

the funds, the equipment and the instructors for the rebels. It is not known whether any financial quid pro quo was also arranged, as in cases when a foreign government leases bases to the United States. But it is virtually certain that the United States made no commitment to Guatemala to aid in the transfer of the disputed colony of British Honduras (Belize) from Britain in exchange for the rebel bases. This deal was implied by President Ydigoras in a December 31, 1961, speech.

Although the Department of State is understandably reluctant to discuss the details, it can be assumed that its officials were aware of the furtive negotiations. On the working level, the arrangements were being handled by the CIA and its mysterious colonels. Soon the Cubans began jocularly referring to the "Cuban Invasion Authority," and the chances are that Castro's ubiquitous agents heard the joke and a good deal more about the preparations. By July 1960 Castro and Cuban propagandists were continually talking about an invasion being planned against their island. The United States denied it loudly, and indignantly.

With Guatemala as a firm ally in the secret undertaking, the physical preparations for the building of the rebel force proceeded apace. The mountainous Guatemalan department of Retalhuleu was chosen as the site of the first bases, and a wealthy coffee planter named Roberto Alejo made one of his ranges near the town of Retalhuleu available for the project. The Alejo family is close to President Ydigoras, and Carlos Alejo—Roberto's brother—was and is the Guatemalan Ambassador to the United States. Guatemala's Embassy in Washington soon became one of the clearing houses for invasion preparations. Members of the Embassy staff discussed the operation openly in letters exchanged with Cuban exiles in Miami. When Roberto Alejo came to Washington in the summer of 1961 to negotiate financial assistance for Guatemalan and Central American coffee growers, he pointedly reminded American officials that the first Cuban rebel base was on his *fincra*. It helped him little, however, in the negotiations.

By late July, hand-picked workers watched closely by Guatemalan soldiers and CIA operatives began building an airstrip in Retalhuleu to serve the emerging rebel air force. The strip was needed for the aircraft to be used in flying supply missions for the Cuban underground since, in those days, the prevailing thinking was that an attack on Cuba would be in conjunction with the clandestine opposition on the island. The long-range strategy was to use rebel

planned for a long time. The airstrip was built in a remote area of the island and was not connected to the main road network. The fact that the project had to be done from Guatemala because of the risk of discovery in the United States. Additionally, the Federal Aviation Agency and the Immigration Service, working through the Border Patrol, had finally succeeded in preventing unauthorized flights from Florida. But there was a breakdown of coordination and the CIA and other Federal agencies frequently found themselves working at cross purposes. Thus federal agents interfered with splendid impartiality with the pro-Castro and anti-Castro agents.

In Retalhuleu, meanwhile, United States transport aircraft from the mainland and from the Caribbean Command in Panama began landing on the new strip, bringing military equipment, supplies, fuel, volunteers, and CIA instructors. Some of the planes carried USAF markings, others were unmarked. Camp facilities were presently erected, CIA and Democratic Front agents combed Florida for refugee pilots for the Cubana Airlines and the Cuban Air Force. As soon as a nucleus of rebel aviators was established, the CIA provided them with a number of obsolete World War II B-26 bombers and C-47 transports. The idea was to duplicate in Guatemala the models used by the Castro air force so that rebel aircraft, painted with the insignia of the Castro Revolutionary Air Force, could operate with more ease on their missions over Cuba. The B-26's were given to the rebels because Castro had inherited a group of the same planes from Batista. But one detail—the particular model of the B-26 in Castro's possession—was overlooked, and as we shall see, this led to the discovery of the whole aerial deceit.

The Cuban pilots were checked out by United States Air Force fliers from a jet fighter squadron. The Cubans were not given fighter aircraft because the distance involved in a round-trip to the island was too great to make them operational. Perhaps it could not have been helped, but the nascent rebel army was being equipped in Guatemala with lumbering and obsolete aircraft at a time when it was already known that Castro was importing Soviet MIG fighters and that Cuban air cadets were taking jet training in Czechoslovakia. Even without the MIGs, Castro was known to have three T-33 jet trainers which, as it developed, were enough to knock the rebel aviators out of the sky when the big fight came.

