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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

24 JUN 1960

SUBJECT: Probable Reactions to a US Military Intervention in Cuba

1. For the purposes of this estimate, we assume that:

a. The US military intervention in Cuba would be made in sufficient force to overcome, within a few days, the frontal resistance of the Cuban armed forces and to consolidate US control of the principal governmental centers and the primary means of transportation and communications.

b. The US would declare its intention to turn over the control of Cuba, as soon as possible, to a Cuban government responsible to the Cuban people, committed to social reform, and dedicated to the preservation of Cuban national independence within the inter-American community of nations.

Reactions Within Cuba

2. The Castro regime has made extensive preparations to resist a US military intervention. It apparently plans for both

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a strong initial defense against invasion and protracted warfare in the interior. A portion of the armed forces would be destroyed in the initial battle. Many of the remainder would probably surrender or desert when they realized the strength of the invasion and the hopelessness of further resistance. Substantial numbers, however, would continue a guerrilla resistance in the interior, according to plan. Their operations would be facilitated by caches of arms and supplies already established in relatively inaccessible areas.

3. Some Cubans would welcome the US military intervention as a liberation. At least as many more would regard it as designed to reimpose upon the Cuban people the yoke of "Yankee imperialism" and would accordingly be disposed to resist insofar as they were able. The great majority would be primarily concerned to keep out of harm's way and to avoid exposing themselves to retribution by either side in the continuing conflict.

4. The establishment of a representative and accepted Cuban government would be greatly hindered by the persistence of terroristic underground resistance in the cities, and by continuing guerrilla resistance in outlying areas. Out of fear as well sympathy, most Cubans would probably be disposed to cooperate at

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least passively with the resistance, unless convincingly assured of effective US protection. Although the overthrow of the present regime might be quickly accomplished, the pacification of the country, to the extent necessary to permit the development of a credibly representative alternative regime, might be long delayed.

5. In these circumstances, a prolonged US military occupation of Cuba would probably be necessary. Resistance elements would deliberately seek to provoke the occupying forces to take such arbitrary measures against the general population as would tend to confirm Cuban suspicions that the US intervention was anti-Cuban rather than anti-Castro, to the further detriment of the prospects for a satisfactory political solution.

6. Nevertheless, the bulk of the Cuban people would desire the restoration of peace, order, and national self-government, and the relief of economic distress. If the US was able eventually to establish reasonable security in most of the country, the inhabitants of the pacified areas would probably cooperate in the establishment of a new and more representative Cuban government, in part as the only effective means of obtaining the withdrawal of US military government. In this phase, however, the establishment of such a government would be hindered by the personal

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factionalism characteristics of Cuban leaders and the desire of all with political ambition to demonstrate their determination to protect Cuban national sovereignty against Yankee domination.

The International Reaction

7. The USSR would have no means to intervene effectively in Cuba with its own forces, and almost certainly would not resort to general war for the sake of the Castro regime. However, the USSR would exert every means of political and psychological pressure at its disposal to procure a universal condemnation of US aggression against Cuba and, if possible, a restoration of the status quo ante. To this end, it might make threatening references to Soviet missile power. Communist China and the other Bloc states would support these Soviet efforts. In the circumstances, there would probably be a first-class war scare, with panic among the neutralists and a high state of alarm in NATO.

8. Latin American political opinion generally would be shocked by a US military intervention in Cuba, regardless of sympathy or antagonism toward the Castro regime. Most Latin American governments would be glad to see Castro effectively disposed of, but would be constrained by domestic opinion to deplore

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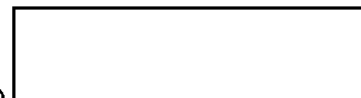
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publicly the US action. If forced to vote in the UN, virtually all would probably feel compelled to vote against the US. However, they might seek to forestall that embarrassment by proposing an OAS political intervention designed to get the US out of Cuba as quickly as possible, and at the same time to provide for the establishment of a democratic government in that country.

9. NATO governments would deplore the US action. Remembering Suez and other occasions, they would feel justified in voting to condemn the US. At the same time, however, they would work to find a political solution of the crisis, in order to reduce the risk of general war.

10. The Afro-Asian neutralist states would condemn the US military intervention in Cuba, and would therefore be disposed to support Soviet initiatives against the US in the UN, where their numbers count. At the same time, however, apprehension of the danger of general war might influence the more responsible neutralist governments to work for a political solution of the crisis.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES



*for*  
SHERMAN KENT  
Chairman

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