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DCI-1455 -61

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE IN FULL 1997

22 MAR 1961

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Director of Central Intelligence  
**THROUGH :** Deputy Director (Intelligence)  
**SUBJECT :** Cuban Reaction to Anti-Castro "Invasions"

1. Almost from the inception of the Castro regime in January 1959, it has systematically sought to identify the US with attempts to destroy the Cuban revolution and to replace it with a reactionary dictatorship like Batista's. After he had been in power only about a month, Castro implied a hostile intent on the part of the US when he told a reporter that if the US should intervene in Cuba, "there will be 200,000 dead gringos" in the streets.

2. Incidents, such as the October 1959 "bombing" of Havana (by planes that actually dropped only anti-Castro leaflets) and the March 1960 explosion of the French ammunition ship La Coubre, were magnified and distorted further to create the image of a hostile, aggressive US government. Every such incident was exploited fully in an attempt to (1) discredit the US and create sympathy for Cuba as a small nation bravely standing up to its powerful neighbor, and (2) to justify the military buildup in Cuba and the imposition of police state controls. A Cuban Communist leader later is reported to have explained that most of the important acts of the Castro regime, such as the seizure of private businesses and the

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socialization of the economy, were possible as "reprisals" against US aggressions, whereas it would have been politically impossible to take such actions "in the name of socialism." By January 1960, Castro was publicly predicting an "invasion" by counterrevolutionaries from the US supported by "imperialism" and called on Cubans to prepare for the sacrifices they must make to safeguard their revolution.

3. After the US cut the Cuban sugar quota in July 1960, Cuban reactions to US "aggressions" became increasingly strident and were accompanied by public assurances that Cuba enjoyed the decisive support of the Sino-Soviet bloc. Since July 1960, Cuba has made four formal appeals in the United Nations, where it has received strong Soviet Bloc propaganda support.

4. In its appeal to the UN Security Council on 11 July 1960, the Castro regime asked for consideration of the "danger to world peace" posed by "US aggressions" against Cuba. The Cuban complaint, prompted by the US cut in Cuba's sugar quota, also referred to the "repeated threats, harassments, maneuvers, reprisals, and aggressions" against Cuba by the US. The complaint was subsequently referred to the OAS, but only after Cuba had received considerable international publicity. The Seventh Meeting of American Foreign Ministers in Costa Rica in August provided Cuba with another opportunity to condemn US "aggressions" and this time Cuba

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publicly condemned other Latin American governments for their "servile" attitude toward the US.

5. The opening of the UN General Assembly in September, when Castro headed the Cuban delegation, provided another world forum for Cuban attacks against the US. Later in September, the development of anti-Castro armed resistance in the Escambray mountains provided the regime with another pretext for attacking the US. The landing of a 27-man anti-Castro "expedition" in Oriente Province on 5 October, evidently from Florida and composed of followers of the hated Batista henchman Masferrer, was used further to identify the US with the most discredited segment of the counterrevolutionary element. The expeditionaries were quickly captured and ten of them, including three American citizens, were summarily executed. A few days later, the capture by government forces of a number of guerrilla fighters in the Escambray area provided another opportunity to step up attacks on "imperialist maneuvers by the US." By October, Cuba was also accusing the Guatemalan and other "lackey" governments of Latin America of complicity in "US plots against Cuba."

6. The Cuban government reacted to the October, "invasion" and the capture of an arms drop in the Escambray area by again appealing to the UN. Foreign Minister Roa on 18 October asked for the inclusion of an item on the General Assembly agenda on the "various plans of aggression and acts

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of intervention which the US is carrying out" against Cuba. The next major "invasion scare" and associated propaganda campaign was developed in late December and early January when Cuba again appealed to the UN for discussion of an "imminent US invasion" of Cuba. On the reopening of the UN General Assembly this month, Koo again urgently demanded a hearing of Cuba's charges.

7. On 21 March, the Cuban government announced the capture of five members of another small "landing force", including one American citizen. Cuban reaction to the several "landings" that were discovered, as well as to the various flights over Cuba by "pirate planes" and arms drops, have not varied notably except that the 5 October 1960 "invasion" received more intense exploitation over a longer period of time, probably because its apparent association with the Masferrer group provided for more effective propaganda.

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Current Intelligence

Attachment: Annex

cc: DDCI

OCI/West:ABush:jb/4281 (22 March 1961)

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**ANNEX**

**"Landings" by anti-Castro exiles in Cuba**

**August 1959**

Trujillo-backed Cuban exiles in the Dominican Republic were lured by "double agent" William Morgan into landing in Las Villas province in a Dominican aircraft to support what they had been led to believe was a large-scale anti-Castro movement. After landing, nine passengers and the two pilots were killed or captured. Castro implied US complicity in the affair.

**5 October 1960**

A 27-man group, apparently composed of Masferrer followers, landed on the north coast of Oriente Province. They were captured in less than a week and three US citizens and seven Cubans in the group were executed.

**15 October 1960**

Three anti-Castro leaders, including "Hino" Diaz, landed on the south coast of Oriente Province and were joined by a number of peasants to set up guerrilla redoubt. Government discovered landing only some days after it took place and

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launched attack on guerrillas. Principals escaped.

February 1961

US Naval Base, Guantanamo reported widespread rumors of a counterrevolutionary landing on the north coast of Oriente Province. Government roadblocks in the area noted by Base personnel tend to confirm reports and subsequent references in Cuban propaganda to new "US aggressions" may have referred to this landing.

21 March 1961

The government announced the capture of five men, one a US citizen, who had landed on the north coast of Pinar del Rio province during the night of 20-21 March in an "arms laden motor launch." The American was identified as August MacKair.

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