While Retalhuleu thus became the air center for the op-

eration, six other training camps were successively established in Guatemala. One of the big camps was at the Helvetia ranch, not far from the air strip. Another was set up near a shrimp factory on the Pacific coast. Two smaller camps were placed in Northern Guatemala, dedicated mostly to guerrilla training. The most promising guerrilla leaders, some of them veterans of the Sierra Maestra campaign at Castro's side, were sent for advance training to the U. S. Army's Jungle Warfare School at Fort Gulick in the Panama Canal Zone.

Small camps and shipment centers were set up in the Florida swamps. One camp was established in Louisiana, where the swampy terrain was reminiscent of the Ciénaga de Zapata where the rebels were to land the following year.

V

The smooth progress of military organization, however, was not matched by political developments. The loudly proclaimed unity of the anti-Castro elements dissolved almost at the moment of its inception. The confusion was soon compounded by the appearance, in an already crowded arena, of new, important anti-Castro groups holding highly independent views.

The first schism occurred within the ranks of the Movement of Revolutionary Recovery and involved Captain Arttime. Initially, the break concerned personality, but it soon became ideological as well. Less than a month after the "unity" Front was founded, Arttime came into conflict with a faction within his own MRR led by Major Nino Diaz, and by Major Ricardo Loríe, a one-time Castro pilot. The two apparently resented the commanding manner of the smooth-talking young captain, and whispers began circulating that Arttime was developing into a budding dictator. Arttime, for his part, was annoyed that Diaz and Loríe—two of the founders of the MRR—disputed his leadership.

Whatever the precise causes, the split grew deeper. Miami's hothouse atmosphere of exile intrigue abetted the schism. Finally, one day in July, Loríe Diaz and several companions burst into the apartment of Pepia Riera, an anti-Castro radio announcer, breaking up a political meeting that was being held there and administering a sound thrashing to Arttime. Thus, before they were ready to attack Castro, the rebels were investing increasing energy in battling each other.

The split within the MRR and the beating given Arttime

was reported the captain's position as a member of the five-man Front dictatorship. A campaign began to oust him. But the CIA stepped in to protect its young favorite. By this time, it is probable that Bender and his colleagues had already settled on Arttime as the putative Castillo Artmas of the invasion army; CIA was not going to permit exile squabbling to upset its plans. This incident foreshadowed a trend which reached the incredible point, early in 1961, of the imprisonment of Arttime's opponents and their ejection from the secret army.

Another political complication within the Democratic Front revolved around Sanchez Arango, a forceful and impatient personality who evolved from communism, in his youth, to a rightist orientation. In time, Sanchez Arango quit the Front and switched to another anti-Castro group in which he cooperated closely with Eusebio Mujal, who had been president of the Cuban Labor Confederation under Batista.

As airline flights from Havana daily disgorged new loads of refugees from Cuba, anti-Castro political movements began to proliferate at a dizzying rate. As summer gave way to fall, Miami began to take on the characteristics of a Cuban city, and it seemed as if every Cuban of any consequence started his own movement of liberation. Some were fly-by-night groups centered about an ambitious politician and his immediate family. Others were more substantial. One calculation asserted that there were more than fifty separate Cuban movements in Miami, merging and dividing like amoebas. Still other movements flourished among exile colonies in Puerto Rico, Caracas and Mexico City. In Florida, radio stations beaming programs to Cuba offered a nightly selection of speakers, each representing a different group.

It was not surprising that Castro's opponents within Cuba soon became disgusted with the political carnival in the comfortable haven of Miami. Presently, a powerful new underground movement came into being. Its emergence coincided with the entry into conspiratorial activities of Manuel (Manolo) Ray, a young American-trained engineer who had directed the sabotage section of Castro's "26th of July Movement" in Havana during the civil war and who later became Minister of Public Works in the revolutionary regime. Ray resigned from the cabinet in November 1959 when the moderates were being purged by the radicals. For nearly six months, Ray's friends in the new anti-Castro underground urged him to join in the nascent struggle against the regime. For six months, Ray resisted the blan-

dishments and concentrated on teaching architecture at Havana University.

Finally, in July, Ray decided that the revolution could no longer be saved and threw himself heart and soul into the conspiracy. Ray's own decision coincided with that of a large number of once devoted Castro supporters in the rebel army and in the government, including Felipe Pazos, "Ché" Guevara's predecessor as head of the National Bank, and Colonel Ramón Barquín, the military ruler of Havana during the first days of Castro's triumph.

