

# Cuba Invasion Organization, Planning Were Mishandled, Army, Air Force Officers Say

## Senior Military Men Believe Such an Operation Would Have Been Confused, With Needless Heavy Loss of Life.

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THE ORGANIZATION and command and control plans for an invasion of Cuba were mishandled and, if an invasion had been necessary, would have caused great confusion with consequent loss of life and delayed success, senior Army and Air Force officers contend.

On the trip with President Kennedy Monday to the stop at Homestead Air Force Base, the press discovered some new headquarters never heard of before. These were AFLANT ADVON and ARLANT FORWARD.

These designated the forward command posts for the Cuban invasion of two organizations not formerly known to be in existence: Army, Atlantic Fleet, and Air Force, Atlantic Fleet.

A fact sheet released by the Navy Atlantic command, said ARLANT is commanded by Gen. Herbert B. Powell, who is head of the Army's Continental Army Command.

The United States Army Forces Atlantic "is composed of units from the XVIII Airborne Corps . . . as well as infantry and armored divisions and their supporting troops."

AFLANT (Air Force, Atlantic) consists of the Air Force Tactical Air Command, or such units of it as may be needed for a particular operation. It is commanded by Gen. Walter C. Sweany Jr.

AN ATLANTIC Command fact sheet said, AFLANT includes bases and units throughout the free world, such as the 4504th Missile Training Wing at Orlando, Fla., the Special Warfare Center, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., Air Force crew training bases in Arizona and many others of similar lack of consequence to the Navy commander in chief, Atlantic CINCLANT.

Atlantic command announcements said the Atlantic command has taken over all the army and navy units at their training centers in the United States.

The Atlantic command is a unified command with military responsibility throughout the Atlantic ocean area, the Caribbean sea and part of the Indian ocean. It is almost exclusively a naval command. It controls no Army forces, because these have been taken out of Iceland, and only nominally is responsible for Air Force bases in Newfoundland, Bermuda and the Azores.

Adm. Robert L. Dennison, commander in chief, Atlantic, wears two hats besides that of commander of the unified command in the Atlantic. He is commander in chief, Atlantic Fleet, as well as supreme allied commander, Atlantic, under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

HE HAS THREE BOSSES: the chief of naval operations, the joint Chiefs of Staff and the supreme allied commander, NATO.

The Atlantic Command contains what is called Joint Task Force Four. It makes contingency plans for ground operations in the Atlantic such as the invasion of Cuba. Lt. Gen. Louis W. Truman, United States Army, commands Joint Task Force Four. He has only a planning staff.

But Joint Task Force Four does not appear in the preliminary operations for invasions of Cuba. Although preparations for invasion included Navy forces, Marine ground and air forces, Army forces and Air Force forces, there was no unification or unified command organization, in existence at the stage at which preparations ceased.

Lt. Gen. Hamilton Howze, commander of the XVIII corps and 101st Airborne Divisions was designated as the joint task

force commander, in addition to his assignment as corps commander for the Army landings. He would not, however, have had any authority until he landed, and then only over the Army. The marines would have operated separately. The Navy would have conducted operations in its own way until the Army was ashore.

THIS IS ALMOST precisely the methods that were prescribed in the late part of the official book, "Joint Army and Navy Operations." Unification has gone back 25 years.

The only co-ordination seems to have come from Adm. Dennison's headquarters in Norfolk, Va.

The Strike Command, a unified command consisting of Army and Tactical Air Force units, was organized in September 1961 to take command and plan for just such a contingency operation as could have come up in Cuba.

It does not appear anywhere in the show. The official explanation is that there had not been time for the Strike Command to take over the contingency planning for Cuba.

Marine and Navy elements necessary to such an operation as the invasion of Cuba were not included in the Strike Command. Thus it lacked the authority to control these elements and also the staff and authority to plan for their employment.

The Post-Dispatch asked Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara why Marine units and Navy amphibious ships were not included in the Strike Command. The answer was that they were already unified within the Navy. The answer meant that we have two sets of forces to do the same thing, with the larger and more important—the Strike Command—lacking the third arm essential for its contingency planning and operations.

The Navy Atlantic Command lacks the Army and Air Force staff to plan and control such a contingency operation as was required for the invasion of Cuba.

THUS BOTH commands were crippled when need arose, apparently as a result of service rivalry and competition for authority.

There was an entirely different sort of confusion in Washington. The civilian secretaries were trying to conduct the operation. It was they, and not the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were at the end of the telephone line giving orders. It is apparent to senior service officers that the secretaries do not yet distinguish between a military operation and a military undertaking.