

military naturally responded with delight to all overtures and even, on occasion, were able - as in the case of anti-submarine warfare - to play off the United States Navy against the United States Air Force to get the best possible weapons deal.

p.200 All this had political and economic side effects. United States military aid obviously gave the recipient governments prestige and their military forces power. The service attaches in United States embassies often disagreed with the policies of the Department of State and on occasion communicated the impression that Washington would not really object to actions the local American ambassador might be trying to stop. A few days before Kennedy's inauguration, General Lemnitzer, the amiable chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had signed a letter to General Stroessner of Paraguay thanking him in terms of extravagant personal encomium for the Christmas gift of a table cloth; his language cheerfully endowed the Paraguayan dictatorship with "Christian spirit" and "moral might". Such gestures were somehow inconsistent with the spirit of the task force report.

For their part, democratic Latin American leaders began to use the United States arms program as a means of warding off right-wing coups, appeasing their own military and purchasing time for social reform. Thus Frondizi, who ruled on the sufferance of the Argentine military, hoped to placate his generals and admirals by backing their requests for United States arms. Even Betancourt, confronted by Castro, Trujillo and internal unrest, was determined to make sure of his own army by getting his generals the arms they wanted from the United States. This, of course, encouraged military demands on national budgets: Brazil, Peru, Chile and Argentina were all devoting a quarter or more of their annual expenditures to military purposes.

By 1961 the special interests of the military were threatening to distort United States policy much as the special interests of business had distorted policy thirty-five years earlier. Still, even in the Eisenhower administration, the counterrevolutionary case had been a minority view, and in the new administration it had even less hope. After all, the thesis that force was the only thing the Latinos respected was not exactly untested; it was nothing more than a return to the old policy of the Big Stick; and its chief result when tried before had been to make the United States an object of universal detestation. ...

p.201 Nonetheless, pressure for a revival of the policy stirred beneath the surface. The chief voice of the counterrevolutionary line within the government was Admiral Arleigh Burke, who represented the Navy on the Joint Chiefs. Like Lemnitzer, he was an amiable man, but with less flexibility of mind, and he pushed his black-and-white views of international affairs with bluff naval persistence. He had opposed the decision of the Eisenhower administration to support OAS sanctions against Trujillo, and he took every opportunity to advocate full support for all anti-communist regimes, whatever their internal character. For men of Burke's persuasion, talk of an alliance for progress could only seem bleeding-heart, do-good globaloney.

It was here that Adolf Berle made an essential contribution. For Berle, with all his ardor for democracy and development, comprehended also, in another part of his nature, the shadowy world of intrigue, conspiracy and violence. He had an extensive knowledge of communist movements and a vivid apprehension of communist dangers. He was therefore able to give the new social initiatives an edge of 'toughness' which, while it was kept strictly separate from the Alliance for Progress, was still able to protect the idea of the Alliance from those for whom anti-communism was the only issue (as well as in time protect the operations of the Alliance from the communists who sought to destroy it.) This

ability to combine awareness of the communist threat with a belief in social revolution was possibly one reason why Kennedy asked Berle to join the administration.

But the revolutionary point remained primary. For Kennedy fully understood - this was, indeed, the mainspring of all his thinking about Latin America - that, with all its pretensions to realism, the militant anti-revolutionary line represented the policy most likely to strengthen the communists and lose the hemisphere. He believed that, to maintain contact with a continent seized by the course of revolutionary change, a policy of social idealism was the only true realism for the United States.

p.202 Moreover, the professionals mistrusted the new approach to Latin America and were even apprehensive about the phrase "Alliance for progress" in the inaugural address. But Mann had played a useful role in helping move hemisphere policy forward in the Eisenhower years; and, though he had an old Latin American hand's skepticism about the grandiose schemes of the New Frontiersmen and, on occasion, even responded a little to the crotchets of Admiral Burke, he was a good bureaucrat and ready enough to go along.

Berle and Mann convened the reconstituted Task Force in February. On February 16, Berle again defined the issue - "to develop policies and programs which would channel the revolution now going on in Latin America in the proper direction and to prevent it from being taken over by the Sino-Soviet bloc." ...

p.204 We know that Latin America cannot go through the same stages which capitalistic development passed in the course of its historic evolution. We are likewise disturbed at the thought of imitating methods which pursue their economic objectives at the cost of fundamental human freedoms. Latin America still has time to avoid this, but not much time.

