night of 17-18 April three air drops were made at the landing beaches. One landed in the drop zone, one in the sea, and one drifted inland.

On D+1 at about 0730 the 2d Battalion reported it could not maintain its position without air support for more than 30 minutes.

0824: The Brigade commander reported that Blue Beach was under attack by 12 tanks and four jet aircraft. The need for ammunition and supplies was repeated.

1010: Red Beach wiped out.

1200: Blue Beach under attack by MIG-15s and T-33s, out of tank ammunition, and almost out of small arms ammunition.

1600: *Essex* reported long line of tanks and trucks approaching Blue Beach from east.

Enemy air attacks and shortage of ammunition continued to be reported for the rest of the day. Ammunition and food were airdropped on the airstrip. On the afternoon of D+1 three friendly B-26s intercepted a column of enemy tanks and trucks, causing 1,800 casualties. At this point it was

emphasized that the overall plan had been based on control of the air and this action was cited as evidence of what the B-26s would have been able to accomplish if the air plan had succeeded.

1800: 1st Battalion reported under heavy artillery attack.

2000: The Brigade commander was advised that he would be evacuated after dark. He replied saying, "I will not be evacuated. We will fight to the end here if we have to."

During the night of 18-19 April Navy CAP was again requested and permission was granted for one hour air CAP between 0630 and 0730. These aircraft were issued instructions to defend the invasion force from enemy air attack, but not to attack ground targets.

When it came time for the friendly forces to launch their air strikes the Cuban air crews were either exhausted or demoralized by the lack of air cover, consequently American crews were dispatched. One American crew was shot down during the period of Navy air cover and another was shot down when air cover was not provided.

At 0600 on the 19th of April enemy air strikes commenced. From 0710 to 1430 the enemy was closing in and the Brigade commander was sending frantic appeals for air cover. Finally at 1430 he sent his final message saying, "Am destroying all equipment and communications. Tanks are in sight. I have nothing left to fight with. Am taking to woods. I cannot wait for you."

QUESTION: What sort of antitank equipment did the force have?

ANSWER: A number of 3.5-inch bazookas; five tanks; two 75-mm recoilless rifles; and an undetermined number of anti-tank mines.

STATEMENT: In considering the possible reasons for the shooting down of the B-26 during the period of Navy air CAP it was suggested that the rules of engagement may have unduly restricted the Navy.

QUESTION: What specific intelligence got to the President?

ANSWER: NIEs [National Intelligence Estimate], intelligence annexes and briefings.

STATEMENT: It would be desirable to examine the ground rules and determine the price we paid to try and keep within political limitations.

STATEMENT: It appears this operation was simply too big to remain covert.

[], head of air operations for the CIA, briefed on air aspects of the operation. His position for this operation was coordinate with []. [] was his chief deputy for this operation. [] had a staff of 14 people working on this operation in Washington. Except for the security, administration and cover people the personnel assigned were []. The actual training site in Guatemala was run primarily by [] with a force of 20 people.

The point was made that one of the greatest procedural difficulties resulted from the physical separation of the air staff from the rest of the planners under [].

[] stated that he had 316 personnel at Puerto Cabezas, of whom 159 were Americans. The Cuban crews were recruited in Miami from 92 personnel that were screened. From these personnel they recruited and/or developed 17 B-26 crews and five C-46 crews. As far as the concept of air operations was concerned the concept varied very little from the beginning. The primary effort was being directed toward eliminating the enemy air force and to provide close support. On the 13th of April the photos indicated that Castro's combat aircraft were located on three airfields. On D-2 eight aircraft were committed against these fields with the results previously mentioned. It was pointed out that the B-26s had been the primary concern and the capability of the T-33s hadn't been appreciated as it wasn't believed that these aircraft were armed.

By late afternoon of D-1 photos indicated that instead of dispersing his aircraft Castro had concentrated them at San Antonio de los Baños.

After the cancellation of the dawn air strikes on D-Day the pilots were briefed to provide close support for the invasion force with at least two aircraft over the beach at all times. Thirteen missions were launched on D-Day in providing close support to the invasion force and in protecting against hostile vessels.

That night six B-26 aircraft were launched against Cuban airfields. However, two aircraft aborted on take-off and the others were not able to identify their targets due to haze.

On D+2 six aircraft were scheduled in support of the beachhead. On the night of D+1 two aircraft got off and struck San Antonio de los Baños. On Wednesday morning two B-26s were committed again and two more were lost.

In summary there were 13 strikes on D-Day, four on D-Day night, six on D+1, and seven on D+2, for a total of 30 air strikes. Seven aircraft were lost in these operations. Furthermore, six C-54s made air resupply drops and one C-46 landed on the beachhead airstrip on the evening of D-Day.

STATEMENT: It is believed that the Cuban pilots did as well as could be expected and they would have done better in an aura of victory.

Following this the Group were read a paper by [] in which he set forth his personal opinion as to some of the deficiencies which became apparent during the operation. Among these deficiencies were:

The lack of clear-cut policy directives—signed. He does not believe that verbal instructions are sufficient.

The slowness of government machinery in making policy decisions.

Overcentralization of control. This prompted some discussion, resulting in the statement that the CIA doesn't have the capability to organize and train paramilitary forces. At this point a message was read from [] just

FOURTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Fourth Meeting of the Paramilitary Study Group

Time and Place: 26 April 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
General Cabell
General McGarr
General Gray
Mr. Bissell
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

The basic problem in Indochina is one of Communist insurgency. This insurgency results in large measure from the fact that the insurgents can enter anywhere along an 850-mile long border and Diem does not have adequate forces to provide more than an alert capability. These Communist insurgents are good, tough, and motivated, and they are tied together by an effective communications net. They have been successful to the extent that Diem now controls only 42 percent of the country.

Some of the reasons for the insurgents' success are that when the Communists withdrew from the south previously, they took many youths from that area with them. These youths were trained and are now hard-core, effective Communists and have been reinfilitrated into Diem's area. Communists are sabotaging all aspects of national power, political and economic as well as military. They have set up a liberation front as a legal device for furthering their objectives.

As a result of these actions the Communist insurgents have succeeded in tying up 80-85 percent of Diem's armed forces 24 hours a day. Furthermore, the enemy can increase his effort as he has a massive reinforcement capability. Four million out of the 12 million people in the country are Communist.

General McGarr pointed out that the Indochinese problem could not be treated as an individual problem for if we should lose Indochina we would lose Southeast Asia. He also stated we were losing face in the country. That people were beginning to ask if we would stand by them when their hour of decision came, or whether we would treat them as we have treated Laos.

In order to defeat the insurgents Diem now has a national plan, one of the key elements of which is to seal the borders militarily and politically, primarily by putting a cork across the top of the nation. Then, in accordance with his counterinsurgency plan, the country will be cleared area by area.

Diem's military effectiveness is improving. One of the reasons for this is that interservice coordination has now been established. Furthermore, the U.S. element has been quite successful in their training efforts and in imbuing the Indochinese with additional will and determination. This is attested to by the fact that since the first of the year Diem's units have initiated at least two-thirds of the actions against the insurgents.

General McGarr stated that most of the actions that have to be taken right now in order to at least suppress the insurgents to the extent that Diem can operate, are now under way. However, these actions have not been budgeted for, and it is imperative that Diem be provided an additional \$50 million in order to finance these essential programs.

General McGarr stated that he believed we should back Diem to the hilt as he is one of the most effective anti-Communists in the world today.

QUESTION: If we put guerrillas into the Communist area how many of these insurgents would it tie down?

ANSWER: Well, this is hard to tell. However, one of the considerations is that CIA is building nets in North Vietnam, and they feel that these nets should be built before we go in with a guerrilla attack, otherwise we might disturb their operation in the area. Furthermore, when this was discussed with Diem he said, with tongue-in-cheek, "Well, you know I must be legal in all that I do."

QUESTION: Couldn't we treat the insurgents in Indochina as the British treated the insurgents in Malaya?

ANSWER: In Malaya they had only a small border with the Thais who helped seal the border. Also, in Malaya they could separate the insurgents from the native population because of their ethnic differences. In Malaya they could use food as a weapon, whereas in Indochina they don't have to bring food with them. Furthermore, in Malaya, Templer made the policy and conducted the operations, and he also had Commonwealth troops and officers to aid in his operation. I might

also point out that even with these advantages it still took the British 13 years to put down the insurgency in Malaya.

At this point the Group was adjourned to reconvene at CIA.

QUESTION: How did the President get his intelligence on this operation?

4 lines deleted

At this point it was decided that it would be helpful to run through the intelligence information contained in the 11 March paper on the proposed operation against Cuba. This intelligence in essence indicated that despite growing discontent within Cuba time was against us. Castro was increasing his police state controls and his military effectiveness to the extent that unless some outside support, some shock action, was taken within six months, it would probably be militarily infeasible to overthrow Castro with a force composed of Cuban exiles.

STATEMENT: It should be made very clear that the idea that time was running out weighed very heavily in the decision-making.

QUESTION: You mentioned the requirement for shock and yet the invasion plan that was finally implemented was purposely limited?

ANSWER: But the purpose of this, sir, was not to limit the shock on the Cubans, but rather to limit the shock on the rest of the world, making it appear that the invasion was something that the Cubans could do by themselves.

At this point in the meeting the intelligence available to the planners and the tactical commander was discussed.

2½ lines deleted

They were surprised, however, by the capabilities of the pilots which Castro committed against the invasion force. In retrospect it was believed that these aircraft were probably flown by 50 Cuban pilots that had been trained in Czechoslovakia and returned to Cuba a few days before the invasion.

With regard to Castro's navy, it was believed that the capability of this force was low and that they would not be inclined to fight. This estimate held good, for only three small vessels were committed, two of which were sunk, while their larger naval units remained at their stations.

The weakest tactical intelligence was on the location of the ground troops. A reason for this was because the militia was not well organized in the sense that no two units were organized exactly the same nor with the same number of personnel. Intelligence was aware, however, of the location of Castro's armored units and his military headquarters. In this connection it had been pointed out that Castro had a force of 6,000 troops armed with tanks and artillery which could arrive at the beachhead within 10 hours. It's believed the tanks used against the invaders were part of this force. If the troops fighting the invasion force were militia, then the estimate of the militia's willingness to fight was incorrect. However, if this force was not militia, but rather the force mentioned above spearheaded by foreigners, then the estimates were not wrong.

3½ lines deleted

With regard to the absence of uprising throughout Cuba during the period of the invasions, it should be pointed out that reports [] of the numbers of people that were likely to support the invasion had been reduced from 20-30,000 down to 2,500 to 3,000 active guerrillas. It was also stated in the intelligence estimates that there would not be any major uprisings until the Cubans could see visible evidence of the invasion force. Consequently, no major uprisings were anticipated until the invasion force had been able to take towns in the Matanzas Province.

STATEMENT: You are now describing much more than a successful lodgment.

RESPONSE: Yes, but we felt that the force had to move out to make the lodgment visible.

QUESTION: Inasmuch as this was a key element in the JCS decision, was it ever made clear to them this degree of success was necessary in the ultimate success of the operation?

ANSWER: I believe the impression was given that the lodgment should last for at least a week. This would have been a significant factor in influencing potential dissidents.

STATEMENT: It was also hoped that the landings in the Oriente and uprisings in the Pinar del Río would help create the catalyst necessary to trigger uprisings throughout Cuba.

STATEMENT: One of the factors that made us think that the resistance potential within Cuba was substantial was the fact that we had a backlog of [] requests from our agents for supplies, arms and ammunition for 8,000 people. These people were crying for supplies. Had we been able to provide this equipment these people would have had something to rise with.

At this point General Taylor requested a brief tabulation of how many reports had been received indicating that people were ready to rise against Castro, and also indicating the number of people that were ready to rise.

2½ lines deleted

QUESTION: At any time did you give an estimate of the resistance potential within Cuba?

ANSWER: I don't believe any numerical estimate was given.

QUESTION: You did expect enough uprisings throughout the country, however, to start the army of liberation?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: At no point, however, was any formal estimate of this possibility given?

ANSWER: I have a paper of 3 March in which it was estimated that between 2,500 and 3,000 were actively engaged against Castro, that 20,000 were potential supporters of the invasion force, and that 25 percent of the population was opposed to the Castro regime.

QUESTION: Did you ever actually define the degree of success necessary to provoke adequate uprising to permit ultimate success?

ANSWER: To establish a beachhead and hold it for some time, approximately a week, together with activities by our air units carrying out their scheduled missions.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the impression prevailed that there would be spontaneous uprisings?

ANSWER: I myself didn't believe there would be major uprisings within 24 to 48 hours.

QUESTION: Do you recall what the JCS said on this issue?

ANSWER: They said the invasion force had a reasonable chance of establishing a lodgment and that ultimate success would depend on uprisings within Cuba.

At this point the JCS evaluation of the alternate objective area proposals was read. Following this the question was raised as to whether JCS had ever acted on the Zapata Plan. The answer was given that the JCS had been advised of the change by General Gray.

QUESTION: Where in the JCS evaluation of the Zapata Plan does it say that there will be air strikes?

ANSWER: It doesn't.

STATEMENT: At this stage of the game there was no plan—only concepts. There was no time to develop a plan as such.

At this point General Gray stated that as he remembered, and as his notes indicated, the Joint Chiefs understood that

the Zapata Plan included only D-Day strikes with no pre-D-Day strikes.

QUESTION: How much time did the JCS give to this problem?

ANSWER: About one hour. It should be pointed out, however, that at the time the JCS considered the alternatives, the Trinidad Plan had not been ruled out, and so in the evaluation of the alternatives it was stated that Zapata was the best of alternatives, however, the Trinidad Plan still had the best hope of success.

QUESTION: When were the JCS or their representatives first briefed on the original plan?

ANSWER: On 3 February.

QUESTION: Was a careful study of this plan made at this time?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: The basic Trinidad Plan did not change prior to March 11 when alternative proposals had been requested?

ANSWER: This is essentially correct.

QUESTION: Was Mr. Rusk briefed on the Cuba plan prior to 10 March?

ANSWER: I believe he was briefed on some elements of the plan, but not on the military details.

STATEMENT: State Department representatives, however, had continued to oppose the plan.

STATEMENT: In attempting to overcome State Department objections, CIA prior to March 11 had agreed to give up the pre-D-Day air strikes.

STATEMENT: The 11 March meeting resulted in two new parameters for the operation. First, a less spectacular landing and, second, possession of an airfield to which the B-26 aircraft could be attributed.

STATEMENT: These decisions led to the hurried search for alternative operational concepts that would meet the new parameters.

STATEMENT: JCS representatives were briefed on these concepts on the 14th of March.

QUESTION: What factors led to the decision to split the force in the Zapata Plan?

ANSWER: Further investigation had revealed that the airfield at Red Beach was inadequate for our purposes. It also revealed there was an airfield south of Red Beach that was adequate to our needs. Consequently the decision to split the force was made in order to protect the airfield and to protect the defiles into the landing area. Furthermore, we were concerned about the fact that the ships that went to Red Beach had an 18-mile run and might not get out.

STATEMENT: At the 15 March meeting the President indicated that he did not like the dawn landings and directed that this aspect be reconsidered. On the 16th of March the President approved the revised Zapata Plan for progressive implementation, but he retained the ability to cancel.

QUESTION: At the 16 March meeting was the JCS preference for the original Trinidad Plan over the Zapata Plan presented?

ANSWER: I don't think so.

QUESTION: Do you think it was in the President's mind that these men could disappear as a guerrilla force if necessary?

ANSWER: Yes.

STATEMENT: The Zapata area has traditionally been an area for guerrilla operations.

RESPONSE: When we went to the State Department we discussed the seriousness of calling off the air strikes. However, I did not say that we would cancel the operation because at this time we did not have the ability to call it off.

STATEMENT: I can't believe that if the President had understood how important the air strikes were that he would have called them off.

RESPONSE: All members of the Group concurred.

STATEMENT: If the President's decision had been made earlier I would have flown out to Glen Ora and discussed the matter with him. However, when the decision was finally made it was too late to do this.

At this point Mr. Bissell gave some of his personal views as to some of the wrong judgments made.

MR. BISSELL: First, the underestimation of Castro's capability in certain specific respects, mainly his organization ability, speed of movement and will to fight. We also underestimated his air capability. Example, contrary to our opinion, the T-33s were armed and flown with skill, loyalty and determination. In retrospect, some of the reasons for this underestimation may have been the use by Castro of bloc technicians and, if this is so, it is believed that one of their greatest contributions may have been in the staff work.

Our second major mistake was our failure to develop an adequate air capability. We should have had at least 50 percent more B-26 pilots. We should have been able to foresee the need for these pilots. We should have allowed for some attrition, and the two aircraft cover over the beach was understated.

Another major mistake was the restriction on the employment of our air capability between D-2 and D-Day. As to the administrative and organizational shortcomings, it is believed that these contributed much to the final failure. Another error was involved in the inevitable conflict between the requirements for military effectiveness and those of disclaimability. In the late stages of this operation I believe unnecessary concessions were made in favor of disclaimability which were unrealistic. Inasmuch as so much of the operation was already common knowledge, our chances of success

would have been much greater if we had been allowed to use U.S. soldiers of fortune and to make air strikes from U.S. bases. In any future operations a cold-blooded appraisal should be made of the degree to which it is necessary to make concessions in favor of disclaimability as opposed to military effectiveness.

At this point Mr. Dulles interjected that he was in basic agreement, but he would like to add two additional items. First, he felt that he should have asked the Navy their opinion of what was necessary to assure that the men would get safely ashore with their materiel during a night landing on an unfamiliar coast.

MR. DULLES: This opinion should have been rendered without concern for political considerations. Another factor was that the President was faced with hurried and difficult decisions. We had made it very clear to him that to call off the operation would have resulted in a very unpleasant situation.

STATEMENT: The odds against any operation of this kind are almost insurmountable until the government faces up to making sharp decisions promptly.

QUESTION: Did the government give the CIA an almost impossible job?

ANSWER: I don't believe so. I think we were closer to success than you realize.

STATEMENT: Despite the disaster the U.S. must retain the capability for unofficial military actions. Whenever the U.S. engages in this sort of operation we will again be faced with the same dilemma of disclaimability versus military effectiveness. In this connection, I think we should consider changing our overt foreign policy posture for we have a tendency to make our operations extremely difficult by oversanctimonious announcements.

STATEMENT: In the future we must carry out any operations of this type in such manner that the President, who has shown the highest courage, will not have to assume the responsibility.

FIFTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Fifth Meeting of the Paramilitary
Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 27 April 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles

Other Participants
General Erskine
General Gray
[]
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Col. Tarwater

QUESTION: Is there anything []
that you believe should be improved?

ANSWER: No.

26 lines deleted

At this point General Erskine left the room and General Gray appeared to answer questions and give his comments.

QUESTION: Would you give us your personal opinion as to how the government should be organized in order to cope with a Cuban-type situation in the most effective manner?

ANSWER: It seems to me it takes almost a different type group for each operation. However, I believe it would be better to start an interdepartmental group that would develop a concept and assign tasks to each of the governmental agencies subject to the approval of the President, and then charge each agency with the execution of these tasks. In the Cuba operation CIA unilaterally developed the concepts. The other governmental agencies were essentially in a supporting role. I believe it's of particular value to have all the agencies participating from the start in order to assure that each agency is aware of all the implications of the operation at the earliest date. For example, in the Cuba operation this would have meant that the State Department would have been brought into the planning in time to work in their ideas and to indoctrinate their people on the overall concept and the requirements for it.

STATEMENT: You are making the point that the plan would have been conceived and developed by an interagency group.

RESPONSE: That is correct. However, one agency should be given the basic responsibility.

QUESTION: Is this interagency group any different than the Special Group which is already in existence?

ANSWER: Yes. The Special Group is simply a high-level group that considers matters brought before it, makes a decision, and then the agencies act on the decision, whereas the

interagency group would be a working group that would continue to have responsibility for a given operation.

QUESTION: Did the Special Group approve the plan to get rid of Castro?

ANSWER: Yes, at the 13 January meeting. The State Department concurred in the CIA view that Castro must go. This determination led to the March 17th paper, which sets forth the basic concept with CIA responsible for three basic aspects of the plan and the State Department responsible for one.

STATEMENT: If General Gray's concept had been used to implement the 17 March paper it seems to me that the primary difference would have been that the force that was to invade Cuba would have come under CINCLANT rather than under the CIA. It seems to me that the basic weakness of this concept is the pyramid of committees.

QUESTION: To whom does the DCI [Director of Central Intelligence] report?

ANSWER: Statutorily to the National Security Council. However, inasmuch as the National Security Council is only advisory to the President the DCI reports to the President.

QUESTION: Do you think 5412 puts the Cuban operation under CIA?

ANSWER: Yes, if Cuba follows in the spirit of paragraph 6.

QUESTION: Does paragraph 6 describe the Cuba situation?

ANSWER: No, Cuba went beyond it. Of course, every development beyond it went to the President for decision.

STATEMENT: I think the important point is that this document was not designed to cover a Cuba-type operation. For example, on the next page it says no open conflict.

STATEMENT: I have a feeling we should look at this thing more broadly than just from the standpoint of a covert operation. Actually it is part of something much broader, which can be called the Cold War, which involves all aspects of national

power, and paramilitary operations are only one segment of the Cold War.

QUESTION: Who is responsible for success in the Cold War?

ANSWER: There are really three agencies that are responsible.

STATEMENT: It seems to me there should be a clear line of responsibility, without any committees, running from the President to the Secretary of State to the director of the Cold War.

RESPONSE: I don't think one man could handle all the actions.

STATEMENT: We had this problem on the Joint Staff. I believe that what we did to solve the problem for us is also applicable on the national level. We developed a system for monitoring the various countries throughout the world in terms of their criticality. We established the problem areas within the country and then made recommendations as to what actions should be taken in order to best achieve U.S. national interests.

STATEMENT: You are giving us so much information it is difficult to absorb. Maybe you should give us a briefing.

STATEMENT: One thing our government really lacks in conducting the Cold War is an economic unit that concerns itself primarily with cold war actions.

STATEMENT: It seems to me that we have three courses of action. First, we can maintain the status quo. Second, we can pass the paramilitary responsibilities to the DOD. Or third, we can re-examine the whole cold war problem.

At this point General Gray left and

1 line deleted

described his part in the Cuban operation. He stated that he joined the Working Group at the time the original Trinidad Plan was evaluated. Later he was one of three that went into the training area to have a first-hand look at the training

operation and to evaluate the capabilities of the force which was being prepared to invade Cuba. Later, in accordance with one of his recommendations, he was returned to the area to help the force prove their amphibious logistic capability. He remained with the force for approximately three weeks.

QUESTION: Would you give us your impressions, please?

ANSWER: These are personal opinions. Troops were trained thoroughly in the use of their weapons. I noted, however, that below the Brigade level they were not organized in the usual military manner. In the subordinate units, as far as organization was concerned, there was an individual referred to as the leader. I inquired as to the reason for this. I was informed that it was for psychological reasons and that the subordinate units would have a rank structure when they left for the port. The training I was able to give was minimal and conducted with the Brigade staff. This was due to the fact that the actual box movers were not there when I arrived. Fifty finally arrived the last day I was there. The basic logistic concept of the force was that the supplies would be put on the beach and the troops would come back and get what they needed.

QUESTION: How can you account for the fact that they had no amphibious training prior to your arrival?

ANSWER: I can't answer that.

QUESTION: How would you say that the men in the invasion force compared with troops that we would have?

ANSWER: Physically they were in good shape. I would say, however, that in a fight it would be like putting our Marines against Boy Scouts. I believed that the overall chance of military success was about 15 percent, that logistically the operation would likely fall apart. I stated this in the original JCS evaluation. The transportation was totally inadequate in that they had assigned trucks to individual commanders instead of having these under central control. They did not have a fuel capability to support air operations. The 50-gallon

fuel drums weighed 400 pounds and had to be manhandled. They had no bridging capability. They had no floodlight systems and consequently they couldn't work the beaches at night. Their plans for distribution of supplies from the dump areas were practically nonexistent. They had no maintenance equipment beyond hand tools.

QUESTION: What condition were they in logistically when you left?

ANSWER: Essentially the same condition as when I arrived, except that I had jerry-rigged a TACLOG [Tactical Logistics Assistance Group] and they had acquired a crawler crane to help unload things on the beach.

STATEMENT: The major fault with the whole operation was that it was too loose, there was no control. In my opinion it was primarily a lack of planning.

QUESTION: When the objective area was changed from Trinidad to Zapata did it change your estimate?

ANSWER: No. Equipment-wise they had added a traveling crane. However, in the original Trinidad Plan they were going to use trucks or the dock to unload. In the Zapata Plan the logistics had to go in across the beach.

QUESTION: Was there any attempt to rehearse the logistic actions?

ANSWER: I do not know.

STATEMENT: I am confused. Were you in a minority?

RESPONSE: We didn't say it wouldn't work because without opposition they could have unloaded in three days. I said their capability was marginal without resistance, but impossible with it.

STATEMENT: As far as ammunition goes the troops carried one unit of fire slightly more than U.S. troops. In addition, each took all he could carry. Each troop should have had ammunition for one day plus what he could carry. Furthermore, the trucks that got ashore gave them an additional

supply of ammunition. As for communications equipment, it was excellent. The invasion force had more and better equipment than one of our 25,000-man divisions. The loss of the ships, however, denied the commander his cryptic capability which was a serious handicap. However, one dangerous tendency developed as the operation progressed. This was the tendency to flood the invasion force with supplies. Actually they had 1,200 tons of supplies available to them and only one crane and plain manpower available to unload it. The basic problem they faced was not the lack of supplies, as such, but rather bridging the gap between the ships 25 miles offshore and the landing beach.

SIXTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Sixth Meeting of the Paramilitary
Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 28 April 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
Admiral Dennison
Captain Ferguson
Commander McCauley
[]
Mr. King
[]
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

The first order of business was the reading of a report of conversation between a CIA representative and approximately 60 of the Cuban Volunteer Air Force returnees. The report stated that while many of the returnees had specific complaints and criticisms of how the project was conducted, there was little, if any, trace of genuine bitterness or hostility toward the United States. There was no defeatism amongst the returnees and the question most asked was, "When do we get going again?" Some of the returnees' observations were as follows:

a. Failure to follow the D-2 air strikes was a serious mistake as it gave Castro time to mobilize his forces and left elements of his air force intact.

b. The landings should not have been permitted until complete domination of the air had been achieved.

c. The operation was defeated by three planes.

d. None of the pilots saw MIGs. They doubted that any of Castro's aircraft were piloted by non-Cubans.

e. None believed that Castro had been aware of the landing site, although they admitted that he had moved in with tanks and trucks at great speed.

f. They explained the absence of popular uprisings by the fact that the landing was in an isolated area; and, second, the notorious fact that 80 percent of the Cubans will never join an insurrection until they are sure that it is winning. Nevertheless, they pointed out that mass arrests throughout Cuba neutralized many of the people who would have revolted before these people were aware that an invasion was taking place.

g. Little, if any, reference was made to the Revolutionary Council.

h. Most of the Air Force personnel seemed certain that they would soon be returning to action.

i. All the returnees were unstinting in their praise of their U.S. instructors.

In answer to a previous question, Mr. Dulles read the figures of the

7¼ lines deleted

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

[]

At this point, [] appeared before the Group. He stated that he had primarily served as a

2 lines deleted

Further, on the 14th of April he and a radio operator went aboard the *Essex*. They proceeded to a point south of Cuba where they intercepted the invasion force ships.

QUESTION: Was the rendezvous on time?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: There is no question in your mind as to a possible loss of surprise?

ANSWER: No. It went better than I expected.

QUESTION: Did you have radio contact with the Cuban ships?

ANSWER: Yes, to some extent.

STATEMENT: The transfer from the LSD took place without incident and the Navy withdrew.

QUESTION: Why do you think the two LCIs stayed in the area after two of the other ships had been sunk, while several other merchant ships left the area and continued going south?

ANSWER: Because of the influence of the Americans aboard the LCIs.

STATEMENT: The *Atlántico* finally stopped, but the *Caribe* just kept on going until intercepted by a destroyer.

QUESTION: Did the *Caribe* have ammunition aboard?

ANSWER: It had considerable aviation gas and ammunition aboard, yes.

QUESTION: Where did the orders to the ship commanders originate?

ANSWER: From Washington.

QUESTION: How long did it take for the orders to be transmitted?

MR. KING: I read messages twenty minutes after they had been sent.

STATEMENT: At the White House, we were 12 hours behind.

STATEMENT: We sent some dispatches from Washington to the skippers to which they never responded.

MR. KENNEDY: I would say that one of the greatest problems was the inadequacy of communications.

[]: I believe it would have been desirable if the Navy had provided us with a back-up communications capability.

QUESTION: Can we have a briefing on this communications problem?

ANSWER: Yes, I believe [], who drew up the communications plan for the entire operation, would be the best man to talk to you about this.

[]

At this point, [] left and [] entered. He stated that he was a retired Army officer with four years Special Force experience. He stated that he ran the operation center aboard one of the LCIs and that he was in contact with the Brigade commander for three days and nights. He also stated that he had a few points he wanted to make as an American. He stated that: (1) We had a sound plan and it would have worked if we'd had air support. (2) The Brigade was winning. If they'd have had ammunition, they would have inflicted tremendous damage on Castro. (3) The men in this force fought as well as any he had ever seen.

STATEMENT: We made the assembly on time. Then I led the UDT [Underwater Demolition Team] team into the beach. As we moved into the beach, I could see six men looking out to sea. Consequently, I turned off the engine on our boat to look and listen and see if I could determine if it was us they were looking for. However, everything was quiet, and as I looked around I could see only blackness. These men then went into a house and the lights went out. About that time, a little later rather, a jeep came down to the beach and turned their lights right on us. At that point, we opened up on him with everything we had. I then called the ships, and told them that we had been spotted, and for them to move on in. We then put out red and white lights to mark the beach; and about that time all the lights in the town went out at once, which made it obvious that someone had developed a plan. As the boats moved in to Blue Beach, they were fired on by only one machine gun from the town. Two of the LCVPs came in and rammed on a coral reef. If we hadn't been discovered, we would have found channels through which the landing craft could have moved to the beach. The men showed good discipline as they went ashore. At exactly six o'clock, just after first light, Red Beach called and said that they were under air attack. I'd like to make the point right here that the blue identifying band on the friendly B-26s was not adequate. We didn't know which B-26s were friendly and which were enemy until they opened fire. At daylight we found the channel for the LCUs. By ten o'clock all the LCUs were unloaded. The LCUs were also utilized in bringing the troops ashore, and all the troops did get ashore. There were about 100 militia in the town at Blue Beach. Seventy were captured and 30 got in a truck and went to Cienfuegos for help apparently. Our people talked to the Chief of Militia in the town, who said that he had been completely misinformed and that henceforth he would give complete cooperation to the invasion force.

QUESTION: How did Arttime act?

ANSWER: Excellent. He was a dedicated leader and a most

moving speaker. [] said that he was no double agent, as reported by some newspapers.

STATEMENT: We could fight off the B-26s and the Sea Furies, but we couldn't touch the T-33s. They fired their rockets from close in and didn't miss, and our fire didn't bother them a bit.

STATEMENT: The merchant ships just ran off and left us. They had the ammunition. Every ship had ammunition. The main communications equipment was aboard the *Atlántico* and it left, as I previously mentioned.

STATEMENT: Our aircraft behaved wonderfully.

STATEMENT: The first attack at Red Beach came at ten o'clock with approximately 500 militia and tanks.

STATEMENT: Landing in the swampy area was a good idea, because after their first attack the militia would not attack without tank support, and the only way you could get through the swamps was on the narrow roads. If we'd had air superiority, we'd have been in an extremely strong position.

STATEMENT: On the night of D-Day we were scheduled to make a fast ammunition supply run in to the beach. However, by the time we received the order and would have had time to make the necessary preparations it was too late. We couldn't have arrived there until after first light. The primary problem the Brigade commander faced was the lack of ammunition. He constantly made requests for ammunition, and stated that all he needed was ammunition and air support. I believe it's true that the ground attacks never really hurt the Brigade, for the Brigade was still in good condition when the end came. They just ran out of ammunition.

STATEMENT: One of the Cuban officers said that the forces employed in the invasion area were militia, not regular army troops. We hadn't known that the militia could run tanks.

QUESTION: Did Castro use any MIGs?

ANSWER: As far as we know, there were only T-33s in the area. However, one man, when asked to draw a picture of the

type aircraft he was calling a MIG, did draw the outline of a MIG rather than a T-33.

QUESTION: Do you think Castro's force fought well?

