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**Waging  
Peace—XXV**

# Ike Recalls Training of

## Cuban Exiles

This is the twenty-fifth of a series of excerpts from the book, "The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961," published by Doubleday and Co. In this part, Gen. Eisenhower discusses the training of Cuban exiles.

**By Dwight D.  
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On Dec. 6, 1960, Sen. Kennedy came to the White House, at my invitation, for a discussion on the transfer of responsibilities.

We talked at considerable length of organization, of financial problems, including the imbalance of payments, of Berlin, Cuba, and the Far East; of NATO, of the leading European personalities, and other matters of interest to him. He listened attentively to the presentations I had arranged from key Cabinet and staff members and seemed to appreciate our efforts. There was complete understanding, of course, that my Administration would carry full responsibility up to the last minute. How much more we still had to face in the next six weeks I would never have guessed.

Ever since the success of the Castro revolution, evidence had been accumulating that Communist influences were becoming dominant in that unhappy country.

By the end of September, 1960, the United States was getting ready to shut down the governmentally owned Nicaro nickel processing plant and to abolish preferential tariffs for Cuban exports to the United States. We were speeding up the evacuation of American citizens. Other moves were imminent.

Castroite groups were, however, threatening other Latin American countries.

### Revolt Reported

On Nov. 13, Secretary

Herter reported a revolt against the government in Guatemala, saying the situation there was not good. I decided that if we received a request from Guatemala for assistance, we would move in without delay.

At that moment, Cuban exiles were training in Guatemala, and we had to consider the possibility of Castro's sending forces of his own to attempt an overthrow of the Guatemalan government. To guard against this possibility, we agreed to that government's request for United States naval units to patrol Guatemala's Caribbean coast. Simultaneously, a similar request came from the government of Nicaragua, which claimed evidence of Cuban complicity in a recent revolt within its borders. Naval units were directed to remain on the alert in the area, and our aircraft were to conduct patrols. They were ordered to report promptly any evidence of a Castroite attempt to send supplies or reinforcements to the rebels, but would refrain from combat unless specifically authorized or unless necessary to bar a direct Communist invasion attempt. Three weeks later the emergency ended, and we recalled the patrol.

On Jan. 2, 1961, Fidel Castro ordered the United States to cut its Embassy staff in Havana to eleven persons within forty-eight hours. The staff, he alleged, totaled three hundred, with 80 per cent of them spies. The truth was that the Embassy had only eighty-seven persons, of whom more than half were Cubans. But this message from Castro was the last straw. We broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba immediately.

### Exile Units Grow

Meanwhile, covert training of exiles for any possible future operations against Castro was going forward. Units were growing steadily

in strength and efficiency against the time when actual tactical planning could be undertaken. In December I suggested to the State Department that the time might now be propitious for organizing a "front" against Castro among the refugees, with the United States recognizing the leader and his associates as the legal government of Cuba, with the proviso, however, that the exiles themselves would voluntarily select from their own number an acceptable "head of government." I added that if they could do so at once, "I'd like to see recognition accorded promptly — if possible, before Jan. 20."

Suddenly we lost the element of secrecy in our training program for the refugees on the morning of Jan. 10, the New York Times carried an article, with a map, describing the training of anti-Castro forces in Guatemala. Although some details in the article were inaccurate, it told most of the story. I decided that we should say nothing at all about this article. Believing that my successor might want some

day to assist the refugee forces to move into Cuba, I considered that we were limited in what we could say about them.

So, as a legacy to the incoming Administration, we left units of Cuban refugees busily training and preparing hopefully for a return to their native land. Although they had as yet been unable to find the leader they wanted—a national leader known to be both anti-Castro and anti-Bastista—their hatred of Castro, their patriotism, and their readiness to sacrifice for the restoration of freedom in Cuba could not be doubted.

Because there has been so much speculation about the matter in recent years, I must make clear that a plan for Cuban refugees to invade Cuba was not developed in my administration. We trained troops to meet any eventuality. The Bay of Pigs invasion was specifically planned only after the refugees had selected a leader early in February, 1961. The invasion was hastily planned and in execution revealed the inexperience in the highest councils of government.

During the years of my Presidency, and especially the latter years, I began to feel more and more uneasiness about the effect on the Nation of tremendous peacetime military expenditures. In the peaceful life-span of the United States, our practice had been to maintain a minimum defense establishment. For a time, we trusted to the protection of two vast oceans. We frequently indulged in a rather naive belief that any American could be made into a competent soldier within a matter of weeks or days. Every one of our wars was followed by rapid, drastic demobilization in the assumption that the world had become too civilized to fight again. With victory in World War II we began to reduce our forces so precipitously that by 1949 the military budget fell below \$12 billion and was decreasing every year.

But in mid-1953, after the

end of the Korean War, I determined that we would not again become so weak militarily as to encourage aggression. This decision demanded a military budget that would establish, by its very size, a peacetime precedent.

None of us was blind to the possible consequences of this move. We knew that such immense expenditures were made necessary by the frictions of international politics and the growing costs of weaponry. The effects of these expenditures on the Nation's economy would be serious. Some of these effects would surely be seen as beneficial. But their eventual influence on our national life, unless watched by an alert citizenry, could become almost overpowering.

To counter this caution, there are, of course, other interested parties. Many groups find much value to themselves in constant increases in defense expenditures. The military services, traditionally concerned with 100 per cent security, are rarely satisfied with the amounts allocated to them, out of an even generous budget.

#### Powerful Lobbies

The makers of the expensive munitions of war, to be sure, like the profits they receive, and the greater the expenditures the more lucrative the profits. Under the spur of profit potential, powerful lobbies spring up to argue for even larger munitions expenditures. And the web of special interest grows.

Each community in which a manufacturing plant or a military installation is located profits from the money spent and the jobs created in the area. And, of course, this fact constantly presses on the community's political representatives—Congressmen, Senators, and others—to maintain the facility at maximum strength.

All of these forces, and more, tend, therefore, to override the convictions of responsible officials who are determined to have a defense structure of adequate size but are equally determined that it shall not grow beyond that level. In the long run, the combinations of pressures for

growth can create an almost overpowering influence. Unjustified military spending is nothing more than a distorted use of the Nation's resources.

In the making of every military budget, my associates and I were guided by these considerations. We did our best to achieve real security without surrendering to special interest.

The idea, then, of making a final address as President to the Nation seemed to call on me to warn the Nation, again, of the danger in these developments. I could think of no better way to emphasize this than to in-

clude a sobering message in what might otherwise have been a farewell address of pleasantries.

The most quoted section of the speech came in these paragraphs:

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the Federal Government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources

and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel

the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

This was the end of my years in the White House, the most challenging message I leave with the people of this country.

*NEXT: Transition.*