(Latin American Task Force, 4/61)

p.205 The task was to create an American civilization "where, within the rich diversity of its own traditions, each nation is free to follow its own path towards progress." His peroration was thrilling:

Let us once again transform the American continent into a vast crucible of revolutionary ideas and efforts - a tribute to the power of the creative energies of free men and women - an example to all the world that liberty and progress walk hand in hand.

It was an extraordinary occasion. The people in the East Room came suddenly alive as the young President spoke his words of idealism and purpose. There was strong applause. Goodwin and I circulated among the group as it dispersed. One found still a measure of doubt and cynicism, but most people were deeply moved. The Venezuelan Ambassador took my arm and said urgently, "We have not heard such words since Franklin Roosevelt." The future of the hemisphere did seem bright with hope.

p.207 It was already apparent ~~that~~ that the key men around the President, so far as policy was concerned, were Theodore Sorensen and McGeorge Bundy.

p.212/3 The mood of the new Washington was ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~New~~ ~~Franklin~~ ~~xxxx~~ ~~the~~ more to do things because they were rational and necessary than because they were just and right, though this should not be exaggerated. In the thirties idealism was sometimes declared, even when it did not exist; in the sixties, it was sometimes deprecated, even when it was the dominant motive.

The New Frontiersmen had another common characteristic: versatility. They would try anything. Most had some profession or skill to which they could always return; but ordinarily they used it as a springboard for general meddling. Kenneth Galbraith was an economist who, as ambassador to India, reviewed novels for The New Yorker and wrote a series of pseudonymous satiric skits for Esquire. Bill Walton was a newspaperman turned abstract painter. This was especially true in the White House itself. Where Eisenhower had wanted a staff with clearly defined functions, Kennedy resisted pressures toward specialization; he wanted a group of all-purpose men to whom he could toss anything. It seemed to me that in many ways Dick Goodwin, though younger than the average, was the archetypal New Frontiersman. His two years in the Army had been too late for the war, even too late for Korea. But he was the supreme generalist who could turn from Latin America to saving the Nile monuments at Abu Simbel, from civil rights to planning the White House dinner for the Nobel Prize winners, from composing a parody of Norman Mailer to drafting a piece of legislation, from lunching with a Supreme Court Justice to dining with Jean Seberg - and at the same time retain an unquenchable spirit of sardonic liberalism and an unceasing drive to get things done.

.... One could not deny a sense of New Frontier autointoxication; one felt it oneself. The pleasures of power, so long untasted, were now being happily devoured - the chauffeur-driven limousines, the special telephones, the top secret documents, the personal aides, the meetings in the Cabinet Room, the calls from the President. Merriman Smith, who had seen many administrations come and go, wrote about what he called the New People: "hot-eyed, curious but unconcerned with protocol, and yeasty with shocking ideas . . . they also have their moments of shortsightedness, bias, prejudice and needlessly argumentative verbosity." The verbosity, I have suggested, was marked only in comparison with the muteness of the Eisenhower days; but the rest was true enough, especially in these first heady weeks.

p.208/9 For his part, McGeorge Bundy treated Sorenson and his relationship with Kennedy with invariable consideration. Bundy possessed dazzling clarity and speed of mind - Kennedy told friends that, next to David Ormsby Gore, Bundy was the brightest man he had ever known - as well as great distinction of manner and unlimited self-confidence. I had seen him learn how to dominate the faculty of Harvard University, a throng of intelligent and temperamental men; after that training, one could hardly doubt his capacity to deal with Washington bureaucrats. Though professionally a Republican, he had supported Kennedy in 1960. On issues, his mind was trenchant and uninhibited. On personalities, an instinctive commitment to the Establishment, of which he was so superb a product, was tempered by a respect for intelligence wherever he could find it. He had tremendous zest and verve. He never appeared tired; he was always ready to assume responsibility; and his subordinates could detect strain only when rare flashes of impatience and sharpness of tone disturbed his usually invincible urbanity. One felt that he was forever sustained by those two qualities so indispensable for success in government - a deep commitment to the public service and a large instinct for power.

