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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM 10 March 1961
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Is Time on Our Side in Cuba?

1. We continue to hold to the view, last expressed in a memorandum to you on 27 January, that Castro remains firmly in control of Cuba and that his position is, if anything, likely to grow stronger rather than weaker as time goes on.*

2. To be sure, the regime's once overwhelming popular support has greatly diminished in recent months and various instances of guerrilla opposition, sabotage, and economic dislocation have arisen to plague it. However, we see no signs that such developments portend any serious threat to a regime which by now has established a formidable structure of control over the daily lives of the Cuban people. The militia is absorbing experience, training, and new weapons

*This was also one of the principal conclusions of our last formal assessment of the Cuban situation, SMIE 85-3-60, "Prospects for the Castro Regime," 8 December 1960.

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and is becoming a pervasive instrument for internal security, though the fully effective portion of it is likely to be much smaller numerically than its rumored gross size of 200,000 or more. Internal opposition, though widespread, still appears to lack sufficient organized strength, equipment and cohesion to provide a serious challenge. Moreover, Cuba's economic difficulties will probably not become great enough to jeopardize the regime. This year's sugar crop will probably be of normal size. In any event the Sino-Soviet Bloc can be depended on to provide such assistance as Cuba may need to stay afloat.

3. The prospects for effective international action against Cuba remain poor, even though Castro's appeal and prestige have declined considerably throughout Latin America since 1959. Most of the governments in the OAS are opposed to Castro on one account or another, but, with the exception of six which have no relations with Cuba,* there is extreme reluctance or unwillingness to participate in collective action on the Cuba problem. The hands-off policies of Brazil, Chile, and Mexico are of considerable influence in this respect.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

*El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti,
Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru.

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