

pp.250/1

.... Dean Rusk listened inscrutably through the discussions, confining himself to gentle warnings about possible excesses. When he went to the SEATO conference in late March and Chester Bowles as Acting Secretary sat in his place, Bowles was horrified by what he heard but reluctant to speak out in his chief's absence. On March 31 he gave Rusk a strong memorandum opposing the invasion and asked to be permitted, if Rusk disagreed, to carry the case to the President. Rusk reassured Bowles, leaving him with the impression that the project was being whittled down into a guerrilla infiltration, and filed the memorandum away.

pp.251/2

There were two possible policies toward Cuba, Fulbright argued: overthrow, or toleration and isolation. The first would violate the spirit and probably the letter of the OAS charter, hemisphere treaties and our own federal legislation. If successful, it "would be denounced from the Rio Grande to Patagonia as an example of imperialism." It would cause trouble in the United Nations. It would commit us to the heavy responsibility of making a success of post-Castro Cuba. If it seemed to be failing, we might be tempted to use our own armed force; and if we did this, "even under the paper cover of legitimacy, we would have undone the work of thirty years in trying to live down earlier interventions."

To give this activity even covert support is of a piece with the hypocrisy and cynicism for which the United States is constantly denouncing the Soviet Union in the United Nations and elsewhere. This point will not be lost on the rest of the world - nor on our own consciences.

Instead, Fulbright urged a policy of containment. The Alliance for Progress provided a solid basis for insulating the rest of the hemisphere from Castro. As for the Cuban exiles, an imaginative approach could find a more productive use of their talents than invading their homeland. Remember always, Fulbright concluded, "The Castro regime is a thorn in the flesh; but it is not a dagger in the heart."

It was a brilliant memorandum. Yet the President returned from Palm Beach more militant than when he had left. But he did ask Fulbright to attend the climactic meeting on April 4. This meeting was held at the State Department in a small conference room beside Rusk's office. After the usual routine - persuasive expositions by the CIA, mild disclaimers by Rusk and penetrating questions by the President - Kennedy started asking people around the table what they thought. Fulbright, speaking in an emphatic and incredulous way, denounced the whole idea. The operation, he said, was wildly out of proportion to the threat. It would compromise our moral position in the world and make it impossible for us to protest treaty violations by the Communists. He gave a brave, old-fashioned American speech, honorable, sensible and strong; and he left everyone in the room, except me and perhaps the President, wholly unmoved.

Kennedy continued around the table. McNamara said that he favored the operation. Mann said that he would have opposed it at the start, but, now that it had gone so far, it should be carried through. Berle wanted the men to be put into Cuba but did not insist on a major production. Kennedy once again wanted to know what could be done in the way of quiet infiltration as against the beachhead assault. The meeting fell into discussion before the round of the table was completed. Soon it broke up.

p.252

I had been thinking about little else for weeks and was clear in my mind that the invasion was a terrible idea. This was not because the notion of sponsoring an exile attempt to overthrow Castro seemed intolerable in itself. As my memorandum said, "If we could achieve this by a swift, surgical stroke, I would be for it." The rigid non-intervention argument had never deeply impressed me.

p.254

..... But a great many people around the globe, beginning with the chairman of our own Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "simply do not at this moment see that Cuba presents so grave and compelling a threat to our national security as to justify a course of action which much of the world will interpret as calculated aggression against a small nation in defiance both of treaty obligations and of the international standards as we have repeatedly asserted against the Communist world." Seeing no justification for intervention, other nations would sympathize with David rather than Goliath. A prolonged civil war in Cuba between the Castro regime and an exile army backed by the United States, the memorandum went on, would open us to damaging attack in the United Nations and elsewhere around the globe. The Russians would enlist volunteers in Jose Marti and probably even Abraham Lincoln Brigades and seek to convert the conflict into another Spanish Civil War.

p.255

.... What this stately language meant was that the operation might recklessly expend one of our greatest national assets - John F. Kennedy himself. Nothing had been more depressing in the whole series of meetings than to watch a collection of officials, some of them holdovers from the previous administration, contentedly prepare to sacrifice the world's growing faith in the new American President in order to defend interests and pursue objectives of their own. Dean Rusk was almost alone in recognizing this problem; but his solution was the curious one of suggesting that someone other than the President make the final decision and do so in his absence - someone who could be sacrificed if things went wrong.