ANSWER: No, sir. When you stopped the tanks, they stopped, that is, after the first attack. After the first attack they wouldn't go anywhere without a tank.

STATEMENT: One man insisted that they were gassed by tank shells at night. He stated they found that a shell from a tank sort of choked them, and they all ran out of the area; and that later they found ten dead men with no marks on them.

QUESTION: What about the airdrops?

ANSWER: The first was dropped directly over the airfield, but the wind blew it off the runways into the swamps. The second one was dropped on the town and every package was recovered. The third was dropped over the town, but the wind blew it into the water. However, most of this was recovered. One C-46 was landed just at daylight bringing in some tank ammunition, and it took out one wounded man. However, the airfield had been in usable condition, even including lights.

At this point, [] left and Admiral Dennison appeared before the Group.

ADMIRAL DENNISON

STATEMENT: My first knowledge that something might happen with regard to Cuba goes back to April 1960, when we helped construct facilities on Swan Island. The next indication I had was when the commander of my amphibious force advised me that he had the task of sanitizing some landing craft, as well as transporting these craft in an LSD to Puerto Rico. At this point, I consulted with General Lemnitzer and asked him if the JCS was aware of these activities. General Lemnitzer told me that he knew something of the activities. At that time he called General Cabell and requested

that I be informed of the operation. Consequently, a CIA representative came down and briefed me on a portion of the plan. He explained that the planning for the operation was compartmentalized and that no one group knew all about the operation.

STATEMENT: On the 9th of February I had the privilege of talking with the President. I asked him if I would be engaged in any possible bail-out operations. He responded definitely no, that if anything went wrong the force would fade into the hinterland. The JCS directive of 7 April set forth the nature of the naval operation that would be required and directed the mission be executed in such manner that the United States could plausibly deny that we had any part in the operation. On 1 April 1961 I issued my own operation order which set up, among other things, the rules of engagement for surface ships and for the air patrol. On 1 April I received JSM-365-61, which gave me my basic orders and also indicated that the CIA was responsible for the planning and implementation of the operation with the DOD in a support role.

STATEMENT: As of this date, I have never seen a copy of the Cuban invasion plan. As things turned out, it would have been most helpful if I had. For example, when we observed the *Perka* we thought it was a ship that had been taken over by the refugees. We had no knowledge of the men aboard the *Perka*. Furthermore, when we were called upon to start the rescue operation, we didn't know how many men were in there, what particular beaches they'd be landing on, where they were likely to be, or any information of this sort. I understand that the reason we probably were not informed of the details of the plan was because it was felt that we had no need for it. But as I say, as it turned out, we certainly did have. On the 5th of April I received a dispatch from the JCS which postponed D-Day from 10 April by at least 48 and probably 98 hours. In the dispatch which informed me of the new D-Day of 17 April, I was also informed of a change in the concept of the support that I was to provide. Essentially, this change consisted of the fact that instead of convoying the invasion fleet my forces would be called on to provide area coverage.

STATEMENT: We had a very difficult time communicating with the Cuban invasion force ships. We didn't know the communications circuits of the ships, nor did we have other adequate means of communication. If the invasion force had been attacked, we'd have had a very difficult time communication-wise. At the same time that I received the change in the concept of the support I was to provide, I also received the first major changes in the rules of engagement.

QUESTION: Who made the decision to change the rules of engagement?

After some discussion of this question, it was decided that the JCS memo of record on the change on the rules of engagement should be secured.

STATEMENT: We were also informed that it was desired that the chance of aborting the mission be minimized. I was informed that the Cuban invasion force was prepared to take risks to prevent the possibility of aborting the mission by overly anxious intervention.

STATEMENT: I wanted then, and I still want, more comprehensive, current intelligence on Cuba, particularly photographs. I am particularly concerned about Guantánamo. What Castro's reaction may be in this connection is a great concern to me.

STATEMENT: **3 lines deleted**

STATEMENT: In view of the extent to which we became involved in the Cuban operation, I believe that it should have been conducted by me, through a Special Task Force. I believe that in an operation of this sort the control has to be centralized, and the control should be military. Even in this covert operation, at some stage it should have been handled by the regular military staff rather than a group restricted in size by security considerations.

It was agreed that Admiral Dennison would forward to the Study Group a copy of his record of the operation.

SEVENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Seventh Meeting of the Paramilitary
Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 1 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Admiral Clark
Captain Crutchfield
Captain Kenscher
Commander McGriffin
[]
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

At the opening of the meeting General Taylor tabled a list of nine points concerning the Cuba operation on which he wanted additional information from CIA. CIA agreed to provide this information as soon as possible. The hope was also expressed that the interviews could be finished this week and that the final report would be ready for the President by the 15th of May.

ADMIRAL CLARK

Admiral Clark, the commander of the Navy Task Group in the operation, was the first person to appear before the Group. In his introductory remarks he made the point that all the orders he had received were good dispatches and clear and that they were all carried out fully; that his evacuation efforts, however, were difficult because he couldn't fire back and because the waters in the bay were restricted.

QUESTION: With regard to the one-hour period when you were flying CAP for the CEF air unit there is some indication that there may have been a misunderstanding on the time. Please describe what happened.

ANSWER: Yes. We were ordered to fly cover for the CEF bombers from 0630 to 0730 Romeo on the morning of the 19th of April. However, I decided to play this one safe and ordered my people to be on station one-half hour early in the event that the CEF aircraft made the trip quicker than they had anticipated. However, they came over our ship one hour early and consequently we launched our aircraft immediately. We arrived over the beach area forty minutes before 0630 Romeo. However, by that time the CEF aircraft had already made their strikes and left.

At this point Mr. King was requested to check with the CEF air forces and determine what caused the time discrepancy.

QUESTION: Would you describe what you saw on the reconnaissance flights on D+1 and D+2?

COMMANDER McGRIFFIN: On D+1 at approximately 1530 there was lots of traffic moving down the east side of the bay. There were a number of tanks, trucks and there were six or eight burned-out buses. The tanks were not burned out apparently, however, because while they were stopped on the first flight at 1530, we checked again at 1730 and by that time they had moved. On D+2 we saw some burned-out friendly tanks. The enemy had established a roadblock in an area north of the beachhead. A large number of trucks and forces were converging on the area from all directions. About 1200 on D+2 we saw the CEF all bunched up at the little resort on the beach.

QUESTION: You got the impression that there was a rapid and intensive reaction by Castro?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Admiral Clark, do you have any recommendations that you'd like to make with regard to the Cuba operation or any future operations of this sort?

ANSWER: I believe it went better than we had a right to expect. Possibly once the rules of engagement have been established, it would be desirable to give the commander on the spot a freer hand.

QUESTION: What do you think were the reasons for failure?

ANSWER: One obvious reason was that surprise was not achieved.

RESPONSE: All the evidence we have had to date indicates that tactical surprise was achieved.

ANSWER: Well, the opposition formed awfully fast. I think Castro's people saw the CEF force from a lighthouse and they

also could have seen them from the air. Another possible reason for failure was that the beach was not as advertised. It was supposed to be a sandy beach, whereas it was coral. Furthermore, the opposition was not as advertised.

QUESTION: Could they have been seen by the lighthouse?

ANSWER: Yes, sir, they could have seen us very clearly from the lighthouse.

MR. DULLES: We have no evidence of any reports originating from this lighthouse. I'll have to talk to [].

STATEMENT: With regard to the evacuation of the CEF force, on the last day we couldn't have evacuated the force unless we were prepared to fight our way in. If we'd been allowed to use counterforce we could have taken them all out. On D+3 we started our destroyers cruising along the beaches a couple of miles from shore at night and five miles from shore during the days so that the survivors could see us and would come out. A group of refugees of the invasion force did make their way to the keys west of Cochinos Bay and we picked them up. However, we picked up no one on the east side of the bay. Without using counterforce it was impossible to move in to pick up survivors during the daylight because we were straddled by artillery fire at three miles offshore.

QUESTION: With regard to the possibility of the invasion forces having been sighted from the air, did any aircraft fly over or did you pick up any airliners?

ANSWER: Yes. Furthermore, since the convoy formed in the daylight, it could have been seen from the air.

STATEMENT: Well, let's ask [] to check with the people that planned the naval portion of the operation and determine whether or not this lighthouse had been considered as a factor in the operation, and whether or not the force was supposed to come within sight of the lighthouse.

[]

At this point Admiral Clark and the officers of his command left and [] appeared before the Group. [] stated that he was the operations officer for the project.

STATEMENT: Prior to September the Cubans were being trained as guerrilla teams. I went down on an inspection trip, during which the Guatemalan revolution broke out. We were concerned about the possibility of losing our bases. President Ydigoras requested that we make an airborne landing, which we did. I was in command of the outfit. Washington gave us permission to do this, but I operated under the mission chief in Guatemala.

MR. DULLES: We can give you the facts on this.

[]: Following the Guatemalan revolt I was sent down to organize the Brigade. On the 20th of November 1960 we had about 420 members in the Cuban force. During this period we were trying to build up our Brigade and by the 8th of December we initiated a seven-week training program with approximately 575 to 600 troops.

QUESTION: Who were the trainers?

ANSWER: At this time I had five American trainers and Cuban officer personnel to assist in the training. However, it must be remembered that we weren't dealing with raw recruits.

QUESTION: How did you determine the background and potential leadership capabilities of the various persons in the brigade?

ANSWER: We had background files on each man. However, the actual selection for leadership positions depended on the performance of the men in the field.

QUESTION: Did you have political problems?

ANSWER: At first, yes. However, as it became obvious that no one received any special privileges and that all ranks were

only temporary, and that if a man selected for a position of leadership couldn't handle the position he went back to the ranks, when these factors became evident the political problem subsided.

QUESTION: Tell us something of Pepe.

ANSWER: He came from a long line of military officers. His father was a general in the Cuban army. Pepe was a captain in the Cuban army. He had trained at Fort Benning, Georgia. He could work with anyone. He was earnest, proud, self-sacrificing and a natural born leader.

QUESTION: Did you say you had ample leadership and training?

ANSWER: Adequate leadership and training, yes, but not experience. Twenty percent of our troops, however, were former soldiers.

QUESTION: Did you have any reservations as to the readiness of this force?

ANSWER: No. I felt that each week they delayed would bring a retrogression in the force.

QUESTION: Was there ever any discussion of U.S. participation or direct assistance in this operation, militarily speaking?

ANSWER: Yes, there were rumors, but we carefully pointed out that diplomatic and logistical support would be given, and the lines of communication would be kept open. Beyond this, however, no support could be expected from the United States.

QUESTION: Did they feel betrayed when the United States aircraft didn't come in?

ANSWER: Yes. It was obvious that the enemy was using jets and the United States jets were visible to them and, of course, they couldn't understand why they didn't come to their assistance.

QUESTION: Then it was a natural reaction rather than their

having been told that the United States would enter on their behalf?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Did you think that the United States aircraft would come in and support the force?

ANSWER: I hoped so, but I didn't believe so.

QUESTION: Were instructions given as to what to do if the operation failed?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What?

ANSWER: There were several contingencies: (1) if we passed the code word they were not to make the landing; (2) if the landing malfunctioned due to heavy surf or enemy opposition they were to disperse according to plan. They were to be evacuated by boat, and as a last resort they were to disperse and continue guerrilla operations in the swamp.

QUESTION: Were any specific areas in the swamp assigned for guerrilla operations?

ANSWER: No, sir.

QUESTION: Then when they fell back to Blue Beach they were doing what they were supposed to do so that they could be evacuated?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Could a man penetrate and live in the swamp?

ANSWER: Yes, a man could penetrate, but a unit couldn't, and there was enough small game, fish and fresh water in the swamp that men could survive.

QUESTION: If you had to evacuate the men by sea how would you have moved them out?

ANSWER: By the same boats that brought them in. We had 36 18½-foot aluminum ships. As I recall, I thought he mentioned that the men were searching for and using indigenous boats.

QUESTION: Do we have any evidence that Pepe ever gave the command for the force to become guerrillas?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Do you believe that some of the men of the force could have come through the swamp?

ANSWER: Yes.

[]: The pilots of the aircraft carrying the airborne troops said that the troops at DZ-1 were attacked by approximately 800 militia.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the landing was a surprise?

ANSWER: Yes, sir, because the time it took Castro to get tanks and artillery to the beachhead area were the exact times that we thought it would take to move this equipment from known positions.

QUESTION: Did you like the terrain for this operation in the Zapata area?

ANSWER: On the basis of the restrictions, yes. This would have worked. These boys were good. The only thing they lacked was ammunition.

STATEMENT: Four out of five drops were successful. We don't know what happened to one drop over Red Beach.

QUESTION: How many instructors did you end up with?

ANSWER: Forty-four.

STATEMENT: I didn't have one AWOL for three weeks before the landing, and no one failed to go with the force, nor failed to jump with the airborne unit.

4¼ lines deleted

ANSWER: Yes. Retalhuleu had 120 card-carrying Communists, including the mayor. However, in an attempt to maintain security, I stopped all outgoing mail three weeks before the operation, and all incoming mail was stopped for seven

days prior to the operation. Of course, these troops had a number of secret channels.

QUESTION: Was your camp adequate?

ANSWER: It could have been better, but it was adequate.

QUESTION: Why wasn't it possible to rehearse the amphibious landing?

ANSWER: We did have a partial rehearsal, but we couldn't bring the vessels to the Pacific side where our camp was for this would have meant bringing them through the Panama Canal.

QUESTION: I want to go back to the guerrillas. Who might have eluded capture?

ANSWER: A number of men from most of the positions. All these men were given compass and map reading and other guerrilla training.

STATEMENT: To sum up the guerrilla situation then, there was no particular training directed toward it, as such, primarily because you had pretty good guerrillas to start with.

[]: Yes, sir.

STATEMENT: Also, for morale reasons you had not briefed the entire force on the possibilities of having to take to the swamps as guerrillas. However, the day before the force left you did brief the commanders on guerrilla operations and the fact that you felt that the primary means of evacuation was seaborne and airborne evacuation, and only if all other things failed would the force attempt to operate as guerrillas.

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: What would have been the consequences if, just before this invasion was launched, the men had been directed to conduct guerrilla-type operations?

ANSWER: They probably would have revolted.

QUESTION: But I understood that they initially wanted to go in as guerrillas?

ANSWER: Yes, but we showed them the advantages of mass firepower, and I believe that they were convinced that the shock action against Castro's forces in meeting this firepower would cause the militia to break and run, and spark mass defections.

QUESTION: Then while the Cuban exiles originally wanted to conduct guerrilla operations they had been convinced that this was a rather unremunerative approach to the problem?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Where are the refugees being debriefed?

ANSWER: At Miami, Puerto Cabezas, Norfolk and Vieques.

STATEMENT: While we don't want to get into the matter in too much detail here, it seems that for historical reasons it would be a good thing if CIA would prepare an after action report on the overall operation.

ANSWER: Yes, we are doing that.

QUESTION: What would have happened if the operation had been called off after the first part of April?

[]: It would have depended upon the posture they were in at the time. If it had been called off after they were actually on the way they would have taken over and kept going. I was informed that if the operation was called off they would take over. They said that as a friend we want you to direct all your people not to resist if this comes about, because we don't want anybody to get hurt. Consequently I had all our people turn in their side arms. I would say that after the 1st of April it was a "go" operation.

STATEMENT: With regard to the merchant ships that went into the beachhead area, let's determine just what orders were given to the ships and by whom. Also, let's look into []'s story about the fact that they were going to take ammunition into the beachhead area in an LCI, but by the time the operation could be undertaken it would have been daylight before they arrived, so the mission was cancelled.

MR. McGEORGE BUNDY

The Group reconvened at Mr. McGeorge Bundy's office at 1415. In attendance were:

General Taylor	Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Mr. Kennedy	Commander Mitchell
Mr. Dulles	Lt. Colonel Tarwater

The notes of Mr. Bundy's interview have been replaced by the memorandum dated 4 May 1961.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 4, 1961

Dear General Taylor:

I regret to say that I am not satisfied with the account of our interview which appears in the Memorandum for Record submitted to me today by Colonel Walmsley. It seems to me that I can do a better job of presenting my views on this matter by sending you a memorandum covering my position on the points which are discussed in the Memorandum of Record.

The President on his entry into office was faced with a decision of disbanding or using the Cuban force in Guatemala. He was informed that the force must leave Guatemala within a limited time, and that it could not be held together in the United States for a long period. It would begin to deteriorate; its existence could not be kept quiet; and if it were disbanded within the United States the results would be damaging.

When the Cuba plan was initially presented to the President, he did not like the scheme for an amphibious landing. He requested that a plan be drawn for infiltration of the force so that it might emerge as a Cuban force already on Cuban territory. The report from CIA was that this notion was not likely to be successful, and instead the agency proposed a modified plan for an unopposed landing in a much less popu-

lated area. This was the Zapata Plan presented by Mr. Bissell in the middle of March 1961. As work on this plan progressed, the gradual impression developed that on balance the CIA preferred this plan to the original Trinidad Plan.

It was clearly understood that the Air battle should be won. The views of the Joint Chiefs were presented in writing, and while there was no clear discussion of the opinion of the Joint Chiefs as to the relative merits of the two plans, I think these two statements are correct: (1) that there was no impression left that the Joint Chiefs as such preferred the Zapata Plan; (2) it was clearly understood that they had approved the plan and favored the operation on this revised basis. I base this statement upon the fact that the President repeatedly asked for the opinion of representatives of the Defense Department including members of the Joint Chiefs, and was invariably informed that the Defense Department favored the operation. I do not think this was merely a matter of "concurrence by attendance." The military certainly wanted the operation to proceed; I do not think that this was because of a deep conviction that this was the best possible plan—it was rather that in view of the absence of desirable alternatives and the press of time, the military believed that the prospects were sufficiently favorable so that it would be best to go ahead. I would not wish to go further into detailed analysis of the motives or positions taken by the Joint Chiefs.

Success in this operation was always understood to be dependent upon an internal Cuban reaction. The first military phase would have been considered successful if it had established a beachhead that could be supplied effectively from outside and joined from inside by defecting Cubans. I do not think that the President was led to feel that the landing operation depended for its first success on immediate uprisings throughout Cuba. On the other hand, reports were made in the last few weeks that gave some hope that the chances of defections and uprisings were growing.

One of the serious misunderstandings in this operation, in my opinion, was over the practicability and likelihood of a guer-

rilla operation by the landing force. The President repeatedly indicated his own sense that this option was of great importance, and he was repeatedly assured that the guerrilla option was a real one. As one listening in the same way that he listened to most of the discussion before him, I was left with the clear impression that unless there was a quite unexpected catastrophe in the beaching process itself, a substantial portion of the force would almost certainly be able to survive for a prolonged period in guerrilla operations. I do not think there was any extended discussion of the relative quality of the Zapata Plan as against the Trinidad from a guerrilla standpoint. There was a considerable discussion of the option of a sea evacuation, but I do not recall that there was a clear decision as to which of these secondary alternatives would be preferable. My point is simply that the President steadily insisted that the force have an alternative means of survival, and that he was steadily assured that such an alternative was present. As I recall it, the report of the Joint Staff on the Zapata Plan explicitly included assurances on the guerrilla option.

While it was recognized that the invasion force was much smaller than Castro's army, let alone his militia, the argument for landing it was that it would have much greater fire power, together with air supremacy, while the enemy would have to come toward the beach along narrow defiles. The invasion force would win the first battle because its soldiers were better fighters, with better equipment. After they had won this first battle, the balance would change; the will to fight of the Castro forces would be reduced; defections would begin; uprisings would occur in other parts of the island, and so on.

One startling omission, in retrospect, is the failure of any of the President's advisers to warn of the danger of the T-33s. I suspect that one reason for the later decision not to launch an air strike on the morning of D-Day was that this capability of the Castro air force was never put forward as significant.

While in retrospect I believe that too much attention was given to what General Taylor has called the question of "attri-

bution," it certainly was believed that it would make a great political difference to have this force essentially Cuban. The Americans were offering moral, political and logistical support, but not battle forces. A question of shading is of course involved. At any rate, on March 29th or April 4th there was a direct statement by the President in a meeting that he wanted all U.S. forces out of the operation, and I recall no word of opposition to this decision at this meeting. Afterwards, there was further discussion, at which I was not present, between the Department of Defense and the CIA, and agreed revisions were worked out. If those responsible for military judgment on the operation felt that the President's instructions were unacceptable, it seems to me that there certainly should have been some statements of this view.

In my meeting with General Taylor and his advisory group, I was asked about the decision not to permit an air strike by the Cuban invasion force early on Monday morning. This is a matter which arises from a conversation with the President and the Secretary of State, and I do not believe I am the right man to comment on it. I do have the recollection that during the presentation of the Zapata landings, the impression was conveyed to the President that there would be no strikes on D-Day that could not plausibly come from an airstrip in Cuba.

I have the general impression that all of those concerned with this operation were gradually put into an intrinsically unsound position because of the increasingly critical Cuban situation and the lack of desirable alternatives. Under these pressures the military planners, who had been given instructions by an earlier Administration, became advocates, rather than impartial evaluators of the problem. Moreover, I believe that many people were reticent in their representations to the President.

Mistakes were made in this operation by a lot of people whom the President had every right to trust, as a result of circumstances of all sorts. In the future, any such plan should have much more careful preparation and evaluation, and the

President should have intelligence estimates presented to him by others than advocates. In the future also the President should have an explicit White House review, so that he can have an independent judgment, especially on points of inter-departmental responsibility.

I do not concur in any judgment that this operation was “run from the White House.” What happened was rather that as trouble began to develop after D-Day, there was steady pressure on the President for a relaxation of rules which had previously been made, and in the light of changing circumstances some such relaxations were authorized. Only in the case of the decision on Sunday with respect to the D-Day strike was there an operational modification that restricted, instead of enlarging, the authorizations to the CIA. This, as I have said, is a matter on which others can comment more effectively than I. Nevertheless, I would agree that the rules of action should be more clearly stated in the future, and responsibility delegated within those rules to a man near the scene of action. I regard this as a somewhat academic point, because I doubt very much whether large-scale operations of this sort can or should be “covert.”

I accept as accurate the statement of my views which runs from the middle of page 13 through the middle of page 14, and I specifically endorse the comment attributed to me that if the military had said at any time that calling off or modifying the air strikes would cause the operation to fail—or even damage it severely—the President would have reversed any such decision as that on Sunday.

/s/

McGeorge Bundy

[The minutes of the seventh meeting resume in progress at the Pentagon. An undetermined number of lines are missing.]

QUESTION: What about interdepartmental cooperation?

ANSWER: I wouldn't be a good judge of this. However, I

wouldn't become involved in such a plan again without knowing what the interdepartmental cooperation was. In the future the President should have an explicit White House review. He should hear something from other than advocates.

QUESTION: Would it have been feasible to let the DOD handle the operation, say, with CINCLANT running it with a POLAD [Political Advisory, Military] alongside and operating within established parameters? Would it be better to have it run this way or to have it run from the White House?

ANSWER: I don't think we controlled the operation from the White House.

RESPONSE: The messages make it appear that it was very close to this. Was this desirable?

ANSWER: I think it would have been better to set forth more clearly established parameters and then delegate the responsibility.

STATEMENT: My own judgment is that while this is important from the lessons that can be learned, I don't think it was just one thing that caused the failure of this operation. I think there are a number of lessons to be learned.

(1) If you take on the political risks of this sort of an operation you must succeed big and quick. I think the concept of possibly starting a prolonged civil war might have been more damaging than the defeat we suffered.

(2) I think that in a new administration everyone must make an unusual effort to overcome their natural reticence in the presence of the President and be completely frank with him.

(3) The obsession with secrecy made for a less careful study of the plan than would have otherwise been made.

(4) I think there were a number of reasons that led both the CIA and the military to become advocates rather than impartial judges of the plan.

(5) I think the quality of the estimates of Castro's forces was a serious factor. For example, their operational doctrine was estimated to be virtually nonexistent, and yet they

seemed to have a very clear understanding of the value of control of the air.

(6) I don't think we worked hard enough to advise the President and I am not sure that all of us felt we were his advisors on this project.

(7) I think the misunderstanding of the likelihood of the requirement for guerrilla operations was serious.

(8) We exaggerated the necessity to do something with the Guatemala force.

(9) As I reflect on the covertness of this operation, I'm amazed that we thought there was a chance of deniability.

(10) I think the men that worked on this got into a world of their own. I don't believe the failure was "because of the want of a nail."

QUESTION: What about the desirability of using U.S. advisors in Cuba as we did in Korea?

ANSWER: If there were Americans in the land force the President was misled and I'd have been against it.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I don't believe the military view, such as held by [], was strongly presented to the President.

MR. KENNEDY: People that actually have to carry the operation through don't have access to the President.

MR. BUNDY: I had the strong feeling that if the military had said that calling off the air strikes would have caused the operation to fail the President would have reversed his decision.

MR. DULLES: One thing I'm not clear on is whether or not the forces encountered by the invasion force were Castro's elite. Actually I blame myself a bit on the guerrilla thing. I think we were misled by the fact that Zapata was a traditional guerrilla area, because the only real course of action in the event the operation didn't succeed was sea evacuation.

MR. BUNDY: I think there was nothing wrong with the organization, as such. I believe that failure resulted from the failures to give the President the help he needed.

EIGHTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Eighth Meeting of the Paramilitary
Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 2 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles

Other Participants

General Lansdale

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Colonel Kinard

Mr. King

Commander Mitchell

Lt. Colonel Tarwater

project with armed men aboard. I called in fire from the *Barbara J.* and the first burst of .50 caliber and 75-mm shells hit the truck column and stopped it. We were later told that the men aboard the trucks dropped their guns and ran, believing that we were part of a major sea invasion force. After I was engaged the commander of Red Beach departed with about two-thirds of his craft because he felt that he should get ashore as soon as possible. Each of these men had 96 rounds of ammunition, plus about 80 rounds of additional ammunition. On the second trip back to the beach I received machine gun fire from the left flank and one of the men in my boat was killed. Then I heard some explosions which I believed were incoming mortars or possibly 80-mm artillery.

QUESTION: Were you visible on the water?

ANSWER: No, sir, the moon was gone.

STATEMENT: About an hour before daylight I noticed that the movement ashore wasn't progressing. I didn't hear any boats moving. I heard that the *Houston* was having trouble with her boats, so I got two rubber boats from the *Barbara J.* and went over to the *Houston* and found eight aluminum craft tied on the opposite side of the ship not being used. It was the 5th Battalion commander's responsibility to get the men from the *Houston* ashore. However, he wasn't in any hurry and he didn't want me to take the boats and men in. Anyway we started ashore. As we were moving in it was gray, just at first daylight, about 0600. About this time a B-26 came at us on the deck firing at us with his .50 caliber machine guns. On his first pass we didn't have time to do much but duck, but on the next pass, since we had a .50 caliber and a .30 caliber machine gun and four BARs [Browning automatic rifle] aboard, I decided that rather than just be shot at we should shoot back. On the next pass we fired at him and he wounded one of my men. However, on the third pass when he passed over he came so close that we could feel the propwash, but after he passed over he started smoking, and we later heard that he had crashed. Immediately following this first B-26 another came in making firing passes. Then our C-46s came in with our paratroopers

and they had two of our B-26 aircraft flying cover. Following this a Sea Fury came in. He fired rockets and strafed the *Houston* and the *Barbara J.* and these two ships, with most of the 5th Battalion and supplies aboard, moved out six miles.

QUESTION: Why weren't the ships unloaded?

ANSWER: Because of the press of time.

QUESTION: Why do you think you were unable to unload during the time you had?

ANSWER: Possibly we were a little over-optimistic in our planning and possibly because of the complete darkness.

QUESTION: How much tonnage did you have to go ashore?

ANSWER: I don't know exactly in terms of tonnage. However, we had a ten-day supply for the Red Beach personnel.

RESPONSE: That's a lot of boat trips.

ANSWER: Yes, sir. Of course, it would have worked if Castro's aircraft hadn't showed up.

STATEMENT: After we'd pulled out six miles we started back in. However, about that time a jet aircraft came in and fired two rockets into the *Houston* and two rockets into the *Barbara J.* He split the seam on the *Barbara J.* and we started taking water and the *Houston* reported no steerage and was heading in toward the beach. We directed that the *Houston* put its engines in reverse and told them that then we'd tow them out. However, the *Houston* had started to sink and he was under attack by a B-26, and there was gas on the water, so the captain ran the *Houston* aground about 50 to 75 yards offshore and all the men jumped off in their life jackets. About 45 minutes after the grounding I received word that approximately 170 men from the *Houston* wanted to be evacuated. However, we had orders to rejoin the fleet because it was under air attack. So I told men from the *Houston* to consolidate and wait. I told them that they couldn't count on us to evacuate them, but that we would resupply them, and transport them. I told them they should try to rejoin the troops on Red Beach. I then asked them to describe their position, and

told them that we'd airdrop some equipment and supplies to them. They described their position and stated they also wanted boats so that they could get some supplies off the *Houston* which they could take into Red Beach. About a half an hour after this communication Castro's aircraft started to attack the *Houston* again. I believe they may have intercepted the message which described the men's position and talked about the supplies aboard the *Houston*.

STATEMENT: On D-Day a brave thing happened. One of our two B-26s was shot down and the other one was out of ammunition and yet he asked what he could do to help. I asked him if he would circle us and run a bluff to keep Castro's aircraft away. He did this until he had only enough gas to get back to base with a 15-minute fuel reserve.

QUESTION: You could have evacuated these men if you had been ordered to do so?

ANSWER: Yes, sir. However, the intent was for these men to join up with the rest of the force at Red Beach.

STATEMENT: At this point we were ordered to go out 13 miles and wait until night. We started out with the *Atlántico*, *Caribe*, *Blagar*, and the LCUs. As we moved out we were under attack by a B-26 and a Sea Fury. The B-26 was shot down.

QUESTION: How many men got ashore at Red Beach?

ANSWER: Two hundred seventy out of 399.

QUESTION: How much ammunition did they have?

ANSWER: Enough for two days of fire.

QUESTION: Is this all they had with them—their rifles and this ammunition?

ANSWER: No, they had four 81-mm mortars, four light machine guns, some 57-mm recoilless rifles, some grenades and some BARs.

QUESTION: They shouldn't have run out of ammunition on D-Day, should they?

ANSWER: No, they must have wasted their ammunition.

STATEMENT: I'm troubled by the fact that all you had to unload your supplies with were these small boats.

RESPONSE: Yes, sir, but all the materials were packaged so that they could be handled by one man. We just formed a chain gang to unload the packages and brought a boat up alongside.

QUESTION: This procedure would have tied up a lot of men, wouldn't it?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I would like to state my understanding now, so that the record will be clear. The order was given to withdraw all the ships from the beach area on D-Day at about 2:00 P.M. The order was for all the ships to rendezvous about 13 miles offshore. You and the LCUs stayed in the convoy, but went beyond the 13-mile rendezvous before you stopped, and the *Caribe* and the *Atlántico* took off and disappeared. You actually stopped about 7:00 P.M., which meant you had been steaming about four hours at six knots, so you should have been about 24 to 30 miles out. Is that correct?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Having reached this area, you then on your own initiative started loading the LCUs with supplies from the *Barbara J.* You were about two-thirds through when you got the orders to turn around and go in again.

RESPONSE: Exactly, sir. The message came from Washington at about 2000 or 2100. It directed the *B-J* to go in with a 500-man pack. The *Blagar* was to come in with the slower LCUs. However, the *Barbara J.* was leaking and all the 500-man packs were aboard the *Blagar*, so it was decided that the *Blagar* would go in with the packs, with the *B-J* and the LCUs following. However, there was about a four-hour delay before the ships were ready to go in.

QUESTION: What caused the delay?

ANSWER: I don't know, sir. The *Blagar* was to pick me up and it didn't pick me up until ten-thirty.

QUESTION: The *Blagar* did start in then at about midnight, and did the *B-J* and the LCUs follow?

ANSWER: I don't know. We steamed toward the beach, however, until about 4:00 A.M., when we were ordered to turn around.

QUESTION: What was the speed of the *Blagar*?

ANSWER: Ten knots.

RESPONSE: Well, at ten knots for four hours, it would seem that you could have made the beach.

QUESTION: Did you have an order to turn around and, if so, who sent it?

ANSWER: I don't know exactly what happened, but whatever happened, happened so naturally that I was not disturbed. I was a little fuzzy at this time as I had been up for four days and four nights.

QUESTION: Did you here in Washington know of the order to resupply the beaches?

MR. KING: Yes. It was a surprise to us to learn that they hadn't been supplied. We didn't know that the *Caribe* and the *Atlántico* had taken off.

