

CU-296

Memorandum from the Central Intelligence Agency Operations Officer
for Operation Mongoose (Harvey) to the Chief of Operations,
Operation Mongoose (Lansdale)

Washington, July 24, 1962.

REFERENCE:

Your Memorandum dated 11 July 1962, Subject
as Above

1. Pursuant to reference memorandum and in accordance with our previous discussions, set out below are comments for inclusion in your overall report to the Special Group (Augmented) at the conclusion of the first phase of Operation Mongoose, 31 July 1962. In preparing these comments it was found necessary to defer finalizing them until we had an opportunity to review and check them against the 23 July 1962 draft of NIE 85-2-62, a copy of which is available to you.

2. BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS -Phase I:

a. On 16 March 1962, the Special Group (Augmented) approved Phase I of Operation Mongoose authorizing and directing that between that date and 31 July 1962, CIA mount a concentrated operational program to collect intelligence concerning Cuba and to develop, insofar as possible, clandestine resistance cadres inside Cuba. This plan authorized intelligence - political, economic, and covert actions, short of those reasonably calculated to inspire revolt within the target area or otherwise require U.S. armed intervention. The plan required that actions taken during Phase I should be consistent with overt policies of isolating Castro in the Western Hemisphere and be undertaken in such a way as to permit U.S. disengagement with minimum losses of assets and prestige. Major operations going beyond the collection of intelligence have required approval in advance by the Special Group (Augmented).

b. Phase I of Operation Mongoose did not provide for a maximum operational program against Cuba and did not authorize any extensive use of U.S. military personnel,

Source: Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda Series, Special Group (Augmented), Operation Mongoose, 7/62. Top Secret; NoFORN; Sensitive.

Not found.

The draft of NIE 85-2-62 cited here has not been found.

For the text of NIE 85-2-62, as approved by the USIB and circulated on August 1, see Document

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 Retain classification / change / classify to
 With concurrence of CIA + NSC
 Declassify in part and excise as shown
 EO 12958, Sec. 1.3 (2) (4)
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CU-296/2

bases, and facilities. No decision was made to undertake a phased operation to provoke a revolt with the commitment that such revolt would be supported by U. S. military forces.

c. Within the policy limitations of Phase I, it was hoped that the following would be accomplished:

- (1) The development of an effective functioning operational unit for the conduct of intelligence, psychological warfare and covert actions against Cuba.
- (2) The development in depth of hard intelligence coverage of Cuba.
- (3) [The establishment of limited resistance cadres inside Cuba and an adequate assessment of the resistance potential, as well as operational conditions affecting the possibilities of organizing and inciting a major revolt.
- (4) Keep alive, insofar as possible, the spirit of resistance inside Cuba and exploit any possibilities that appeared for the development of future Cuban leadership and revolutionary doctrine.
- (5) [Determine the possibilities of and, if possible, take action toward splitting the top Cuban leadership.]

d. During Phase I the following has been accomplished:

(1) An effective operational unit for the conduct of multi-purpose operations against Cuba has been established and is functioning well. We of 23 July, 477 CIA staff personnel are devoting full time to this effort. In addition, a very large number of additional personnel are devoting part-time efforts to Operation Mongoose.

[As?]

(2) Point c(2) above has been accomplished. Hard intelligence coverage of Cuba at the present time exists in depth and has increased substantially since the inception of Phase I. Through this coverage we now have an excellent understanding of military, political, economic and resistance conditions and activities inside Cuba as reflected only by

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numerous individual intelligence disseminations, but by the intelligence reflected in summation in the forthcoming NIE 85-2-62. [The plan for Phase I of Operation Mongoose contemplated that we would have established inside Cuba by 31 July 1962, [] controlled reporting intelligence agents, including legal travelers. In fact; we have at the present time inside Cuba [] controlled Cuban agents and [] third country controlled agents, a total of [] agents inside the target area. [] third country controlled agents, reporting substantially on Cuba, are located outside Cuba. A substantial number of these will in the near future be dispatched on missions inside Cuba. In addition, [] independent support agents are producing intermittent intelligence reports with some frequency concerning Cuba. The above figures do not include the extensive reporting from the Opa-Locka Intelligence Center, which is now totaling approximately 800 reports a month.]

