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UPDATING THE LOSS CAUSE

By Richard Barrett
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Miami
THE HAT and the special brilliance of the sunlight matched the mood of the huge crowd of Cuban exiles in the Orange Bowl in Miami on December 29, 1962.
The celebrated year span 40,000 throats was like a heavy air beating in the great stadium.

"General (war) Guevara!"
They were caught up in an emotional frenzy touched off by President John F. Kennedy who had, a moment earlier, presented the only thing of value the survivors of the Bay of Pigs had to give — the flag of Brigade 2506.
Deeply moved, the President declared: "I can assure you that this flag will be returned to the brigade in a free Havana."

To the Cubans, that impulsive promise was a liberation pledge. It was a step to a triumphant hope. The flag, the brigade's biographer Haynes Johnson has written, began to die when Mr. Kennedy fled. The process was accelerated by the preoccupation with Vietnam. Today, they have all returned, like the brigade itself. The exile community is splintered, leaderless, disillusioned and impatient.

THE FEW activists who remain for the most part regard the Government of the United States as a very good adversary, rather than an enemy.

Felipe Rivero, who drank Scotch with a beer chaser on the beach at the Bay of Pigs, as he fell in Miami awaiting action on charges of plotting "violent acts against Cuba."

Orlando Borge, head of the Revolutionary Movement for Democracy, Freedom and Justice (MURDJ), a unit of the Cuban Revolutionary Council for exiled Cubans in the United States, attempted gun-running, and conspiracy to take over Cuban sugar mills.

George Mas, an intellectual bomb thrower who runs the largest of the extracurricular organizations — SICKER (Cuban Resistance of Exiles) — speaks in a Windsor Inn backroom on West Flagler street over the hostility of American officials.

"They give Castro a security," he complains bitterly. "But they haven't. They seize our boats and our guns. Their agents (from the Immigration and Naturalization Service) spy on us all the time."

Ramon Domestico, a dentist, boatbuilder who dreams of a "solid" Havana to lead for the release of political prisoners, is frustrated with a five-year prison sentence if he returns out his plan. Immigration Service agents follow him at least a day to frustrate his scheme.

THE MORE substantial figures associated with the movement — many of them military heroes — have slipped out of sight. At least two were committed to mental hospitals. Others have been discredited by time and events.

Ernesto Guevara, who was to have been the minister of education and internal affairs if the Castro regime had fallen in 1961, lost his and intelligence in 1962. He is now a lowly investigator at the National Archives, civil servant of the Bay of Pigs contingent, suffering a similar fate. He is now said to be in the restaurant business in Florida.

Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, a guerrilla warfare theoretician, was captured and jailed in Cuba when he attempted to translate his theories into practice. He is now in a government prison.

Only Ernesto Ojeda, second in command of Brigade 2506, retains his old prestige. But he is so busy with his own organization that he has no time to assume a military command and lead his followers to the United States directly.

AN AMERICAN intelligence official, sitting in a conference room, compares the Cuban movement to the Polish exiles in London. He says the Cuban exiles, like the Polish, are "a very small, very tight-knit group of all exiles." They speak the same language and have the same goals. They have no effect on the Cuban government and no ability to work together.

Another official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation says he is convinced that the Cuban exiles are "a very small, very tight-knit group of all exiles."

SHOULD WE INVESTIGATE? OR SHOULD WE SUPPORT THE POLITICAL POLICY THROUGH?

intelligence work" is equally harsh and equally difficult in his judgments.
"The ability of the exiles to influence the course of affairs in Cuba is nil. Their input has absolutely no effect."

The "input" to which he referred consists of isolated and unproductive acts of terrorism, carried out with great infrequency and conspicuous clumsiness.

There is no visible evidence that the CIA is encouraging, financing or arming exiles. The terrorists' groups such as Armando Fletes' second front, Orlando Spinks' International Movement, Alpha 66 and Jorge's Mas's RECE have been to mouth operate on emotional impulses and are subject to continual harassment by American authorities.

U. S. OFFICIALS estimate that the largest of the groups — RECE — has no more than 800 or 900 active members at the present time, although Mas has 15,000 applicants for the "Liberation Army" locked up in his cell.

Ojeda, who has no visible means of support but travels extensively in Latin America and turns aside questions about his connection with the U.S. Government, is confident that an army of 40,000 or 50,000 exiles could be raised with no great difficulty.

Ojeda, he says, can be liberated only by Cubans and other Latin Americans. He believes there is no place for American troops in such an undertaking, although American arms would be necessary.

Both Ojeda and Jorge Mas of RECE believe that Castro is stirring up trouble throughout Latin America and is actively encouraging the Negro "revolt" in the United States.

As a result, they believe collective military action against Castro will one day become a necessity. Mas thinks that day may be close at hand.

"You have lost the war in Vietnam," he declares. "You have lost the war on Poverty. You have failed and miserably in your cities. The only place the U.S. can rebuild its prestige is in Cuba. We do not ask for U.S. troops. We only want a change in policy to help Cuban freedom."