QUESTION: Do you recall when you realized that the beach supplies had not been received?

MR. KING: After dawn the next day.

After additional discussion with [], it was decided that he should write a chronology of the events and submit it to the Group for further study.

[]

[] was responsible for the communications

plan for the operation. In making his presentation he utilized several charts showing the communications nets and agreed to provide the Study Group with desk-size copies for their records.

42 lines deleted

QUESTION: How were the messages that came into Washington handled?

ANSWER: They were immediately seen by [] who made any tactical decisions that may have been necessary. If they involved higher level decisions, [], Mr. Bissell or Mr. Cabell would take the message to the State Department or the White House.

QUESTION: Was there a routine sending of messages to the State Department or the White House?

ANSWER: No, only on special issues as determined by the higher-ups.

MR. KENNEDY: I'd like to get all the messages that were sent out from Washington and those that arrived, plus all the coded messages.

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: What would you change if you had it to do over again?

ANSWER: I don't think I'd change anything,

2½ lines deleted

[]

At this point [] left and [] was recalled in an attempt to clarify what had developed after the ships had been ordered out on D-Day. Recalling these events, [] covered much the same ground as [] and he did relatively little to clarify the chronology.

However, he did add one new point when he stated that he may have given Pepe the impression that the Navy air CAP would come in and stay for the duration of the operation rather than advising him that the Navy air CAP would only be provided for one hour. He stated that this had been his honest impression, and that he had not purposely misled Pepe. However, in fact, he had given Pepe the wrong impression.

[]

At this point [] left and [], the skipper of the *Blagar*, appeared before the Group. After a few introductory remarks he was asked whether or not it was possible that the ships of the invasion force had been sighted by the lighthouse. He replied that it was entirely possible, stating that he had seen the lighthouse very clearly. Much of []'s testimony was essentially the same as that of [] and []. Consequently, only those portions of his statements have been included that contain new or differing information.

STATEMENT: We picked up the crew of the *Río Escondido* and they rather demoralized our crew so that we had something of a mutiny aboard ship, in that they refused to go back to the beach again. However, I talked to them and pointed out that there were 1,200 men on the beach and we were only 60 and that we had to try and help them.

QUESTION: When did you leave the beach?

ANSWER: About 10:00 A.M. I sent the message to take all the ships out to sea and give them protection. I had to get the ships off the beach for there was no maneuverability and we had to go slow, five and a half knots. After we got away from the beach I called the ships to join together, but only the *B-J* returned. At about this time my blue net went out and I had to conduct my communications through the *Barbara J.* I used my green net to work with the *Barbara J.* During this period

we kept steaming south toward Point Zulu where we had been ordered to rendezvous. While en route someone down in the engine room from the *Río Escondido* tried to stop the engines of the ship. Again I tried to explain the situation to the men from the *Escondido* and five of my own men as to the requirement for our getting supplies to the men on the beach.

QUESTION: Were any Americans involved in the group that were refusing to go back in?

ANSWER: No.

STATEMENT: After I had talked to these men we continued on, but I could not find the whereabouts of the *Atlántico* or the *Caribe*. Later I found out that they could hear me, but they would not answer. Finally they showed up at Point Zulu on the 18th of April at about 1600.

QUESTION: Did everything you wanted to send back to Florida have to go through the *Barbara J*?

ANSWER: No, I had my own wireless to Florida.

QUESTION: What messages did you receive?

ANSWER: The first message I received directed me to steam out of the bay and stand by. The second message directed me to go to Zulu, and the third message directed me to go to Charley-Charley, a point further south.

QUESTION: On the first night was there any discussion relative to sending in supplies?

ANSWER: Yes, sir, but we were at Charley-Charley and the message came in too late, at about 2400. Prior to this, however, I had steamed around Point Charley-Charley and unloaded the *B-J* into the LCUs.

QUESTION: When did the *Atlántico* and the *Caribe* get back?

ANSWER: About 1600 on D+1.

QUESTION: Did you unload the *Atlántico*?

ANSWER: Yes, but not the *Caribe*.

QUESTION: When did you get the order to load the LCUs and go back in?

ANSWER: During the day of D+1 before the *Atlántico* and the *Caribe* got back.

MR. KENNEDY: The decision to permit a daylight cargo run was made at about 1400.

QUESTION: When did you finish loading the LCUs?

ANSWER: About 2230.

STATEMENT: We were ready to go about 2300. As we headed back in I sent a message that unless we got support we couldn't go in in daylight. I requested air cover. I never got a reply to my request for air cover. However, later on, while steaming north I got a message not to go in, that I should remain out at sea.

STATEMENT: Following this on D+2 there was talk about evacuation so I formed two convoys, one with my ship and the two merchant ships, and one with the *Barbara J.* and the LCUs. I steamed full speed ahead toward Blue Beach and sent a message at the same time requesting permission to go in. I gave Pepe an ETA [estimated time of arrival] of about 1630. However, Pepe said that it was too late. In the meantime, I got a message to lay off 15 miles to help evacuate. Later on I got word that the evacuation was cancelled. I was about 30 miles out from the beach heading north when the evacuation was cancelled. Later I received orders to go back to Charley-Charley with the LCUs and some of us got orders to go to Stock Island in Florida. I don't know where all the other ships went, but we set our course for Florida. Following this they asked me if I could take my ship back to Stock Island with only the Americans aboard for a crew. When I replied in the negative they told me to go to Vieques.

QUESTION: Do you have any suggestions on how this operation might have been done better?

ANSWER: Well, I think if we'd had LSDs we could have unloaded right out the front instead of with little boats as we

tried to do. Oh, and the beach wasn't the best. We lost two LCVPs in the first landing we made. Another thing, a man should get a ship, not one of those things we had. I'd like to have had something like a Coast Guard cutter. Also, we had a lot of explosives and ammunition aboard. I don't know if that was advisable.

GENERAL LANSDALE

At this point [] left and General Lansdale appeared before the Group.

QUESTION: What part did you play in this operation?

ANSWER: I was a deputy to General Erskine and we had a small component that furnished support to the CIA. Our first real action was last March when we obtained a radio transmitter and helped get it and other facilities installed on Swan Island. We also arranged for the use of Fort Sherman for training troops. From then on I continued in the support role up until December when the Willauer Group came into being. It was shortly after this, in January, I believe, when the JCS and General Gray became involved in the plan and our office essentially became a monitoring agency. Then I was gone for a month and when I came back I was made a personal assistant to Mr. McNamara on much of this. We were getting supplies for the operation and making facilities available—that sort of thing.

QUESTION: Did you attend Special Group meetings?

ANSWER: I attended two as assistant to Mr. Douglas.

QUESTION: Did you see enough of the planning to discuss how it went?

ANSWER: First, I'd like to say that I am not a Monday morning quarterback. However, I expressed some comments that it seemed to me that they should do more to get a popular base for the operation. For many valid reasons, however, the

decision was made that this was not necessary. From then on we tried to support the operation in every way that we could.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the Department of Defense evaluation and support came into the picture soon enough?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Was the State Department brought in on the operation soon enough?

ANSWER: That's difficult for me to say. However, I believe that the general concept had agreement from State, although they objected to certain specific details.

QUESTION: Should this kind of an operation be assigned to CIA, or should the responsibility be split, or should the DOD do it all?

ANSWER: I think there should be a more clear line of command. However, I don't think it matters who is in command so long as the person is competent. I believe that this particular operation should have been handled by CIA. However, it was coming close to one that should have been handled by the DOD. Essentially I believe that there should be one leader for an operation. All activity should be under one leader with specialists from each of the other agencies and departments as required. I believe this could probably be handled by an ad hoc committee.

QUESTION: You are really saying that there should be a task force of representatives of various agencies with one leader?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: How would your concept differ from what is being done now?

ANSWER: It would be tasking by a leader who would have subordinate leaders. Furthermore, I would have a means of calling to the attention of the President situations that couldn't be handled by the ordinary machinery of the government.

MR. KENNEDY: I think we have to come up with some sort

of a plan so that we can take actions before the situations develop to the point where it is almost certain that we'll get licked.

GENERAL LANSDALE: You have to establish a method for surfacing the best views on what to do about a situation and get these views before the President.

MR. KENNEDY: What we need is a mechanism that's continually in operation in the government determining what we are going to do all over the world. We shouldn't just wait until the crisis is upon us.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I disagree with the ad hoc task force concept, but we must have a national pattern for handling these situations.

GENERAL LANSDALE: In developing a military capability in the various nations of the world, I believe you have to start on a political base. The people in the country concerned must feel that they have something worth fighting for and we must use the local people.

QUESTION: Do you agree that it is not sound to isolate paramilitary activities from the rest of the Cold War?

ANSWER: Yes, it is only part of the Cold War.

COLONEL KINARD

At this point General Lansdale left and Colonel Kinard appeared before the Group to give a briefing on Special Forces. In his briefing he explained that Special Forces participated in unconventional and psychological warfare. He explained that unconventional warfare consisted of three parts: (1) guerrilla action, (2) evasion and escape, and (3) subversion. He stated that our Special Force units are trained to organize indigenous personnel in conducting unconventional warfare. He further stated that at the present time there are three basic Special Force units: one in Okinawa with 364 officers and men; one at Bat Toltz, Germany, with 346 officers

and men; and one at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, with 1,100 officers and men. He stated that the equipment is now standardized for these units. Members of the Special Force units are all airborne qualified and, in addition, have atomic demolition capabilities. He stated that there is a back-up of Special Forces in the Reserve and the National Guard. The Reserves have 1,456 officers and men authorized and 1,000 in being. In the National Guard there are 938 officers and men.

QUESTION: How is the re-enlistment rate?

ANSWER: Good. Some of our men have served in all of the three units.

Colonel Kinard then gave a description of the psychological warfare battalions and the loud-speaker and leaflet companies. He stated that at the present time they have psychological warfare elements in both Europe and the Pacific.

QUESTION: Suppose we wanted to put unconventional warfare units in Vietnam at this time?

ANSWER: This would not be difficult. We have been training people in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, over the last six years.

At this point members of the Paramilitary Study Group had to excuse themselves to attend another meeting and Col. Kinard was invited to return the following day.

NINTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Ninth Meeting of the Paramilitary
Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 3 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
Mr. McNamara
General Wheeler
General Bonesteel
[]
Colonel Kinard
Mr. King
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

50 lines deleted

At this point [] left and [] appeared before the Group. [] was in charge of the foreign intelligence section which was concerned with reports, research, economic support, foreign intelligence operations, debriefings, State Department liaison.

12 lines deleted

QUESTION: What was your general impression of conditions within Cuba prior to the invasion with regard to uprisings?

ANSWER: It was my opinion that if the people do not get arms they would not rise.

STATEMENT: In a meeting with Mr. Devine he mentioned the President's statement that no Americans would be used in the Cuban operation. He then asked me what I thought would happen if the operation was turned over to the Cubans. I told him I thought that they would clobber the hell out of the invasion force.

QUESTION: In your debriefings of significant sources, before the operation, did you detect any readiness on the part of the population to rise?

ANSWER: Yes. For example, from a U.S. businessman who traveled throughout the country I had indication that there were relatively small bands that were ready to rise.

STATEMENT: If an invasion of this sort had taken place in January when there was active resistance in the Escambrays there might have been a better chance of uprisings. However, in my estimation there was less likelihood of uprisings in April.

QUESTION: Was there any evidence of tightening up before the invasion?

ANSWER: Yes. They were tightening up before D-Day and then they really clamped down on D-Day.

QUESTION: The press said that there had been no call to the Cubans to rise against Castro. Is that true?

ANSWER: We certainly didn't put out any call to rise for that would have been the worst thing to do. We wouldn't put out any call for the people to rise until there was something solid for them to rise to.

QUESTION: How many Soviet-bloc personnel were in Cuba at the time of the invasion?

ANSWER: Nine hundred eighty-one with about two to three hundred military advisors included in that number.

99 lines deleted

SECRETARY McNAMARA

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

At this point the Group proceeded to Secretary McNamara's office where he was asked a number of questions in an attempt to determine what the picture was as he saw it at his level of decision.

QUESTION: What was the estimate of the probability of success of Zapata?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: This should be answered in the time context of the point of no return. Actually the chances of success changed as the days went by as the plan was modified. Initially there was a smaller force, about 800 personnel. Finally there were somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,200. This increase in the strength of the invasion force, of course, increased the chances of success. The increased logistic support also tended to increase the chances of success. On the other hand, the reduced air support, the new landing area, and the reduced sea cover all tended to reduce the chances of

success. However, the overall balance indicated a marginal probability of success. It seemed desirable to go ahead for three reasons:

(1) If we didn't proceed we would have to bring the invasion force back to the United States. It seemed that the general conclusion that would result from this would be the idea that the United States was unwilling to help others fight against Communism.

(2) A feeling that never again would we have a chance to overthrow Castro without utilizing Americans.

(3) The failure of the CEF to succeed in their operation as a unified force would not preclude the force from breaking up and continuing guerrilla operations, in which case the operation would not be viewed by the rest of the world as a total defeat.

STATEMENT: One side we are interested in exploring is the side presented by Mr. Mann.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Tom Mann endorsed the plan before the point of no return.

STATEMENT: Our papers indicate that on the 18th of February Mr. Bundy reported to the President that there were two points of view, Mr. Bissell's and Mr. Mann's. Was Mr. Mann the one who insisted on nonattribution?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The desirability of nonattribution was a general view, almost to be met prior to approval. However, this can't be charged to Tom Mann.

QUESTION: Was the question of guerrilla operations in the Zapata area considered?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes. However, this was considered to be unlikely because the CEF was believed to be able to control the access routes into the beachhead. If control of the access routes was lost, however, it was believed it would be easier for the invaders to get through the swamps as individuals than it would be for Castro's units. Finally, it was believed that if Castro broke through the force could be evacuated by sea.

QUESTION: Was it a major factor that this force could get to the mountains?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, it was certainly in the President's mind. It was always considered that the force could be evacuated or go through the swamp into the mountains, in which case the press wouldn't be able to look upon the operation as a total failure.

QUESTION: What was the feeling with regard to the possibility of popular uprisings?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It was understood that there was a substantial possibility of uprisings, possibly on the order of four or five out of ten. This led to the belief that the whole operation was marginal. Uprisings in a police state weren't expected to occur fast enough to support the landings.

QUESTION: What was expected to happen if the landing force effected a successful lodgment but there was no uprising?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: They would be split up into a guerrilla force and moved into the Escambrays.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the position of the JCS as to Zapata? Was it appreciated that they favored Trinidad over Zapata?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The JCS had reviewed the plan in early January and while they considered it marginal they still believed it had sufficient chance of success to warrant its implementation. After all the modifications to the original plan were made they still believed the chances of success were marginal, but they still wanted to give it a try. There was one important modification that the Chiefs never knew about and one about which they all felt strongly. This was the decision to cancel some of the D-Day air strikes. This decision was made at the only meeting at which neither I nor the Chiefs participated. It was my understanding that both the CIA and the Chiefs preferred Zapata to Trinidad. For a while Trinidad offered the advantage of close proximity to the Escambrays or guerrilla territory, Zapata offered an airstrip and was likely to

be less well protected by Castro, thereby raising the chances of success for the initial landing.

QUESTION: Was it understood that control of the air was essential to the success of the landing?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It was understood that without control of the air the chances of success would be considerably decreased. The understanding of Castro's air force was not adequate, particularly in terms of the numbers and types of aircraft. Furthermore, it was assumed that a large number of his aircraft would be incapacitated. This appears to have been a major error. However, to get back to the question of control of the air, it was certainly understood that it was very important.

It doesn't appear that we would have achieved complete control of the air even if we had made the dawn air attack.

STATEMENT: There were some reports that we knocked out approximately two-thirds of Castro's combat aircraft.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: If we knocked out two-thirds of Castro's aircraft they had a greater capability than they were expected to have.

QUESTION: What was the understanding as to the ability of the landing force to pass a guerrilla status in an emergency?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Quite clear that they could function in a guerrilla status.

MR. DULLES: Actually this never had a chance to be tested.

QUESTION: What degree of nonattribution was sought and why?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The highest possible degree because the Latin American countries had indicated they would not support this operation.

QUESTION: Was there any doubt that, globally speaking, this operation would be attributed to the United States?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We felt it would to a degree, but wanted to reduce this to a minimum.

QUESTION: Were the implications of the conflict between operational requirements for success and the need for non-attribution clearly understood?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Not really. As the plan progressed there was a definite trend to reduce the possibilities of attribution. This trend took the shape of a curve and finally the plan was compromised in order to reduce the chances of attribution.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the CIA became advocates of the plan?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It was not a CIA debacle. It was a government debacle. There wasn't any person in the room that didn't approve the plan. Bissell in no sense was selling the operation. [] was eloquent in advocating the plan. However, his presentations were so one-sided that he made little influence on my judgment.

This was a marginal operation. It was recognized that if one ship was lost we were in trouble. The feeling never developed, however, that CIA was selling this operation.

ADMIRAL BURKE: I had misgivings about the plan, but none that were crucial.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: That's right, it was a gradual erosion of the plan, but not to the extent that it seemed desirable to call off the operation.

QUESTION: You mentioned the requirement for the clarification of responsibilities here in Washington.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: CIA should not run such large operations. They simply don't have the facilities. We could have used our facilities on a nonattributable basis. It would have been better if we could have handled the operation because we could have planned it on a much larger scale. We could have assured command control. A military operation should never be conducted except under a military man. We should systematize the decisionmaking process.

QUESTION: How would you do this on a systematic basis?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I wasn't thinking so much in terms of this as the fact that I wouldn't allow any decisions to be made or actions taken except on the basis of written documents.

QUESTION: Do you believe the absence of written documents was a consequence of security considerations?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes.

QUESTION: Going back to the Cuban operation, accepting for the moment that the military should have run the operation, when should they have taken control?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I am not qualified to answer that as I don't know enough about the CIA structure.

Another alternative that might be desirable in the case of future Cubas is that the CIA, for example, would conceive the need for certain actions. CIA should then lay out their basic plan and when they reach the point where they feel that they should train and equip troops, the JCS should be brought in to make an evaluation. This should be done even before the President makes his decision. Then at the point when the operation is approved the military commander should take over so he can shape the whole operation. In the case of Cuba, for example, at the point where the Special Force instructors were requested the DOD should have come in.

There is one point that should be emphasized, that is, that all decisions and actions should be written. This would engender responsibility.

QUESTION: How big should a force be before becoming a DOD responsibility?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: To answer that question you need a detailed organization study. I believe that someone should make a study and come up with a recommendation.

GENERAL WHEELER

At this point the Group returned to General Taylor's office and General Wheeler appeared before the Group.

QUESTION: As the director of the Joint Staff, how did this operation look to you?

ANSWER: When we got into this in January I put General Gray to work as our representative. Now an interesting aspect was that we attempted to make an evaluation of the plan as it existed at the time we became aware of it and I had J-2 and J-3 make an independent survey to find the optimum landing beach in Cuba, and they came up with Trinidad. Then General Gray, working with a group of officers from all the J Staffs, evaluated the plan, and this evaluation was concluded with the statement that the plan had a fair chance. It was pointed out, however, that our conclusions were based only on hearsay and so we recommended that a team of officers go down to the training area and make an evaluation there. When they returned they wrote their evaluation which indicated several weaknesses, particularly in logistics. As a consequence, we sent [] down to help them with their amphibious logistic problems. Thereafter, progressively as the time approached for the implementation of the plan, the plan as originally envisioned was walked away from, particularly the air support aspects. For example, the air strikes were desired on D-Day for maximum effect. The next thing that was bothersome was that we couldn't land at Trinidad as we had to find an airstrip from which the B-26s could claim to be operating. Then came the evaluation of the Zapata Plan. If I remember correctly, there were three alternatives to Trinidad that were looked at, and Zapata was the least objectionable. I can recall that when he looked at the Zapata Plan, General Lemnitzer asked how the force would get out of that area in the event that the operation didn't go well. It was explained that the troops would fade into the swamps and move into the mountains. I felt that this had less than a fair chance of success.

QUESTION: How long did you consider the Zapata Plan?

ANSWER: It couldn't have been for more than 48 hours.

QUESTION: Do you think this was time enough to go into the plan adequately?

ANSWER: I believe that you could make a fairly good evaluation in that length of time, or even less. Zapata was only a change of the area of landing, not a change of the pattern of the landing.

QUESTION: What about the air plan? Was it really discussed by the Chiefs?

ANSWER: At every meeting there were pros and cons on how important the first air strikes would be and how important it would be to the success of the operation. I feel that the sense of the Chiefs throughout the meetings was that air support was critical to the success of the operation.

QUESTION: When the Chiefs approved the Zapata Plan, however, was it with the understanding that there would be pre-D-Day strikes or D-Day strikes?

ANSWER: The matter of the pre-D-Day strike came up after the Zapata Plan was more or less set as the plan to be implemented, if I remember correctly. The plan for the Zapata landing, as I recall it, still called for the D-Day strike, I think at dawn on D-Day. As I say, I could be wrong on that particular point.

QUESTION: Do you have documents that you can refer to that will establish this time?

ANSWER: Yes. General Gray, I am sure, has these documents.

STATEMENT: The Chiefs were still talking largely in terms of the original plan with the locale moved from Trinidad to Zapata.

RESPONSE: That would be more understandable except for the fact that you rejected some of the other alternatives you considered on the basis that they didn't have air strikes.

QUESTION: Did anybody study whether or not the guerrillas could operate in the swamp area?

ANSWER: I understand that they can, that they have been operating in there for a hundred years.

STATEMENT: This has been referred to, as General Wheeler says. However, I have seen no evidence it has been utilized in recent years.

QUESTION: Did anybody study that?

ANSWER: In that particular area we didn't make any particular study of it, no. We were told this was a guerrilla area and I was under the impression that there were even some guerrillas operating in there at this time.

QUESTION: But nobody in the Joint Staff looked into this matter at the time?

ANSWER: Our people said that this was a guerrilla area and that people could sustain themselves in there.

QUESTION: What I am trying to determine is if a study was made.

ANSWER: No. No study was made, certainly no detailed study.

STATEMENT: We inquired into this on one occasion and the people at CIA told us that a group of a hundred guerrillas were operating in this area, and there was lots of small game.

STATEMENT: Of course, a second point was that while it might have been usable as a guerrilla area at one time, this was before the time of helicopters. It would seem that some of these military experts should have been able to figure this out.

QUESTION: In talking with [], did he point out that the primary evacuation would be by sea, but if this failed they would move into the swamps for their guerrilla operation?

ANSWER: Yes, that was discussed, sir, and it was recognized that this would be a very sticky and difficult thing to do. In the first place, it was recognized that evacuation by sea is one of the most difficult operations there is. You almost have to have support from the sea in the form of gunfire support or air

cover. I thought that if these people were really pressed hard the possibility of evacuation would be much less than their going into a guerrilla operation.

STATEMENT: It would seem that the concept of falling back to the beaches should have been ruled out because it almost ruled out the possibility of guerrilla action as a practical thing.

QUESTION: With regard to the logistics of this thing, would you say that the Joint Staff checked the logistics carefully?

ANSWER: I believe that the logistic aspects were checked very carefully indeed.

QUESTION: As D-Day approached what plans were there for liaison with the CIA?

ANSWER: We set up a little war room here which ran on a 24-hour basis. We had constant liaison with CIA, we had liaison officers from the services, and I had taken people from various sections of the Joint Staff. We had a special communications system where all items from CINCLANT came directly in to General Gray. He was really the disseminator of all messages from the Department of Defense and the other agencies to CINCLANT.

QUESTION: How did you get the messages that came in over at CIA?

ANSWER: They were transmitted over here.

QUESTION: How were they transmitted?

ANSWER: We have a teletype here in J-2.

QUESTION: So you had the same messages here as they had in CIA?

ANSWER: To the best of my belief.

QUESTION: When were you and the Joint Staff aware of the ammunition shortage?

ANSWER: When we got word that the ship that was at Blue Beach was sunk we learned that a large portion of their reserve ammo was aboard, and then we saw messages from the beach

area in which they particularly mentioned that they were running low on tank ammunition.

QUESTION: Once you found out there was an ammunition shortage did you try and get the ships back in there?

ANSWER: Yes, we did.

STATEMENT: I get the impression that a very careful evaluation was made of the Trinidad Plan and that about all that was done in regard to the Zapata Plan was that it was looked at with the idea that everything set forth in the Trinidad Plan would go with the exception of the adjustments that had to be made at the new beach.

RESPONSE: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Did you have liaison officers over at CIA?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: On D+1 they were going to try and make a run into the beach with ammunition. They made any emergency request for air cover. Do you recall whether it was appreciated that this was the only way that they could get that ammunition ashore was with air cover?

ANSWER: Sir, I wouldn't even put it on the basis of ammunition alone. The reports from the beach indicated that the men desperately needed air cover. I definitely knew the situation was desperate at that time, there was no question about it.

STATEMENT: Well, let's move out now and have you tell us how you think you could do this a little bit better in the future.

ANSWER: This is not an original thought. It results from discussions with General Gray and others, and we feel that to properly organize you need to start with a broad national plan prepared by all the agencies of the government. It should start off in the broad terms of a concept and after the concept is agreed upon and approved by the President each agency should prepare its own part of the plan. We think that in this case CINCLANT should have set up a special operational task force and prepared the detailed plan for the operation. If

this plan was prepared, of course, it would be passed up through channels to the President.

QUESTION: How about your other aspects of the plan—the political, the psychological and so on?

ANSWER: Well, actually these are the special plans that were mentioned earlier with regard to the national plan.

QUESTION: Who would be responsible for success or failure?

ANSWER: The man in charge of the special task force.

STATEMENT: What we really feel is that we lack this national U.S. plan of action. We feel that there should have been a unified task force commander to really conduct the operation. We feel that you cannot efficiently attempt to conduct operations of this sort from Washington. It is too far removed. People are too immersed in other types of activities. What it results in is that responsible officials are called upon to make rather heavy decisions with very little forewarning and in some cases without perhaps as much information as they should have.

TENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Tenth Meeting of the Paramilitary
Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 4 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
General Gray
General Bonesteel
Mr. Rusk
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

The first portion of the meeting was devoted to a consideration of some of the tentative conclusions reached at this point. After a short while it was deemed desirable to recall General Gray for further questioning.

GENERAL GRAY

QUESTION: We are impressed by the incompleteness of the JCS appraisal of the Zapata Plan. We understand that the incompleteness of the evaluation was due, in part, to the fact that it was based on a concept rather than a completed plan. Is that a fair statement?

ANSWER: Yes. To a degree the incompleteness was due to that.

QUESTION: Having at least concurred in this concept as being an adequate basis for further planning, why didn't the Joint Chiefs, at some point down the road, look at the completed plan or a plan sufficiently detailed so that they could consider some of the points that they had missed?

ANSWER: One reason the Zapata Plan was brief in comparison with the other one is because most of the factors were exactly the same. The second factor was the limitation of time. We were briefed in the morning and had to get out a paper on which we could brief the Chiefs the following morning. Furthermore, at this time this was not just a consideration of three possible alternatives. The original Trinidad Plan was still in the running. We determined that Zapata was the best of the three alternatives, but we still preferred the original Trinidad Plan.

QUESTION: But you did accept Zapata as the basis for further planning?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: At what point did the plan take enough shape that the JCS could have made a detailed evaluation?

ANSWER: The detailed plan was probably completed on 8 April because that's when [] went down south. However, we didn't get that plan until the operation started.

QUESTION: General Gray, how close were you to this plan?

ANSWER: I was in on all the meetings that were held at the White House with one exception.

QUESTION: Were you talking with CIA people on this plan?

ANSWER: Yes. The first change we noticed was when the concept changed from being just at the head of the bay, and moved south down the eastern side to the Blue Beach area.

QUESTION: How did you get that information?

ANSWER: By liaison back and forth between officers. I briefed the JCS on that change in concept at one of their meetings. The reason for this change was because a usable airfield was down on the shoulder and that was one of the requirements that had been placed on the plan.

QUESTION: Was the possibility of this force becoming a guerrilla unit considered?

ANSWER: Not formally by the Joint Chiefs, but we looked at it. It was felt that they could hold this area. However, if they didn't get popular support there was no advantage for them to sit there. For even if Castro couldn't eliminate them, other people couldn't get in to them, so they had to get out of there. It was concluded if they were going to withdraw there were three ways they could do it. One was evacuation by ship. If the decision had been made and planned for we could have withdrawn those people off the beach. The second one was that with air support they could have fought their way out. The third possibility was that part of the force would be evacuated and then later infiltrated back in as guerrillas and the other part of the force would actually remain in that whole Zapata peninsula area and operate as guerrillas in the expanse to the west. It was always believed they could get out by sea because the CIA's sea operations had always been very successful.

QUESTION: Were you aware that the troops were trained and instructed that in the event they couldn't hold their lodgment they were to fall back onto the beaches for evacuation, and only if that failed would they operate as guerrilla forces?

ANSWER: No, we weren't. That wasn't in the plan and we were not present at the final briefing.

QUESTION: Did you brief the Joint Chiefs on all the parts of the plan?

ANSWER: Yes, all except the question of the air strikes.

QUESTION: What was your understanding of the air strikes?

ANSWER: There would be air strikes on D-Day. This D-2 air strike didn't come in until the last few days. The air plan consisted of nothing but D-Day strikes. Our understanding of the plan was always that the air strikes would be conducted at dawn from Puerto Cabezas.

QUESTION: Would you look back in your notes and see when you briefed the Chiefs and essentially what was in your briefing so we'll know what they heard about the plan?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

STATEMENT: There were four official papers that the Joint Chiefs considered. The first was the original Trinidad Plan. The second was the Zapata Evaluation. Third was the evaluation of whether or not we could put a small force in the Oriente Province and they could hang on, and fourth was the evaluation of the team's trip to Guatemala. They were briefed on these official papers and at their regular meetings I brought them up to date on what was going on. At several of these meetings they were briefed on changes to the plan and they approved them.

QUESTION: Were these briefings for information or to get their decision?

ANSWER: Generally speaking, when I briefed them it was on

some paper or something that they were being asked to approve.

QUESTION: Would you say then that the Chiefs did have all the essential elements of this plan and did consider the plan adequate?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Did you feel you had the option to the guerrilla alternative?

ANSWER: Yes, I've always thought we had the option to make that decision before the force got pressed right down to the beach.

GENERAL GRAY: As D-Day approached it seemed to me that popular support was developing and building. We did measure all the military factors we thought were necessary. However, it was very difficult to get an accurate fix on where the militia was.

QUESTION: You and the DOD did consider the logistic problem and took action to strengthen the logistic plan. Is that a fair statement?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

STATEMENT: In other words, logistically speaking, you had planned a very heavy back-up to insure a successful operation.

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Would you say that you saw this plan develop, that you had adequate contact with the CIA so that your group, at least, had full knowledge of the developments and anything that looked doubtful was taken before the Joint Chiefs?

ANSWER: That's right.

QUESTION: Is it true that while the Joint Chiefs never had a presentation on the overall Zapata Plan at one time, they were briefed on all the pieces of the plan, so they could be said to have knowledge of the entire plan?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: What concern was expressed over the fact that there were only small boats to unload the *Houston* off Red Beach?

ANSWER: I actually didn't know that detail.

QUESTION: Did you know that the *Atlántico* and the *Caribe* had gone south a hundred or two hundred miles and actually escaped from control for a number of hours?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Do you recall when you discovered that?

ANSWER: It's in our log. As soon as we became aware of it we told CINCLANT to round them up.

STATEMENT: Our position on all of this was that we would do anything as long as it was approved, and then CIA carried the ball on getting the approval.

GENERAL TAYLOR: After listening to General Gray's testimony I now feel that the Joint Chiefs had a more complete appraisal of the plan and consequently gave a more complete approval.

GENERAL GRAY: I believe there should have been a final briefing on the overall plan about April 12th. I wrote that into the tasks that were to be followed by the different agencies. I believe this would have permitted a more detailed evaluation of the plan and all the changes that had been made up to that point. Speaking for myself, there could have been a more detailed evaluation, but I don't think it would have changed my evaluation that the plans should have gone ahead.

GENERAL BONESTEEL

At this point General Gray left and General Bonesteel appeared before the Group.

QUESTION: How can we better cope with the Cold War problem?

ANSWER: It is essential that we have a Cold War Indications Center where all the traffic of messages and intelligence from all the departments would come into a central area which is organized and staffed to keep an eye on what is happening throughout the world in order to flag situations on which it may be necessary to take action. This institution needs to be staffed by people from the State Department, the military and intelligence communities.

QUESTION: Would this group make plans?