PP. 1215/6

Much has been written about that revolution, its origins and its objectives. Jean-Paul Sartre and C. Wright Mills, who visited Cuba in 1959-60, later proclaimed that the revolution was a peasant uprising, caused by conditions of intolerable poverty, and despair in a wretchedly underdeveloped country. In fact, as more careful writers like Theodore Draper and Hugh Thomas have pointed out, Cuba was hardly in so hopeless a shape. It was, indeed, the perfect test of the Eisenhower theory that unhampered private investment was Latin America's road to salvation. It stood fourth among Latin American nations in per capita income, fifth in manufacturing, first in per capita distribution of automobiles and radios. It ranked near the top in education, literacy, social services and urbanization. These aggregate statistics, however, concealed shocking disparities in the distribution of wealth, especially as between city and countryside and between white and Negro. There was enough wealth about to reveal to all how agreeable wealth might be. The statistics also - along with the popularity of ~~the~~ Havana cigars - concealed the extent to which the Cuban economy depended on a single industry, sugar, which not only was at the mercy of world markets but was itself then in a state of decline. Still, if Cuba had serious economic problems and, compared to the United States, a low standard of living, it was quite well off compared to Haiti or Bolivia. The immediate motives behind the revolution were as much political as economic, and the revolutionaries themselves were members of the middle class rather than peasants or workers.

p.216/7

Cuba's history as an independent republic had been a drama of acute and chronic political frustration. One crowd after another had come to power on promises of progress and regeneration only to go out in orgies of graft and plunder. Dr. Carlos Prío Socarras, who had presided over a genial regime of social reforms and political corruption until Batista overthrew him in 1952, once visited my office in the White House and observed with a certain dignity, "They say that I was a terrible president of Cuba. That may be true. But I was the best president Cuba ever had." That may be true too. By the late 1950s a feeling was spreading through the intellectual community and the professional and even business classes that life was becoming intolerable - the sugar industry was deteriorating, the educational system was decaying, illiteracy was increasing, and Batista was keeping himself in power only by a mounting use of repression, corruption and violence.

This feeling of political and social disgust produced a passion for change. In its origins, the Cuban Revolution was led by professional men and intellectuals (like the Castro brothers and Ernesto Guevara, the Argentine physician) and subsidized by businessmen and landowners. As Blas Roca, secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, admitted in 1959, "The armed struggle was initiated by the petty bourgeoisie."^o The avowed aim was to establish a regime pledged to carry out the liberal constitution of 1940, which provided for free elections, civil liberties and agrarian diversification and reform. This aim enlisted wide backing throughout the country. At the start of 1957 Castro had been the leader of a beleaguered band of a dozen men hiding out in the hills; at the end of 1958 he entered Havana in triumph. He did this, not because he defeated Batista's 40,000 soldiers on the battlefield - at the moment of victory, his own force numbered less than two thousand men - but because of the withdrawal of support from Batista's government on the part of most of the people and most of the army. The Havana underground, brilliantly organized by a radical young engineer named Manuel Ray, completed the work Castro had begun in the Sierra Maestra.

^o World Marxist Review, August 1959.

p.217 To what extent did Castro at this point conceal secret communist purposes? He later said that he hid radical views in order to hold the anti-Batista coalition together, and this was probably true. But, though a radical, there is no conclusive evidence that he was then a Communist or even a Marxist-Leninist. Whatever he later became, he began as a romantic, left-wing nationalist - in his own phrase, a "utopian Socialist." He had tried to read Das Kapital at the University of Havana but, according to his own account, bogged down on page 370. When he made his first assault on the regime - the attack on the Moncada barracks on July 26, 1953 - the Partido Socialista Popular, the Cuban Communist Party, still had relations with Batista. It should not be forgotten that in 1943 Batista had appointed to his cabinet the first avowed Communists ever to hold cabinet posts in any American government; one of them - Carlos Rafael Rodriguez - was in Castro's government twenty years later. Even when the Communists broke with Batista, they continued to condemn Castro as "bourgeois" and a "putschist," adolescent and irresponsible. They refused to believe the situation 'ripe' for revolution. Javier Pazos, the son of Castro's first head of the Bank of Cuba, who served as an officer on Castro's staff in the Sierra Maestra until he was captured by Batista in early 1958, wrote, "The Fidel Castro I knew . . . was definitely not a Marxist. Nor was he particularly interested in social revolution. He was, above all, a political opportunist - a man with a firm will and an extraordinary ambition. He thought in terms of winning power and keeping it."^o

^o Javier Felipe Pazos Vea, "Cuba - 'Long Live the Revolution!'" New Republic, November 3, 1962.