.... But, just as the members of the White House staff who sat in the Cabinet Room failed in their job of protecting the President, so the representatives of the State Department failed in defending the diplomatic interests of the nation. I could not help feeling that the desire to prove to the CIA and the Joint Chiefs that they were not soft-headed idealists but were really tough guys, too, influenced State's representatives at the cabinet table.

More than once I left the meetings in the Cabinet Room fearful that only two of the regulars present were against the operation; but, since I thought the President was the other, I kept hoping that he would avail himself of his own escape clause and cancel the plan. His response to my first memorandum was oblique. He said, "You know, I've reserved the right to stop this thing up to 24 hours before the landing. In the meantime, I'm trying to make some sense out of it. We'll just have to see." But he too began to become a prisoner of events. After another meeting on April 6, I noted: "We seem now destined to go ahead on a quasi-minimum basis - a large-scale infiltration (hopefully) rather than an invasion." This change reflected the now buoyant CIA emphasis on the ease of escaping from the beaches into the hills. By this time we were offered a sort of all-purpose operation guaranteed to work, win or lose. If it failed of its maximum hope - a mass uprising leading to the overthrow of the regime - it would at least attain its minimum objective - supply and reinforcement for the guerrillas already on the island.

The next morning Dick Goodwin and I met for breakfast in the White House Mess to consider whether it would be worth making one more try to reverse the drift. Though Dick had not attended the Cuba sessions, we had talked constantly about the problem. Later that morning before departing for an economic conference in Latin America he went to see Rusk. When Goodwin expressed strong doubts about the Cuban operation, Rusk finally said, "Maybe we've been oversold on the fact that we can't say no to this." Afterward Goodwin urged me to send Rusk a copy of my memorandum to the President and follow it up by a personal visit. I arranged to see Rusk the next morning.

When I set forth my own doubts on Saturday, the Secretary listened quietly and somewhat mournfully. Finally he said he had for some time been wanting to draw a balance sheet on the project, that he planned to do it over the weekend and would try to talk with the President on Monday. He reverted to a suggestion with which he had startled the Joint Chiefs during one of the meetings. This was that the operation fan out from Guantanamo with the prospect of retreating to the base in case of failure. He remarked, "It is interesting to observe the Pentagon people. They are perfectly willing to put the President's head on the block, but they recoil from the idea of doing anything which might risk Guantanamo."

I don't know whether Rusk ever drew his balance sheet, but probably by that Saturday morning the President had already made up his mind. When Goodwin dropped into his office Friday afternoon to say goodbye, Kennedy, striding over to the French windows opening to the lawn, recalled Goodwin's fiery campaign statement and said ironically, "Well, Dick, we're about to put your Cuban policy into action." I saw the President myself later that same afternoon and noted afterward: "It is apparent that he has made his decision and is not likely now to reverse it."

Under-
scoring
mine
p.258

Why had he decided to go ahead? So far as the operation itself was concerned, he felt, as he told me that afternoon, that he had successfully pared it down from a grandiose amphibious assault to a mass infiltration. Accepting the CIA assurances about the escape hatch, he supposed that the cost, both military and political, of failure was now reduced to a tolerable level. He added, "If we have to get rid of these 800 men, it is much better to dump them in Cuba than in the United States, especially if that is where they want to go" - a remark which suggested how much Dulles's insistence on the disposal problem had influenced the decision, as well as how greatly Kennedy was himself moved by the commitment of the Cuban patriots. He was particularly impressed by the fact that three members of the Cuban Revolutionary Council had sons in the Brigade; the exile leaders themselves obviously believed that the expedition would succeed. As the decision presented itself to him, he had to choose whether to disband a group of brave and idealistic Cubans, already trained and equipped, who wanted very much to return to Cuba on their own, or to permit them to go ahead. The President saw no obligation to protect the Castro regime from democratic Cubans and decided that, if the Cubans wished to make the try on the categorical understanding that there would be no direct United States military support, he would help them do so. If the expedition succeeded, the overthrow of Castro would greatly strengthen democratic prospects in the hemisphere; if he called it off, he would forever be haunted by the feeling that his scruples had preserved Castro in power.