ANSWER: It could if expanded to this. However, its primary purpose would be to call attention to situations that might require some kind of action.

QUESTION: Isn't this the State Department's area of responsibility?

ANSWER: Possibly, but it wouldn't work as well under the State Department as it would if the various agency representatives worked as coequals.

STATEMENT: The reason this sort of center is necessary is because of schizophrenia. The DOD probably believes that power is the final criteria of Communist success, whereas in the State Department there are probably only a half dozen people that understand the requirements for power. Furthermore, you can't get the State Department to plan on the use of power in any future operations. Actually you have no one place to get the proper interagency coordination on Cold War matters.

QUESTION: The NSC was organized for this purpose, wasn't it?

ANSWER: Yes, sir. The NSC is a mechanism for doing this. However, it has no staff except stenographic.

QUESTION: Are you suggesting that if the NSC was reorganized they could do this?

ANSWER: No, I would in fact revise the NSC.

QUESTION: Who would spark off the actions that needed to be taken throughout the world?

ANSWER: The Cold War Indications Center.

QUESTION: Where would be the central place that the plan would be developed?

ANSWER: Under NSC auspices.

SECRETARY RUSK

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

At this point the Study Group reconvened in Secretary Rusk's office in the State Department. Present were:

General Taylor	Secretary Rusk
Mr. Kennedy	Commander Mitchell
Mr. Dulles	Lt. Colonel Tarwater

After a few introductory remarks Secretary Rusk was asked his estimate of the probability of success of the Zapata Plan.

SECRETARY RUSK: It was in the neighborhood of 50 percent. It appeared the landing might be followed by further uprisings. If this failed the force could become guerrillas.

MR. DULLES: I think we all looked upon this as a pretty risky operation.

SECRETARY RUSK: The risks of the operation were accepted, however, because the importance of success was fully appreciated. Time was running out. It was the last chance in some time to have this job done by Cubans. Otherwise we might have to do this with American personnel and this would be less desirable. Castro's police power was increasing and he was also receiving a large inflow of Soviet arms. Further, it should be pointed out that when we talked about the possibility of failure we talked about far more disastrous results than

actually occurred. For example, we had discussed the possibility of such things as being ousted from the OAS or censure by the UN, and lively and adverse reaction by our Allies in Europe. The results that developed were not as serious as those that we had considered.

QUESTION: What was the feeling of the likelihood of a popular uprising following the landing?

SECRETARY RUSK: There was a very considerable likelihood of popular uprisings.

QUESTION: How essential was such an uprising regarded for the success of the operation?

SECRETARY RUSK: It was believed that the uprising was utterly essential to success in terms of ousting Castro. At one point we discussed the possibility of putting these men in as guerrillas. However, this concept was rejected on the basis of the fact that it would not spark an uprising.

QUESTION: What was your understanding of the requirements for sufficient shock to spark uprisings?

SECRETARY RUSK: The impression existed that 1,200 highly-trained men expected to get ashore and run into some militia units and beat the hell out of them. This would be the kind of a bloody nose that would get things moving. The feeling was that there would be no fighting on the beach. It seemed that this area was virtually empty. There was a good chance the invasion force could get well ashore without being discovered.

QUESTION: What was expected to happen if the landing force effected a successful lodgment but there was no uprising?

SECRETARY RUSK: In that case they would commence guerrilla operations, move into the swamps and then into the hills. This swamp area was stated to be the home of guerrillas.

QUESTION: Was the point made that this area had not been used for guerrilla operations in this century?

SECRETARY RUSK: I don't recall.

QUESTION: Was the possibility of a sea evacuation of the force considered?

SECRETARY RUSK: I don't recall. At least, it didn't make an impression on me. Let me point out that there was a minimum of papers.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the position of the JCS as to Zapata? Was it appreciated that they favored Trinidad over Zapata?

SECRETARY RUSK: They approved the Trinidad Plan. Trinidad involved a larger scale, more spectacular operation. It didn't offer the immediate possibility of an airstrip. It was felt that Zapata had considerably more political advantages and that the JCS approved Zapata.

STATEMENT: The JCS commented that Zapata was the best of the three alternatives they considered, but that they still favored the original Trinidad Plan.

SECRETARY RUSK: They didn't put their view in writing and that didn't come through. There was a strong impression that they favored the plan. At one meeting the President went around the room and asked everyone personally their opinion and I believe that I was the only one that didn't approve.

QUESTION: Was it understood that control of the air was considered essential to the success of the landing?

SECRETARY RUSK: Yes, it was understood that it was essential to the success of the landing, but there was an inadequate appreciation of the enemy's capability in the air. Furthermore, neither the President nor I was clear that there was a D-2 air strike. We did have it in our minds that there would be a D-Day air strike. Following the D-2 air strike there was considerable confusion. It wasn't realized that there was to be more than one air strike in the Havana area. The President was called on this matter and he didn't think there should be second strikes in the area unless there were overriding considerations. We talked about the relative importance of the air strikes with Mr. Bissell and General Cabell at the time. How-

ever, they indicated that the air strikes would be important, not critical. I offered to let them call the President, but they indicated they didn't think the matter was that important. They said that they preferred not to call the President.

QUESTION: Did you attempt to advise the President as to the importance of the air strikes?

SECRETARY RUSK: I had talked to him and he had stated that if there weren't overriding considerations the second strikes shouldn't be made. Since Mr. Bissell and General Cabell didn't want to talk to the President on the matter, I felt there were no overriding considerations to advise him of. I didn't think they believed the dawn air strikes were too important. I believe that Castro turned out to have more operational air strength than we figured.

MR. DULLES: I don't believe they had any more. However, they turned out to be more efficient.

QUESTION: Do you recall why the question of air strikes was withheld until Sunday evening?

SECRETARY RUSK: As far as I was concerned, I was caught by surprise with the first air strikes. I was trying to advise Adlai Stevenson at the UN on what was happening and suddenly found out there were additional air strikes coming up. We didn't want him to have to lie to the UN.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the ability of the landing force to pass to a guerrilla status in an emergency?

SECRETARY RUSK: The impression was that the ability of this force to pass to guerrilla activities presented no difficulty. At the beginning of the second day the President and I discussed the question of whether it was time to move the force out as guerrillas. However, it appears there was a delay in turning to this because they didn't have this action in mind.

GENERAL TAYLOR: They were told to fall back to the beaches so that they could be evacuated from the sea.

SECRETARY RUSK: Guerrilla actions were regarded as far more feasible than they turned out to be. I do regret, however,

that consideration was not given to another alternative. I suggested earlier that they land in the eastern portion of Cuba and then get a position with Guantanamo behind them. However, our military friends didn't want to spoil the virginity of Guantanamo.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the ammunition situation at the end of April 18? Was the importance of air cover for the returning ammunition ships understood?

SECRETARY RUSK: It was apparent that it was critical. The requirement for air cover wasn't as apparent as for air drops and getting the ships back in there, particularly in regard to getting them some tank ammunition.

QUESTION: Was it known at your level that two of the ammunition ships had taken off from the beach area and kept going south?

SECRETARY RUSK: No.

QUESTION: What degree of nonattribution was sought and why? Were the operational disadvantages arising from some of the restrictions imposed by the efforts to achieve nonattribution clearly presented and understood?

SECRETARY RUSK: We were hoping for the maximum. In retrospect, however, this looks a little naive. The considerations involved in this were that if you have success all the problems solve themselves. However, if you have failure it's very nice if the United States is not involved.

STATEMENT: Of course, there are degrees of nonattribution. The most costly restriction was the requirement not to have the air strikes even by Cubans.

16 lines deleted

QUESTION: To what extent did the CIA operations representatives have to "sell" the operation to the other agencies of government?

SECRETARY RUSK: You have to draw a distinction between the policy side and the operational side. The policy side

we were willing to look at, if it was policy. On the operational side, we were oversold on the operational aspects.

QUESTION: What do you mean by “oversold on the operational aspects”?

SECRETARY RUSK: It was presented in too optimistic terms.

QUESTION: Do you have any remarks on the integrated planning and coordination?

SECRETARY RUSK: This is very important. These covert matters are handled on such a restricted basis that the resources of the departments are not brought to bear. When you go beyond a few people in an operation of this sort it shouldn't be handled by the CIA.

QUESTION: Why didn't we do that? We should have.

SECRETARY RUSK: Before the President made his decision, CIA and Defense should have spelled out the entire CIA plan in one presentation. While the President had all the factors in his mind, I think this would have helped. Furthermore, we overemphasized some of the factors. For example, the question of what to do with this 1,200-man force. This question played too large a role because we certainly should have been able to handle these 1,200 men.

If you are not prepared to go all the way you shouldn't put 1,200 men ashore. When you get to the final decision stage the room should be cleared of all but those that have formal constitutional responsibility. People looking down the cannon's mouth should be in a solemn position and make a solemn decision without having large numbers of people in the room.

STATEMENT: Mr. McNamara stressed the desirability of having written papers and decisions.

SECRETARY RUSK: That would have been helpful. However, it would have meant 50 to 60 pieces of paper around this town.

One concluding remark. There was no one involved that didn't recognize this was a risky business and that failure would be costly. However, we overestimated the international effects of failure, and underestimated the effects of failure on this town.

ELEVENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Eleventh Meeting of the Paramilitary
Study Group

Time and Place: 5 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
Mr. Berle
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

The only person to appear before the Group was Mr. Berle.

MR. BERLE

QUESTION: What was the estimate of the probability of success of Zapata?

MR. BERLE: It was high. This was based on the theory that the group would get ashore and stay ashore long enough to stimulate reaction inside the country. It was perfectly clear from the beginning that 1,200 men could not possibly conquer an island the size of Cuba. They could only, therefore, be considered as a catalyst for uprisings with sufficient internal political support, so that there would be a great growing support throughout the island. The validity of this estimate will never be known because they did not stay ashore long enough. It was not necessary that they immediately spark uprisings. It would have been enough if a good territorial bridgehead of anti-Communist forces was established on Cuba.

QUESTION: What was expected to happen if the landing forces effected a successful lodgment but there was no uprising?

MR. BERLE: We estimated one of two things: Either the landing force would be able to make its way into the interior and there deploy with guerrillas already active in the area; or the alternative, we would have to stage an operation of rescue. This alternative was not wholly examined. It was assumed that if they were isolated they could maintain themselves for some time, and it was clear that if they could not break out, that we would be engaged in rescue operations.

QUESTION: Overt U.S. operations?

MR. BERLE: Not too overt. Possibly by having our ships lay off three miles and having small ships go ashore. There may have been other ways.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as to Zapata? Was it appreciated that they favored Trinidad over Zapata?

MR. BERLE: It was understood that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been through this and approved it as a sound plan. It was not understood whether they had greater preference for Trinidad or Zapata.

QUESTION: Was it understood that control of the air was considered as essential to the success of the landing?

MR. BERLE: Yes. The plan contemplated that Castro's air would be reduced to the minimum.

QUESTION: And that it was necessary to a successful landing to reduce Castro's air to the vanishing point?

MR. BERLE: The understanding was that it would be reduced to minimal proportions.

QUESTION: What were the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the D-Day air strike?

MR. BERLE: As the plan emerged, it was considered to be an operation by Cubans to fire a shot for freedom in their own country. The less participation of American force the better. The air strikes would be assumed to be American air strikes, therefore the air strikes would not receive any favor from State. The hope was, therefore, that by action by the Cubans themselves from the captured air strip, they could take care of the Cuban aviation in time to clear the thing up. The circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the air strikes, I don't know.

QUESTION: What was the understanding as to the ability of the landing force to pass to a guerrilla status in an emergency?

MR. BERLE: The feeling was that they would make their way in the swamps for a period of time and then most likely get to the Escambrays. Our understanding was that the probability of this was very considerable.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the ammunition situation at the end of 18 April? Was the importance of air cover for the returning ammunition ships understood?

MR. BERLE: I can't answer that question.

QUESTION: What was the degree of nonattribution sought?

MR. BERLE: Nonattribution was not altogether necessary. The conventions protecting against intervention did not apply because the Communists had intruded in this hemisphere, and second because Castro's government was an openly constituted totalitarian government which is clearly outside the provisions of the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro. That is, they attacked the Organization of American States, announced they would not be bound by the rules of the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, and announced they were going to export the revolution. They had actually invaded two or three other states, and were in no position to claim the protections of the international system. This is still true. As far as nonattribution is concerned, we had assisted Cubans that wished to fight for freedom in their own country. As a matter of fact, it seemed that it was the last clear chance that Cubans would have to fight for freedom in their own country. The danger then, was not of nonattribution but of failure. Clearly it must not be an American invasion. The attribution of assistance to the Cubans by the United States under all circumstances did not seem too serious.

STATEMENT: From the other testimony, it appears that the actual policy that was followed was much tougher than that.

MR. BERLE: Yes, this was probably true.

QUESTION: To what extent did the CIA operations representatives have to sell the operation to the other agencies of the government? Did it seem that they had become so motivated in favor of implementation of this plan that they were willing to accept restrictions that might have been dangerous? Even to accept restrictions of an operational nature rather than to run the risk of a cancellation? Did you think anything like this was in the atmosphere?

MR. BERLE: No. It would not be fair to say that.

QUESTION: Do you have anything to say about the plan in a general nature?

MR. BERLE: Success in this kind of an operation would have been the greatest single thing we could have done to avoid any Cold War threat of major proportions from the countries to the south. Some sort of a clash was bound to come, and it was probably better if it came sooner with one country, rather than later with two or three countries.

STATEMENT: I believe that our feeling is once the decision is made to run an operation such as this that the success should have gained the edge over nonattribution.

MR. BERLE: I think so too.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the interdepartment planning and coordination could be better effected in a similar operation?

MR. BERLE: Yes. The determination of policy should not be determined in group meetings. Policy should be determined by the President and two or three men. The difficulty with the meeting technique is that no one man states everything that is in his mind. Further, it seems to me that probably a somewhat better list of priority premises could be made up. The cardinal premise should be that once an undertaking is underway, it should be followed through until success, no matter what is committed. Then you should have lesser premises. As to coordination, there was no great lack. It was about as good as it could be.

STATEMENT: One problem would appear to be that we have no focal point outside of the President.

MR. BERLE: I believe we need a chief of staff of the Cold War. I wrote this out once in a report to President Kennedy before his inauguration.

QUESTION: Could a copy of this paper be made available to this group?

MR. BERLE: It's the President's personal report.

MR. KENNEDY: No problem.

MR. BERLE: I also made a talk at the Air University on this same subject. It's in New York, but I'll write for a copy for you.

QUESTION: Where would this chief of staff of the Cold War be established?

MR. BERLE: The theory was that we should have a cold war chief of staff and you would have to have certain theatre commands under him. He would be subject to a political committee, composed of the President, the Secretary of State, possibly the Secretary of Treasury, and the Secretary of Defense. But primarily the predominate consideration should be political. The handling of the funds would have to be worked out in some way so that the budget wouldn't have to be examined as terribly painfully as the military budgets are at the present time.

QUESTION: Would you recommend we contact Mr. Mann?

MR. BERLE: His record is longer than mine. However, I don't think it would differ from what I have said. If he was in Washington, I think you should call him. However, he is in Mexico, and I would question the desirability of bringing him back.

QUESTION: What has the reaction been in Latin America with regard to this operation?

MR. BERLE: They're slowly coming our way.

QUESTION: It hasn't been very harmful?

MR. BERLE: No. It's led to the breakup of a lot of united fronts throughout the Latin American countries, and the demonstrations against us have been by the Communist hardcore. But slowly the people are realizing that they have to choose between the Communist intrusion and the United States, and it seems to be developing favorably for us.

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Conversation between General Taylor and []

Time and Place: 6 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Member*
General Taylor

Other Participants

[]

Lt. Colonel Tarwater

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

1¼ lines deleted

[]

QUESTION: Would you explain how the air operation was organized? As I understand it, there were two organizations: one for planning and one for execution.

ANSWER: That's right.

QUESTION: Were you the actual air commander?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: When did the pre-D-Day strikes come into the picture?

ANSWER: I'm not sure.

STATEMENT: Will you ask [] to come over on Monday and set forth the facts relating to the pre-D-Day air strikes?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What was the turnaround time for your aircraft?

ANSWER: The longest time was three hours. A normal combat loading took approximately an hour.

QUESTION: How long could you remain over the target?

ANSWER: Thirty minutes to an hour.

QUESTION: What was your capability for providing air cover to the beach?

ANSWER: We could keep someone over there all the time. On D-Day we had a capability for launching [] sorties. If we hadn't lost some of our air crews to enemy air action, we'd have been able to maintain this indefinitely.

QUESTION: That would have been a major effort?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: How many strikes were conducted against the airfields?

ANSWER: The D-2 air strikes of eight B-26s against three airfields. On the nights of 17 and 18 April three B-26s were scheduled against San Antonio de los Baños. Two of these aborted, one arrived over the target, but due to haze and a blackout he was unable to identify his target. In the early morning hours of 18 April three more aircraft were dispatched against San Antonio de los Baños. One aborted on take-off, two aircraft arrived over target, but due to scud and haze in the area, they couldn't locate the target.

STATEMENT: After the D-2 air strikes, we knew that we hadn't destroyed all the aircraft. Consequently, we requested permission to launch air strikes against the remaining targets on D-1.

QUESTION: How was the request for the D-1 air strike handled?

ANSWER: It was not approved by Washington.

QUESTION: When were you denied permission to use napalm?

ANSWER: We only had standing authority to use napalm against a tank farm. We had to request authority on all other targets.

QUESTION: When did the pilot fatigue show up?

ANSWER: 171030Z.

QUESTION: Was this really fatigue?

ANSWER: Yes. In 14 out of 17 cases; the other three pilots just didn't have it.

QUESTION: How many B-26 pilots did you have?

ANSWER: Seventeen Cuban and eight American. Twenty-five all together.

QUESTION: What do you think about the adequacy of the number of pilots?

ANSWER: It was enough.

QUESTION: Did you have enough pilots to fly over the beach with two aircraft at all times?

ANSWER: Yes. There was a 4,100-foot strip in the beachhead area and we had crews qualified to operate from this strip.

QUESTION: If the invasion had been successful enough to keep the artillery off, you would have been successful?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What was your understanding on the use of contract pilots?

ANSWER: We didn't have blanket authority to use them, but we did have the authority to hire and train them and put them on a standby status. Later the use of contract pilots, in the beachhead area only, was approved by Washington.

QUESTION: Who handled your messages in Washington?

ANSWER: [].

QUESTION: Were you surprised at the effectiveness of the T-33s?

ANSWER: I've flown T-33s—they're a good airplane. We weren't surprised at their capabilities once they were airborne.

QUESTION: How would you summarize your feelings with regard to the operation and the lessons to be learned?

ANSWER: Policy decisions above the agency denied us the right to go ahead as scheduled and planned.

QUESTION: Was there some confusion as to the time the Navy air CAP was to be provided?

ANSWER: There was no confusion of the time. I received a message that Navy air CAP would be provided.

QUESTION: Would you provide us with a copy of the message?

ANSWER: Yes.

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

COLONEL BLACK

The first person to appear before the Group was Colonel Black. Colonel Black said he is currently assistant to Mr. Gilpatric.

QUESTION: Is Mr. Gilpatric heading a task group on clandestine warfare at this time?

COLONEL BLACK: He's the head of a presidential task force trying to develop a paper on Vietnam. It is not a generalized consideration of paramilitary operations; it's just restricted to Vietnam.

QUESTION: Were you involved at all in the Cuba operations?

COLONEL BLACK: No, sir.

It might be useful, however, if I told you, first, to what extent the Secretary's office had been involved in the Cuba operation and, second, to go on with some brief ideas of my own as to the lessons to be learned from this particular exercise, if that would be of any help.

Mr. Gilpatric was involved in the Cuba operation through his Thursday meetings of the 5412 Group. However, as far as this particular operation was concerned, Mr. Gilpatric did not have much direct responsibility.

QUESTION: Who's the chairman of the 5412 Group?

MR. DULLES: We don't have a chairman. I am the action officer. I handle the proposals for action by the CIA and they are approved, disapproved, or referred for further study.

QUESTION: The 5412 Committee is under the NSC. Is that right?

MR. DULLES: It's under the President, I would say. It was formed under that document, NSC 5412, but the practical

working out of the Committee was under the President. The President often wanted the covert operations presented to him in a smaller group than the full NSC meeting.

QUESTION: Then this group would take any new proposals to the President direct?

MR. DULLES: If it was of the consequence that the Secretary of State or Gordon Gray thought it should go to the President. Often we would pass on an operation without going to the President.

COLONEL BLACK: That's about all I can contribute to the actual Cuba exercise, as such. I should say also that I am speaking for myself, Colonel Black. I haven't checked this out with my boss. It seems to me that the principal lessons are these: First, we can't do it with mirrors; I have a feeling that we are trying to do very significant things in the struggle against the Communist power without really going all the way. We are trying to do it with some trick or gimmick. Second, I don't think personally from my work here in Washington that the United States fully understands how to use the power which we have at our disposal—that's political, military, and economic. Third, I don't think we have yet the interdepartmental structure to fight the Cold War. Fourth, I think we seriously need action to halt the erosion of America's will to win. I don't think we really go into the battle against Communism to win. We go in there to hold our own and this, in turn, has a very bad effect on all our policies, on the morale of our people. Finally, I have some criteria for solution of the problem which is just basic criteria. I have them written up for your four members.

QUESTION: You mention your opinion of the inadequacy of the governmental structure. Do you have specific suggestions?

COLONEL BLACK: We need a National Security Operations Center. This should be right in the White House. In my judgment, it can't be anywhere else. The State Department is setting up an operation center, and I'm sure the State Department will claim that any interdepartmental organization such as this should be in the State Department. I'm convinced, both from what I've seen in the field and in Washington, that

you cannot effectively conduct these national security operations under the sole leadership of the State Department. The classic example, in my judgment, is South Vietnam. The President, on the 20th of April, asked Mr. Gilpatric to head up a presidential task force to try to develop a program to prevent the Communist domination of Vietnam. It soon became apparent that the problem as the Department of State saw it was one of maintaining the primacy of State in the control of all operations overseas, rather than really focussing on the problem of defeating the Communist effort in South Vietnam.

QUESTION: You say they are reluctant to work towards success?

COLONEL BLACK: They spend most of their time trying to make sure that the government decisionmaking authority and control will be in the State Department. They went right back to their old principle that the first and essential element of the Vietnam problem is to reform Diem; reform his government, and giving that priority over defeating the Communists. Defense has always felt that primary emphasis must be placed on finding a solution to the internal security problem, and to do that the reform of the Diem government would have to wait until you had established a reasonable degree of internal security. The State Department wants to make any additional military effort to improve the internal security program sort of a quid pro quo for instituting these internal reforms. The basic point is that the direction of this sort of thing has to be on the basis of national security rather than on foreign policy.

QUESTION: You say then that such a center should be in the White House and not in the State Department?

COLONEL BLACK: That's right. I have here a paper that sets forth the concept, and a longer paper that sets forth some argumentation.

QUESTION: When you say a center, do you mean a committee?

COLONEL BLACK: No, sir.

QUESTION: Who's in charge?

COLONEL BLACK: The President. It has to be close at hand to the White House so that he can use it whenever he wants, but it should be manned by professionals from all departments and agencies of the government.

QUESTION: Is it simply to provide information and intelligence and that sort of thing, or is it to be an action group that checks on things and starts interdepartmental work and so on?

COLONEL BLACK: First, it gives the President up-to-the-minute intelligence; secondly, it gives him communication with which he can personally communicate to his ambassadors and to his field commanders all over the world, and it keeps him abreast of the status of approved projects and programs that have been started in the government. It gives him, in effect, a mechanism for command supervision which I don't think he has today.

QUESTION: I don't see how he'd accomplish that.

COLONEL BLACK: In effect, he could determine from the information available in the center whether we're making any progress toward our objectives or not.

STATEMENT: Gilpatric's task force on Vietnam seems to be symptomatic of our weakness. The present consensus is the need to pull these things together and to get a program and to follow up on it, but now they're using ad hoc methods with a task force committee limiting their scope to one particular country which can't be considered by itself, in my opinion. The question in my mind is: Should there be some machinery on some permanent basis whereby you have this machinery essentially, State, CIA, and Defense, and a sort of permanent committee with broader responsibilities, in a sense like the 5412 Committee, but with broader responsibilities, not just to consider covert operations but all Cold War operations?

MR. DULLES: Then you have another task force with Mr. Nitze on Cuba, another one on Iran under the State Department, and there was a fourth one under the State Department.

STATEMENT: Well, isn't that hopeless confusion? Doesn't it suggest that the President senses a need for the ability to pull things together and look to one place for some order? I would say that he would need a permanent setup of the 5412 type. Your Command Post would be an essential part of this, but it would be just one aspect of this.

RESPONSE: If you put it in the White House, it means in the old State Department building and then you have a medley of problems such as security, and so on, and I think you should give the President a cushion. If you have the President sending out uncoordinated messages to ambassadors all over the world, you're going to have chaos.

STATEMENT: These are practical questions that have to be solved.

MR. DULLES: Something of this kind should be established and the State Department, when they get the right men, ought to share in it.

COLONEL BLACK: The way to get around the interdepartmental problem is to have representatives of the departments in the Command Post as working members. They're not going to be representing their departments, they're going to be working for the President, but they would keep their departments informed and they know where to get information, and so forth.

GENERAL TAYLOR: We are facing the same problem in an international area that we faced in Defense; namely, the concept has now been abandoned by the Army, Navy, and Air Force, that the departments per se can go out and fight wars. The people who do go out and fight wars are a task force. I think we are faced with that in international relations. The State Department has developed people with certain skills, as has CIA and Defense. There ought to be something in the economic field, where you have that component well represented. Then the ambassador sits on top of this group and reports back to the President. Now we haven't got to this, but isn't this the concept?

MR. DULLES: Yes, and the ambassador reports back to the President and not to the State Department, and your economic capability ought to tie right in.

QUESTION: To whom do you look at the present time for that kind of economic warfare advice?

MR. DULLES: Mr. Ball. But we've never had, since the war, any office that looked upon the economic thing as a weapon to defeat someone.

STATEMENT: Well, I think we ought to take this paper and read it over and possibly have another session on the matter.

COLONEL BLACK: I would just like to make one point before I leave and I think it is an important one. This is the difference in thinking between State and Defense. State tends to be reluctant to apply national power, particularly military power, during its conduct of diplomacy because of the fear of complicating the strictly political and psychological situations. Elements in State have gotten to the point where they think that power is basically an immoral thing and the application of power in any form is an immoral act, and this is not true. It depends on whether or not you use power to preserve peace or use it for an immoral purpose.

STATEMENT: I think that it's important that the President have representatives of both points of view, so that neither one would have freedom to dominate.

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

GENERAL SHOUP

QUESTION: What action was taken on the overall U.S. plan of action for Cuba developed by the JCS in late January?

GENERAL SHOUP: It was considered by the JCS, but I don't know to whom it was distributed nor what action was taken on it.

GENERAL TAYLOR: At no time after January was there any reconsideration by the JCS of the need for that kind of paper to pull the whole thing together?

GENERAL SHOUP: To my knowledge there was no reference to it by the Chiefs, but what the chairman might have done I don't know.

QUESTION: What was the JCS view of the military feasibility of Trinidad and Zapata?

GENERAL SHOUP: Only by having an opportunity to give my feelings on this whole operation can my observations be taken in the proper context. When I first learned that something of this nature was happening, as a military man, it immediately dawned on me that this was a whole lot more than dropping a few parachutists or running a boat in at a few various places along the island. I went through the NSC papers and discovered that the national policy was the overthrow of the Castro regime. CIA then drew up the Trinidad Plan and asked that the Joint Chiefs and the Joint Staff evaluate it from a military feasibility standpoint.

This led to a very careful look at the mission. The mission had nothing to do with the armed forces of Cuba or the militia, with the exception of that necessary to enter Cuba. The personnel of this force were being better trained than the ordinary Cubans. Their task was to get ashore with this tremendous amount of equipment and supplies which was to be made available for distribution to the people who would rise up to assist the operation. They had considered time and space factors available to them, and determined that this organization had sufficient time to get in there, get the materials ashore, and distribute them to the dissidents.

The intelligence indicated that there were quite a number of people that were ready to join in the fight against Castro. These people were to come into the beachhead and pick up this material, and then the beachhead would expand and they would very soon have a formidable military organization. Considering this plan and the location of the enemy forces on the basis of the time and space factors, it appeared to me that they could accomplish their objective.

Sometime later the chairman said the President would not approve the Trinidad Plan because it smacked too much of Normandy, which would make it impossible to deny U.S. involvement. Consequently CIA was directed to develop some alternatives. Later General Gray came in and briefed us on some alternate plans and, as I understood it, there was no question about the Trinidad thing. It was out right there as far as doing it in its original form. A new requirement was levied on CIA to make their landing where there was an airfield. It was my personal feeling that the airfield requirement virtually restricted the operation to the Zapata region. The JCS decided that there was no question about it, the Zapata area had the greatest possibility of success of the alternatives we were considering.

Following this there was considerable discussion about how many aircraft Castro had, and the best way to eliminate the tanks. There seemed to be no question about being able to destroy Castro's aircraft with napalm, strafing and rockets, nor the ability to disrupt the tanks. That brings us to the place where the decision was made to go in and try the Zapata thing. However, one thought was predominate. You must achieve and maintain air superiority or you are not going to be able to get ashore.

QUESTION: Did you feel that Zapata was as good a plan as Trinidad?

GENERAL SHOUP: No, sir. I questioned the swamp area. However, after considerable thought and discussion, I was satisfied that by dropping parachutists to block the roads and by using antitank mines you could accomplish the same objectives in the Zapata area that you could in the Trinidad area. However, there were complications in the distances the people would have to come to get the weapons, the problem of maneuvering would be more difficult, and the possibility of debouching would also be more difficult from the Zapata area.

QUESTION: There was no civilian population in the area at all, was there?

GENERAL SHOUP: There were about 1,800 people where the landings were made.

QUESTION: You made the point that one of the essential parts of the Trinidad Plan was the fact that they had a population there on which they could base their expansion. Did you consider that possibility existed in Zapata?

GENERAL SHOUP: Yes, sir. The idea was that time and space factors were favorable. It was my understanding that there were lots of people just waiting for these arms, that they would get them in the same manner as they would have in the Trinidad Plan. However, you were closer to some of Castro's army forces and tank forces and you would have more difficulty debouching from this area.

QUESTION: Did you visualize that this landing would attract sizable Castro forces?

GENERAL SHOUP: Obviously, once he determined the location of the main invasion, Castro was bound to bring in his forces.

QUESTION: How were the dissident Cuban civilians going to get their arms then?

GENERAL SHOUP: The parachutists and antitank mines would block the roadways. Then the whole area would be in a state of revolt. There would be no problem of them coming through. These people would have been much closer to their source of arms than the enemy, because the enemy didn't know where they were coming in.

QUESTION: Was there any impression that there was going to be a pre-D-Day message to the population?

GENERAL SHOUP: My understanding was that the possibilities of uprisings were increasing, that people were just waiting for these arms and equipment, and as soon as they heard where the invasion was that they would be coming after them.

QUESTION: If you were in charge of the defenses in this area couldn't you get some artillery in and really give them hell?

GENERAL SHOUP: It takes time. It's time and space. I didn't conceive of them stashing all this stuff on one spot on the beach and waiting until somebody brings artillery down.

QUESTION: What was your opinion of what they were going to do? Get these arms out of there?

GENERAL SHOUP: Right. And there would be people there to assist them and get the arms. This force, from my understanding, was highly trained in comparison with the militia. They had proper arms, equipment, and leadership to enable them to stand off the armed forces they could expect Castro to commit against them.

QUESTION: How long did you think they'd be in the bay?

GENERAL SHOUP: One day. I thought they'd unload those ships and get out of there. If they didn't get unloaded, they'd come back after dark, depending upon whether they were actually rushed by the enemy or if they weren't, and depending upon where the people were that could use the arms.

QUESTION: Was it your understanding that a lot of people in this area were going to come in and help?

GENERAL SHOUP: I certainly thought there was going to be a number of them. We weren't just talking about the people that had homes in this area. We were talking about the people who wanted to get the help they knew was coming to them with this landing force.

I didn't think the militia were going to band together and harm this thing. It would take some elements of the organized force and if the actual time and place of the landing was not known, the enemy could not afford to commit all of his forces because he doesn't know where the main thrust will be. It was my opinion that the arms and ammunition they had with them was nowhere near sufficient for the people that wanted them.