The idea of men like Ray and his companions was to restore the revolution to its original goals of political democracy and social justice. They stood firmly for the continuation of the social reforms initiated by Castro. Many of the early MRR followers, displeased with the Artime faction, turned to Ray for leadership. The underground movement these new insurgents created was given the name of *Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo*—the MRP—or People's Revolutionary Movement.

Ray quickly became a major thorn in Castro's side. The MRP grew from day to day, established national, provincial and local underground chapters, collected money, dispensed propaganda and practiced as much sabotage as could be accomplished without help from abroad. It was an action, not a debating society, but nevertheless received scant help. Although explosives and weapons were already flowing to Artime's MRR through air drops and clandestine maritime landings, no material was made available to Ray's MRP. Whatever help Ray did receive came from MRR underground units that were more disposed to cooperate with the MRP in Cuba.

At about the same time Ray helped to found the MRP, independent guerrilla operations came into being in Las Villas and Camagüey provinces, and especially in the rugged Escambray Mountains, where the anti-Batista Revolutionary Directorate had conducted its "second front" against Batista. Plinio Prieto, a tough one-time anti-Batista fighter, Captain Sinesio Walsh, and Captain Oswaldo Ramirez, both veterans of Castro's rebel army, commanded the new guerrillas. Catholic student organizations in Santa Clara, the capital of Las Villas, established contact with the Escambray units and took upon themselves the recruitment of volunteers and the sending of supplies. An 18-year-old Santa Clara university student named Porfirio Ramirez, who was president of the provincial University Students Federation, led the student underground. Support even came from the

and the CIA drew up plans to help the Escambray insurgents. About October, Cuban rebel aircraft

VI

By early fall, 1960, the combination of the Escambray guerrillas and the MRP underground in the cities was creating a situation of open rebellion against Castro. The two movements were not linked, but in their own ways they became the most important anti-regime operations in Cuba.

Yet the CIA strategists in Miami had little patience with the underground. It was not sufficiently conscious of "security," they said, and it was too difficult to get trained communicators into the Escambray with radios. But behind these objections was the Agency's enormous reluctance to give a blank check to any group beyond its control.

The MRP was then little known in Miami, since Ray and his companions were not politically represented in Florida. But the Escambray guerrillas could not be wholly ignored. Stories about their defiance of Castro were circulating in the United States, and the Premier made no secret of his concern about their progress. By September, he had moved powerful militia units to the foothills of the Escambray, and had taken personal command of the operation. His own experience in the Sierra Maestra taught him the danger of tolerating guerrilla force. Peasants and their families were evacuated from the region so that they could not supply food to the guerrillas. Firing squads went back to work.

Nonetheless, by the first of the year Castro had still not beaten the Escambray fighters, despite their lack of food and weapons. Castro's personal physician, an Army major, was killed in a skirmish with the guerrillas, who controlled most of the big mountains.

This stubborn resistance had an impact on Miami, and with some reluctance the CIA drew up plans to help the Escambray insurgents. About October, Cuban rebel aircraft

from Guatemala began flying occasional supply missions to the Escambray, dropping food, weapons and radio transmitters. But it was an unenthusiastic effort and the drops were too infrequent. Slowly, the pressure of the thousands of Castro militiamen began to yield results, and the perimeter held by the guerrillas gradually shrank. The parachuted supplies started falling into the hands of the militia instead of the guerrillas. By mid-November, the back of the movement had been broken, and the guerrillas were fighting for physical survival. Anguished radio messages from weak transmitters desperately pleaded for help. But since the effectiveness of the guerrillas had diminished, the flights were curtailed, and a long agony in the Escambray continued until almost the eve of the Bay of Pigs invasion, which, ironically, entered the island only 80 miles from the former rebel stronghold.

The collapse of the Escambray resistance left the MRP as the principal anti-Castro movement within Cuba. Although the MRP was growing in importance, Ray realized that it could not go on forever without material help from the United States. The example of the Escambray was cruelly clear. Growing desperate, but also hoping that John F. Kennedy's election would bring an administration into power more disposed to work with the left-of-center MRP, Ray arranged to be smuggled into Miami in November 1960 to plead his case in person.