p.218 . . . Fidel was accustomed to running a guerrilla band, not a government. He had slogans but no program. He was an exciting figure, with his black beard, his flashing eyes, his inexhaustible flow of pungent and philosophical rhetoric, his sympathy and his audacity, and he had an adoring personal following, but a personal following was no substitute for an organization. . . . This was the Communist Party. Fidel's younger brother Raul and Guevara, who had long had close relations with the Communists, no doubt helped move Fidel in this direction. Now that he had won his power, the Communists offered him the means of keeping it and using it.

p.221 The State Department grew obsessed with the problem of getting American citizens proper indemnification for expropriated land and business; Havana construed this as the anticipated enmity of American business to Cuban reform. Washington became disturbed over Castro's nonstop anti-Yanqui orations; Havana complained about exile bombing raids apparently launched from private airfields in Florida. ... But ~~Ransom~~ Bonsal still advocated a policy of moderation in order to make it more difficult for Castro to rush to the other side. If the United States played the role Castro had cast for it, Bonsal felt, it would only fulfill Castro's purposes.

p.222

Others in Washington - especially Vice-President Nixon, who had met Castro during his Washington visit and distrusted him from the start - wanted a more aggressive policy, if only on a contingency basis. But as late as January 1960 the United States government made a new effort to reach an understanding, using Dr. Julio A. Amoedo, the Argentine ambassador to Havana and a personal friend of Castro's, as the intermediary. There appears to have been still another attempt in March through Rufo Lopez Fresquet. On the morning of March 17, 1960, President Dorticos rejected this last United States overture. Lopez Fresquet responded that he had remained as Finance Minister only on the assumption that the Cuban government wanted to compose its differences with Washington; if Castro thought no reconciliation possible, then, Lopez Fresquet said, he wanted to resign. Dorticos immediately accepted his resignation. On the same day in Washington President Eisenhower agreed to a recommendation from the CIA to train a force of Cuban exiles for possible use against Castro.

But Washington still declined to use the weapons of economic pressure which lay so easily at hand. It was not until July 1960, long after Castro had effected the substantial communization of the government, army and labor movement and had negotiated economic agreements with Russia and China, that the United States took public retaliatory action of a major sort. The suspension of the balance of Cuba's 1960 sugar quota (that same quota which Guevara had already denounced in March as "economic slavery") was the conclusion, and not the cause, of Castro's hostility. Or rather it was not quite the conclusion. Washington did not finally break off diplomatic relations until January 3, 1961, and then because of Castro's scornful demand that the staff of the Havana Embassy be reduced to eleven people in forty-eight hours.

p.223 And it was true that revolutionary Cuba had a reckless and anarchic verve, unknown in any other communist state, that it had abolished corruption, that it was educating and inspiring its people, that it had exuberantly reclaimed a national identity, that it was traduced and slandered in the foreign press - and these truths blotted out harsher truths and subtler corruptions. So C. Wright Mills, after stating the revolutionary case in an angry book: "Like most Cubans, I too believe that this revolution is a moment of truth." So Jean-Paul Sartre: "I do not see how any people can propose today a more urgent goal nor one more worthy of its efforts. The Cubans must win, or we will lose all, even hope." As Castro's dictatorship within Cuba was a fact, so too was the faith men of good will outside Cuba vested in him.

p. 224

How much was the Eisenhower administration to blame for all this? Cuba, of course, was a highly tempting issue; and as the pace of the campaign quickened, politics began to clash with Kennedy's innate sense of responsibility. Once, discussing Cuba with his staff, he asked them, "All right, but how would we have saved Cuba if we had the power?" Then he paused, looked out the window and said, "What the hell, they never told us how they would have saved China." In that spirit, he began to succumb to temptation.