QUESTION: The JCS commenting on Trinidad said that it had a fair chance of success. Then I think that the record shows that they viewed the next alternatives and said that Zapata was the best of these three plans, but that they still preferred Trinidad.

GENERAL SHOUP: Yes, sir, any corporal would have said that.

QUESTION: The Chiefs apparently rated the chances of success for Zapata as something less than fair. What was your appraisal of the chances of success of this operation?

GENERAL SHOUP: The plan they had should have accomplished the mission in Zapata, if the plan had been brought to fruition.

QUESTION: You did not expect a quick or strong reaction from the Castro forces?

GENERAL SHOUP: I expected them to react, but not with some of the equipment with which they did react, and I don't think they would have if the plans had been carried out.

QUESTION: As you saw this plan develop, the amphibious landing on a hostile shore, did you have any misgivings?

GENERAL SHOUP: I very frankly made this statement: If this kind of an operation can be done with this kind of a force with this much training and knowledge about it, then we are wasting our time in our divisions, we ought to go on leave for three months out of four.

MR. DULLES: Do you realize how many military men we had on this Task Force? Some of your very best officers. We took a great deal of responsibility, but we called on the Defense Department and I looked to them for military judgments. I didn't look to our people for military judgments.

QUESTION: General Shoup, isn't that statement of yours somewhat in contradiction with your overall optimism that this plan would work?

GENERAL SHOUP: No, sir, it is not.

QUESTION: Would you say that you took the same interest in this operation and made the same personal analysis as you would have done had you been in charge?

GENERAL SHOUP: I'll say this: I spent a lot of sleepless hours over this because I worried about the thing because

there was no plan for helping these men if there was something unforeseen, an act of God or something, that prevented a successful landing. In my opinion there would be no way to save them. There was no way to guarantee its success, but if the plan was executed, as planned, I believe it would have been successful. I couldn't find out all I wanted to about the plan. I knew I wasn't supposed to. It wasn't my responsibility. Had I been completely responsible I think I would have known about everything. There were only four people in my headquarters that knew anything about the plan.

STATEMENT: Let's go back to this question of military responsibility. Certainly you, as commandant of the Marine Corps, had no responsibility for it, but as a member of the Joint Chiefs you did have responsibility for this operation.

GENERAL SHOUP: That's not my understanding.

STATEMENT: At least the JCS as a corporate body had responsibility for this operation.

GENERAL SHOUP: That's not my understanding, only insofar as the commander in chief might want to know something about the adequacy of the plan, or the probability of success. Otherwise I don't feel that I or the other Joint Chiefs had any responsibility for the success of this plan.

QUESTION: The Joint Chiefs are by law the advisors to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council, and the President. Consequently, would you say that you should volunteer any advice on this subject?

GENERAL SHOUP: As a member of the Joint Chiefs I don't know what the chairman did. I don't know what happened at a lot of meetings at the White House or the State Department, but I do know this, that within the corporate body I for one emphasized time after time that we had to have air superiority and we had to help this outfit fend off the force they were going to have opposing them down there.

ADMIRAL BURKE: There are three or four things that are the basis of this thing that ought to be clear. One is the responsibility of the Chiefs to comment on the plan. Another

is the actual conduct of the operation, which was all in one place and that was in CIA.

MR. DULLES: But that was done by military personnel.

ADMIRAL BURKE: But not under our command structure.

STATEMENT: But as advisors to the President the JCS had a responsibility. The President had the right to look to the Joint Chiefs for advice during the planning or execution phase if they thought they had something important to offer.

GENERAL SHOUP: That's true, as limited by their knowledge of all aspects of the plan.

STATEMENT: And in the absence of hearing from the Chiefs he had a right to assume that everything was going satisfactorily.

GENERAL SHOUP: Yes, to the limit of our knowledge. I want to tell you this right now. Had I as an individual heard that they were going to call off the air strikes I'd have asked that the commander in chief be informed. I'd have called him myself because it was absolutely essential to success. The D-2 affair was only a half effort.

MR. DULLES: General, may I add this: The D-2 Day was essentially a plot, not a plan. The plan was the D-Day strike.

QUESTION: Do you feel that you had absolute and complete knowledge about this operation?

GENERAL SHOUP: Absolutely not.

QUESTION: Did you understand that the President and his advisors were looking to you for your military evaluation of this plan?

GENERAL SHOUP: The thing that we were asked to do was to determine which of the three alternatives was the best.

QUESTION: But then after that, did you understand that during that period of time that the President was looking to you, the JCS, for the military evaluation of the operation?

GENERAL SHOUP: I would have to presume that in accord-

ance with his title as commander in chief he would be thinking about the military part.

QUESTION: But you understand that he wanted to get your advice and ideas also?

GENERAL SHOUP: That was never stated.

QUESTION: What I am getting at is that if you feel that you didn't have full knowledge and information on the plan and at the same time the President was looking to you for advice, it seems to me it would be almost impossible for you to give him the military evaluation.

GENERAL SHOUP: Well, you had to look at it in the context of what the agency said about the uprisings. I had no possible way to know or evaluate them. That in itself was a particularly important factor.

STATEMENT: There was a general impression that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved this operation. I don't think there is any doubt but what they went ahead thinking that you and the other Joint Chiefs had approved the plan, but you now say that you didn't have full knowledge and information in order to evaluate the plan. That in itself is of some significance for the future.

GENERAL SHOUP: One of the main features relating to the ultimate success of this was not whether you could put these ships in here and unload this military equipment, whether the people were properly trained to fend off a reasonable enemy effort.

STATEMENT: Your idea of the plan is entirely different from some other peoples' idea of the plan.

GENERAL SHOUP: I'm telling the truth as I know it.

STATEMENT: I don't think there is any doubt about that.

STATEMENT: The idea that the people would land on the beach and then take off into the swamp is a new one to us.

ADMIRAL BURKE: There was great emphasis on the uprisings and we spent hours and hours determining how to get

additional equipment. We ended up with equipment for 30,000 people. The only slight difference I have with General Shoup is that it was my understanding that this group had to be able to hold a beachhead for some time, for several days.

STATEMENT: It's very significant that the commandant of the Marine Corps, whom the President of the United States and the Secretary of State thought had approved this plan, had an entirely different idea of what the plan was. It seems that something has gone wrong somewhere along the line.

GENERAL SHOUP: This whole thing was a function of time.

STATEMENT: But when I asked you, you said they were going to get out of there the same day. They were only going to hold a beachhead long enough to unload the equipment. There wasn't any possibility of anybody coming down there. There wasn't anybody around there. Their idea was to hold that beachhead. I think it is important that when the President and the Secretary of State think they have your view, that they do have your view.

GENERAL SHOUP: I don't think that the chairman should go to the President as commander in chief on an operation of this kind by himself. There are three people here who are quite knowledgeable. The chairman undoubtedly has a good grasp, but when you hit something like this, details are important.

QUESTION: During the execution of this operation did you keep informed of what was taking place?

GENERAL SHOUP: It is a question of degree. I had a liaison officer working for me to keep me advised.

QUESTION: The ammunition situation turns out to be the vital factor that caused the ultimate defeat at the beachhead. Did you have a clear picture of how vitally the beach was hurting for ammunition?

GENERAL SHOUP: No, with the exception that I was told that the ship that was sunk had arms and tank ammunition.

QUESTION: But at the end of the second day's fighting no

one communicated to you the crisis that had arisen as a result of the lack of ammunition?

GENERAL SHOUP: Yes, to the extent that the ships that were sunk had this vital ammunition. Whether or not the drops had rectified this situation I didn't know.

QUESTION: What was your understanding of additional resupply of ammunition by ship?

GENERAL SHOUP: They had a regular plan drawn up. I can't tell you exactly what the plan was. The equipment was for 30,000 people.

QUESTION: Was it reported to you that two of the cargo ships that had reserve ammunition had fled the area and one got as far south as 200 miles?

GENERAL SHOUP: No, sir.

GENERAL TAYLOR: May I summarize now what my understanding is? That you would say that you as members of the Joint Chiefs first concurred in the feasibility of Trinidad Plan; that with regard to the Zapata Plan you concurred that it was the best of the three alternatives considered, and as you saw the plan develop you still felt it had a reasonable chance of success.

GENERAL SHOUP: For the mission as I understood it.

GENERAL TAYLOR: You feel that the Joint Chiefs recognized their responsibility for advising the President, but did not make any special comments to him mainly because you thought the plan was going along all right.

GENERAL SHOUP: I think you have to preface all these remarks by recognizing that I was not consulted as to whether such a thing ought to happen. That wasn't my business.

GENERAL TAYLOR: The overthrow of Castro you accepted?

GENERAL SHOUP: Yes, that was national policy.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Wouldn't you say that the Joint

Chiefs had every right and responsibility if they didn't believe that an amphibious landing of this kind would succeed, to so advise the President?

GENERAL SHOUP: Absolutely.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Were you satisfied with the plan as being a feasible, reasonable plan?

GENERAL SHOUP: To accomplish the mission as I understood it, not the destruction of the armed forces.

QUESTION: What was the mission?

GENERAL SHOUP: The mission was to get some well-trained military people into Cuba, who could gather into their fold and equip all the people that were just waiting for a chance to get at Castro, then these military people could develop a real military organization and increase their strength to the extent that the whole Castro regime would fall apart.

QUESTION: The success of this operation was wholly dependent upon popular support?

GENERAL SHOUP: Absolutely. Ultimate success.

STATEMENT: Not only ultimate success, but any success really.

QUESTION: Who gave you this information on the uprisings?

GENERAL SHOUP: I don't know. I suppose it was CIA. Well, it's obvious we wouldn't be taking 30,000 additional rifles if we didn't think there was going to be somebody to use them. I don't think any military man would ever think that this force could overthrow Castro without support. They could never expect anything but annihilation.

QUESTION: You'd say then that they would still be on the beach if the plan had been carried out as conceived and depended upon popular uprisings throughout the island of Cuba? Otherwise they would have been wiped out?

GENERAL SHOUP: Absolutely. I don't think there is any

doubt at all. Eventually 1,500 people cannot hold out against many, many thousands.

QUESTION: Would you send 1,200 Marines in there to do that?

GENERAL SHOUP: No, I wouldn't, unless 1,200 Marines are going to be assisted by 30,000 Cubans.

QUESTION: Did somebody tell you there'd be 30,000 Cubans?

GENERAL SHOUP: No, they didn't, but we were getting materials ready for them.

QUESTION: Did you ask about the swamp?

GENERAL SHOUP: Yes, I asked about it on the first briefings. Even in the rainy season parts of it were passable by foot and in the dry season much of it was passable by foot. There were a number of egresses other than the roads. That's what we were told.

QUESTION: Were you in touch with General Gray during this?

GENERAL SHOUP: To my knowledge I was personally present each time that General Gray briefed the Joint Chiefs.

QUESTION: But aside from that, did he give you any individual briefings?

GENERAL SHOUP: No, sir.

QUESTION: If you were going to do this again and there was still the requirement that it be a covert operation, what changes would you make? Anything that would be materially different?

GENERAL SHOUP: I don't think that at this time in 1961 or hereafter you are going to do it covertly.

QUESTION: Did you really think that this could be covert in the sense that it would not be attributed to the United States?

GENERAL SHOUP: I did not.

GENERAL WHITE

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: What action was taken on the overall U.S. plan of action for Cuba developed by the JCS in late January?

GENERAL WHITE: I don't know.

QUESTION: What was the JCS view of the military feasibility of the Trinidad and Zapata plans?

GENERAL WHITE: Our evaluation was that the operation had a fair chance of success based on (1) the mission and (2) the intelligence, which indicated that popular uprisings were likely. The next point that weighed heavily in my mind was the probability that this force could escape into the hills to the northwest of the beach area and join with guerrillas there if they were unable to enlarge the beachhead. The third point was the importance of surprise, particularly in the air part of the picture. The Zapata Plan was briefed at a JCS meeting. I was not there. Curt LeMay was, however, and he filled me in on the three alternatives; and the fact that the Chiefs thought that the Trinidad operation was still the best, but that of the three alternatives presented, Zapata was probably the best.

QUESTION: As you learned more about the Zapata Plan, did you ever make an appraisal in your own mind as to the probability of success?

GENERAL WHITE: I felt all along that the success or failure of this operation depended almost entirely upon the reaction of the Cuban people. If we were able to establish and enlarge the beachhead somewhat, plus other subsidiary operations, if we did these things, the Cuban people would join in.

QUESTION: Describe your recollection of the beachhead plan. How did you visualize that this force would behave when they got ashore?

GENERAL WHITE: Well, the number one thing that I felt was vital was surprise air attacks on the several airfields.

While I don't have a high regard for the Cuban air force, certainly it is a prerequisite for going ashore that you have air control, and I think the air strikes were the key to it and surprise was the key to the key so to speak. It seemed to me that if the location and timing of the attack were not known, that they would have a very good chance of establishing at least sufficient lodgment to be able to escape without disaster.

QUESTION: Assuming the air strikes?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, and that the air strikes were achieved with surprise.

QUESTION: When the Joint Chiefs commented on Trinidad and as Zapata initially developed to have the only strikes on D-Day, did that appear adequate to knock out the Castro force?

GENERAL WHITE: It was felt that heavy surprise attack, and if I could have only had one, I would have picked the one on D-Day rather than one earlier, for two reasons: (1) I think the early one may have tipped off that this thing was coming; (2) I remember mentioning down there that I was a little bit worried about the relationship between Cuba and Guatemala because it would be obvious that the aircraft were coming from there, and I wasn't quite sure what the situation would be. At another point I thought that if we did do the pre-D-Day strikes, there was a pretty good chance that world reaction would be such that the thing would be called off, and I had been keen on the United States seeking the initiative in some areas, and I thought that on balance this was a feasible show and I wanted to see it go on.

QUESTION: How did you feel about the final limited plan of eight sorties against the airfields?

GENERAL WHITE: In my opinion, it was fatally weak.

QUESTION: Would it have been better not to have had them?

GENERAL WHITE: I think the best operation would have been to launch as heavy a strike as we could on the airfields on the day of the attack.

QUESTION: Who was the proponent of the D-2 strikes, Allen? I don't recall that point.

MR. DULLES: I think that it was partly in our shop and partly with Mac Bundy, as I recall. The idea of the defections—this was one of the keys to the idea that the planes that were striking Cuban airfields were operating from Cuba. I can't say whether that limited strike concept was ever brought over here or not. I think it must have been known to General Gray, but I don't know whether it was discussed in the Joint Chiefs.

ADMIRAL BURKE: It was, but not before it was decided to do it. I think that this was done at the behest of State in order to get a Cuban defector ahead of time, so that it would be believed that Cubans were conducting the air strikes from Cuba.

STATEMENT: Well, we'll see what Gray's record shows on that.

QUESTION: You thought that Zapata looked like a feasible plan?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes. However, I felt it was inferior to the Trinidad Plan.

QUESTION: Did you feel that you had a reasonable understanding of what the plan amounted to by the time D-Day approached?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, I had a reasonable understanding of the plan as it was supposed to go but didn't.

QUESTION: Would you say you made a personal study of this at least of the air elements?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, and I had action officers who were privileged with this information who worked very close with the Joint Staff and with CIA and on appropriate occasions they briefed me on what was going on in addition to the meetings we had formally in the JCS.

QUESTION: Do you recall when you learned about this D-2 plan?

GENERAL WHITE: No, I do not. I have no memory of any change. The D-1 strike and the D-Day strikes were the ones that I was under the impression would go.

QUESTION: I forgot the D-1 air strikes, Allen. That was discussed I know, but did that ever get going?

MR. DULLES: Well, that was discussed, but it never went.

GENERAL WHITE: May I say I remember very well the discussion of defectors. We got into it because we had the air defense force moving down to Homestead in Florida with its additional radar, and we wanted to get the defectors in and to be on guard in case the Cuban air force made a strike against Florida.

QUESTION: You were in favor of this plan then?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, to the degree that it had a fair chance of success on the basis that the objective was to get a rallying of Cuban people.

QUESTION: Did you make any distinction between Zapata and Trinidad?

GENERAL WHITE: In my opinion the Trinidad Operation was a better one, but once the decision was made to go into Zapata, we backed it.

QUESTION: You wouldn't have backed it if you didn't think there would be a chance of success?

GENERAL WHITE: I think it also had a fair chance of success, but I think the chances were better in the Trinidad Operation.

QUESTION: Viewing this from the point of view of the President, you, of course, felt that the JCS were the primary military advisors. He heard nothing from the Chiefs with regard to any infeasibility of this plan. Is it fair to say that the Chiefs would have volunteered their comment if they really thought that this thing was going badly?

GENERAL WHITE: Without any question. The problem was that there were last minute changes of which we did not know.

QUESTION: You refer to the last minute cancellation of the air strikes?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes.

STATEMENT: But that was just one factor.

GENERAL WHITE: I think that was a very key factor, sir.

STATEMENT: Well, in this operation, I think we would be convinced that the plan wouldn't have been any more successful if we had had the air strikes.

GENERAL WHITE: Well, I really believe that the Cuban air force had a whale of an effect on the bad outcome. It is difficult to say what an air strike on D-Day at dawn would have done, but it might very well have made the difference in my opinion.

QUESTION: In the performance of the T-33s, were you surprised at how effective they were?

GENERAL WHITE: I was surprised to find that they were armed.

QUESTION: You did not consider that they were combat aircraft?

GENERAL WHITE: We did not.

QUESTION: Well, had you known they were armed?

GENERAL WHITE: Well, there again you come back to how effective the air strikes would have been. I certainly would have wanted the T-33s to be one of the main targets of the Strike Force.

QUESTION: Was it any surprise to you that these T-33s could take out the B-26s?

GENERAL WHITE: No, there was no surprise about that. That's another thing, the B-26s were used as air cover over the beaches. The B-26 is a light bomber.

STATEMENT: Yes, but you knew that was the case—that that was the only cover they would have on the beach.

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, but they were supposed to have air strikes which would come first and the B-26s, as I understood it, would be used largely for ground support.

QUESTION: You said that you would have recommended that the T-33s be knocked out?

GENERAL WHITE: In planning these strikes for the three airfields, certainly I would have urged that we concentrate strikes on the fields that had the T-33s.

QUESTION: Would you have made a recommendation that they be knocked out?

GENERAL WHITE: We didn't know that they were armed.

QUESTION: Based on the information you had, then you would never have recommended that they be knocked out?

GENERAL WHITE: They would have been included in the overall plan to knock out Castro's air force.

STATEMENT: Yes, but they were on the field on D-2, but they didn't knock them out.

GENERAL WHITE: Had we known that the T-33s were armed, we might well have highlighted the field where the T-33s were located.

QUESTION: Did you think that the crews they had were sufficient in number? Did that concern you at all?

GENERAL WHITE: I think the numbers were adequate. We sent an Air Force officer down as part of a team to make an evaluation. They made quite a complete report. The report was very favorable on the quality of the Cuban pilots.

QUESTION: By the time D-Day afternoon came, the crews were exhausted because they had to fly from Nicaragua to Cuba in a seven-hour trip.

STATEMENT: This is a very important point. I think the record shows that they had 17 Cuban pilots and about six

American pilots. Now, suppose they had knocked out Castro's aircraft and then provided air cover over the beach because the invasion force immediately attracted very heavy forces of the Castro ground units. As I picture it, this would have put a major strain on this little air force.

ADMIRAL BURKE: I think some of the pilots' energy was dissipated in sitting up all night waiting to go and they didn't go. But this was just as bad as going.

QUESTION: How many pilots would it take to keep two planes over the airfield during daylight?

GENERAL WHITE: Do you want me to check it or give you an offhand answer?

QUESTION: Did that ever occur to you during this time?

GENERAL WHITE: Perhaps not specifically, but I'm sure I evaluated it in my own mind and my people did.

QUESTION: What was your concept of this plan? What was it intended to do, and how would they go about it?

GENERAL WHITE: It was intended to make a lodgment and then fan out to gain as much of the beachhead as possible, expecting that there would be a great many of the guerrilla people and other defectors that would join in, and we had ammunition and equipment to give them as they came in to the fold.

QUESTION: The guerrillas were to come in to the beach?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, wherever they could join in.

QUESTION: Then they would just come down into that area where the landing took place?

GENERAL WHITE: I understand that there were leaflets to be dropped and a general call for the people to rise against Castro.

QUESTION: When was the uprising to take place?

GENERAL WHITE: I think as soon as it could be generated.

QUESTION: Was it to take place simultaneously or within a short period?

GENERAL WHITE: Within a short period, I would say beginning with D-Day it ought to snowball.

QUESTION: How did you visualize any great number of these civilians coming in to the beachhead area with Castro's forces coming down the same route, in, behind, and along the lines of communication?

GENERAL WHITE: I understand there were a good number of defectors who came over even under the circumstances.

QUESTION: Did you think that this group of 1,200 people could hold this beachhead?

GENERAL WHITE: There was a fair chance of holding the beachhead if the air was knocked out. We had also anticipated that there would be more uprisings throughout Cuba which would divert the Cuban armed forces elsewhere and they would not be able to concentrate on this one place.

STATEMENT: Just so the record is complete, when we had a briefing from one of the pilots, we asked him about the T-33s and he said they weren't aware at that time of the problem or difficulty with the T-33s and they concentrated on the B-26s.

QUESTION: The question of going guerrilla has come up. It was thought that if things went badly, these people could operate as guerrillas. How was this presented to the Joint Chiefs and how did they regard that alternative?

GENERAL WHITE: On this particular operation, I cannot say. On the Trinidad Operation, I've a very clear memory.

QUESTION: Would you say that the guerrilla phase was specifically studied by the Joint Chiefs?

GENERAL WHITE: Only the fact that there were guerrillas in the area and that it was anticipated that the people would join with them.

QUESTION: Was there any thought to evacuating by sea?

GENERAL WHITE: Not until later in the game.

QUESTION: How did the Joint Chiefs follow the course of the operation after D-Day? Were you kept informed of what was going on?

GENERAL WHITE: I was kept informed generally by my action officer.

QUESTION: Did you have liaison with General Gray's office?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Were you aware of the criticality of the ammunition situation at the end of the second day?

GENERAL WHITE: I had heard about it.

QUESTION: But you didn't have any realization that the battle would be won or lost the night of D+1 / D+2 unless they got ammunition?

GENERAL WHITE: No. My impression is that in general we had very little knowledge of what was actually taking place at the beachhead.

QUESTION: How would you define the responsibility of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in this operation?

GENERAL WHITE: Number one, we were called on for our views; we gave them to the best of our ability; and once the decision was made to go into Zapata, we supported it any way we could.

QUESTION: Would you say you had the responsibility to volunteer advice to the President and since he received no contrary advice he had a right to assume that all was well?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, except that a number of things took place that I did not know about. I knew nothing about the cancellation of the air strikes.

QUESTION: I'm going to ask the same question I asked General Shoup. Do you feel that the JCS studied this plan and gave it that cold hard look which they would have given it had it been their plan?

GENERAL WHITE: Certainly they did with the Trinidad

Plan. I don't know about Zapata. I was not there when it was briefed. It was my understanding, however, that the basic overall considerations were similar. I would say we did not make as detailed an evaluation of the alternative as we did the Trinidad Plan.

QUESTION: Looking back on this thing now with the benefit of experience, how do you feel about the covert nature of the plan? Was it realistic to consider that this could be kept covert—by that I mean a plan that cannot be attributed plausibly to the United States?

GENERAL WHITE: I am sure that we could not expect to train a very sizable group of people with aircraft in any part of the world, at least any populated part of the world, without the world knowing. So I am sure that the training base in Guatemala was well known to the Cubans. This is hearsay. I was told that somebody briefed many Latin American governments about this forthcoming operation to get their views and met with almost unanimous disapproval. I'd say this alone was enough for a tip-off.

STATEMENT: I believe this was Mr. Berle's mission down south.

QUESTION: Do you have any comment on a landing on a hostile shore which is covert?

GENERAL WHITE: I don't object to the military doing covert things; in fact, this may be a wise way for the future on this sort of thing. But there are certain considerations; I don't believe you should have U.S. officers in uniform because this puts them into a different category and they take risks beyond those which were usually expected of them in peace time. As far as covert operations are concerned, I think probably they should be done under the aegis of some agency other than Defense.

MR. DULLES: The question is, can there be a section in the Department of Defense that has been sheep-dipped or something. How are we going to do this in the future?

GENERAL WHITE: I think there should be greater Depart-

ment of Defense participation; in fact, I think perhaps the responsibility ought to be placed on military professionals, but I believe it still should be under the aegis of some other agency. I would not like to see this type of operation attributable to the Department of Defense.

STATEMENT: It might have been done something like this: The CIA could have done everything up to and including recruiting, assembling, and putting them into a covert training area, and organizing the covert protection around it. Training at that point could have been turned over to the Department of Defense. Planning could have been turned over to the Department of Defense and the execution turned over to the Department of Defense.

GENERAL WHITE: That's all right with me. However, I think that the cover should be with the CIA or some agency other than the DOD.

MR. DULLES: When you get an operation this big, the cover blows off.

QUESTION: What do you say about the quality of interdepartmental coordination on this plan?

GENERAL WHITE: I think it could be improved very much. I don't know of a formalized body short of the NSC that takes a problem like this and integrates all the interested government agencies into a planning group.

STATEMENT: It's been a problem for a long time.

GENERAL WHITE: I think not only in this type of thing but in the Cold War. After all, in hot war, we're certainly organized for it and we hope ready for it. Limited wars—we're organized for and we hope prepared for, but this kind of covert operation we're talking about now is part of the Cold War. The Cold War is on every day of our lives and I think we need a similar organization to fight the Cold War.

QUESTION: Have you spelled that out?

GENERAL WHITE: OCB [Operations Coordinated Board (of JCS)] started this kind of a thing I believe, but it was

always kind of loose. The organization we need is not only to oppose Soviet power, but to take the initiative.

STATEMENT: I wish you would give us your thoughts at your leisure.

GENERAL WHITE: My staff has prepared a study on this subject which I subscribe to. Almost every agency in the government is involved in fighting this Cold War.

QUESTION: Are you suggesting that possibly the NSC framework is the place to hang this or are you talking about something separate?

GENERAL WHITE: I think the NSC is too high level an organization. I don't think it should be an operating organization. I conceive this to be an operational group. They undoubtedly would have to report to the NSC or send it to the President.

QUESTION: Would you give us your views on this thing?

GENERAL WHITE: My views will be just what is contained in this study.

QUESTION: Will you send us a copy of the study?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Will you go back to the operations for a minute? Do you think that in view of the circumstances, this was given sufficient time and attention by the Joint Staff?

GENERAL WHITE: Yes, up to the word "go" but there were a lot of last minute changes.

QUESTION: I understand that, but as of the 15th of March, the "go ahead" signal from a military point of view to the President and to those who were making the decisions was given. Thereafter, there were continuous meetings that took place and nobody came forward and said: This is going to be fatal; we shouldn't go ahead. Really considerable support developed from individual members and from the chairman. The President understood that it was supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In view of all this, do you feel it was given

sufficient time and attention by you as an individual and by the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

GENERAL WHITE: I will make the single point that General Shoup made. I think there were times when the chairman was consulted and although he has been extraordinarily conscientious to keep us informed, I think that things took place at levels above the Joint Chiefs of Staff about which we were not fully informed. On those things which we had cognizance of, I believe the Joint Chiefs accomplished their task.

MR. KENNEDY: For instance, as I look at the records, I see that the original Zapata Plan plus the alternatives were considered by the JCS for twenty minutes.

GENERAL WHITE: I can't tell you the times because I wasn't there, but I believe by virtue of the study that was made on the Trinidad Plan, that it was fairly easy to have a good look at the Zapata Plan and come up with a statement that the Trinidad Plan was still the best, but that of the three alternatives Zapata was the best.

STATEMENT: Then your answer is that you feel that you gave sufficient time, opinion, and study.

GENERAL WHITE: On an overall basis, yes, sir.

[]

The following notes are not a verbatim records, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: Did you brief the pilots before D-2?

[]: That's correct.

QUESTION: Were the T-33s considered a dangerous weapon in the hands of Castro?

[]: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Were the pilots briefed to knock them out first?

[]: No, they were told to knock out any offensive aircraft, including B-26, T-33, Sea Furies, and any single-engine combat-type aircraft in the parking area.

QUESTION: Was there any priority?

[]: Not by aircraft type. The plan was based on destroying all offensive aircraft.

QUESTION: A pilot by the name of [] gave us quite a different picture. Was he an important figure there?

[]: He was one of our intelligence officers.

QUESTION: Was he at the briefing?

[]: He assisted. However, I was the person in charge of the briefing.

QUESTION: Were these T-33s isolated or were they interspersed with the other aircraft?

[]: They were isolated to the extent that they were parked on individual revetments.

QUESTION: How many T-33 aircraft were there?

[]: There were four on the 6th of April parked at San Antonio de los Baños, there was one parked at Santiago de Cuba, and these were the photos we used for planning our strikes.

QUESTION: How many did you knock out?

[]: We knocked out all but two and then between the 15th of April and the 18th of April they managed to get one more aircraft into commission. Out of the five we feel that we knocked out three during the D-2 strikes.

QUESTION: Whose idea was the D-2 air strikes?

[]: I cannot tell you that.

QUESTION: Were you in favor of these strikes?

[]: I was in favor of any effort that would knock out their offensive air capability.

STATEMENT: It could be argued, I think, that for a limited

air strike of only eight planes, you were giving up the benefit of surprise on D-Day. Furthermore, that he should have dispersed his airplanes if he'd used his head.

[]: That's what I was afraid of. Our original Zapata Plan was based on strikes on D-Day only. They were to make strikes at dawn and then go back in the afternoon and strike any that hadn't been knocked out in the morning raid.

QUESTION: Did you think that the pre-D-Day strikes strengthened the plan?

[]: D-1 would strengthen the plan.

STATEMENT: I can see that, but I have real doubt in my mind as to whether you did well by accepting those other D-2 strikes.

GENERAL DECKER

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: What action was taken on the overall U.S. plan of action for Cuba developed by the JCS in late January?

GENERAL DECKER: Nothing positive.

QUESTION: What was the JCS view of the military feasibility of Trinidad and Zapata?

GENERAL DECKER: We felt that success in terms of the mission, as we understood it, was feasible; that this force would be able to get ashore and establish a bridgehead and thereby provide a catalyst to which other dissident elements throughout Cuba might rally. Trinidad was reviewed first and then several alternatives were considered. However, the JCS considered Trinidad preferable to any of the alternatives.

QUESTION: Did you ever evaluate the chances of success of the Zapata operation in your own mind?

GENERAL DECKER: If this had been a regular military

force, Trinidad would have been better for a regular-type landing. However, for the purpose of the landing that was planned under the Zapata concept, this area provided a reasonable chance of success.

QUESTION: What was the purpose of Zapata?

GENERAL DECKER: The same as that for Trinidad, to establish a beachhead, serve as a catalyst for uprisings, and get people into the beachhead area to build up the force.

QUESTION: How could people get into the area to build up this force?

GENERAL DECKER: Well, it was more difficult than reaching the Trinidad area. However, this force had a secondary purpose, and that was that if trouble developed that they couldn't handle, they were to go to the hills.

QUESTION: Did you look at the Zapata area from the possibility of conducting guerrilla operations in the area?

GENERAL DECKER: I thought there was too much swamp. It would be difficult for people to join in the beachhead area. It was visualized that there would be several focal points of activity in the beachhead area.

QUESTION: Did you visualize that one of these groups might be wiped out?

GENERAL DECKER: We pointed out that if surprise was lost they might be wiped out.

QUESTION: To what extent did you go over this plan?

GENERAL DECKER: I went over it thoroughly with Army planners. We reviewed the Trinidad Plan thoroughly. However, since Zapata was so similar, we didn't express our views on it to the degree that we had on Trinidad.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the importance of control of the air? Were the Chiefs satisfied with the plan without pre-D-Day strikes?

GENERAL DECKER: The advantages of pre-D-Day strikes would be that Castro's aircraft would be knocked out prior to

the landing. I was in favor of pre-D-Day strikes two or three days in advance.

STATEMENT: I believe that the Zapata Plan included an air strike at dawn on D-Day. The D-2 strikes developed later in April.

GENERAL DECKER: The air plan was changed several times without my knowledge.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the JCS as to the action of the landing force if it effected a lodgment but no uprisings occurred?

GENERAL DECKER: There was supposed to have been an announcement of a provisional government once the bridgehead had been established. Then if this group didn't get support from the populace, they were supposed to go to the hills. I don't recall any discussion of sea evacuation.

QUESTION: How did you follow the course of the operation after D-Day?