mine

More generally, the decision resulted from the fact that he had been in office only seventy-seven days. He had not had the time or opportunity to test the inherited instrumentalities of government. He could not know which of his advisers were competent and which were not. For their part, they did not know him or each other well enough to raise hard questions with force and candor. Moreover, the massed and caparisoned authority of his senior officials in the realm of foreign policy and defense was unanimous for going ahead. The director of the Central Intelligence Agency advocated the adventure; the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense approved its military aspects, the Secretary of State its political aspects. They all spoke with the sacerdotal prerogative of men vested with a unique understanding of arcane matters. "If someone comes in to tell me this or that about the minimum wage bill," Kennedy said to me later, "I have no hesitation in overruling them. But you always assume that the military and intelligence people have some secret skill not available to ordinary mortals." The only opposition came from Fulbright and myself (he knew nothing of Bowles's memorandum to Rusk, nor did he know that Edward R. Murrow, the new director of the United States Information Agency, who had learned about the operation from a New York Times reporter early in April, was also deeply opposed), and this did not bulk large against the united voice of institutional authority. Had one senior adviser opposed the adventure, I believe that Kennedy would have canceled it. Not one spoke against it.

One further factor no doubt influenced him: the enormous confidence in his own luck. Everything had broken right for him since 1956. He had won the nomination and the election against all the odds in the book. Everyone around him thought he had the Midas touch and could not lose. Despite himself, even this dispassionate and skeptical man may have been affected by the soaring euphoria of the new day.

On the following Tuesday the Robert Kennedys gave a party to celebrate Ethel's birthday. It was a large, lively, uproarious affair, overrun by guests, skits, children and dogs. In the midst of the gaiety Robert Kennedy drew me aside. He said, "I hear you don't think much of

this business." He asked why and listened without expression as I gave my reasons. Finally he said, "You may be right or you may be wrong, but the President has made his mind up. Don't push it any further. Now is the time for everyone to help him all they can."

p.260 Our purpose was to persuade him to give the Council's program social and economic content. We pointed out that the Council draft was filled with impassioned appeals to the foreign investor, the private banker, the dispossessed property owner, but had very little to say to the worker, the farmer or the Negro. I remarked at one point, "It would be foolish if the Cuban Revolutionary Council turns out to be to the right of the New Frontier." We suggested that the Council must reassure the Cubans that it had no intention of ~~destroying~~ stroying the social and economic gains of the last two years.

Miro threw his hands in the air, heartily agreed, and said that we must understand the situation in Miami: whenever he delivered a speech about social justice, half the audience went away convinced that he was a communist. ...

p.261 A few days later Gilbert Harrison of the New Republic sent over the galleys of a pseudonymous piece called "Our Men in Miami," asking whether there was any reason why it should not be published. It was a careful, accurate and devastating account of CIA activities among the refugees, written, I learned later, by Karl Meyer. Obviously its publication in a responsible magazine would cause trouble, but could the government properly ask an editor to suppress the truth? Defeated by the moral issue, I handed the article to the President, who instantly read it and expressed the hope that it could be stopped. Harrison accepted the suggestion and without question - a patriotic act which left me oddly uncomfortable.

About the same time Tad Szulc filed a story to the New York Times from Miami describing the recruitment drive and reporting that a landing on Cuba was imminent. Turner Catledge, the managing editor, called James Reston, who was in his weekend retreat in Virginia, to ask his advice. Reston counseled against publication; either the story would alert Castro, in which case the Times would be responsible for casualties on the beach, or else the expedition would be canceled, in which case the Times would be responsible for grave interference with national policy. This was another patriotic act; but in retrospect I have wondered whether, if the press had behaved irresponsibly, it would not have spared the country a disaster.

p.296 He made his only misstep when, in a speech before the American Newspaper Publishers Association on April 27, he told the press that it should be prepared to censor itself in the interests of national security. This went much too far, and he did not urge the point again.

