

# Bay of Pigs? Even Name Got Fouled Up

WASHINGTON.

WHEN the 10th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs affair slips by with no blasting of trumpets it is time to cry over our failure to distinguish between the trivial and the highly important.

No other honor in American history quite compares with it. The selling of that plan was a feat to be compared with the purchase of the Brooklyn Bridge by the visiting hick in Manhattan.

Today the country is little wiser as to how and why the shippage came about, those so-called inside views which have been published being greedily in error and by nature apologetic.

It will probably be no better off 20 years hence when some of the official papers are made public, since they will be defensive and self-serving, reflecting only one view from the center.

Even the place name of the fiasco is wrong. There is no Bay of Pigs. It is a mistranslation of the Bahía de Cochina, the body of water off the great Zapata Swamp.

The cochina is also a small fish that abounds in those waters. So it would be more accurate to call the place the Bay of Sardines or maybe the Bay of Small Fry.

## No Eisenhower Plan

On the day after, when the young palace guardsmen who attended President John F. Kennedy were sadder but hardly any wiser, they deliberately tried to shift the burden of blame to the preceding administration, saying or implying that a going plan had been taken over from President Eisenhower.

Mr. Kennedy was no party to that fraud. He was indignant about the deception.



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There had never been such a plan under Gen. Eisenhower. In existence only was a quite limited number of assets, a relatively few young Cubans in training, with no direction as to how they might be used.

The outgoing President had kept saying that nothing was anywhere near a state of readiness as to Cuba and he was more concerned with what was happening in Laos than with what might be done with the young trainees in Guatemala.

Mr. Kennedy did not, however, object to the studied attempt to pass the buck to the military, or more specifically, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In the aftermath, the horns were pinned on them and the professionals have never quite recovered from that stigma.

So let it be said first off that the JCS had no responsibility for the conception, or indeed, for the execution. That was the work of the Central Intelligence Agency.

No one of the JCS even saw a plan—that is, a scheme of operation definitely committed to paper. There were only oral briefings and those of a very vague sort.

So well kept was the secret that those who had to make the decision (and the military are not in that category) never fully understood what was intended or were permitted to weigh out in detail the prospect for getting away with it.

The CIA was the source of all intelligence. It was also the operator. This is ever an inexcusably bad arrangement. Yet no one at the center tried to fault it.

All hands that engaged in the councils were thrown off by the word "covert," since the CIA was the agency accountable for operations of that nature.

The military—that is, the JCS and all others in the Pentagon—were in no sense privy to any part of the secret until late January 1961 following Mr. Kennedy's seating at the White House. They knew nothing about the training activities in Guatemala and Nicaragua and they had no plan of action against Castro and Cuba.

## Landing Plan Shifted

The first operation rigged by the CIA for presentation to the new President called for an amphibious landing by the "brigade of exiles" near the port of Trinidad on Cuba's south coast. The terrain, the near mountains and the communications all favored that location. But after getting only a sketchy outline of the proposal, experts on the JCS said the chance of success was no better than fair.

The President nixed that place, saying it too clearly revealed the hand of the United States in the business, which was bound to come out in any case. Then when, due to these fanciful political considerations, the site was shifted westward by the CIA to the Zapata Swamp or Bay of Pigs area, the JCS was not even asked to re-evaluate the undertaking, much less approve it.

One overriding mystery, probably never to be penetrated, is what happened to the Cuban underground. There was such an apparatus and the CIA had been in contact with it. But it was never alerted, and by the hour when Havana knew of the landings, it was too late. Shortly thereafter its key figures were executed by Castro.