GENERAL DECKER: I was out of the city temporarily on Monday, the 17th, but returned to Washington that evening. General Eddleman attended several meetings in my absence. After my return we were briefed on developments at the JCS meetings.

QUESTION: When did you get the impression that the ammunition situation was critical?

GENERAL DECKER: I believe it was on the 18th when I received word that several of the ships had been sunk.

QUESTION: Was it called to your attention that two ammunition ships had gone as far as 200 miles south?

GENERAL DECKER: Not that I recall.

QUESTION: Did the Chiefs discuss whether or not the attempt to keep this covert was feasible?

GENERAL DECKER: It never occurred to me that we could disown supporting this operation.

QUESTION: Do you feel that CIA is capable of running an operation like this?

GENERAL DECKER: I'm not able to say if they were capable. I will say as a general rule, however, that military operations should be controlled by the military.

QUESTION: Do you think that at some point the control should have been passed to the military?

GENERAL DECKER: As long as the United States is going to back an operation of this sort, it seems that the military should be responsible for the whole thing. They should do the planning, training, evaluation, and the execution.

QUESTION: What role would CIA play in this kind of an operation then?

GENERAL DECKER: I think they would continue to handle the strictly covert parts of the plan. The only part that I believe the military should take over from the CIA would be the military aspects of the operation.

QUESTION: Were you surprised by the effectiveness of Castro's forces?

GENERAL DECKER: I wasn't surprised that most remained loyal. I was surprised at the speed and effectiveness with which they moved.

QUESTION: Did you consider the effectiveness of the T-33s as being a major threat to the operation?

GENERAL DECKER: That point was not made.

QUESTION: How do you view the JCS responsibility in this sort of an operation?

GENERAL DECKER: To give our best judgments and evaluations to CIA and anyone else that asks for them and is entitled to them.

QUESTION: If you thought things were not as they should have been, would you have taken the initiative to advise the President or other appropriate personnel about this fact?

GENERAL DECKER: Yes, and we were making recommendations to CIA.

ADMIRAL BURKE: In this connection, I think that General Lemnitzer suggested, (1) that we fly air cover, (2) that the Navy put air cover over the beachhead area at dawn on D+1, and (3) that we strike their tanks. These were not formal or written recommendations. They were simply put forth to Mr. Bissell.

QUESTION: As I recall, the Chiefs did not make any recommendations to the President?

GENERAL DECKER: If we had thought the plan would fail, we certainly would have advised the President.

QUESTION: How could interdepartmental planning and coordination be better effected in a future similar operation, and how should a paramilitary operation be fitted into our governmental machinery?

GENERAL DECKER: As far as coordination is concerned between CIA and DOD, I think it was all that could be expected. I would say, however, that authority and responsibility were not adequately centered in one person.

QUESTION: What can we do to make our paramilitary operations better in the future? I believe that the Army is the only service with Special Forces. Does the Army have plans for expansion of these forces?

GENERAL DECKER: Yes, but we have a greater capability now than is being used. They could be used in Vietnam and South America to train indigenous personnel.

STATEMENT: Colonel Kinard indicated that modest increases were planned for the Special Forces in the near future.

GENERAL DECKER: We have increased by 500 this year. If our additional requests are approved, we will increase this force considerably in the coming year.

QUESTION: In your Special Force considerations, have you established an R&D [research and development] factor?

THIRTEENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Thirteenth Meeting of the Paramilitary Study Group

Time and Place: 10 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
General Walter Bedell Smith
[]
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

GENERAL SMITH

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: How can we, in a democracy, use all our assets effectively without having to completely reorganize the government?

GENERAL SMITH: A democracy cannot wage war. When you go to war, you pass a law giving extraordinary powers to the President. The people of our country assume when the emergency is over, the rights and powers that were temporarily delegated to the chief executive will be returned to the states, counties, and to the people.

STATEMENT: We often say that we are in a state of war at the present time.

GENERAL SMITH: Yes, sir, that is correct.

QUESTION: Are you suggesting that we should approximate the President's wartime powers?

GENERAL SMITH: No. However, the American people do not feel that they are at war at the present time, and consequently they are not willing to make the sacrifices necessary to wage war. When you are at war, Cold War if you like, you must have an amoral agency which can operate secretly and which does not have to give press conferences. For example, on occasion Drew Pearson had almost verbatim texts of NSC meetings 48 hours after the meeting. Those responsible for government have to recognize the fact that once the Communists take power, there is never a change of party or control except by force.

STATEMENT: We can lose only once, but they can lose ten times and still recover.

GENERAL SMITH: Yes.

STATEMENT: We have attempted to do things covertly,

which really can't be done covertly, and yet the attempt to do so leads to operational restrictions which in the case of Cuba were very serious.

GENERAL SMITH: I would take issue with the statement that they cannot be done covertly. They can be done covertly when the situation begins to be threatening enough so that you have to be immoral.

QUESTION: I think we are now thinking of the Cuban operation which was the landing on a hostile shore of about 1,400 Cubans. I wonder if the attempt to keep the operation covert was a mistake?

GENERAL SMITH: I only know what the papers say, but covert operations can be done up to a certain size and we have handled some pretty large operations.

QUESTION: Should we have intelligence gathering in the same place that you have operations?

GENERAL SMITH: I think that so much publicity has been given to CIA that the covert work might have to be put under another roof.

QUESTION: Do you think you should take the covert operations from CIA?

GENERAL SMITH: It's time we take the bucket of slop and put another cover over it. If you're going to deal with people expert in these affairs, who have no regard for the individual or human life, you can't be quite as tough as they are, but you have to approach it in some manner. The Communists will continue nibbling around the world as long as they find it profitable or until we can find a way to stop it. We must face up to the Communist problem and take effective action.

FOURTEENTH MEETING

[Entire meeting classified]

FIFTEENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Fifteenth Meeting of the Paramilitary Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 16 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
[]
Mr. King
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

QUESTION: Would you give us your impression of the actual execution of the naval side of the operation?

[]: The execution went off extremely well.

QUESTION: That comment applies to the landing in the objective area?

[]: Yes, sir. From the little information we have received on the landing, everything started off on schedule as far as the reconnaissance of the beach and the landing of the troops.

QUESTION: What about the unloading plan at Red Beach? How did they expect to get their equipment ashore?

[]: They had some small craft.

QUESTION: I have a conflicting impression. One time I got the impression that they expected to use the ships' boats and then at other times I got the impression they contemplated using LCUs?

[]: No, sir, not unless time permitted sending the LCUs up there. The main unloading was supposed to take place at Blue Beach. At Red Beach they were only supposed to off-load their troops and the personal equipment that went in with the troops.

QUESTION: Did you ever make an estimate of how long it would take to unload the ships at Red Beach?

[]: We estimated approximately four hours.

MR. DULLES: We have a report, I think, that the engines on six or seven of the aluminum boats didn't work. Do you know anything about that?

[]: No. When they were put aboard ship they had been completely tested.

QUESTION: The reports from the survivors say that all the boats but one broke down, the engines didn't work, the mechanisms for getting them off the ships wouldn't work. Were those things tested?

[]: Some of the ships had tested them.

QUESTION: Did you check those things?

[]: No. These boats were put aboard at Puerto Cabezas and tested there.

QUESTION: Who tested the boats?

[]: Army and Air Force personnel down there.

QUESTION: Were these Cubans or Americans?

[]: Americans.

STATEMENT: The problem may have been that the salt air caused the engines not to start because they hadn't been turned over during the trip.

[]: Yes, but these were outboard engines and you can't turn them over unless they're in the water because they need the water for circulation.

QUESTION: Were you in the Command Post when the message came in from [] stating that he was going to withdraw the ships because of the bombing?

[]: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Was that message ever answered?

[]: When we received word that they were being bombed we told them to withdraw all the ships immediately. As I recall, that went out in the clear.

QUESTION: When did you learn that the *Atlántico* and the *Caribe* had proceeded far to the south?

[]: We sent the message for them all to clear out of there and to proceed to a designated point. We didn't receive any word from them, so we tried to check their positions. After a considerable period we received word that they had proceeded far to the south.

QUESTION: I wonder if that 200 miles could be accurate. Did they have time to go 200 miles and back?

COMMANDER MITCHELL: The *Caribe* was 218 miles south. The *Atlántico* was about 105 miles south.

QUESTION: In checking over the naval portion of the plans did you have any misgivings about the difficulty of controlling this heterogeneous force at sea?

[]: Very much so.

QUESTION: Did you make any comments?

[]: Yes, sir, we discussed it very thoroughly. One of the main problems that we discussed was the secrecy of the entire operation. I don't know how much you've been informed on it, but this was one of the big obstacles of the entire operation.

QUESTION: What kind of comments or suggestions did you make?

[]: Mostly they concerned how we were going to support these ships logistically. I was told, however, this was no real problem because the ships were going to sail from the States to Puerto Cabezas where the crews would be briefed and then they would depart for the objective area; and for the number of days that would be involved, this was quite adequate. Of course, after the ships arrived there, the operation was postponed, and before we knew it some ships had been at Puerto Cabezas almost three weeks. My first big problem was logistics, but again this was taken care of within the logistics department of the operation section. The other problem was, of course, planning how to get these ships to operate together, signals and communication. Again we had to simplify it to the bare minimum in order to sail the ships and have them arrive on schedule.

QUESTION: Was there any discussion of putting Americans on the freighters to provide better control?

[]: We had discussed it, but this idea was thrown out on the basis there was to be no U.S. participation.

QUESTION: Thrown out on the general grounds that you couldn't use the Americans?

[]: But this was not considered a real problem because the whole operation was to be accomplished in a quiet area of Cuba where they would have time to off-load.

QUESTION: What was your impression of the ammunition situation at the end of the second day?

[]: Very critical. As soon as we knew that two ships had been sunk we knew that the situation was going to be grave because the one ship at Blue Beach had the majority of ammunition and vehicles.

QUESTION: You'd say that everyone at the Command Post was very much impressed with the fact that they would need ammunition?

[]: Very much so. We planned an airlift into that area that night and we also wanted to get the *Caribe* and the *Blagar* and the *Barbara J.* back into Blue Beach.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Did you realize that you just had the *Atlántico* to contend with because the *Caribe* was so far south?

[]: Yes, that's correct. The other solution was to load the LCUs with the packs from the *Barbara J.* and *Blagar*.

QUESTION: Do you recall that about eleven o'clock that night they did transfer the ammunition and the packs to the LCUs?

[]: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Later on that was cancelled. Do you recall the circumstances?

[]: As I recall, the reason it was cancelled was because they would have arrived at the beach too late to withdraw from the area by dawn.

QUESTION: That's what the record shows, but was that ample reason?

[]: Yes. We were very worried about the air attacks.

QUESTION: But if you didn't get the ammunition in that night you would lose the beachhead. In retrospect, wouldn't you take the risk of putting those ships in there?

[]: That's difficult to answer. We've argued it out before. It was feared the ships would be sunk and the men still wouldn't get their supplies.

QUESTION: Yes, but those same ships were under air attack on D-Day and most of them came out.

[]: Yes, that's true.

QUESTION: Was there any real debate on this at the Command Post that night?

[]: Yes, sir, and, of course, one of the Cuban crews almost mutinied rather than go in on the second night.

QUESTION: Do you recall whether any special effort was made to get air cover?

[]: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Was there any special request that night? We can't find any record of any special request from the Command Post that requested cover for the convoy. There was a request for air cover for the beach. Do you have any recollection of a request for cover for the convoy?

[]: No, there was no requirement at night.

QUESTION: But for cover for them to withdraw the next day?

[]: No, not that I recall.

QUESTION: Looking back on this naval action, what are the big lessons that we should bear in mind?

[]: Well, number one, you can't plan an operation like this without the wholehearted or all-out support of the military. You have to cut the military in completely.

QUESTION: Would you say you didn't have the wholehearted support of the military?

[]: I think the Navy did everything they possibly could within the limitations imposed upon them, but I feel that from the very beginning that there was never the necessary coordination with the military. The whole thing was based on arriving at the beach and conducting a landing without opposition. I think the whole operation was based on the assumption that Castro's air force would be destroyed.

QUESTION: If that was the assumption then why was the decision made to go to the open sea during daylight? If you'd destroyed the air force you wouldn't need to go to sea because they couldn't have moved artillery up in that time. There seems to be a little inconsistency there. Undoubtedly the plan was to unload and get out to sea, but if you have destroyed the air force you don't have to get out of there.

STATEMENT: I think they wanted to make it appear that this force had come from Cuba somewhere and consequently they wanted to get the ships out of there.

MR. DULLES: Yes, but they were Cuban ships and Cuban crews and Cuban owned. Everything about them was Cuban.

[]: There were several considerations, Mr. Dulles. One was to have them in there in time for landing the troops. Our plan was to unload the one small ship, the *Río*. We knew the *Río* would be there at daylight, but the other ships were to get the troops off and get out. There was no need to keep them there because their cargo was such it wouldn't be required until later on. The *Río* was the key ship.

QUESTION: If they could unload them in four or five hours, why was it that actually very little was unloaded?

[]: That's correct. However, we knew it would take longer to off-load the *Río*. She had the vehicles, deck cargo, and so on.

QUESTION: I thought you said earlier that it would take about four or five hours?

[]: No. At Red Beach I said it would take about four hours to off-load her troops and their personal equip-

ment at Red Beach, just the gear they carried ashore with them.

QUESTION: Wasn't there anything else aboard?

[]: Not very much. Just deck cargo, gasoline drums, and that sort of thing. They were to come back later on and unload their big stuff at Blue Beach.

QUESTION: Were all the ships supposed to be unloaded by dawn?

[]: No, sir, only the troops and their essential equipment, not their cargo and such.

QUESTION: I never heard this before. I thought they were supposed to be gone from there at dawn. That's not true?

[]: Yes, with the exception of the *Río*. The *Río* was to stay on and off-load at Blue Beach, using the LCUs. The other ships were to evacuate to a given point offshore.

QUESTION: Why wasn't this plan carried out?

[]: Because they were caught at dawn still there.

QUESTION: Why were they caught at dawn if the plan was to be out of there?

[]: We knew it would be very close to dawn.

STATEMENT: But they really didn't get started unloading.

RESPONSE: I think the 5th Battalion commander hadn't started to unload and as some of the boats wouldn't work, so I think it was a breakdown in command and mechanical problems.

[]: Of course, this was not a U.S. Navy-style operation. The only time they got together was just before they sailed. There was absolutely no rehearsal.

QUESTION: What would you say about the naval plan now, if you had to do it again with the same ships and everything?

[]: I don't think I'd change anything. However, if I could change the boats, I'd have a different type of boat to

off-load the troops. This was a last-minute consideration.

QUESTION: If you had a command ship in the actual bay area, would that have been helpful?

[]: I think it would have been a tremendous help. Trying to run the operation from Washington created much delay.

QUESTION: Supposing it didn't have to be kept so secret, how would you have run it?

[]: Then I would have tried to bring the Navy into it more from the very beginning. I wasn't brought in until the very last and the plan had essentially been drawn up, for the Trinidad Operation in particular. I think it was a grave error that the Navy wasn't brought in from the very beginning. The whole requirement was for logistic support and the type of craft to be used for off-loading of troops should have been given much greater consideration. We were banking strictly on the LCUs and LCVPs that were provided.

QUESTION: Did it occur to you before the landing that these small boats were not adequate?

[]: I knew they were inadequate. But we were faced with a problem of buying craft that could off-load the troops in a hurry and procurement was a big problem in the short time that we had. We had to settle on what was available and what they could get.

QUESTION: Did this mean any kind of boats that they could get?

[]: At this time, yes.

QUESTION: When was this time?

[]: About ten days or two weeks before the actual operation. We had to procure them, get them assembled, send them down to Puerto Cabezas, load them aboard ships, and train some crews to run them.

SIXTEENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Sixteenth Meeting of the Paramilitary Study Group

Time and Place: 17 May 1961

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants

Mr. San Román

Mr. Estrada

Mr. Royorosa

Mr. Lopez

Mr. Betancourt

[]

[]

ROBERTO PEREZ SAN ROMÁN

Mr. San Román is the brother of the Brigade commander and CO of the Heavy Weapons Battalion.

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

MR. SAN ROMÁN: I had eleven months' training which I feel was very good training. We had a good unit; there was high intelligence; and everyone was trained well; and I think we had a good chance of success because of the fine training we had. All the commanders liked the plan when they saw it.

QUESTION: When did you brief your troops?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: I was briefed in Nicaragua just before going aboard ship, and I briefed my troops two days later out on the ocean.

QUESTION: Did you have weapons other than 4.2s?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes, but not with me. With me I had the Headquarter Battalion and a 4.2 mortar platoon. The rest of my men and their weapons were attached to different units inasmuch as we were the Heavy Weapons Battalion. I went ashore at dawn about five-thirty or six in the morning on D-Day.

QUESTION: Was there firing on the beach at that time?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes, and we were attacked by a B-26 almost immediately. It took us a while to unload our 4.2s because they were very heavy. I had about 60 rounds of 4.2 ammunition with the weapons, but I had additional ammunition on the trucks that came in on the LCUs. I never ran out of ammunition during the three-day period. I was simply short of ammunition and I had to cut down the requests. For example, if they would request six rounds of fire, I would only be able to give them maybe two. As soon as we were organized, I moved my platoon toward San Blas. We arrived there at nine to nine-thirty on the morning of D-Day. There I met the airborne

commander of the 1st Battalion. The airborne had cleared the hospital area to the west of San Blas.

QUESTION: Had the airborne troops hit their drop zone?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes, about three o'clock the outpost established by the airborne unit received fire from the militia.

QUESTION: How did the militia come at you?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: On foot, down the road.

QUESTION: How was the swamp? Could they get off the road?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: I think they could have, but I don't think they liked the water.

STATEMENT: I get the impression that they first brought in troops; they were given something of a bloody nose; and then they used artillery and aircraft in their attack against the invasion force. Is that right?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes. Later, at about 1630, the outpost was surrounded so I sent in a tank, some 3.5 mortars, 75-mm recoilless rifles, .50 caliber M/G [machine gun], and some of the men. Following this, the outpost personnel withdrew to a point three to four kilometers south of San Blas.

QUESTION: Where were your mortars?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: I was out of range. After the original fighting, the militia only came in on foot again after two days of artillery fire. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, Alex sent word that he wanted me by messenger. All our radios were inoperative because we off-loaded so far out they got wet when we came ashore. Anyway, at dawn of D+1, Alex told me to move fast to about two kilometers north of San Blas.

QUESTION: What time did you fall back?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: About six to seven o'clock in the morning. We had no radios, so I went to see the Brigade commander.

QUESTION: What was happening on the beach?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Once in a while a plane would strafe the beach. My brother said that he didn't want to send the troops to Green Beach because they would be out of range of his radio. At the time I was there at 7:30, I was told that the situation was not good at Red Beach.

QUESTION: What was the disposition of the various Battalions at that time?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: The 1st Battalion was split between Red and Blue Beach areas; the 2nd and 5th Battalions were at Red Beach; the 6th Battalion was between Red and Blue Beach in a semicircle; the 3rd and 4th Battalions were at Blue Beach. When I told my brother about the situation in the San Blas area, he sent the 3rd Battalion up there and moved another unit out to cover the road that led to the east. I returned with the 3rd Battalion to my outfit. On that day the artillery started about four o'clock in the morning and they never stopped. They had lots of ammunition.

QUESTION: Do you think our planes could have knocked out their artillery?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes, very easily. That's what I don't understand. People want to fight, and know how to fight, and yet they can't because of the lack of air support.

QUESTION: Did you ever get any air support at all?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: About seven-thirty on Tuesday night, one of our B-26s came over and fired their machine guns and dropped napalm on Castro's artillery.

QUESTION: At the end of Tuesday, were there many casualties?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Not many because we were dug in. However, the airborne Battalion had 10 to 15 casualties.

QUESTION: Did men of the invasion force abandon their ammunition when they fell back?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: No, never.

QUESTION: At the end of Tuesday, were they short of ammunition?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes, they were short on rifle and .30 caliber machine gun ammunition and out of BAR and .50 caliber machine gun ammunition.

QUESTION: Was there any resupply from the beach?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: No.

QUESTION: Why?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: There was nothing to pick up at the beach.

QUESTION: At the end of D+1, was everyone hurting for ammunition?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes. On Tuesday afternoon, we said we better be on the offensive, so we pushed the militia back, but we didn't have enough ammunition to follow through, so we had to fall back.

Then on Wednesday morning, the 3rd Battalion began to retreat with no order. We were receiving artillery fire, we had no ammunition, and so everyone fell back. The Brigade commander told me to reorganize the 3rd Battalion and go back. He said that he had received some air drop supplies; that he had sent a pilot back with a paper informing the people back at the base about the situation at the beach, so I organized a bunch of men and we started back up to San Blas. We knocked out one tank after we made contact with the enemy but we were under extremely heavy artillery attack, so we had to fall back again. When we got to the beach, everything was under artillery attack. This was Wednesday, at about 2:30 P.M. At that time, we saw a small boat offshore and swam out to it. We left the beach area at that time.

QUESTION: Was fighting going on to the west?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes.

QUESTION: Then the big attacks by Castro's forces were launched from the Red Beach area and from northeast of Blue Beach?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes. Why didn't we have air support? We were supposed to.

RESPONSE: Were you told that you would have Navy air support?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: No, but our own planes were supposed to bomb certain targets every day and they didn't. I don't know why they didn't stop the invasion if the air strikes were cancelled. Without air support, we were sure of going to our death. Frank said that everything in Cuba would be destroyed. This can be done with 16 planes and we knew there was a carrier nearby. We had radio contact with the carrier and I don't know why they didn't help us. We lost because we didn't have air support. If we had had air support, we could have gotten through to a town and our force would have been increased by five or six times. The way we had been briefed, we thought we were sure to win.

QUESTION: Had you discussed the possibility of becoming guerrillas?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Just between the J-3 [Operations Officer of the JCS] and myself. We weren't briefed on becoming guerrillas. We were so sure that we were going to win that we didn't concern ourselves with this.

QUESTION: Did you have adequate rations?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Only the rations that we had when we landed.

QUESTION: Were the paratroop drops successful?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: The men all landed where they were supposed to.

QUESTION: What was the reaction of the prisoners you took?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Some looked like fanatics and they were singing revolutionary songs. However, some of the others joined us.

QUESTION: What kind of weapons did Castro forces have?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: They had semi-automatic rifles, sub-machine guns; they had good weapons. One of the men had a hammer and sickle emblem on his hat.

QUESTION: What about the people who were put in confinement at the base in Guatemala?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: The different political groups in Miami all sent in representatives so that their men could try and gain control of the camp for them and thereby they would have influence in Cuba after the revolution. Furthermore, some of the big men in Miami when they arrived at the camp found they weren't big men anymore. They were soldiers just like everybody else. We military men were put in charge as we had more experience. The instructors kept us in charge as they realized that we had more experience. We had a penal code for discipline, of course, and since we were in a foreign country, we had to enforce it.

QUESTION: Did you court-martial anyone?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: Yes, we had court-martials. However, we had no appropriate place to confine these people and also we needed them to do work so they didn't stay in confinement long.

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QUESTION: Do you have any additional comments?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: I want to know why we didn't get air support?

RESPONSE: That's one of the things we are looking into now.

QUESTION: What would you like to do now?

MR. SAN ROMÁN: I would like to go to Cuba again. The situation is getting to be worse every day. We have to do something to clean up our country and make it democratic again. We need someone very strong to stand beside us, and the United States has always been very strong.

MR. ESTRADA

Mr. Estrada was the S-4 [] of the Airborne Battalion.

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

MR. ESTRADA: I jumped with about 50 others north of San Blas. We lost a lot of the ammunition that was dropped with us. We had no communications with the Brigade because while our radios were good, the Brigade's were inoperative.

At about five o'clock Monday afternoon, we were attacked. However, the first real fire fight was at twelve-thirty Monday night. Following this, we were under heavy attack and finally about two-thirty Tuesday afternoon, we moved back to San Blas. We had no ammunition, so the Battalion commander went to see the Brigade commander and he returned with some ammunition. Beginning at about two o'clock Tuesday afternoon until Wednesday, we received a great deal of artillery fire.

QUESTION: Where was the artillery fire coming from?

MR. ESTRADA: All the fire was coming from the north. Wednesday, one of our B-26s came in, strafed, and dropped napalm on the artillery positions, and then we advanced with our tanks. However, after a short while, we began to receive artillery fire again and the CO told us to fall back to the beach.

QUESTION: What happened on the road back to the beach?

MR. ESTRADA: We knocked out some militia infantry and we captured a Castro major. We wanted to get back to the beach to reorganize but we were under tremendous fire and so when we saw the ship offshore, we boarded it and left the area.

QUESTION: Was there ever any mention of your becoming guerrillas?

MR. ESTRADA: No, we had no plan to go to the mountains.

QUESTION: Do you think anyone escaped?

MR. ESTRADA: I think so.

QUESTION: What was the terrain like in this region?

MR. ESTRADA: It was heavily wooded.

QUESTION: What did you think of the training you received?

MR. ESTRADA: I've been in training since September. First, we had guerrilla training. I think that the training overall was very good, particularly the paratroop training.

MR. ROYOROSA

Mr. Royorosa was a member of the UDT team scheduled for Green Beach.

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: Would you just tell us your story please?

MR. ROYOROSA: I was scheduled to land at Green Beach; however, it was decided to land the Green Beach force at Blue Beach. However, I was aboard the *Blagar* and I assumed the task of landing all the troops from the *Blagar* at Blue Beach. There were many messages coming to our ship asking where to go and what to do, and there was no one there to answer the questions; it was a tactical mistake, so I assumed the responsibility and got the troops landed. We came under air attack at about seven-thirty. We stayed off Blue Beach until about eleven, and then we went out to sea. We were attacked three or four times on the way out. I went ashore one time early on D-Day. Our G-2 [General Staff Intelligence Officer] was telling the people the purpose of our invasion and the people were very nice. They offered to help us take care of our wounded; even the fishermen told us where to find a new landing place. The fishermen told us that six o'clock was low tide and to bring the boats in then. So we got a lot of help from the local population. On Friday, our B-26s made their first attack. According to our information, our Air Force was supposed to bomb all the targets on the list, particularly all the airfields.

QUESTION: You never moved at all?

MR. ROYOROSA: No, sir. We never moved toward the beach because we never got air support.

QUESTION: Were you ordered into rescue operations?

MR. ROYOROSA: Yes, sir. On Sunday, at ten o'clock in the morning, we picked up the first survivors. We picked up four men, and later we picked up 28 men. These people were in very bad condition. The last day we were spotted by the militia and we heard .50 caliber shots.

2½ lines deleted

they didn't know whether they were militia or our men, and they wanted to know if they could be evacuated. We were ready to go in but then they called it off. I think they found out that the men around the ship were militia.

QUESTION: Do you have anything you want to tell us?

MR. ROYOROSA: Yes. Most of our people feel we were in a way betrayed. We were sent in there to get slaughtered, because you know how we were armed—we had two LCIs with .50 caliber machine guns, and the B-26s weren't adequate for the job. Furthermore, the engines on the boats wouldn't work. The method of landing was silly, with those little boats. Only two of the boats on the *Houston* worked. They did make some landings with the aluminum boats but not very many.

QUESTION: What happened to the aluminum boats? Were they left?

MR. ROYOROSA: When the *Río* was sunk, they had some aluminum boats, and the crew came over to us in the aluminum boats, and then they let the boats drift away. We were under air attack at the time.

QUESTION: Was it your opinion that the men running the boats didn't know how to run them?

MR. ROYOROSA: Yes, the men only had two days' training and they couldn't run them at all.

QUESTION: Who was supposed to unload the ships?

MR. ROYOROSA: Well, you see, sir, the messages came in and the captain didn't know Spanish, so I started translating. Everytime he looked at something he couldn't understand, I had to explain it to him. There was lots of confusion, because there was no landing officer.

QUESTION: Anything further you would like to tell us?

MR. ROYOROSA: I'm ready to go back and fight again, but I don't believe too many of my people would, because they saw what happened during the invasion. The United States didn't help us, so I don't know how we're going to get back to Cuba.

I'll go again shoulder-to-shoulder with the American troops. If you try to get a lot of people together again, it will be awfully hard now, and it's going to take a lot more than a thousand men to overthrow Castro. He's very strong. The militia didn't fight well, but there were thousands. The militia were armed with good automatic rifles. However, when we got into a town, the people immediately responded with help. I think that's very important. The Cubans want to have freedom. They have to say they love Castro because they have no choice. I firmly believe that the people want to get rid of Castro.

MR. LOPEZ

Mr. Lopez was a member of the Airborne Battalion.

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: Why were you against Castro?

MR. LOPEZ: I fought against Batista as a student in clandestine warfare, and I put all my hope in Castro. But a few months after Castro took over, our Western way of life changed completely. The statements of the former Cuban air force chief, Major Lanz pointed out Castro's intention.

Our advance point was about five kilometers beyond San Blas. On the night of D-Day we were in contact with the militia all night. On the following morning we had to fall back. This was our first pullback and it occurred on Tuesday. We had very defensible dug-in positions; however, we were taking so much fire that we had to pull back. There were lots of deficiencies in the communications system. We made our second pullback at 3:00 P.M. on the 18th. We pulled back and dug in about a half of a kilometer away from the town.

QUESTION: How many men did you have at this time?

MR. LOPEZ: About 70 or 80. We had taken such heavy artillery fire during the night that we had to withdraw in the morning. We had no food or water; almost all the jumpers jumped without rations; they left them back in camp at Nicaragua.

QUESTION: Could you find any food in the towns?

MR. LOPEZ: We found some rations—some condensed milk and some oranges. We also found some water and purified it.

QUESTION: What happened on Wednesday?

MR. LOPEZ: A small group of us were together on the road and considered falling back, but our CO said that the airborne would not pull back, and he told me and six of my buddies to advance. As we advanced, we saw a motorized column heading toward us and it turned out to be tanks. We had two bazookas and we knocked out the two leading tanks, but then we had no more ammunition, so we decided to try to get to the Escambray Mountains. However, we apparently went in a circle. When we got back to the road, we took over a jeep and captured one of Castro's majors. We then headed toward the beach in the jeep and picked up some of our friends on the way, including Roberto San Román. When we got to the beach, it was deserted and it looked like an impact area. Then we saw a boat which we went aboard and left the area.

QUESTION: What about the aluminum boats?

MR. LOPEZ: We understood that many of them had defec-

tive engines; however, we didn't take any because they were too far away.

QUESTION: Do you have any comments you would like to make?

MR. LOPEZ: I believe the training was very hard but good and that it's a shame that such hard work was lost. Next time, it will be better.

QUESTION: Are you ready to return?

MR. LOPEZ: As a Cuban, I would return to Cuba with a rock. I feel more obligated than ever to return.

MR. BETANCOURT

Mr. Betancourt was the air liaison officer with the 2nd Battalion at Red Beach.

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: When did you go to the camp?

MR. BETANCOURT: Six January.

QUESTION: Had you had any previous military training?

MR. BETANCOURT: No.

QUESTION: How was the training?

MR. BETANCOURT: I thought the military training was very good. I had infantry training first, then communications, and then I was made the air liaison officer of the Battalion.

QUESTION: Did you have any trouble in the camp? Were there agitators?

MR. BETANCOURT: When you have a group of people, there are always a lot of people who would like to be leaders, and they're not. There were a number who wanted these positions for both personal and political reasons. Many of

these people were doctors and they wanted positions when we went back to Cuba. []

I think this was one reason why they were causing the trouble.

QUESTION: What ship were you on?

MR. BETANCOURT: The *Houston*. I'd like to talk about the landing. We had nine landing boats with outboard motors. Only two worked and at the end, only one worked, so it was terrible. It took the first landing craft 20 minutes to get to the beach, and there were only nine men in the first landing.

QUESTION: Did you notice whether the boats worked when you took off from Nicaragua?

MR. BETANCOURT: I wasn't there.

QUESTION: The men who manned the boats, had they ever used them before?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, they were taken out of our training camp for that purpose, so I imagine they operated the boats.

We didn't think they were the right type of boats for a landing. They looked like speed boats for water skiing. But anyway, we landed the 2nd Battalion except for one squad. At six o'clock in the morning, the first plane came in. The first time they hit the boat was about six o'clock. About seven o'clock I was transferred to the front lines and they were being attacked by the enemy.

QUESTION: Were these attacks local militia?

MR. BETANCOURT: No, these were not local militia—we had taken care of them.

QUESTION: Did you have a paratroop group out ahead of you?

MR. BETANCOURT: No. However, shortly after I arrived at the front, we were being hit from the area where the parachutes were coming down. We kept fighting practically all day until about one or two o'clock that afternoon.