He made his most extended statement in a speech at Cincinnati in early October. He began by appearing to adopt the thesis that the State Department should have listened to its pro-Batista ambassadors and recognized the revolution as a communist conspiracy from the outset. This differed markedly from his interpretation in The Strategy of Peace. Doubtless it was campaign oratory. Though Earl Smith was an amiable gentleman and old friend from Palm Beach, Kennedy did not regard him as an oracle on Cuba. He had remarked at Hyannis Port in August, "Earl Smith once said to me that the American Ambassador was the second most important man in Cuba. What a hell of a note that is! Naturally those conditions couldn't last." (Smith also made his remark about "the second most important man in Cuba" publicly, stimulating President Dorticos of Cuba to congratulate a Cuban audience on now having "the privilege of living in a country where the United States Ambassador means little.")

p. 225 The more substantial part of the Cincinnati speech - and the part which I believe more faithfully reflected Kennedy's views - condemned the Eisenhower policy toward Cuba on quite different grounds. In the years before Castro, Kennedy charged, the administration had declined "to help Cuba meet its desperate need for economic progress"; it had employed "the influence of our Government to advance the interests and increase the profits of the private American companies, which dominated the island's economy"; and it had given "stature and support to one of the most bloody and repressive dictatorships in the long history of Latin America." He concluded: "While we were allowing Batista to place us on the side of tyranny, we did nothing to persuade the people of Cuba and Latin America that we wanted to be on the side of freedom."

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Two weeks later, the Kennedy staff, seeking to take the offensive after his supposed 'soft' position on Quemoy and Matsu, put out the provocative statement about strengthening the Cuban "fighters for freedom." These words were no more than a rhetorical flourish. Neither Kennedy nor his staff knew about the secret Cuban army in Guatemala, and they had no enterprise of this sort in mind themselves. Nixon, however, knowing that Allen Dulles had briefed Kennedy about Cuba, assumed that the briefing covered operations as well as intelligence. He therefore incredibly concluded - or so he later said - that Kennedy was trying to claim credit for the idea and that the secrecy of the project was now in jeopardy. When the fourth television debate took place the next day, Nixon - in the interests, he suggested subsequently, of national security - accused Kennedy of advocating what was in fact his own plan and went on to attack that plan as "probably the most dangerously irresponsible" recommendation made in the campaign. It would, he said, violate the United Nations Charter and five hemisphere treaties;

p. 226

if we were to follow that recommendation ... we would lose all of our friends in Latin America, we would probably be condemned in the United Nations, and we would not accomplish our objective ... It would be an open invitation to Mr. Khrushchev to come in, to come into Latin America.

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In his response, Kennedy said nothing/about strengthening the fighters for freedom, only noting that economic sanctions against Cuba, to be successful, would have to be multilateral and that "the big struggle will be to prevent the influence of Castro spreading to other countries." For the rest of the campaign, he left Cuba alone.

Immediately after the election, his concern was with an affirmative program for Latin America rather than with Cuba. On November 14 he asked John Sharon for estimates of the effectiveness of the trade embargo against Cuba and of the possibilities of a rapprochement. Four days later Dulles and Richard Bissell of CIA informed him for the first time about the Guatemalan project.

p.236 The political criteria laid down by the CIA in Washington and demanded by most members of the Frente were abandoned in the rush. Bender gave particular authority to a dubious figure in Miami named Joaquin Sanjenis, and Sanjenis favored men of the Cuban right. If they had been in Batista's army, no matter; Time reported that, when one member of the Frente complained about the recruitment of Batistianos, a United States officer replied, "They're anti-communists, aren't they?"

The influx of new recruits created problems in the training camp. Men who had taken part in the revolution had a natural hatred of officers who had served Batista. The American advisers, on the other hand, were impatient of what they regarded as political quibbling. They preferred men who had professional military experience (like Pepe San Roman, who had received training at Fort Belvoir and Fort Benning in the United States) and could be relied on to follow orders. It is true that most of the Batistianos were so called because they had once been in Batista's army, not because they now wanted to return Batista to power. But this did not make the Cubans selected by the United States advisers to command the Brigade any more popular with the rank and file.

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In spite of the optimistic reports rendered to CIA in Washington about the splendid morale in the camp, discontent increased. In January it broke out into mutiny. Almost half of the now more than 500 Cubans in the camp resigned. It is hard to disentangle all the motives behind this demonstration; but it seems clear that the mutineers had the support of the Frente. At this point, the United States advisers intervened on behalf of the officers. "I am the boss here," one adviser said, "and the commander of this Brigade is still Pepe San Roman." A hundred of the Cubans refused to accept this decision and insisted on seeing representatives of the Frente. When they were promised a visit from the Frente, most agreed to rejoin the Brigade, but a few still held out. In one of the unhappier passages in this whole unhappy story, the CIA operatives arrested a dozen of the ringleaders and held them prisoner under stark conditions deep in the jungle of northern Guatemala.