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(3) With regard to Point c(3), we have been less successful. [The original maximal planning under Phase I contemplated that we would have infiltrated into Cuba by 31 July 1962 at least 23 illegal intelligence reporting and resistance cadre teams. By the conclusion of this phase, we will have actually infiltrated no more than eleven such teams. In addition, four caching operations and one 1,500 pound re-supply operation will have been completed. During August 1962, barring presently unforeseen operational failures or aborts, five more teams should have been infiltrated into Cuba, as well as two additional cache operations and one 3,000 pound re-supply operation. Our failure to meet the original schedule of team infiltrations primarily was due to two factors: (a) lack of policy approval by higher authority to make any extensive utilization of Department of Defense personnel and support, and (b) a series of operational failures and aborts due to weather, enemy action, failure of inside agents to keep rendezvous and, in a few instances, missions aborted by the Cuban agents involved for various reasons, including their dissatisfaction with U.S. lack of aggressiveness against Cuba. Since 1 April 1962, in addition to the operations involved above,]

1.2(a)(4)

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CU-296/4

19 maritime operations have aborted or failed due to one or more of the factors listed immediately above. Had we been permitted to mount a more intensive and aggressive effort, the original infiltration schedule probably would have been met, possibly exceeded. You will recall that it was pointed out to the Special Group in March 1962 that the full implementation of the operational plan for infiltration would require use of Defense facilities which were not subsequently, as a matter of policy, forthcoming. The speed with which and the extent to which we can in the future infiltrate black teams for resistance purposes into Cuba will of course depend upon policy approvals by higher authority and the amount of support we can count on thereunder. Although we have had losses in connection with the teams infiltrated, Phase I has demonstrated that we can successfully infiltrate such teams and that, given proper policy approval and sufficient support, we can greatly increase the resistance cadres and activities inside Cuba.]

1.3(a)(4)

(4) With regard to Point c(4) above, our activities, we believe, have had a substantial effect in supporting a spirit of resistance inside Cuba. This effect has not of course been as great as it would have been had we been able to mount a maximum covert action, paramilitary and psychological warfare operation. We have not been successful in developing an effective revolutionary movement or leadership around which a Cuban revolt inside Cuba could be rallied at the present time.

(5) [With regard to Point c(5) above, we have developed a number of promising leads to the top Cuban leadership, but no immediate current possibility of splitting it.]

1.3(a)(4)

3. OPERATIONAL ESTIMATE:

a. The operational estimate of conditions and possibilities inside Cuba is well reflected in the forthcoming NIE 85-2-62. In summation, based on the intelligence collected and our operational experience during Phase I, it is our conclusion that there is a sufficiently substantial resistance potential inside Cuba which, given a maximum operational effort, could be organized and incited into open revolt

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provided the Cubans could be assured that if they themselves revolted their revolt would be supported by U.S. intervention and that the U.S. would not permit it to be crushed by Castro's military and police counteraction. It is our opinion that there is an excellent chance such a revolt could be incited by late 1963 if we embark on a maximum operational program now. Possible dissatisfaction with the Cuban regime inside Cuba has materially increased over the past several months and is likely to continue to increase for some time. It is not likely to result in spontaneous revolt or in major widespread resistance without organized assistance and support from the U.S. The Military/Security/Police apparatus of the Castro regime is effective and its effectiveness can be expected to increase. It is and will remain, in our opinion, for the foreseeable future, capable of containing and eventually destroying the bulk of any unorganized, unsupported resistance or revolt which may arise in Cuba. If a revolt in Cuba is organized and incited, it will be destroyed at best within a matter of a few days if it is not supported by substantial military force.