One of the authors saw Ray in Washington shortly after his arrival. Deceptively soft-spoken, Ray had the manner of a young instructor, and was given to understatement rather than the usual full-blown rhetoric of Cubans. His English was good, learned during his student days at the University of Utah. He was preoccupied but optimistic about the prospects for the underground.

He was asked about Major Huber Matos, the revolutionary hero who was jailed for "treason" for espousing anti-communist views. Ray said that the MRP looked to Matos as a symbol of what the movement stood for. He added, with a flicker of excitement, that a plan was underway to free Matos that day, but that nothing could be said about the details. A few days later, Ray was downcast by the news that the plan had failed; it had relied on collaboration with insiders at the Isle of Pines prison, but Castro apparently got a hint of the plot, transferred all prison personnel and mounted a heavy garrison on the island.

The argument that Ray presented to officials in Miami and Washington hinged on the political desirability of an in-

personnel that would leave Castro with a few hundred men. He suggested that such a force should be focused on attempts to wear down Castro's reserves and encourage defection within the ranks of the rebel army. The United States could help the underground by supplying it with arms and equipment—but the MRP would refuse to submit to political domination by the CIA. These conversations left no doubt that Ray was proud and in some ways a "difficult" person. He made no secret of his detestation of Mr. Bender, although his public remarks before and after the invasion were circumspect. At one point, after a phone call from the White House, Ray agreed to withdraw a letter he was sending to the New York Times outlining his difficulties with the CIA. It is an ironic footnote that CIA emnity cost Ray his leadership of the MRP after the invasion; the underground, feeling that it would never get any favorable consideration for help without a new face, asked Ray to step down.

With Ray's arrival in the United States, the two basic concepts of anti-Castro strategy collided directly. Ray wanted help for the underground tied in with a left-of-center political program; the CIA was in favor of an invasion presided over by an exile front with a cautious, moderate program.

At this point, however, the CIA was not wedded to a single, massive invasion. It talked in terms of multiple landings tied in with sabotage and insurrection within the island. As late as October 1960, Artime himself gave high priority to underground help. Discussing the operational blueprints with one of the authors, Artime spoke of a planned strategy involving thirty simultaneous air and sea landings by rebel forces designed to link up with thirty guerrilla and underground groups on the island. The quick-talking, chain-smoking Cuban explained that his rebels were already in possession of the necessary aircraft and landing ships to carry out the operation. Artime added that the exile forces were even forming parachute units.

Artime is being held incommunicado in a Castro prison in Havana, and until he is free to speak it will be difficult to determine what led him to discard his own plans and accept the CIA proposal for a one-shot invasion.

VII

At the same moment that the Escambray guerrillas were collapsing in Cuba, the CIA army was reaching a high degree of preparedness in Guatemala—after a fashion. Re-

United States aircraft from the deactivated Navy ship at Opa-locka, near Miami. Instructors were being assigned from a number of improbable places.

A United States Army colonel known as Davis was directing the conventional warfare training. A Filipino colonel who had fought against the procommunist Huk rebels in his country was flown in from Manila to work with the guerrilla and infiltration teams. Several Eastern European specialists, possibly anti-Soviet Ukrainians, whom the CIA had unearthed somewhere in Europe, were brought to Guatemala. Interpreters were provided to translate the instructions into Spanish, working with the training commanders.

But the entire operation was a study in military realism at least in the opinion of many Cubans who were there. Conventional solutions were proposed and executed for what was by definition an unconventional situation. Although it was obvious that a force of 1,500 to 2,000 men could not possibly defeat Castro in orthodox combat, the CIA planners built a miniature army on conventional lines. The Cubans were trained in World War II infantry tactics. They were provided with up-to-date weapons like bazookas, recoilless antitank guns and even a handful of medium tanks. It is difficult to imagine what kind of war the CIA was visualizing in Cuba, ignoring as it did that country's tradition of guerrilla wars going back to the Wars of Independence, as well as the political realities on the island and the staggering operational problems the little army would have to face.

The guerrilla training offered in Guatemala and at the jungle warfare school in Panama, such as it was, was equally inadequate. In the opinion of the Cuban fighters subjected to it. Most of the Cubans were veterans of the Sierra Maestra, and this gave them a certain authority in discussing the subject. Their opinion is that the Guatemalan camps they were trained on a terrain of granite volcanic outcroppings that bore no resemblance to conditions they knew to exist in Cuba. The tactics taught, therefore, were largely unsuited to the problems they would face at home. Several Cubans were sternly reprimanded by the CIA strategists when they suggested that the training follow more closely the instruction given the militia units in Cuba by Castro. In the end, a number of the Cuban guerrilla experts were expelled from the camps and returned to Miami.

