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Bad Guess on Castro Power Held Cause of 'Pigs' Failure

Associated Press

A former high-ranking CIA officer says the major cause of the failure of the 1961 Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion was "a complete miscalculation by the CIA operators of what was required to do the job."

By the eve of the ill-fated landing, Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr., adds, many were pessimistic about its chances—but went ahead anyway in belief a last-minute cancellation would have worse consequences than a failure.

As it turned out, he says, Havana's Red forces proved so much stronger and more loyal than the CIA operators had predicted that the 1443-man invading brigade would probably have lost "even if Castro had not had airplanes or tanks."

Kirkpatrick, now a professor at Brown University, writes of his 23-year career in the cloak-and-dagger business in "The Real CIA" (Macmillan, \$6.95), one of the few books published

by senior officials with inside knowledge of the Central Intelligence Agency.

As CIA's inspector general for eight years, he was picked by the then intelligence chief, Allen Dulles, to conduct a thorough post-mortem within the agency.

Kirkpatrick concludes that the Bay of Pigs attempt met catastrophe not because of CIA itself, but failure to use what was available within CIA for an objective intelligence judgment divorced from those carrying out the operation.

It was essentially the same group of people processing the intelligence, planning the operation, "selling the project to the policymakers, and finally directing the final effort," he says.

"If there had even been a moment during the battle when the Cuban exile brigade had been near to achieving victory, then we might be able to

say that it had been close; in my opinion, the outcome was never close," Kirkpatrick writes.

Kirkpatrick absolves the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff from major blame.

He also shunts aside claims that Adlai E. Stevenson, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and others opposed to the invasion had torpedoed it by persuading President Kennedy to call off a planned second air strike by the free Cubans.

When the air strike was called off just ahead, he writes, "the landing could have been recalled."

But the 'operators' had a very strong conviction that if for any reason the operation did not go through, the Cuban brigade would either act on its own, or mutiny; or create such a disturbance that it would be more dangerous than even a failure of the operation."