p.239 Late in February the Chiefs sent an inspection team to the Guatemala base. In a new report in early March, they dropped the point about external support and hinged victory on the capacity of the assault to produce anti-Castro action behind the lines. From the viewpoint of the Joint Chiefs, then, the Cuban resistance was indispensable to success. They could see no other way - short of United States intervention - by which an invasion force of a thousand Cubans, no matter how well trained and equipped nor how stout their morale, could conceivably overcome the 200,000 men of Castro's army and militia.

p.242 The determination to keep the scheme alive sprang in part, I believe, from the embarrassments of calling it off. As Dulles said at the March 11 meeting, "Don't forget that we have a disposal problem. If we have to take these men out of Guatemala, we will have to transfer them to the United States, and we can't have them wandering around the country telling everyone what they have been doing." What could one do with "this asset" if not send it on to Cuba? If transfer to the United States was out, demobilization on the spot would create even greater difficulties. The Cubans themselves were determined

to go back to their homeland, and they might well forcibly resist efforts to take away their arms and equipment. Moreover, even if the Brigade were successfully disbanded, its members would disperse, disappointed and resentful all over Latin America. They would tell where they had been and what they had been doing, thereby exposing CIA operations. And they would explain how the United States, having prepared an expedition against Castro, had then lost its nerve. This could only result, Dulles kept emphasizing, in discrediting Washington, disheartening Latin American opponents of Castro and encouraging the Fidelistas in their attack on democratic regimes, like that of Betancourt in Venezuela. Disbandment might thus produce pro-Castro revolutions all around the Caribbean. For all these reasons, CIA argued, instead of turning the Cubans loose, we must find some means for putting them back into Cuba "on their own."

The contingency had thus become a reality: having created the Brigade as an option, the CIA now presented its use against Cuba as a necessity. Nor did Dulles's arguments lack force. Confronted by them, Kennedy tentatively agreed that the simplest thing, after all, might be to let the Cubans go where they yearned to go - to Cuba. ...

(Note: Nonetheless, failure was worst alternative. Apparently not considered.)

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As the expeditionary force enlarged its hold, the CIA men argued, now introducing a new idea, a provisional government could be flown in; and, if the invaders could sustain themselves for ten days or two weeks, this government could receive recognition as the government of Cuba. Once this was done, the new government could request United States aid, though this aid was carefully defined as "logistic" and therefore presumably excluded military intervention. The CIA planners envisaged a continuous build-up and enlargement of the perimeter around the beachhead over a long period, rather like Anzio in 1944. The scheme envisaged victory by attrition rather than by rebellion and no longer assigned a significant immediate role to the internal resistance. As the invaders strengthened their position, this, along with their command of the skies and the acceptance of the new government by other American republics, would produce a steady withdrawal of civil support from Castro and his eventual collapse. And, if by any chance the attack failed, Trinidad was near enough the Escambray for (the invaders to disappear into the hills.

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p.240 And there was another potent reason for going ahead:

Castro, the CIA said, was about to receive jet airplanes from the Soviet Union along with Cuban pilots trained in Czechoslovakia to fly them; once the MIGs arrived, an amphibious landing would turn into a slaughter. After June 1, it would take the United States Marines and Air Force to overthrow Castro. If a purely Cuban invasion were ever to take place, it had to take place in the next few weeks.

p.240 I had first heard of the Cuban operation in early February; indeed, the day before leaving for Buenos Aires I had sent the President a memorandum about it. The idea sounded plausible enough, the memorandum suggested, if one excluded everything but Cuba itself; but, as soon as the focus was enlarged to include the rest of the hemisphere and the rest of the world, arguments against the decision gained strength. Above all, "this would be your first dramatic foreign policy initiative. At one stroke you would dissipate all the extraordinary good will which has been rising toward the new Administration through the world. It would fix a malevolent image of the new Administration in the minds of millions."

p.241 Richard Bissell, whom I had known as an economist in the Marshall Plan before he turned to intelligence work and became CIA's deputy director for operations, was a man of high character and remarkable intellectual gifts. His mind was swift and penetrating, and he had an unsurpassed talent for lucid analysis and fluent exposition. A few years before he had conceived and fought through the plan of U-2 flights over the Soviet Union; and, though this led to trouble in 1960, it still remained perhaps the greatest intelligence coup since the war. He had committed himself for the past year to the Cuban project with equal intensity. Yet he recognized the strength of his commitment and, with characteristic honesty, warned us to discount his bias. Nonetheless, we all listened transfixed - in this meeting and other meetings which followed - fascinated by the workings of this superbly clear, organized and articulate intelligence, while Bissell, pointer in hand, would explain how the invasion would work or discourse on the relative merits of alternative landing sites.