By the end of 1960, the Guatemalan operation was nearing the periphery of public knowledge. Inquiring newspaper-

Although a good many perplexed Americans were inclined to discount the strange rumors about a rebel army, Fidel Castro followed the reports with the utmost concern. His network of agents in Central America and in Miami fed him the necessary details. He began a propaganda counteroffensive immediately, warning that an invasion was coming. Late in November, he ordered a general mobilization and charged that the Eisenhower Administration in its waning months would doubtless attempt an attack on Cuba. The militia remained under arms until Kennedy took office.

Havana and much of the Cuban coast soon bristled with fortifications. Gun emplacements dotted the curving seaside Malecón Boulevard in the capital, although it surely must have seemed unlikely to Castro that his enemies would wade into Havana Bay. But to further dramatize the peril, the Premier let it be known that strategic areas of the city were, or would be, protected by explosives and that he would blow up Havana if the enemy succeeded in overcoming its defenders.

It is probable that Castro was really convinced that an invasion would come about November. He kept hundreds of thousands of militiamen on the alert for nearly three months, although the mobilization took men from their jobs and the sugar harvest time was approaching. Hence Cuba's sinking productivity declined even further. Matters reached the point that Major Guevarra warned in a speech early in January 1961 that Cuba had to return the men to work to avert an economic collapse. Meanwhile, incredulous Americans dismissed the invasion scare as a propaganda stunt and editorial writers remarked that the new Administration would be too wise to fall into such an obvious trap.

The day of President Kennedy's inauguration, Castro ordered a demobilization. He remarked with satisfaction that the Cuban show of force had prevented the invasion, an

argument that cannot wholly be dismissed. In addition, there is reason to believe that Castro hoped that Mr. Kennedy would seek an accommodation with revolutionary Cuba. He seemed to feel that the young President would radically alter Washington's policy toward Cuba. Consequently, Cuban propaganda was muted and Havana adopted an attitude of expectancy toward the new Administration.

But, on a political level, the new government had the same distaste for the Castro regime as did its predecessor. Operationally, as we shall see, it was caught in the growing momentum of the CIA's pet project.

VIII

A few days before President Kennedy's inauguration, the CIA moved to strengthen its hold over Guatemala—in effect, presenting his new Administration with a *fait accompli* in which the liberal elements among the Cuban exiles were swept from positions of influence.

This move, which the impotent Revolutionary Front had to accept tacitly, took the form of a *coup d'état* in the Guatemalan camps. On January 18, the rebel troops in the Guatemalan camps were summoned by the CIA agents in charge and informed that the new military leadership of the anti-Castro army was being placed in the hands of officers enjoying the special confidence of the United States. These officers, the assembled men were told, were Captain Artime, Captain José P. San Román and Captain Miguel Villafañá. Artime was the youthful member of the front, who had become the CIA favorite. San Román was a former officer in the Batista Maestra region. In the eyes of most anti-Batista Cubans, he was closely identified with the former dictatorship. Villafañá was the head of the exile air force, a strong-willed officer with a rightist reputation.

Other officers identified with the right-wing school of thought, including Batistanos, were given command of numerous units, including some five battalions of the rebel army. In Miami at the same time, the CIA and its Cuban associates arranged for the dismissal of the Front's "Chief of Staff," Colonel Martín Helena, a professional army officer who had resigned his regimental command in protest over Batista's 1952 *coup d'état*.

While the Front's leadership, except for Artime, was not consulted about the purge, the CIA came to rely extensively in its political activities on a shadowy group known around Miami as the "Cuban CIA," and built around the intelli-

power network of the Front. The head of this operation was
Francisco Serrano, a cousin of Manuel Serrano, the founder
of the MRR.

The Serrano operation acquired considerable power in the opening months of 1961, when the invasion preparations reached the final stage. Working from its headquarters in a villa in Coral Gables, the intelligence group had the choice of which Cubans would be permitted to participate in the planning and execution of the assault on Cuba.