p.262

Kennedy understood this better than anybody and needed no prod-
ding. Two days later he seized the occasion to say in a press confer-
ence: "There will not be, under any conditions, an intervention in
Cuba by the United States Armed Forces. . . . The basic issue in Cuba
is not one between the United States and Cuba. It is between the Cubans
themselves. I intend to see that we adhere to that principle and as I
understand it this administration's attitude is so understood and shared
by the anti-Castro exiles from Cuba in this country."

p.262/4

The meeting on April 12 was preceded by a strange incident whose significance even today remains indecipherable to me. I received a request from Georgi Kornienko, the counselor of the Soviet Embassy, for an immediate appointment. Soon a sharp-eyed, moon-faced man appeared, speaking fluent but somewhat formal English. After some preliminary palaver, he said courteously that he did not fully understand the policy of the United States toward Latin America and especially toward Cuba. I referred him to the White Paper, observing that the concern of the United States was not over the fact of revolution in Cuba but over its subsequent betrayal; if the Castro regime had any hostility to fear, it was the hostility of Cubans. When he expressed wonder that the United States cared so much about the emergence of a regime in Cuba with ties to the communist world, I suggested that he might understand if he were to transfer recent events in Havana to, say, Warsaw; I doubted whether the Soviet Union would accept such developments in the case of Poland with the same detachment he now urged on me. By Soviet standards he should be more impressed by American patience than by American impetuosity.

After additional inconclusive talk, Kornienko asked whether we excluded the possibility of further negotiation with Castro. When I inquired what he had in mind, he said that of course all this was fantasy, since he was not under instructions and could not, in any case, speak for the Cubans, but that, if he were Castro, he would wonder whether an effort at negotiation might not be appropriate; after all, Castro had not as yet issued a formal reply to the White Paper. I wondered what issues might be negotiated, citing the President's statement in his State of the Union message about the negotiability of social and economic issues and the non-negotiability of communist invasion of the hemisphere. Kornienko doubted whether Castro would regard internal Cuban questions as negotiable. He then asked what sort of action Washington might take as evidence of a serious desire to negotiate. I replied that a crucial issue was the monopoly of political action enjoyed by the Communist Party. Speaking in the same spirit of fantasy which he had earlier invoked, I inquired whether he thought that the Castro regime would, for example, offer the Revolutionary Council equal freedom of political action. He evidently did not think so. After a time the discussion moved on to other areas.

I came to know Kornienko better in time; we used to lunch together at irregular intervals until he returned to Moscow at the end of 1963. These luncheons were never very productive. Kornienko, an exceedingly intelligent and entirely immovable defender of the current Soviet brief, whatever it might be, rarely showed any inclination to talk apart from it. For this reason, I am sure that he was acting under some sort of instruction in bringing up the possibility of negotiations. But the instruction could not have been very urgent. His talk was marked by a total absence of warnings or threats; his attitude seemed one of polite curiosity. His visit must have been either exploratory or, more probably, diversionist; for he had nothing positive to suggest. In any case, I promptly informed the President and Rusk of the meeting. Neither saw much in it, Rusk confining himself to the comment that my memorandum of conversation was unclassified and should have been stamped "secret."

Note: Diplomatically, the obvious presumption is that Kornienko was asking for an explanation of what was up and, at the same time, telling the U.S. it was generally aware something was up and it was interested in it.

p.264/5

Everyone knows, Miro said, that the United States is behind the expedition. If it should succeed no one will object to the American role. Berle then said that it could not succeed without an internal uprising, and that, if one came, we would provide the democratic Cubans with the things necessary to make it successful. Once the provisional government was established on the beachhead, we would offer all aid short of United States troops. Miro said that 10,000 Cubans would immediately align themselves with the invading forces. Berle replied that there would be plenty of arms for them. The kind of help we were prepared to give, he repeated, would be ~~enough~~ enough if, in fact, a revolutionary situation existed within Cuba.

p.265

I reproduce this part of the confersation from notes made at the time because Miro told his colleagues and later claimed publicly that Berle had promised the support of 10,000 United States Troops. Either Miro's knowledge of English or the transaation was sadly at fault. Miro, a driven man, probably heard what he desperately wanted to hear.