QUESTION: Was this the 2nd Battalion?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes.

QUESTION: How did the invasion force fight?

MR. BETANCOURT: They were courageous; they just kept going and going.

QUESTION: How about the Castro people?

MR. BETANCOURT: They fired, but I don't believe they were as well trained as we were. We could tell that. Our commanders were extremely good. At two or three o'clock the militia's first tanks came in and we asked for air support, and they gave air support and it was very good. After the air attack, they went away. Out of 1,000 militia, they killed 700-800.

QUESTION: Were your communications good?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, very good, with the airplanes.

QUESTION: Could they get off the road in that country?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes. It wasn't swampy in this area. Later on, there were some more tanks coming in, so we called again for air support. They came in and did a terrific job and that was the last air support we received. At 3:00 A.M. Tuesday morning, I went to Headquarters.

QUESTION: Where was your Battalion Headquarters?

MR. BETANCOURT: At the beach. By the time I arrived the situation wasn't too good. There were a lot of tanks coming down that road from the north. Everything came down the road from the north.

QUESTION: How about the 5th Battalion?

MR. BETANCOURT: None of them ever got to Red Beach from the *Houston*.

QUESTION: Do you know the reason about this?

MR. BETANCOURT: We were told that panic was created in the boat when the planes attacked the ship.

1¼ lines deleted

The executive of the Brigade talked with the CO and told him we needed help; that we were running out of ammo. The second time we talked with the Battalion CO, he was ashore.

QUESTION: Was the 5th Battalion commander captured?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, I believe he was.

QUESTION: Am I correct that the 5th Battalion had less training than all the rest?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, that's correct.

QUESTION: What was your ammunition situation at the end of D-Day?

MR. BETANCOURT: It was very bad.

QUESTION: What did you have when you got ashore?

MR. BETANCOURT: We had our initial combat loads. The company of the 4th Battalion attached to us with heavy weapons had some ammo for the mortars and the bazookas, and .50 caliber machine guns. We also had one armored truck with a .50 caliber machine gun on top.

QUESTION: How many tanks did you have up there?

MR. BETANCOURT: At that time, we had one tank.

QUESTION: How did that work out?

MR. BETANCOURT: It did very well.

QUESTION: How did it get up there?

MR. BETANCOURT: It came up by road from Blue Beach.

QUESTION: What happened during the night of D-Day?

MR. BETANCOURT: We were under fire from 105 artillery starting at about six o'clock at night.

QUESTION: What kind of observation did they have?

MR. BETANCOURT: They had a plane, and they had three forward observers.

QUESTION: What direction was the artillery fire coming from?

MR. BETANCOURT: We knew the artillery was placed in a rough place because their artillery was moving when it was fired.

QUESTION: What else happened that night?

MR. BETANCOURT: They kept firing at us until very early the next morning. On Tuesday the 18th, we moved to Blue Beach at about nine o'clock in the morning, because we knew there were lots of tanks and militia coming in and we couldn't hold them.

QUESTION: Did you have enough transportation?

MR. BETANCOURT: We managed. We moved the whole Battalion down the road.

QUESTION: What was your force at that time?

MR. BETANCOURT: At that time we had about 20 casualties and 180 other men. We had five to eight killed.

QUESTION: Was the shortage of ammunition the reason you had to withdraw?

MR. BETANCOURT: No. We were short of ammunition, but even if you had a lot of ammunition you couldn't hold, because we needed air support.

QUESTION: When did you arrive at Blue Beach?

MR. BETANCOURT: I got to Blue Beach around nine o'clock and the whole Battalion was there by ten-thirty.

QUESTION: What was the situation at Blue Beach?

MR. BETANCOURT: We had a couple of hours of rest at Blue Beach.

QUESTION: Were there any troops north of the road when you came down?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, there were some people of the 4th Battalion between Red and Blue Beach.

Things were quiet for awhile, then we were hit by Castro's

air force. Following this we were told to turn around and go back to Red Beach.

QUESTION: Why did they tell you to do that?

MR. BETANCOURT: Because we had obtained additional ammunition, we were reinforced with troops, and two tanks were attached to us, so we started back to Red Beach at about 1300 or 1400. We didn't quite make it, however. We ran into the enemy about two-thirds of the way up and they had plenty of tanks and we couldn't go any further.

At this time, I was moved back to Brigade Headquarters. However, the Battalion stayed in position just south of Red Beach and fell back gradually as they were forced back.

QUESTION: When did you get to Brigade Headquarters?

MR. BETANCOURT: I'd say around five or six o'clock on that second day.

QUESTION: What was the situation at the Brigade Headquarters?

MR. BETANCOURT: A lot of people were calling for ammo and air support.

QUESTION: At the end of the second day, will you tell us where the 2nd Battalion was?

MR. BETANCOURT: About two-thirds of the way from Blue moving towards Red Beach.

QUESTION: What about the ammunition situation at the end of the second day?

MR. BETANCOURT: Very bad.

QUESTION: Could you tell us about the air drops the night before?

MR. BETANCOURT: I only saw one. It was very poor. They dropped nine chutes and we only recovered one.

QUESTION: Anything else you can comment on at the end of D+1? Were there any casualties around the beach? Did you see any of the surgeons around?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, there were some casualties and I saw a few surgeons around.

QUESTION: What about food? What had you been eating?

MR. BETANCOURT: I didn't eat anything. They had food and water but I wasn't hungry.

QUESTION: Did you see the Brigade commander at the Headquarters?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, I stayed with him from two o'clock in the morning until six o'clock operating the radio asking for air support and ammunition.

QUESTION: Will you tell us about Wednesday?

MR. BETANCOURT: They started very early Wednesday, hitting us with artillery.

QUESTION: Where was it coming from?

MR. BETANCOURT: It was coming out of the column coming down from the north.

MR. BETANCOURT: I was with San Román until six o'clock Wednesday morning, and then I moved back with the rest of my Battalion. We had to destroy one of the radios that we used to talk with the airplanes, and one was broken. So from Wednesday on, most of the communications were by messenger.

QUESTION: When did you last see the Brigade commander?

MR. BETANCOURT: At eleven or twelve o'clock. I went back to the Headquarters at five o'clock, but I think they left about four.

QUESTION: What boats were on the beach when you first came back? I'm trying to find out what happened to those aluminum boats that were at Blue Beach.

MR. BETANCOURT: When I got to Blue Beach, the only boats I saw were the little row boats and a couple of big landing craft, but I don't think they were operable.

QUESTION: At five o'clock you went back and saw the

Brigade Headquarters was not there. Were you in contact with the enemy at that time?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes.

QUESTION: Was there anybody out in front of you?

MR. BETANCOURT: I think a battalion was still out there.

QUESTION: What was your ammo situation at this time?

MR. BETANCOURT: We were out of ammo for the 81 mortar, for the 4.2s, for the bazooka, for the .50 and .30 caliber machine guns.

QUESTION: You essentially didn't have anything but rifle ammunition?

MR. BETANCOURT: That's right. We didn't have anything.

QUESTION: What was happening on that road coming down on the north? Did anybody ever come down on the road from the east?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, I was told there was another front line there.

QUESTION: What happened from five o'clock on?

MR. BETANCOURT: There was no one at Brigade Headquarters. There were only about 15 or 20 people left at Blue Beach. There were no high ranking officers to ask what we should do, so we walked toward the beach. Five of us got together and we saw a little row boat. So we got on the little boat and rowed with our hands. When we got off the beach, we saw another boat with eight of our people in it. Then an aircraft came over and killed all eight of the people in the other boat; they fired at us but didn't hit us. By this time, I'd say it was about six o'clock in the evening.

QUESTION: Was that the only boat you saw, the one with the eight men in it?

MR. BETANCOURT: No, we saw a couple of other boats. The next day at about five-thirty we drifted down to one of the keys. We were later picked up by a destroyer. We were on one

of the keys for four days; we had three coconuts. We also ate some crabs.

QUESTION: What about water?

MR. BETANCOURT: We drank a little salt water, and rotten water from the swamp.

QUESTION: Was there any talk, when it appeared things were becoming critical, of going guerrilla?

MR. BETANCOURT: Not that I know of.

QUESTION: During your training, was there any talk of this?

MR. BETANCOURT: No.

QUESTION: Do you have any comments you would like to make?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes. The initial plan called for three air strikes—the 15th, the 16th, and the 17th. The 15th there was an air strike, but then there was an order to stop the rest of the air strikes. We had to have these air strikes because they were supposed to take care of the airfields and the tanks—maybe not 100 percent but quite a bit, so actually the success of this invasion was based on those air strikes. That was the initial plan, so why didn't they tell us we couldn't carry on with the invasion because the air strikes were stopped? They could have told us and we could have gone back to the point of departure.

RESPONSE: We know the D-2 strikes were quite successful but not entirely successful.

MR. BETANCOURT: We knew the success of the Brigade depended on the success of the air strikes; otherwise, it's just like sending a bunch of human beings to get killed.

Well, there's no point in asking why the American jet airplanes didn't help us. They could have very well. They could have been our planes as far as we were concerned. We could have arranged to take all the insignia off. [

] There are many things I don't understand about political affairs and so on, but

I don't think the United States knows how to fight the Communists. You can't go by the books. Sometimes you have to throw away the book to fight. There's only one way to fight those people and that's by fighting them the way they fight. You cannot fight them by talking. You cannot fight with conferences. Look at what's happening in Laos. In my opinion, Laos is completely lost.

QUESTION: There was some comment as to whether the force could be turned back. If they had been ordered to turn around and go back because there were no air strikes, do you think that Pepe would have turned around and gone back?

MR. BETANCOURT: We could have delayed the invasion.

QUESTION: Do you think he would have responded?

MR. BETANCOURT: I couldn't answer that question. That's not the point. The point is that the order never came in. If he had taken the order and not responded to it, that would have been his responsibility.

QUESTION: Any other comments?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, as far as I'm concerned, I'm willing to help any way I can. I think we fight a common cause. It's not just Cuban against Cuban—it's throughout the world.

SEVENTEENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Seventeenth Meeting of the Paramilitary Study Group Meeting

Time and Place: 18 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke

Other Participants
General Lemnitzer
Mr. Varona
Mr. Ray
Mr. King
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

GENERAL LEMNITZER

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The thing I would like to say at the very beginning is that I consider the JCS role was one of appraisal, evaluation, offering of constructive criticism, and assisting CIA in looking at the training and detailed plan. Defense participated in the role of support.

QUESTION: What action was taken on the overall U.S. plan of action for Cuba developed by the JCS in late January?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, we prepared a plan of action for Cuba and forwarded it to the Secretary of Defense. There's some question of what happened to it up in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I did discuss it with Dean Rusk and Mr. Dulles at one of the high-level governmental meetings on the 22nd of January. Several attempts were made by General Gray, at his level, to interest State and CIA in preparing a national plan based on the Trinidad concept. State was pretty receptive, but the people at CIA were not quite as receptive because they were involved in planning this operation and were already pretty well under way, as a result of a previous decision taken way back in March 17, 1960.

QUESTION: What was the JCS view of the military feasibility of Trinidad and Zapata?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, Trinidad first. Assuming control of the air, we felt that the landing could be effective against a light opposition which was the most that was anticipated in that area, but like all other considerations, the ultimate effect centered upon the uprisings that would be generated throughout the islands and the reinforcements which would be gravitating toward this particular beachhead.

QUESTION: Control of the air—what did that mean to you?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It meant that the air plan would

succeed in knocking out the limited facilities available to Castro.

QUESTION: One hundred percent?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Not 100 percent, but a great majority of the aircraft.

QUESTION: How could you deal with any remaining aircraft, since you had only B-26s?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It was expected that the initial strikes would be generally successful, since Castro's aircraft were concentrated on several fields. Following the initial strike, it would be a matter of matching the aircraft that were allocated to this plan against what remained of Castro's aircraft.

QUESTION: In recurring strikes thereafter?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's right. We didn't intend to stop with just the strike on D-Day.

QUESTION: It seems to me that several times there was a confidence in 100 percent control of the air and this just never happens.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I never heard of a 100 percent success. On the other hand, you didn't have too many aircraft, and if we did some of the things that were anticipated and one important thing that I haven't heard discussed, the question of the diversionary landing has not received the attention that it deserves. Having been involved in this type of operation during the war, we always put great stress on diverting the enemy. This was a very important part of the Cuba plan but, unfortunately, it didn't go. When you only have one diversionary attack to attract the enemy's attention to another area and it doesn't get in, this is very detrimental to the overall success of the plan.

STATEMENT: There was a feeling that a 100 percent job would be done on Castro's air force, which just doesn't happen.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I wouldn't go along with the idea

that there was a feeling there would be 100 percent success in any kind of an operation.

STATEMENT: This is [] reply to a message: "Since the plan called for the destruction of Castro's aircraft, there seemed to be no point in putting antiaircraft guns on the ships."

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I inquired as to what machine guns, or antiaircraft equipment they had aboard the ships, and they mentioned the .50 calibre guns, and so on, and this seemed reasonable for the type operation that was envisaged.

QUESTION: Did the Chiefs approve Zapata?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't regard our actions as approval as such—I'd like to make clear that we have supported the thing, but we didn't consider that it was within our purview to approve the plan. However, we did believe the plan was feasible, therefore, the plan was all right to go.

QUESTION: Was there any question about the feasibility of the plan in your mind?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The guerrilla aspects of the Trinidad Plan were much more obtainable than the Zapata Plan. We felt that in the Zapata Plan the same importance was attached to the whole air operation to the extent that the landing could be effected and the beachhead held for a period of time, but there again the success of this plan was dependent upon the full gravitation of guerrilla forces to the beach area.

QUESTION: The ultimate success, or were uprisings a precondition to getting ashore?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, not for getting ashore. Ultimate success would be determined by the invasion serving as a catalyst for further action on the part of the anti-Castro guerrillas or elements throughout Cuba.

QUESTION: By ultimate success, do you mean the overthrow of Castro?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes. I never did count on an indefinite maintenance of this beachhead. When you get com-

mitted to a beach, the question of ultimate success depends on whether you can pump in resources faster than the enemy can build up around you. I think we generally believed that the establishment of the beachhead would constitute a trigger to set off a series of other events. It was never intended that this entire force would lodge themselves on the beach and maintain themselves there indefinitely since there were no reinforcements coming in.

QUESTION: Was it anticipated that the military would be able to land in force on the beachhead and maintain the beachhead for a period of time?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That is correct, and if the enemy forces built up faster than they had planned, they would go into the Escambray Mountains under the Trinidad Plan.

QUESTION: How about Zapata?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It didn't stand out so loud and clear, but nevertheless the same general type of ultimate action was contemplated. There were three alternatives in Zapata, after they got on the beach, if it looked as though the uprisings would not occur. First, we were in a guerrilla-type country. Second, the Escambrays were quite a long way away, but they could be used as a guerrilla base. Third, if we succeeded in getting rid of most of the enemy air, the force could have been withdrawn and reassembled for possibly another type of attack somewhere else.

QUESTION: Do you think they could have been withdrawn without overt U.S. support?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I didn't regard this as a single beachhead. This particular plan never involved a 36-mile beachhead with 1,400 men—that would be absurd. Green Beach and Red Beach and Blue Beach were small lodgments that never involved a continuous perimeter.

STATEMENT: In talking to a lot of the operators I find that they felt that they really had impassable obstacles and that anyone coming into the area had to come down the roads.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That is correct. There was no intention that the beachhead would include this whole area.

QUESTION: With regard to the question of being in guerrilla territory, was any independent study made?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, so far as I was concerned, I didn't go beyond the information we got from the CIA and from my own staff, that this was an area in which the guerrillas had operated for over 100 years.

STATEMENT: I think this was considered guerrilla territory about 100 years ago and then about 60 years ago, but not recently.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: There are few people living in it and few roads, and so on.

STATEMENT: There is no place in which you can maintain yourself in that swamp.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I suppose the same thing could be said about the Escambray Mountains. I'd like to make clear that we did not like this area as well as the Trinidad area, and one of the reasons was that it was more difficult to break out of here.

STATEMENT: You mention the preference for Trinidad—I'm not sure whether you're aware of it, but the Secretary of Defense apparently never appreciated that point. In fact, he had the impression that the Chiefs thought that Zapata was the better of the two plans.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I just don't understand how he got that impression. I can show you in my notes on two accounts where I called it to his attention. We also put it in writing that "of the alternate plans, alternative three is considered the most feasible and likely to accomplish the objective. None of the alternates involved are as feasible and likely to accomplish the objectives as the present paramilitary plan." I don't see how you can say it any clearer than that.

STATEMENT: I think it's just a question of too many papers and being confused.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I'd like to go back to your question about guerrilla territory. This Zapata area is not much different from that in Vietnam, where they're having the devil's own time chasing the guerrillas through the swamps.

STATEMENT: There are several problems. First, in comparison with the area in Vietnam, there isn't an expanse where these people could move. This is more limited. Furthermore, the towns and villages are on the outside where the invasion forces couldn't reach. The second problem is that these people were never trained or told that they were supposed to become guerrillas.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't agree with that because they were trained as guerrillas for nine months.

STATEMENT: That was until November, 1960. There were only about 300 of them at that time, but then the great influx of about 1,000 came in after that time, and the great influx never received any instruction in guerrilla training.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It was our understanding of the plan without any doubt that moving into the guerrilla phase was one of the important elements of the plan, and any idea that the Chiefs considered that they were making an indefinite lodgment on the beachhead is not right. Every bit of information that we were able to gather from the CIA was that the guerrilla aspects were always considered as a main element of the plan.

QUESTION: What I can't understand is when it was presented to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, why didn't it receive a great deal of attention?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That was regarded as one of the alternatives if they weren't successful.

STATEMENT: General, if you look at that area and talk with anybody who has been there, you couldn't possibly become guerrillas in that damn place.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't see why not.

STATEMENT: Where are you going to get the water and the food? It's not like Vietnam. They sent helicopters over and shot all these people down.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: In Vietnam, for example, they don't get any food. They sustain themselves in an area just like this.

STATEMENT: As I understood it, they did, that's why they put the wire around the villages.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: They put the wire around the villages to keep the food in, but there was also the possibility that these fellows would establish themselves as guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains or in the swamps and they would receive air drops.

ADMIRAL BURKE: Guerrillas couldn't sustain themselves in any of these areas until they got support from the populace. Supplies would have to be carried in to them until they received support from the populace.

STATEMENT: The President had the same impression that you did—that if worst came to worst, this group could become guerrillas, but as we've gotten into it, it's become obvious that this possibility never really existed.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Then we were badly misinformed.

STATEMENT: Without training and instruction, they would never have gone guerrilla.

MR. DULLES: I wouldn't wholly buy that. These people had a cadre of leaders—20 percent to 30 percent would be the leaders. They knew about guerrilla warfare. The guerrillas in World War II never had any training until they got into a guerrilla operation.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It was always considered that the most feasible action was withdrawal from the beach by sea. This came up at one White House meeting when Mr. Bissell made the statement, that if we do have to pull out, the best course of action would be to withdraw from the beach.

STATEMENT: But they had no plan to withdraw by sea. They had no capability to withdraw by sea, except as provided by the U.S. Navy.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, it's a question of the time of withdrawal.

STATEMENT: It still isn't clear to me how you're going to get them off if you wait until they are buttoned down on the beaches.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Certainly as far as withdrawals are concerned, and I said this many times when the operation was on, the most difficult operation in the world is the withdrawal under enemy pressure from a beachhead. But that was not the kind of withdrawal that was anticipated, as far as I was concerned.

QUESTION: That's the picture that shaped up and that's one of the unhappy aspects of the picture. Let's go back to Trinidad. The JCS said that Trinidad had a fair chance of success. What was your estimate of the feasibility of Zapata?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Still feasible, but less so than Trinidad. We considered Zapata feasible. I could put words together and say that we said that Trinidad had a fair chance and that Zapata had less than a fair chance, but actually we felt that Zapata had a fair chance but of a lower grade than Trinidad.

QUESTION: If the Chiefs had had any question as to feasibility, the Chiefs would have spoken up. Is that a fair statement?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I'm sure they would.

QUESTION: To what extent had the Chiefs made a personal study of the final operations plan?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The final operations plan was received two days prior the final D-Day and it was too late for a personal study. Portions of Zapata were proposed on four occasions and approved on the basis of explanations that we got from the Working Group.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Is it fair to say that you gave it de facto approval on a piecemeal basis?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No other solution was feasible at that time. The rainy season was approaching and one thing that I would like to mention here was the fact that they had 100 MIG pilots being trained in Czechoslovakia, and we didn't know when they were going to be returned, and our thinking was strongly influenced by this fact.

QUESTION: Was any discussion given as to what would happen if a few MIGs appeared?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, all we could do was to go on the basis of the information we had that the MIGs had not yet arrived. We also felt that if this operation was going to go, it should go before Castro received two Soviet destroyers that we understood were being delivered.

QUESTION: What would have happened if you had had a couple of MIGs there at the time?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Their appearance would have pretty well complicated the operation.

QUESTION: Were any steps taken in order to prepare for that possibility?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: None, other than the possibility that you might go to the Navy and ask the Navy for overt support, but that was very unlikely.

QUESTION: What was the Chiefs's view on the suitability of the terrain?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We discussed that somewhat. It was considered not as suitable as Trinidad for the reasons that I indicated. Their success depended upon their ability to seize the approaches to the swamp area. Now the size of the beach-head question was emphasized before. There was a plan to put lodgments in the entry ways into the swamp area. The size of the area was dictated by the necessity of protecting the air-fields, and to prevent access to the swamp. The large area

wasn't considered desirable but acceptable if the approaches were held and control of the air was established.

STATEMENT: When you commented on Zapata the first time, the air plan was for D-Day strikes only, but with no limitations.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's correct.

QUESTION: Later there were limited strikes on D-2 and limited strikes on D-Day. Would you comment on this watering down of the air plan? Were the Chiefs satisfied with this?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The D-2 strikes were added for nonmilitary reasons. We would have preferred to do without the D-2 air strikes. They were never intended to accomplish the destruction of the Castro air force. They were to lend plausibility to the story that the D-Day strikes had been launched from within Cuba.

QUESTION: Did you object to the D-2 air strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, we did not object. We would have preferred not to have them, but for nonmilitary reasons they were considered to be of great importance and they were approved.

STATEMENT: They could have been quite disastrous because they could have alerted Castro and he could have dispersed his aircraft.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, but he didn't.

STATEMENT: Yes, but that was just luck.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, but here again you get into the old battle of getting into an operation of this kind covertly—political and psychological considerations against military considerations. My conclusion here is, which I'll explain a little bit later, you have to be very careful about diluting military considerations in order to attain nonattribution and nonassociation with the United States.

QUESTION: Do you feel that you or the Joint Chiefs were the defenders of the military aspects of the operation, or was CIA?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The defenders of the military parts of the plan were the people who produced it and that was CIA. We were providing assistance and assuring the feasibility of the plan.

GENERAL TAYLOR: What led to the idea that it was necessary to maintain that all of the air strikes emanated from Cuba?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We were strong for the Trinidad Plan. However, about the middle of March during a meeting at the White House, Mr. Mann was gravely concerned about the impact throughout the Latin American area of these air strikes coming from outside of Cuba. He hammered at the point repeatedly and wanted to know if there wasn't some area in Cuba where they could land on a ready-made area. At the conclusion of this meeting CIA was directed to review the whole idea and come up with alternative landing areas other than Trinidad, because Trinidad didn't have the kind of airstrip that was required to provide plausibility to the story that the aircraft had come from within Cuba. This was an important consideration.

QUESTION: Was this approved beyond Mann?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: He was the one who expressed the views. I don't know how much Secretary Rusk or any of the other people were involved. As a matter of fact, it was a disappointment to me, because I thought we had a plan that had been thoroughly worked out and hated to see another delay and another complete evaluation of the island. It caused some concern both in my own group and in CIA. On March 16, when we had another meeting and were discussing the Zapata Plan, Mr. Mann liked the Zapata Plan because of the airfield and indicated that it provided us with a plausible denial. I indicated that the JCS had gone over the alternatives and didn't think that any of them were as good as the original Trinidad Plan, but of the three to be considered, Zapata was the most achievable. Then I said this, that it was not clear to me why Zapata was any more acceptable from the political point of view than the Trinidad Plan. Whereupon Mr. Mann

replied that it gave plausible denial to the launching of air operations from outside Cuba. He said we needed a façade behind which we could deny that these attacks came out of the United States, Guatemala, or Nicaragua.

QUESTION: Why were they so sensitive about the fair name of Guatemala and Nicaragua?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, his concern was how much this particular operation might upset or antagonize the other Latin American nations by doing violence to one of the members of the OAS. He was deeply worried about the impact of this type operation conducted with our support and assistance which he felt was generally known, and he was especially worried about the air aspects of the plan.

QUESTION: With regard to the D-2 and the D-Day air strikes both of which were to be limited, did the Joint Chiefs feel they had an adequate plan?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I would say they regarded it as adequate; it was a reasonable air plan. I'd like to point out that the D-2 air strike was never expected to wipe out Castro's entire force. It was the D-Day strike which was the important one. The D-Day strike involved fragmentation bombs, napalm, .50 caliber machine guns. This was an all-out effort and one of the critical aspects of the whole operation. The air plans for Trinidad and Zapata were the same. They were the same for the reason that the targets were identical. In the examination of the Zapata Plan, we were merely looking at the location of the landing. The same number of aircraft were on the three essential airfields and the air plan was not considered to be affected at all as far as the D-Day strikes were concerned.

STATEMENT: I would like to make two points: First, there were three plans considered and the objection to one of the plans was the fact that the airstrip wasn't adequate. That same objection was not made in connection with the Zapata Plan. The second thing is that the Zapata Plan as it was originally considered, anticipated capturing this airport and then have the planes take off from the airport.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, sir. That's wrong.

STATEMENT: I'm just going by what the paper says.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Are you saying that these aircraft were supposed to fly from Nicaragua and then land and load up and take off and bomb and so on?

STATEMENT: I don't know. I wasn't there.

GENERAL GRAY: I think it's wrong to base that whole Zapata Plan on one paper because this was just the first cut at the Zapata Plan. After that the Zapata Plan was considered again and again over a period of time, and all this became very clear as it went on.

STATEMENT: Yes, I understand, but we're just talking about the beginning. The important thing is that you didn't turn one plan down because of the air strike situation, and yet you did turn another plan down because the air strike situation wasn't adequate. You didn't turn Zapata down because the air strikes weren't considered adequate, and yet the air strikes consisted of taking off after dawn.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I didn't think there was any material change in the air plan. The targets were the same regardless of where you'd land. On D-Day the air plan involved going after the Cuban air force; thereafter, they would take under attack any movements of troops to the area and they would attempt to knock out microwave communications stations on which the Cuban national communications were largely dependent.

QUESTION: What did you think would happen if you weren't 100 percent successful and didn't get a couple of T-33's?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: In war, you never expect 100 percent success. However, a couple of T-33s are not going to be decisive elements in an operation of this kind.

QUESTION: Were there any comments or discussion about the T-33s in particular?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I think I had information that they were armed, because we had been trying to get some kind of equipment against the Pathet Lao and we were considering what the distribution of T-33s was around the world. We saw that some of them had been armed as reconnaissance planes and it was suspected that the Cuban air force had armed theirs—but they weren't bombers.

STATEMENT: Yes, but they hit targets.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, but the T-33s didn't sink any ships.

STATEMENT: Yes, they did.

STATEMENT: No, not the T-33s. I think they were Sea Furies. A Sea Fury was the one that hit the *Río*.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I have a long list of the reasons why we preferred Trinidad to Zapata: It was more distant from Havana, the closeness to the Escambray Mountains, there was only one access road into the area; the nearest Cuban army unit of any size was 100 miles away; and considerable support from dissidents was expected in that area.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the importance of control of the air?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Absolutely vital to success.

QUESTION: Were the Chiefs satisfied with the plan of pre-D-Day strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We first talked about some strikes on the day before D-Day, but the D-Day strikes were regarded as critical. We were particularly interested in napalm, or I was, because I've seen the effects of napalm on aircraft when they're parked close together; also fragmentation bombs. Of course, elimination of the D-Day strike greatly eliminated the insurance against attack from the Cuban air force.

QUESTION: Were the Joint Chiefs of Staff involved in the cancellation of the D-Day air strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: They were not. It came as a surprise to me.

QUESTION: When did you hear about it?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: At two o'clock on the morning of the 17th of April when General Gray and General Wheeler came to my quarters on another matter. They said they had received a call from CIA urging that they get air cover for the beachhead on the 17th. It was then that I heard that they had cancelled the D-Day air strikes. On that occasion I strongly supported putting U.S. naval cover over the beachhead. I directed that Admiral Dennison be prepared to provide this cover. However, I recognized the major political implications involved and directed General Wheeler and General Gray to consult with the Department of State on this matter.

QUESTION: Was the request for air cover an attempt to neutralize some of the effect of the cancellation of the D-Day strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The way it came to me was that it was an urgent call for putting U.S. air cover over the beachhead.

STATEMENT: Maybe General Gray can tell us.

GENERAL GRAY: At the time I was called over to the CIA, it was about one o'clock in the morning. They informed me then that the air strikes were cancelled. Then General Cabell asked me if I would see what I could do to get air cover from the carrier. We eventually got permission for the early warning but not for the air cover.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the JCS as to the action of the landing force if it effected a lodgment but no uprisings occurred?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Those were the three alternatives: Go guerrilla in the swamps; conduct guerrilla operations from the Escambrays; or be withdrawn.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the ability of the force to go guerrilla?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It might not have been ideal country but it had been used, and it was believed to be feasible guerrilla country.

QUESTION: Did the JCS examine the feasibility of this course of action?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, no specific study. The Working Group studied the feasibility and presented it to the JCS on several occasions as being feasible.

QUESTION: What did they think of the effect of the swamp on the operation?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We felt that it assisted defense but it was also a double-edged sword—it aided defense but also made it more difficult to break out.

QUESTION: How did the JCS follow the course of the operation?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The Secretary of Defense and I attended briefing sessions held in the special war room which we set up for this operation. Then service liaison officers briefed their respective Chiefs with information from the war room. There was a continual flow of information from the war room and CIA. It came to our war room by telephone calls, and messengers from their war room to this one.

QUESTION: There was no electronic gear?

GENERAL GRAY: Many messages came by teletype and some by phone, and then we had an officer on liaison duty with CIA.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The Joint Staff met on the 17th and 19th of April and considered important action messages. On the 18th, Admiral Burke and I were at the White House for most of the day in conference, and we followed the operations from there. That's in general how we handled it.

QUESTION: Would you say this was satisfactory?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: If we were running the operation, no. But we were in a support role. We were primarily con-

cerned with logistic support. We arranged a rather elaborate extensive logistic support plan. We envisioned arming a hell of a lot of Cubans if the uprisings occurred. Our logistic plan was four or five times larger than the original. The Secretary of Defense was particularly interested in being sure that they had all the support that they could possibly require.

QUESTION: What was the understanding as to the ammunition situation at the end of D+1?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Our understanding was that it was critical. However, we knew there was ammunition on the LCIs and the LCU's, and there was an airdrop planned by CIA on the night of D+1.

QUESTION: There was one on D-Day night and one planned for D+1?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes.

ADMIRAL BURKE: We also tried to get some C-130s.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That is correct. We had some C-130s over at Kelly Air Force Base but they never got into the action.

QUESTION: Did the chairman know of the flight of the ships?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I sure did. I knew of all the attempts by CIA and CINCLANT to try and round them up.

QUESTION: What recommendations were made regarding U.S. help after D-Day?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, Arleigh and I were over at the White House when the question of using U.S. destroyers to pick up people off the beach was discussed. The feasibility and the need was discussed right there, and the decision was made to order them in.

ADMIRAL BURKE: We didn't know what was going on at the beach so we asked for reconnaissance, and the reconnaissance was approved.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The afternoon or night of D-Day

four B-26s were made available which we had been preparing for the Laos operations. Then four more were made available on D+1. In addition to that, we offered five T-33s and CIA accepted four. On D+1 action was initiated to use C-130s in dropping ammunition on the beachhead. The aircraft were moved to Kelly, the packing crews were on their way, and the crews were set up for the drops on the night of D+1 but they never went into action.

QUESTION: Why weren't the T-33s turned over to CIA on D+1?

MR. KING: I believe it may have been a question of getting pilots. We were short of pilots by D+1.

QUESTION: When did you sense that the beachhead might be going down?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: On the morning of D+2, I made a comment to the President that this was the time for this outfit to go guerrilla.