This power was reputedly used to eliminate from the preparations most of those who had cooperated with Castro in the early days of the revolution and who held reasonably progressive or liberal views. The foremost target was Manuel Ray's MRP, and during the months preceding the invasion this organization was deprived of any assistance, even though the MRP operated the most successful underground network in Cuba. While explosives, weapons and money flowed to Artime's MRR and to other groups that were not objectionable to the CIA's field operators, the MRP had to plead, bargain and fight for every pound of plastic explosives and for every submachinegun. Ray's agents obtained additional supplies by purchasing them on the black market and smuggling it into Cuba aboard their own boats.

Thus in the critical weeks preceding the invasion, the principal underground organization in Cuba was ignored by the very people who were planning the assault. At this time, the MRP was being described by its American and Cuban opponents as a dangerous movement advocating "Fidelismo without Fidel," whatever that was supposed to mean.

These wrong-headed activities went even further. Important groups of experienced guerrilla fighters were prevented from leaving for Guatemala even in the days preceding the invasion because those who directed the operation wished to have no fighters representing a different political approach. This was particularly and astonishingly true of a group of officers who had belonged to the garrison of Major Huber Matos in Camagüey and who had made their way to Florida after their commander was arrested and sentenced to prison for "treason" against Castro. Some of them, like their leader, Captain Napoleón Becquer, had escaped from prison to try to join the anti-Castro war. Guerrilla fighters who had escaped from the Escambray encirclement were similarly treated.

The exclusion of politically "unsound" fighters and favoritism for the pro-Batista groups continued even after President Kennedy has publicly assured that there would be no Batistanos among the Cuban freedom fighters. Simi-

lar assurances were made privately by CIA Director Allen Dulles, and it can be assumed that neither the President nor his intelligence chief had any idea of the meaning of what was going on in the secret little fiefdoms springing up in Miami and Guatemala. CIA higher-ups seemed to feel that officers who served in the Batista army were acceptable if they had a "clean" record.

Although a last-minute agreement between the Front and the MRP—forced on a reluctant CIA by the White House—called for the MRP's full participation in the approaching battle, the CIA operatives found ways of ignoring directives from above. A week before the invasion, the Becquer contingent and more than 100 MRP volunteers were ordered to go to Guatemala. But they were taken instead by the CIA and the Front's intelligence operatives to a farmhouse on the outskirts of Miami, near a spot called Bauer's Road, and kept there under guard. It is not known whether this action was taken with the consent or knowledge of Washington.

In the Guatemalan camps, more than 200 troops who had objected to the January *coup d'état* were arrested on the spot. Most of them were released and shipped back to Miami, but a hard-core group—including several young lawyers—were kept in a series of improvised prisons in the Guatemalan province of Peten until after the invasion. According to their subsequent testimony, they were guarded by tough American CIA agents—imprisoned for the "insubordination" of refusing to serve under Batista military officers.

When word of these high-handed tactics reached Miami, at least one member of the Front—Justo Carrillo Hernández—rebelled against it. Although he refrained from making any public charges, he refused from that point to visit the Guatemalan camps. But his colleagues continued to make their periodic, morale-building inspection trips.

The CIA's position was that the insurgents who opposed the rightist leaders installed in the invasion army were unreliable and dangerous elements who had to be weeded out. It was implied that they were unreliable anticommunists, although many of them had been in Castro's prisons precisely because of their stand against the increasing communist inroads in Cuba.

Subsequently, the claim was made that the underground could not have been brought into the operation because the secrecy of the whole venture had to be protected. But those who advance this implausible case were oddly remiss

It is reported that the members of the Front... A... that... and... was made by... and... were on speaking terms with the CIA... the Miami operation was conducted with such... ing indication that Castro in Havana was... what was happening as if he himself had... of meetings in the bars and hotels along Biscayne Boulevard and Flagler Street.

IX

But even the pre-invasion purges were not enough, apparently, for the CIA operatives and their Cuban business and political friends. There was still one more arrangement in the dark to assure that a post-Castro regime contained no troublemakers.

This top-secret project was known as "Operation Forty," and was set in motion in early March by Sanjénis and the intelligence branch of the Front.

Many details of "Operation Forty" are still shrouded, but enough is known to indicate that it was intended as a kind of "civilian-military government" that would move in on the heels of the invading army and take control of the national and local governments before the underground fighters could realize what was happening.