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A 1000 DAYS

ADVISERS - Mann

p.266

..... (Tom Mann, who was scheduled to become ambassador to Mexico, had resigned early in April lest he arrive in Mexico City bearing the onus of the invasion of Cuba).

p.267

My observations have increased my confidence in the ability of this force to accomplish not only initial combat missions, but also the ultimate objective, the overthrow of Castro. The Brigade and battalion commanders now know all details of the plan and are enthusiastic. These officers are young, vigorous, intelligent and motivated by a fanatical urge to begin battle. . . .

p.268 But I doubt whether anyone in Washington really ~~wh~~ knew what was taking place in Guatemala. The top CIA officials - Dulles, Bussell, Barnes - were civilized and responsible men; but the CIA operatives in the field and their military colleagues were a different breed, if, at least, the Cubans themselves are to be believed. As zero hour approached, the American advisers told them again (or so they later informed Haynes Johnson) that their Brigade would not be the only unit in the invasion. They received the impression that after seventy-two hours they could count on United States military and air support. At one point, according to Pepe San Roman, the chief United States adviser even talked darkly of efforts in Washington to cancel the operation and said that, if a stop order came through, "you come here and make some kind of show, as if you were putting us, the advisors, in prison, and you go ahead with the program as we have talked about it, and we will give you the whole plan, even if we are your prisoners." He went on to hint that this was the desire of his superiors.° (Actually the United States Navy had been briefed to intercept and turn back the mission in case of a last-minute decision against it.)

° Haynes Johnson, The Bay of Pigs (New York, 1964 (Dell edition)), 73-74.

....Apart from professionals who had served in Batista's army, few real Batistianos had slipped in, but some notorious Batista criminals somehow showed up on the boats on the way to Cuba (to be subsequently displayed by Castro as representative members of the Brigade). ...

p.274 The first ~~fg~~ frogman on each beach was, in spite of Kennedy's order, an American.

p.271 In New York Adlai Stevenson was getting ready for a long-delayed debate in the United Nations General Assembly over a Cuban charge of aggressive intentions on the part of the United States. Kennedy, who had been much concerned about the UN aspect of the Cuban operation, told the group in the Cabinet Room that he wished Stevenson to be fully informed, and that nothing said at the UN should be less than the truth. ~~Rtk~~ "The integrity and credibility of Adlai Stevenson," he had remarked to me on April 7, "constitute one of our great national assets. I don't want anything to be done which might jeopardize that."

Under-scoring added In preparation for the debate, Tracy Barnes and I had held a long talk with Stevenson on April 8. But our briefing, which was probably unduly vague, left Stevenson with the impression that no action would take place during the UN discussion of the Cuban item. Afterward, when Harlan Cleveland, the Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, Clayton Fritchey of the United States Mission to the UN, and I lunched with Stevenson at the Century, he made clear that he wholly disapproved of the plan, regretted that he had been given no opportunity to comment on it and believed that it would cause infinite trouble. But, if it was national policy, he was prepared to make out the best possible case.

After the Saturday air strike, Raul Roa, the Cuban foreign minister, succeeded in advancing the Cuban item, scheduled for the following Monday, to an emergency session of the UN Political Committee that afternoon. In Washington Harlan Cleveland tried to ascertain the facts about the strike. His office called the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, which in turn called the CIA. Word promptly and definitely came back that it was the work of genuine defectors, and Cleveland passed this information on to Stevenson. A few moments later Stevenson told the UN: "These two planes, to the best of our knowledge, were Castro's own air force planes and, according to the pilots, they took off from Castro's own air force fields." As Stevenson spoke, someone handed him a piece of press ticker containing what appeared to be corroborative detail, and Stevenson read further parts of the CIA cover story into the record.

p.272 The 'need-to-know' standard had simply left the Bureau of International Organization Affairs and most of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (as well as Ed Murrow and the USIA) ignorant of the operation. Rusk himself, moreover, seems for a while to have confused the phony defector at Key West with the authentic defect or at Jacksonville. Apparently it was not till late Saturday afternoon that he understood that the Key West plane was part of the CIA plot. Why CIA should have misled State has never been clear. Possibly the Agency, having worked out its deception plan, felt obliged to deceive even the rest of its own government; or possibly the CIA source, if in the Intelligence Branch, was himself 'unwitting.'

p/275

.... Dean Rusk told a press conference later that morning, "The American people are entitled to know whether we are intervening in Cuba or intend to do so in the future. The answer to that question is no. What happens in Cuba is for the Cuban people to decide."