b. With regard to the influence of Castro and Cuba elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere, the appeal of Castroism as such has dimmed appreciably in other Latin American states during the past several months, although there are many indications that Castro's Cuba is still active in subversive activities elsewhere in the Hemisphere, [including firm evidence that Cuba provided \$10,000 to the 13th of November Guatemalan revolutionary group in Mexico City.] It cannot be overstressed, however, that the Cuban regime has proven that violent social revolution and a break with the U.S. is possible in Latin America and will be supported by the Soviet Bloc without the USSR necessarily insisting on complete traditional communist control. The appeal of the Cuban example will increase in other Latin American states if reform lags and if hopes and promises remain unfulfilled. Cuba also represents and will continue to represent a danger because its subversive activities might at any time provide the spark that would set off explosions in unsettled countries, for example, Venezuela and Guatemala. In addition, Cuba represents of course the dangerous example of a communist regime within the Western Hemisphere in defiance of the United States and breaching hemispheric solidarity.

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CU-296/6

4. FUTURE COURSES OF ACTION:

Set out below are comments on the four possible future courses of action outlined in Paragraph 5 of reference memorandum:

"a. Cancel operational plans; treat Cuba as a Bloc nation; protect hemisphere from it:" If this course of action is adopted by higher authority, it will not result in the overthrow or probably in any material change in the Castro regime in the foreseeable future. If this course of action is adopted, the extent of effort currently being devoted by CIA and other agencies to Operation Mongoose should be reviewed and reconsidered and probably seriously curtailed. If this course of action is adopted, the U.S. Government will of course receive increased pressure from the multitudinous Cuban exile groups and will be faced with an increasing level of irresponsible unilateral Cuban actions based in and from the U.S.

"b. Exert all possible diplomatic, economic, psychological and other pressures to overthrow the Castro-Communist regime without overt U.S. military commitment:" This course of action, which is very close to that undertaken in Phase I of Operation Mongoose, is not likely to result in the overthrow of the Castro regime in the foreseeable future and unless it is intensified to the point of substantially raising the "noise level" inside and outside the U.S., its effectiveness is likely to be limited to the collection of intelligence and to the containing of Cuba at about the present level. If this course of action is adopted, certain portions of the present CIA effort probably should be terminated, [particularly the infiltration of black resistance teams, since without some phased plan for action these teams are being jeopardized to little purpose.]

"c. Commit U.S. to help Cubans overthrow the Castro-Communist regime, with a step-by-step phasing to ensure success, including the use of U.S. military force if required at the end.:" This is, in effect, the original operational proposal presented to the Special Group (Augmented) and disapproved in favor of Phase I on 16 March 1962. If this course of action is adopted, and if we are permitted thereunder in the immediate future to mount an all-out maximum operational effort to establish and support resistance

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CW-296/7

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inside Cuba with full covert use of military facilities and personnel, there is an excellent chance of inciting a revolt inside Cuba by late 1963. This would require maximal effort keyed to a phased plan and would require decision now to commit U.S. Forces to support such a revolt since, even if incited, such a revolt cannot be kept alive more than a few days in the face of Cuban military and security counteraction unless the revolt is supported by substantial military forces. This phasing is necessary too since, unless we can assure the Cubans that if they are able to revolt they will be supported, our chances of inducing them to engage in resistance and revolt to a sufficient extent to constitute more than an irritant to the Castro regime are remote. Details and specifics of the necessary actions to implement this course of action have been discussed with you on a number of occasions. Basic to successful implementation of such a course of action, and particularly the clandestine operational phases thereof, are a series of policy decisions by higher authority at the inception which would permit the operational units sufficient flexibility and freedom of action and decision within clearly understood policy parameters to effectively implement the operations involved on a phased basis.

"d. Use a provocation and overthrow the Castro-Communist regime by U.S. military force:" This course of action involves a policy decision by higher authority beyond the purview of CIA. If higher authority decides on this course of action, CIA is of course prepared to assist in developing the necessary provocation to justify such intervention and to assist in implementing this course of action with full intelligence and covert assets.

5. It is hoped that the above comments will be of some assistance to you in preparing your overall report on Phase I of Operation Mongoose to the Special Group (Augmented). It would be most appreciated if you would make available to us copies of your report to the Special Group in order that we may comment as appropriate. If any further details or comments from us would be helpful, please let me know.

(signed)

WILLIAM K. HARVEY

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