Both Dulles and Bissell were at a disadvantage in having to persuade a skeptical new administration about the virtues of a proposal nurtured in the hospitable bosom of a previous government - a proposal on which they had personally worked for a long time and in which their organization had a heavy vested interest. This cast them in the role less of analysts than of advocates, and it led them to accept progressive modifications so long as the expedition in some form remained; perhaps they too unconsciously supposed that, once the operation began to unfold, it would not be permitted to fail.

p.245 Miro then held a press conference to announce the formation of the Council as the basis for a provisional government of Cuba once it had gained "a piece of Cuban soil."

p.247 We all in the White House considered uprisings behind the lines essential to the success of the operation; so too did the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and so, we thought, did the CIA. It was only later that I learned about the Anzio concept; it certainly did not come across clearly in the White House meetings. And it was much later that Allen Dulles wrote: "Much of the American press assumed at the time that this action was predicated on a mistaken intelligence estimate to the effect that a landing could touch off a widespread and successful popular revolt in Cuba. ... I know of no estimate that a spontaneous uprising of the unarmed population of Cuba would be touched off by the landing."^o This statement plainly reflected the CIA notion that the invasion would win by attrition rather than by rebellion. It also, strictly construed, was accurate enough in itself - if due attention is paid to such key words as "spontaneous," "unarmed," and "landing." Obviously no one expected the invasion to galvanize the unarmed and unorganized into rising against Castro at the moment of disembarkation. But the invasion plan, as understood by the President and the Joint Chiefs, did assume that the successful occupation of an enlarged beachhead area would rather soon incite organized uprisings armed members of the Cuban resistance.

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^oAllen W. Dulles, The Craft of Intelligence (New York, 1963), 169.

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p.249 Kennedy feared that, if the Cuban invasion went forward, it might prejudice chances of agreement with the Soviet Union over Laos; Ambassador Thompson's cables from Moscow reported Khrushchev's unusual preoccupation with Cuba. On the other hand, if we did in the end have to send American troops to Laos to fight communism on the other side of the world, we could hardly ignore communism ninety miles off Florida. Laos and Cuba were tied up with each other, though it was hard to know how one would affect the other.

p.249 But after the March 29 meeting I noted: "The final decision will have to be made on April 4," I have the impression that the tide is flowing against the project."

Dulles and Bissell, convinced that if the Cubans were ever to be sent against Castro they had to go now, sure that the Brigade could accomplish its mission and nagged by the disposal problem, now redoubled their efforts at persuasion. Dulles told Kennedy that he felt much more confident about success than he had ever been in the case of Guatemala. CIA concentrated particularly in the meetings on trying to show that, even if the expedition failed, the cost would not be excessive. Obviously no one could believe any longer that the adventure would not be attributed to the United States - news stories described the recruitment effort in Miami every day - but somehow the idea took hold around the cabinet table that this would not much matter so long as the United States soldiers did not take part in the actual fighting. If the operation were truly 'Cubanized,' it would hopefully appear as part of the traditional ebb and flow of revolution and counterrevolution in the Caribbean.

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Moreover, if worst came to worst and the invaders were beaten on the beaches, then, Dulles and Bissell said, they could easily "melt away" into the mountains. This might have been true at Trinidad, which lay near the foothills of the Escambray, and it was more true of the Bay of Pigs than of the other two alternative sites proposed in mid-March. But the CIA exposition was less than candid both in implying that the Brigade had undergone guerrilla training (which had substantially ended five months earlier, before most of the Cubans had arrived in Guatemala) and in suggesting the existence of an easy escape hatch. I don't think we fully realized that the Escambray Mountains lay eighty miles from the Bay of Pigs, across a hopeless tangle of swamps and jungles. And no one knew (until Haynes Johnson interviewed the survivors) that the CIA agents in Guatemala were saying nothing to the Cubans about this last resort of flight to the hills, apparently fearing to lower their morale. "We were never told about this," San Roman said later. "What we were told was, 'If you fail we will go in.'"^o

^oHaynes Johnson, The Bay of Pigs (New York, 1964 (Dell Edition)), 67.