A 1000 DAYS

~~xRRRxxx~~ USSR - Cuban Interest of

p.275

.... An angry diplomatic note came in from Khrushchev, denouncing the invasion and pledging "all necessary assistance" to Castro. ~~xxx~~

p.276 "I probably made a mistake in keeping Allen Dulles on," he said. "It's not that Dulles is not a man of great ability. He is. But I have never worked with him, and therefore I can't estimate his meaning when he tells me things. . . . Dulles is a legendary figure, and it's hard to operate with legendary figures." As for CIA, "We will have to do something. . . . I must have someone there with whom I can be in complete and intimate contact - someone from whom I know I will be getting the exact pitch." He added, "I made a mistake in putting Bobby in the Justice Department. He is wasted there. Byron White could do that job perfectly well. Bobby should be in CIA. . . . It is a hell of a way to learn things, but I have learned one thing from this business - that is, that we will have to deal with CIA. McNamara has dealt with Defense; Rusk has done a lot with State; but no one has dealt with CIA."

a 1000 DAYS

Threats

p.287/88

Unilateral intervention, he told the editors, would have violated our traditions and international obligations. "But let the record show," he added, "that our restraint is not inexhaustible. Should it ever appear that the inter-American doctrine of non-interference merely conceals or excuses a policy of non-action - if the nations of this Hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration - then I want it clearly understood that this Government will not hesitate in meeting its primary obligations which are to the security of our Nation!"

p.289 By Friday, however, the morning papers were filled with ~~what~~ what purported to be 'inside' stories about the Cuba decision. An impulse for self-preservation was evidently tempting some of the participants in those meetings in the Cabinet Room to put out versions of the episode ascribing the debacle to everyone but themselves. Kennedy, having called a ten o'clock press conference, summoned Rusk, Salinger, Bundy, Sorensen, Goodwin and myself for breakfast in the Mansion.

The President remarked acidly that the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was notably neglected in several stories - an omission which, by Washington exegesis, pointed to the Pentagon as the source. The best way to turn off the speculation, he said, was to tell the truth: that all the senior officials involved had backed the operation but that the final responsibility was his own. Then he added, with unusual emphasis, "There is only one person in the clear - that's Bill Fulbright. And he probably would have been converted if he had attended more of the meetings. If he had received the same treatment we received - discontent in Cuba, morale of the free Cubans, rainy season, Russian MIGs and destroyers, impregnable beachhead, easy escape into the Escambray, what else to do with these people - it might have moved p him down the road too."

p.290 They were talking about the CIA. The President said that he could not understand how men like Dulles and Bissell, so intelligent and so experienced, could have been so wrong, but added that nothing could be done about CIA immediately. So long as he kept Dulles there, he said, the Republicans would be disinclined to attack the administration over the Cuban failure. The Vice President vigorously agreed.

Kennedy looked exceedingly tired, but his mood was philosophical. He felt that he now knew certain soft spots in his administration, especially the CIA and the Joint Chiefs. He would never be overawed by professional military advice again. ...

p.291 David Ormsby Gore told me that British intelligence estimates, which had been made available to CIA, showed that the Cuban people were still predominantly behind Castro and that there was no likelihood at this point of mass defections or insurrections.

Under- p.292/3 Afterward Kennedy would sometimes recur incredulously to the
scoring- Bay of Pigs, wondering how a rational and responsible govern-
mine ment could ever have become involved in so ill-starred an adventure.

He soon designated General Maxwell Taylor, Dulles, Burke and Robert Kennedy as a commission of inquiry into the fiasco. The commission, perhaps because two (note: really 3) of its members had been architects of the project, construed its mandate narrowly, concentrating on dissecting the military operation and on thinking up a new inter-departmental agency to coordinate future cold war ventures. The State Department successfully opposed this idea; but the Taylor report did focus the government's attention on the problems of coping with guerilla warfare and of improving the control of clandestine projects.