QUESTION: How were your comments received?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I received a surprise when Mr. Bissell said they were not prepared to go guerrilla.

QUESTION: This was the first time you'd known about that?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes.

QUESTION: That being the case, was there any discussion that we were going to lose the war or we were going to have to use the U.S. Navy? Was it realized that they were accepting defeat if that decision wasn't made?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I'm not sure it was put in quite those terms.

MR. KENNEDY: Could I add something? I don't think there was complete information—all the messages showing the critical situation were not transmitted to the President. However, there was general knowledge that there was a shortage of ammunition. We were told on D-Day that the ships had gone out 15 miles and they intended to come back in that night. The

President had said that day that he'd rather be called an aggressor than a bum, so he was prepared to go as far as necessary to assure success, but we were always about five or six or seven hours behind on our information. The next morning on D+1 we knew the ships hadn't come in for some reason we couldn't understand and there was a serious ammunition shortage. At this time there was no assurance whether it would be possible to hold the beachhead even if the Navy was ordered in. So at one o'clock Admiral Burke was instructed to send Navy pilots over to reconnoiter and send back a message stating whether they could maintain the beachhead. The message in reply stated there was no fighting going on, so there wasn't any point in going in that they could see. The next morning there was a message saying the beach had collapsed and they wanted to evacuate the men, so the President gave the order for the destroyers to go in, but by this time it was impossible to evacuate the men because the beachhead wasn't large enough, so then it was too late to do anything.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It wasn't just the question of committing U.S. forces and saving the war—it wasn't that simple. It was a question of whether or not the Navy could save it if you sent them in.

MR. KENNEDY: We didn't have any idea what the situation was there. The President said he used to walk around on that White House lawn thinking he'd like to do something if he knew what was going on.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This is just like all actions. The commander didn't have the kind of information that he'd like to have had.

QUESTION: What we're talking about is the difficulty, in fact, the impossibility of running a military operation from Washington. Was this ever recognized during the preliminary considerations?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The difficulty is that no commander could have made these decisions down there because these were decisions to commit the U.S., and the only place that decision could be made was right here by the commander

in chief. No matter where you had your command ship, you would still have to get the decision out of Washington because this was a decision to commit U.S. forces.

STATEMENT: That's very true. But I thought you might have a number of representatives of different departments on a first-class ship with first-class communications.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: But you would still have to rely on communications from the beach.

STATEMENT: The men on the *Blagar* had a pretty good picture of what was taking place, but that picture never was transmitted up here.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's certainly correct.

QUESTION: Were the JCS satisfied to have CIA conduct this operation?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: As far as we were concerned, the job was a covert operation and the JCS couldn't legally conduct a covert operation.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I couldn't find that you or anybody else ever raised the question whether or not CIA should have run this operation.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This thing started back in March of 1960, when this assignment of responsibility was made. I didn't get into it until many months after all of this had been decided.

MR. DULLES: I think some JCS representative was at that meeting at the White House.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't know. I wasn't chairman at that time. Maybe Nate was there. I was not there and I didn't know a thing about it, but nevertheless there were lots of times when various people indicated that this was something the military ought to run. But again it was a question of the disassociation of the United States.

QUESTION: Well, the JCS could have been just as disassociated as CIA was?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: How could you?

STATEMENT: Didn't you turn over the training of these people to people from Defense? The only difference would be the responsibility for the execution of the plan.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's one of the things we have to look at in the United States Government right now. Are we going to run this thing on a covert basis—I think we were trapped by words, by "covert."

QUESTION: Do you agree that an operation can be covert and still be conducted by Defense?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, we can. We've conducted some. I think you can do it with CIA provided you provide them with the military staff that they need.

STATEMENT: I think they had a lot of staff and they had what they needed.

MR. DULLES: I thought we did. We had 38 trainers down in Guatemala that you supplied.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, we did.

QUESTION: We would like to get your views on how you think paramilitary operations should be conducted in principle. Should we make the decision that covert operations of this sort be assigned to Defense?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I think the answer to this question depends upon the size, the magnitude of the operation that is involved.

STATEMENT: General Lemnitzer, we would appreciate it if you would take the time to give us your ideas on where the line should be drawn with regard to covert operations.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't see how you can have covert activities by armed forces. I think it's a contradiction in terms. We can have military people that are sheep-dipped and put them in an operation of this kind. But you can't just take

any officer and say he's going to be sheep-dipped unless he volunteers for it. He has family problems. The military would have a hell of a time contracting these people.

QUESTION: But there was no question of transferring it—no suggestion?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No.

QUESTION: What is your view of the accuracy of the evaluation of the effectiveness of Castro's force?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The evaluation of the navy was accurate; the air force, fairly accurate—it was inaccurate as to pilots' capabilities, and also regarding the guns on the T-33s; concerning the army, I would say that the information was not accurate. My information was that most of the tanks were up around the Havana area, and how they moved their tanks down there that fast without having some in that area, I don't know and I haven't been able to get into it because I've been away, but I would say the navy information was accurate; the air force, fairly accurate; and the army and the militia not too accurate in terms of reaction time and capability.

QUESTION: What impression did the JCS have of the likelihood of an uprising?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We had no information. We went on CIA's analysis and it was reported that there was a good prospect. I remember Dick Bissell, evaluating this for the President, indicated there was sabotage, bombings and there were also various groups that were asking or begging for arms and so forth. All they needed were arms and equipment, and the impression that we got was somewhat over-optimistic; particularly in light of measures that Castro took.

QUESTION: Can defeat be properly attributed to any deficiency in the intelligence?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I would say only to a degree. For example, the estimates of the possibility of the population rising up, and I don't think we estimated the effectiveness of Castro's control of the people.

QUESTION: May I just mention the attitude most of us have on that now. This is related to the fact that no call to rise was given, and that this was withheld until they could be sure that these people had someplace to go for support; so the idea of the uprising was never really tried.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I've seen all kinds of reports about the number of people they've put under arrest, in the stockades and so forth, which would have certainly inhibited any uprising.

QUESTION: How should a paramilitary operation be fitted into governmental machinery?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I think we ought to have a national plan for any one of these situations like we have for Laos. We have a man now who is Mr. Vietnam. He does the coordinating activities for the department and much more effectively than was ever done in the past.

STATEMENT: We have developed a little chart of the kind of things that we are considering. Would you like to make a comment on this?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This is about what I have in mind. With a permanent chairman with no other kind of job, you have the representation from the departments; knowing the nature of the operation ahead of time and determining which department has the paramount responsibility, the chairman should be selected accordingly.

STATEMENT: We visualized that this framework would be applicable to any situation.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, I don't think this would be practical. For instance, right now. We're enmeshed in Vietnam, Thailand, and Korea. You can be chairman of just so many things. No more than about one if you're going to do the job right. I think you'd have to have more than just one chairman.

STATEMENT: This overall chairman would get everything all straightened out, say here's your problem and send it to the President to make the decision.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Secretary McNamara has some strong views about this, but I pointed out repeatedly that I had seen this tried and the chairman can make the decision and then suddenly the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense finds that a big chunk of his resources have been allocated for something when he wants to put them someplace else, particularly when you get into the foreign policy field.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Then you feel it is good in theory but not in practice?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's right.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the Chiefs discharged their responsibilities as military advisors to the President in the course of this operation?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, I do feel that the Chiefs discharged their responsibility.

QUESTION: I mean as military advisors?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, I do.

QUESTION: Were the Chiefs ever consulted as to whether or not this operation was really necessary?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This question was resolved way back in the previous administration.

QUESTION: How do you feel situations should be handled when only the chairman is present at a conference?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Many times the chairman has to go to an NSC meeting and questions come up which he has to answer from a military point of view what the Chiefs would have answered if they were in body, but you can't have everybody at that level all the time. I think the chairman has to speak for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, generally speaking. On special occasions, I think all the Chiefs should be present.

MR. VARONA

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

MR. VARONA: There were many military as well as political aspects to consider in the course of our deliberations. However, I'd like to point out that the Council was not aware of the invasion; that is, the actual military aspects of it, and yet we believed that within our Council we had enough experience to have coped with the problems that came up.

QUESTION: Do you believe it would have been prudent for all the Cubans to have known of the secret plans?

MR. VARONA: No. Not all, but the top leaders should have. The grave problem was although the Cubans decided on given military leaders, these men were not accepted by the Americans, because the American advisors preferred to work with Cubans of a lower echelon. For example, we nominated Colonel Martina Lana to head the force but he was not accepted by the Americans.

QUESTION: You visited the camps and saw the military leaders that were in command?

MR. VARONA: Yes, but I was not satisfied with the persons in command because I didn't feel they were qualified military leaders. However, we were forced to accept the advisors' choice of leaders.

Rather than analyze all the errors of the past, I would just like to state that we would be in Cuba today if it was not for the lack of air support that our forces suffered. All those who've returned said that but for three airplanes, they would have been successful in their invasion attempt.

All those who have returned still want to fight. I think that every day we are losing strength in Cuba. In Cuba they looked upon the coming invasion with great hope and they pinned all their hopes on it. Then when they saw that the invasion resulted in a fiasco, their morale dropped consider-

ably. The repression and terrorism that has followed the invasion attempt has caused many of the people who would have been our supporters to go into exile. The internal fight in Cuba represents only about 10 percent of the problem because the people in Cuba will fight only if they have hope, and that hope is in an invasion from outside. We must rebuild their hope of an invasion. An invasion could still be accomplished. There is sufficient support within Cuba. Out of the 27 persons that our forces met on the beach, 18 joined the invasion force. This gives you an idea of the proportion of Cubans that want to be rid of Castro. I'd like to point out further that the demobilization of the camps at the present time gives evidence of defeat and failure, whereas with the recruitment of about 3,000 troops, with air cover, we would have an adequate force to do the job if Castro doesn't have MIGs and his 100 jet pilots who are being trained in Czechoslovakia.

The task of building this force could be started in camps in the United States, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, in groups of 200-300. I believe that this force would get the backing of the Cuban people and I believe that the Cuban Revolutionary Front does represent the Cuban people and has the backing of the Cuban people.

QUESTION: Should the council be broadened?

MR. VARONA: I believe that it is sufficiently broad at the present time. Every time you increase it, it calls for further increases.

MR. RAY

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: What are your impressions of the recent operation against Cuba?

MR. RAY: We knew it was wrong from many aspects. For instance, from a military point of view, the operation didn't go

deep within the people in Cuba. Many of the people that were in the force did not know what they were fighting for. Furthermore, the wrong impression had been created. It appeared to many people within Cuba that there was too much U.S. control and this developed in a large measure from the control of the two major radio stations that were broadcasting into Cuba from the outside. Also, within the Miami area, if one didn't work for the official organization, you could get very little support. In a country where there's much discontent, there's lots of motivation, and there are many who will help in an enterprise of this kind if the people believe in something.

We had a plan to take the Isle of Pines, but this was constantly postponed and we never got the supplies that we were supposed to. Later on we asked for help in the Escambrays, for airdrops between September and February, and during all this period we never received any airdrops. Then in early April we presented a plan of sabotage in Cuba which we call Cuban Flames. We felt we could be very successful in this because we had made a very deep penetration in the labor movement; however, we never received the support we needed for this either.

Now, following the invasion we are getting many materials. Before the invasion when we asked for arms it was difficult to get them, but now it's easier. We still believe that we can cause an uprising within Cuba amongst the Cuban people but we believe that the leaders must be developed within Cuba itself and that the force against Castro must develop within Cuba itself. We believe that the invasion concept was wrong. Another thing that was wrong with this operation was the fact that many of the elements in the invasion force represented the old army. We felt it was wrong to give the impression that the old army was coming back and we protested.

QUESTION: To whom did you object?

MR. RAY: To Mr. Carr and Mr. Bender.

QUESTION: What was Mr. Bender's reaction?

MR. RAY: I don't know. I really have no impression of any

reaction. However, I ended up believing that I couldn't trust him.

QUESTION: What was Operation 40?

MR. RAY: Operation 40 was a group that followed the invasion force, or it was planned for them to follow the invasion force, to organize each of the cities. It was outside of our organization.

With regard to the invasion plans, I remember talking with Mr. Varona and he said he wasn't satisfied but there was nothing he could do. He had no control. Furthermore, when we did develop ideas and plans and though we had an understanding of the plans, they were changed without our knowledge. Another thing we couldn't understand was why all the radios were tied to Batista.

QUESTION: Didn't you screen the people who went into the Brigade?

MR. RAY: We asked to be permitted to do this, but we were never granted this right. Later we protested the fact that Batista supporters were in control of the actual recruiting of people for the Brigade. We told Mr. Bender about this, but there were no changes.

QUESTION: Did you approve of Pepe San Román as the commander?

MR. RAY: No. Everyone knew that he liked Batista. His brother had also fought against Castro in the Sierra Maestra.

QUESTION: To sum up some of your reactions, is it fair to say that you objected to the composition of the invasion force because it was composed primarily of people who didn't know what they were fighting for or didn't care; and second, that there were too many Batistianos in the unit; and third, you feel that you didn't receive the support you needed to keep your guerrillas active in the Escambrays?

MR. RAY: That's correct.

QUESTION: What do you think should be done with the Council?

MR. RAY: It should be changed, and more weight should be given towards the attitude of the people on the council. There has to be a willingness to sacrifice and there should be less participation in the Council by the old-type political leaders. I believe that putting all groups into one organization is a big mistake. It's certainly dangerous in any underground organization.

QUESTION: Would it be possible to have a list of the Batista supporters that were in the units?

MR. RAY: Yes.

QUESTION: Don't you think there should be coordination amongst the various groups that are opposing Castro?

MR. RAY: Yes. However, we believe that the leaders of the efforts against Castro should be chosen on the basis of performance.

EIGHTEENTH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Eighteenth Meeting of the Paramilitary Study Group

Time and Place: 19 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Dulles
Admiral Burke (Witness)

Other Participants
Mr. King
Commander Mitchell
Lt. Colonel Tarwater

ADMIRAL BURKE

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

QUESTION: Do you have any recollection of what happened to the memorandum to the Secretary of Defense in January with regard to the national plan?

ADMIRAL BURKE: The Chiefs considered and approved the plan. They sent it forward to the Secretary of Defense where it apparently stopped.

QUESTION: Would you give us your evaluation of the approval of Zapata by the Chiefs?

ADMIRAL BURKE: When we considered the Trinidad Plan, we went into it in considerable detail. General Lemnitzer made the point at that time that we had to remember that this was not our operation and that what we were to do was to offer what advice we could and such help as we could. We couldn't treat this plan in any sense as we would a plan that had been our own because of great secrecy, nonattributability, and lack of a written CIA plan, all of which precluded the usual staffing. On the Zapata Plan, General Gray presented five possibilities—two were thrown out. We examined the three that remained to determine which was the best of the three, and we had a hell of a short time to examine them.

QUESTION: What was the air plan under the Zapata concept at that time?

ADMIRAL BURKE: The air plan was that some B-26 aircraft would land on the seized airfields and conduct air operations from these airfields immediately thereafter so as to give credence to an explanation that all air strikes originated from Cuban airfields.

QUESTION: There were no predawn strikes?

ADMIRAL BURKE: There were in the briefing. As you know, this plan was prepared very quickly. In the briefing it

was stated that two aircraft would touch down on the airfield on D-Day morning. The only difference between this plan and the Trinidad Plan was that since they had an airfield they could say that all the aircraft had taken off from within Cuba, but all the targets and the strikes remained the same.

QUESTION: Did the Chiefs approve this plan?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Technically, no; morally, they did.

QUESTION: Would you say it was given de facto approval?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes.

QUESTION: Would you describe your view of the JCS responsibility toward this plan?

ADMIRAL BURKE: The Joint Chiefs of Staff were responsible for evaluating and reviewing the plan that was placed before them. Looking back on it, we should have demanded a complete written plan, but we did have the responsibility for reviewing the ideas which were given to General Gray orally, and which he later transmitted to us orally. By this method of course there are some slight differences in our understanding. Our big responsibility was to make sure that they had adequate logistic support. We spent a great deal of time on this. I don't feel that the Joint Chiefs had any responsibility to determine the loading of the ships, for example.

QUESTION: However, if it had looked as though they had had an unfeasible plan, you would have volunteered your doubts, isn't that right?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes.

QUESTION: What about the air plan which turned out to be critically weak? Did you make any special judgment of the adequacy of the air plan?

ADMIRAL BURKE: In the early days of this plan I didn't think the Cuban air force was any good. However, after considerable argument with the other Chiefs I was led to the conclusion that this force had a better capability than I had originally believed.

QUESTION: To what extent had the Chiefs made a personal study of the plan of operation?

ADMIRAL BURKE: All the study that was done, except by General Gray's group, was done on a personal study basis by the Chiefs themselves. The emphasis on utmost secrecy did not permit the usual staffing.

QUESTION: Did you as CNO [Chief Naval Officer] make a separate study of this thing?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No. For example, my whole staff was Commander Mitchell. He was the only man who knew about this on my staff and he kept me informed on what he knew about the plan as it developed. The point I'm making is that the only complete study that was made was the one made by General Gray. We did, however, make certain recommendations. For example, they were going to sail to the objective area in a convoy. However, I said that this was unacceptable because any airliner that would fly over these ships would report a convoy approaching Cuba.

QUESTION: Was this as a result of a study outside of JCS work?

ADMIRAL BURKE: That's right. Naturally, I was looking primarily at the naval aspects of it.

QUESTION: Did you make as detailed a study of this plan as if it had been your own?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No. If it had been my own plan, I'd have had the whole thing laid out and had it staffed completely. That's one of the problems. This thing was so secret it wasn't staffed properly.

QUESTION: What was your view on the terrain for the guerrilla operations?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Trinidad was better for guerrilla operations. This plan I did not study enough. I accepted the fact, however, that it was guerrilla territory and we did talk a little bit about the similarity between this and Vietnam and other

places in the world where guerrilla activities were taking place, but we did not make any independent study of it. The Joint Staff did make a report that they had looked at it and it looked all right to them.

QUESTION: Will you comment on your view of the adequacy of the air plan as it evolved, including the D-2 and D-Day strikes?

ADMIRAL BURKE: None of the Chiefs felt that the D-2 strikes were good militarily, but they could see that it was an important aspect of the plan politically. The D-2 strikes were not built or designed to knock out any great amount of the Cuban air force. This was to be done by the D-Day strikes. We looked at this quite carefully. I recall that we were surprised that Castro had concentrated his tanks and aircraft on a few fields and left them there. We assumed these were concentrated because of his fear of defections, sabotage, and so on. The aircraft were concentrated on three airfields and they should not have been too difficult to knock out if we had used fragmentation bombs and napalm. Furthermore, the strike on D-Day would have created all sorts of havoc and confusion on the day of the landing so that it would have been very difficult for them to take off.

QUESTION: Did you expect them to use napalm?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes.

QUESTION: Did you think it was reasonable to assume that they would get all of Castro's airplanes?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No, we didn't think they'd get them all. However, the advantage of the D-Day strike was that it would create a great deal of confusion in addition to destroying most of the airplanes and the Cuban air force would not likely be able to launch strikes against the invasion on that day.

QUESTION: How did you plan to protect the friendly planes if you didn't get all of Castro's aircraft?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Castro's aircraft wouldn't have been able to take off. After a strike against an airfield you have to

go out and check whether there is damage to the aircraft, damage to the runway, and so on. There would be so much damage and confusion that they couldn't have taken off on D-Day.

QUESTION: Would you have then have complete control of the air?

ADMIRAL BURKE: You never have complete control of the air. You might have an enemy airplane over the beach now and then.

QUESTION: I still don't understand why no plans were made to turn over T-33s to these people.

ADMIRAL BURKE: I don't believe they had the range. If I were doing this thing again, I'd have them fly from Key West.

QUESTION: Did you regard the Joint Chiefs as defenders and spokesmen of the military aspects of this operation?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No. That's one of the unfortunate misunderstandings. We sent military people over to CIA, but CIA gave the orders, and they had the people, and they had control. We examined the plan and that was it.

QUESTION: Now, with regard to establishing the plausibility of aircraft operating out of Cuba, would you feel that the Joint Chiefs had a responsibility for arguing against that concept? Rather, do you feel that the Joint Chiefs should have registered a reclama on this?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes, and General Lemnitzer did protest.

QUESTION: When did you learn of the cancellation of the D-Day strikes?

ADMIRAL BURKE: On the morning of D-Day, after the strikes should have been made.

QUESTION: What was your impression of what would happen if the landing was made but there were no uprisings?

ADMIRAL BURKE: It was my understanding that the land-

ing force would go guerrilla. I never knew they had orders to fall back to the beachhead. The first time I knew that they were not prepared to go guerrilla was when Mr. Bissell made this point on the night of D+1.

QUESTION: How could you expect them to go guerrilla when they were under pressure on the beach?

ADMIRAL BURKE: The plan was that since the enemy could only come down the roads, and if the invasion force couldn't hold these entries into the swamp, they would fan out and become guerrillas.

QUESTION: How were you kept abreast of the conduct of this operation?

ADMIRAL BURKE: By Commander Mitchell, who was my liaison officer with the operation. He stayed at General Gray's shop and whenever anything happened, he advised me.

QUESTION: How clearly did you see the movement of the vessels on the critical night of D+1 and D+2?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Not clearly at all. I knew they had been ordered out of the area south of Point Zulu. I did not know that they had kept on going until in the morning.

QUESTION: Was it critical that these ships get in there that night?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes.

QUESTION: Were you aware of the decision not to send the ships back in there?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Not until it was too late. The trouble with running the operation from here is that it takes so long to get the information.

QUESTION: Why didn't the Chiefs comment on the obvious difficulties of control that would arise?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Primarily because the fundamental decisions in an operation like this had to be made at the seat of the government. However, I believe it would have operated

better if they had had an American commander down there, on a ship, in control and responsible for the overall direction of the operation with his limits of authority which would be carefully spelled out.

QUESTION: Would you remind us of the relaxation of the ground rules preventing U.S. participation which came about during the course of the operation—or perhaps we should ask Commander Mitchell to give us a tabulation on this?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes. That will be fine.

QUESTION: Did it ever occur to you that CIA really shouldn't be conducting this kind of an operation?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No, I never said anything about this because there was no other agency in government that could do it.

QUESTION: What was your view of the pre-D-Day accuracy of the effectiveness of Castro's forces?

ADMIRAL BURKE: I was surprised at the ability of Castro to take control of the people who might rise against him in such large numbers; and second, I was surprised that although the time and space factors were in accord with what could be done in terms of reaction by Castro, I was surprised that they were able to do it.

QUESTION: Would you agree that defeat cannot be attributed to intelligence?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No. I don't think so.

QUESTION: What is your view as to how these operations should be fitted into our government?

ADMIRAL BURKE: When you get into anything sizeable or anything that must be successful, it has to be put in the hands of military people, as a military operation.

QUESTION: Would you say that the transfer of the execution of this operation to Defense would have had any influence on keeping it covert?

ADMIRAL BURKE: I don't think it could have remained covert in Defense. In a military operation, many people have to know about it. At first there wouldn't be anybody talking about it, but eventually, three, four, or five months later, somebody would talk.

QUESTION: I would presume that you are saying that the military should be trained to conduct secret operations.

ADMIRAL BURKE: That's right, we do conduct secret operations.

QUESTION: Do you have any suggestions on how the United States can increase its capability for paramilitary operations?

ADMIRAL BURKE: All the services have to increase their capability for paramilitary operations above that needed for their own forces. Now we, for example, have underwater demolition teams, and we have lots of little tricks we can do. However, we have been teaching these things primarily for the support of our own units. However, we are increasing our capability now so that we can do more.

QUESTION: The question is how should we set forth our desire to expand our capability for paramilitary activities?

ADMIRAL BURKE: What we have to do primarily is to train other people in this sort of thing. However, we must keep in mind that the people we train can overthrow a government as well as support it.

QUESTION: What practically can we do through the DOD?

ADMIRAL BURKE: We can increase our capability to train foreign people.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the Chiefs discharged their responsibility to the President during this operation?

ADMIRAL BURKE: This is a most difficult question. My answer can be misinterpreted badly. According to what had happened before and under the way the Chiefs operated before and in view of the procedures which had been set up, yes, they did discharge their responsibility; but morally, they did

not. In looking back on it now, I regret several things very much, personally. I regret personally that I did not insist upon things that I felt uneasy about. I felt uneasy about being briefed instead of having something in writing so that I could wrestle with it. I regret I didn't do that. I should have insisted.

QUESTION: Do you have any comment on the old problem of the chairman representing the Chiefs at meetings?

ADMIRAL BURKE: No, I don't see how it can be done any better. Any chairman is bound to give an opinion on occasion with which the rest of the Chiefs don't agree. He has to give opinions off the top of his head. You can't have all the Chiefs at all the meetings, and General Lemnitzer does a very good job in debriefing, but of course he's pushed so hard sometimes that he can hardly keep notes. That's why when I'm acting chairman, I take someone else with me and tell them that their job is to take notes.

QUESTION: The first rules of engagement and the final rules of engagement for the Navy differed substantially. How did these changes come about?

ADMIRAL BURKE: The Secretary of Defense felt that the rules left too much room for interpretation at the lower level and stated that the Joint Chiefs of Staff should study the matter further and restrict the rules.

MR. DULLES: Just one point—I have here the intelligence annex to the operation plan. This is what I believe was used to brief the Brigade. I think it sets forth the enemy forces with considerable accuracy: "The nearest enemy combat forces numbering about 6,000 men are located at Santa Clara, about 70 miles northeast of the target area. It is composed of one infantry regiment, one tank battalion, one artillery battalion." Then there was the combat force Occidente stationed in the Havana area and numbering about 6,500 officers and men; and it was estimated that they could reinforce the area within a ten-hour period. While we don't state here how long it would take to arrive from the nearer concentration with the tanks, it was ten miles nearer than the Havana tactical force. So pre-

sumably, they could have gotten there also within the ten-hour period. So we foresaw that quite a substantial number of forces including tanks could get there within ten hours of alert.

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes. The surprise was that they came in force at the earliest time that they could possibly have made it.

NINETEENTH MEETING

[Entire meeting still classified.]

TWENTIETH MEETING

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Twentieth Meeting of the Paramilitary Study Group

Time and Place: 25 May 1961, at the Pentagon

Participants: *Investigating Committee Members*
General Taylor
Mr. Dulles

Other Participants

Dr. Miró Cardona

[]
[]
[]

DR. CARDONA

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.

DR. CARDONA: The Brigade was already established when I came into the picture. I visited the camp and found them to be a well-trained group. I thought very highly of Pepe San Román as commander and felt that all of the leaders were very good, but I felt they were a little too young. The morale of the Brigade was wonderful. I was afraid, however, that this small force would have very little chance against Castro's thousands. They then explained to me that we could count on 30,000 more, and that, besides, the invasion force would control the air. At this time I requested a military briefing on the invasion plans and they promised I would receive one as soon as I returned to the United States. However, this briefing never materialized. Also, when I was at the camp, I requested that I be permitted to leave Artime as the personal delegate of the council at the camp. This I was permitted to do.

Then on the 3rd of April, I went to the State Department to talk to Mr. Berle, Mr. Schlesinger, and Mr. Bonsal and we talked about the "white paper" and other matters. During the course of the conversation, they promised economic support for the rehabilitation of Cuba, and they also talked about propaganda matters, such as Radio Swan.

At this time I made the point that Radio Swan was controlled by people who were not in my confidence. On the 4th of April I was asked to give a press conference in which I would essentially declare war against the Castro regime. I said I didn't feel I should declare war when there were so few people in the invasion force. However, Mr. Berle stated that 15,000 additional people would be available. I expressed surprise at this, stating that Frank had told me that they would have 30,000 additional men. While no statements were specifically made as to where these men would come from, I assumed they would come from the United States Army.

After considerable discussion on this matter, Mr. Berle

said that on his word of honor, we would have 15,000 additional men. I said that that was good enough for me and that terminated the discussion on this point. With regard to the [] prisoners at the camps, I visited them and felt that only one or two were really undesirables, whereas the others were just Cubans, rebels against anyone in control. The place where they were confined was a horrible place and I was promised that they would be moved. Later on I found that they hadn't been moved.

On the Friday before the invasion I was very worried. I had no information on what was planned, I had no alternatives, and I didn't want to stop anything that was planned by the United States Government. Then, just before the invasion, General Barley told me a few things about the plan. Then at six-thirty on the morning of D-Day, we heard over the radio that the invasion force was going into the Bahía de Cochinos, and it made me and the rest of the council feel very bad. At this point the Council wanted to go to Cuba and ask for recognition as the official Cuban government. We made this request to Washington and waited all night long for an answer. However, later Colonel Baker stated that a B-26 had crashed on the airfield so that it would be impossible for us to get in there for the moment. I stated at this time that this was the moment for the United States Government to come in and help this operation, otherwise it would appear that the United States had abandoned the people who were fighting against Communism in Cuba, and I asked President Kennedy to go all out.

However, that night one of the U.S. representatives came to me with a defeat statement saying that the invasion force was going to the Escambrays to continue fighting from there. I said that I wouldn't sign it because it would make me responsible for something that I had known nothing about. At this point I requested to see Mr. Kennedy, and I was informed that some high officials would talk with me. The next morning, Mr. Berle, Mr. Schlesinger, and [] came down. I explained to them my view that it still wasn't too late; that this was the moment for the United States to come in with all its power; that there was already anti-American feeling in Cuba and Latin America, and that Castro would exploit this to the

maximum if the invasion force was abandoned. This in turn would result in tremendous repercussions throughout Latin America. I further stated that if the U.S. would now throw in the 15,000 people that they had promised, the Council would accept everything that had been done previously in good grace. However, this was not done and the force was defeated.

Following this, I was invited to the White House and when I went in the President stated that he had been responsible for the failure. At that moment, I felt that the past should be forgotten. The next day I prepared a memo asking the President to continue the war.

At this point, Dr. Cardona said that forgetting about everything, forgetting about the 15,000 men—what I can't understand is why Castro was bombed and then given 48 hours to recuperate and get ready for the invasion. In talking with the refugees and everyone who has come back, it seems apparent that but for three jets, the invasion force would have won the fight.

Then he went on to say—we have to do something now, avoiding the mistakes of the past, we should get on with the efforts to oust Castro. In my mind the solution is primarily in the recognition of a government-in-exile. The United States should not be the only one to recognize this government. Intervention in Cuba in the future should not be by the United States alone, but rather in conjunction with Cubans. I feel that the relations have to be from the U.S. Government to the Cuban government-in-exile. Then we could make loans, recruit men and raise an army, and obtain bases in other countries. This government-in-exile could also buy arms and make military alliances. The people want to go back to the training bases and raise another brigade and go to war. The only alternative to this is the Cold War and the Communists are the masters in the Cold War. We should go to war soon, otherwise Castro will spread throughout Latin America.

QUESTION: Do you believe the Council should be modified?

DR. CARDONA: No. I would also like to make it clear that I

am ready to continue serving Cuba in any way that I can, either on the Council or off the Council, in any capacity; but I feel that we have the pilots, we have the people, and we should get on with the project of ousting Castro, and this should be done in the very near future.

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Abbreviations

AWOL	absent without leave
BAR	Browning automatic rifle
BRAC	Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities
CAP	combat air patrol
CEF	Cuban Expeditionary Force
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINCLANT	Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic
CINCONAD	Commander-in-Chief, Continental Air Defense Command
CNO	Chief Naval Officer
CO	Commanding officer
CONAD	Continental Air Defense
C/WH/4	CIA, Western Hemisphere Division, Branch 4
CWIC	Cold War Indications Center
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
DD	destroyers
DOD	Department of Defense
DZ	drop zone
ETA	estimated time of arrival
EW	early warning
FRD	Frente Revolucionario Democrático
IDTF	Interdepartmental Task Force
J-3	Operations Officer of JCS
J-4	Logistics Officer of JCS
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
LCI	landing craft, infantry
LCM	landing craft, mechanized
LCP	landing craft, personnel
LCU	landing craft, utility
LCVP	landing craft, vehicle and personnel
LSD	landing ship dock
M/G	machine gun
Mig	Soviet fighter plane (<i>Mikoyan i Gurevich</i>)
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NSC	National Security Council

OAS	Organization of American States
O/B	order of battle
OCB	Operations Coordination Board (of JCS)
PM	paramilitary
POLAD	Political Advisory, Military
R&D	research and development
S-4	logistics section in Army brigade
SRG	Strategic Resources Group
TACLOG	Tactical Logistics Assistance Group
T/O	table of organization
TWX	teletypewriter exchange service
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
UN	United Nations
USIA	U.S. Information Agency
WH/4	CIA, Western Hemisphere Division, Branch 4