What caused the disaster? Too much comment on the Bay of Pigs has fallen into the fallacy of Douglas Southall Freeman, who once wrote a long chapter analyzing the reasons for Lee's defeat at Gettysburg without mentioning the interesting fact that the Union Army was there too. For the reality was that Fidel Castro turned out to be a far more formidable foe and in command of a far better organized regime than anyone had supposed. His patrols spotted the invasion at almost the first possible moment. His planes reacted with speed and vigor. His police eliminated any chance of sabotage or rebellion behind the lines. His soldiers stayed loyal and fought hard. He himself never panicked; and, if faults were chargeable to him, they were his over-estimate of the strength of the invasion and undue caution in pressing the ground attack against the beachhead. His performance was impressive.

One reason Washington miscalculated Castro, of course, was a series of failures in our own intelligence. We regarded him as an hysteric. We dismissed his air force and forgot his T-33s. We thought that his troops might defect. We supposed that, although warned by advance air strikes, he would do nothing to neutralize the Cuban underground (either that, or we supposed that the underground, without alert or assistance from us, would find means to protect itself and eventually rise against the regime). And there were tactical errors.

~~Waxxon~~

p.294 If there were no intervention, then only an internal uprising could finally have overthrown Castro; and an internal uprising would have required both an intact underground and a far more potent political purpose than any which animated the CIA project. Kennedy had well defined this purpose in the Alliance for Progress and the White Paper, but the CIA had developed its operation in a different political atmosphere and on different political presuppositions. ,,,

p.295

The expedition was not only misconceived politically. It was also misconceived technically. If it was to be a covert operation for which we could plausibly disclaim responsibility, it should have been, at most, a guerrilla infiltration. Once it grew into a conventional amphibious invasion, it was clearly beyond the limits of disownability. Unless we were prepared to back it to the hilt, it should have been abandoned. When the President made it clear time after time that for the most cogent reasons we would not back it to the hilt, the planners should not have deluded themselves into thinking that events would reverse this decision or that the adventure would succeed on its own. ~~Instead of trying to~~ ...

All of us, the President most of all, went through this sequence of thoughts again and again in the months to come. And yet, and yet: for all the utter irrationality with which retrospect endowed the project, it had a certain queer logic at the time as it emerged from the bowels of government. ...

The President reserved his innermost thoughts and, in the end, blamed only himself. ~~He~~ But he was a human being and not totally free of resentment. He would say at times, "My God, the bunch of advisers we inherited. . . . Can you imagine being President and leaving behind someone like all those people there?" My impression is that, among these advisers, the Joint Chiefs had disappointed him most for their cursory review of the military plans. About Dulles and Bissell he said little. I think he had made up his mind at once that, when things settled down, they would have to go. He regretted this because he liked them both.

p.296 The first lesson was never to rely on the experts. He now knew that he would have to broaden the range of his advice, make greater use of generalists in whom he had personal confidence and re-make every great decision in his own terms - as, indeed, he had done with the other decisions of the ninety days. He understood too that the prestige of the presidential office had been lightly regarded by men whose primary loyalty was not to him or his administration. Thereafter he took care to make sure that the presidential interest would be represented in the large decisions. He turned from the people he had inherited in government to the people he had brought in himself - the people he had worked with longest, knew best and trusted most. Neither Robert Kennedy nor Ted Sorensen had taken part in the meetings in the Cabinet Room; both were at his right hand at every subsequent moment of crisis for the rest of his Presidency. He charged Dick Goodwin with responsibility for the next steps in policy toward Cuba and the exiles. He chose Maxwell Taylor as his personal adviser on military affairs until the time came when he could make him Chief of Staff.

p.300 Though Kennedy had, in the main, stayed aloof from the DAC Debate, he was clearly aligned with the Stevenson-Harriman-Bowles position, if more in the Harriman than in the Bowles mood. A sharp critic of the tendency to suppose that all problems had military solutions, he was a strong advocate of economic assistance to the uncommitted world. His reactions in 1960 to the shooting down of the U-2 over the Soviet Union and to the Quemoy-Matsu issue showed his dislike for rigid interpretations of the cold war. He did not suppose that the United States had it within its power to work overnight changes in the Soviet Union; but he did not suppose either that the Soviet Union was fixed forever in its present mold. He therefore favored a policy of reasoned firmness accompanied by a determination to explore all possibilities of reasonable accommodations.