Curiously, the "liberators" were planning to repeat the policy of "Che" Guevara when he swept down into the plains of central Cuba and left his political indoctrinators behind in every town and village in his path. The difference is that Guevara planted procommunists, and the "Cuban CIA" was going to plant what at best can be called unreconstructed antirevolutionaries. As "Operation Forty" was being organized, it is worth remarking, the Kennedy Administration was eloquently affirming its support for a noncommunist but advanced social revolution in Cuba.

According to well-informed Cubans, "Operation Forty" also had a second task: that of assassinating, if necessary, political leaders who stood in the way. It was reported that the project included a hand-picked task force of professional killers who were to eliminate obdurate elements which might oppose a return to the good old days. In the confusion of battle, such killings could go unnoticed and the victims depicted as communists. One of the potential killers was reported to be Ramón Calviño, a Batista police torturer,

a seaman who had been smuggled on shipboard and who subsequently went ashore with the invading forces and was captured by Castro's militia. In history's strange way, Calvino himself was executed.

The saddest aspect of all these blunders was that they obscured the character and motives of the vast majority of the Cubans who enlisted in the invasion forces. Only some 35 members of the invasion force were Batista soldiers who had had records and the overwhelming majority of the rank and file were free of any connection whatsoever with the Batista regime.

They were brave, headstrong and democratic-minded young men who genuinely wished to restore freedom to Cuba. They were ready to risk their lives to eject a dictator and they entered the invasion force with the boundless enthusiasm of daredevil youth. Their gesture was gallant—whatever the other sad circumstances surrounding a venture over which they had pitifully little control.

CHAPTER SIX



THE DISPOSAL PROBLEM

"The disposal problem." This was the crisp euphemism that Allen Welsh Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, used to describe an inherited problem on President Kennedy's desk. The time was shortly after Mr. Kennedy's inauguration, and the problem, basically, was what to do about some 1,500 men under arms, trained and equipped by the CIA, who were restively waiting for a chance to attack Fidel Castro's Cuba.

The outcome of the "disposed problem" developed into a classic instance of how a contingency plan can become an operational venture in the nether world of the secret service. When President Eisenhower first authorized the formation of the exile cadres in March 1960, no one contemplated a massive one-shot invasion. Instead, the small cadre was a contingency operation; ineluctably, the force grew—and so did the plan.

The wheel turned, a new President assumed office and

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First, there were the opposing personalities of Fidel Castro and John F. Kennedy, the young adversaries who were playing boldly for the highest stakes. Both had in common a background of family wealth, both attended respectable schools, both were fiercely ambitious, and both were men who could coolly estimate the odds and take a chance.

But Castro was a rebel and Kennedy was not. In whatever environment, Castro surely would have wound up with a sword in his hand as an avenging revolutionary. Fidel had little respect for the wisdom of his elders or the mysteries of traditional society. In contrast, Kennedy was a seeker of advice, a heeder of expert opinion. He came to the White House not as an innovator but as a specialist in effective political management. Whereas Castro cared little for the counsel of men of rank (especially if they wore a uniform), Kennedy at that time gave considerable weight to the words of the Establishment hierarchy.

Castro had already been in power for two years; Kennedy came into the White House as the youngest elected President, and he was palpably aching for greatness. After his narrow win over Mr. Nixon, the President was especially anxious to bring off a victory in the first months, to certify his title to office by popular acclaim.

Yet what did the President confront? At home, he faced a Congress with a reduced Democratic majority in which he was barely able to win a House Rules Committee fight intended to insure that his program would at least escape being stifled in the cloakroom. Abroad, the President encountered a no less disheartening array of problems—shapeless, irritatingly ambiguous, seemingly unbudgetable slugs of frustration. Laos was slowly slipping away, Berlin presented thwarting complexities, the Congo was a mess.

Then there was Cuba, so temptingly close to home. By virtue of his campaign speeches, the President was pledged to do something about Fidel Castro. An instrument was at

hand in the form of the CIA plan—and, as we shall see, his respected senior advisers urged him to "let'er rip." But, along with many others, the President seriously underestimated his adversary. Fidel Castro may give the appearance of boisterous disarray, but on those questions vital to his survival he is seldom a "romantic." No simple phrase can sum up the personality of Fidel Castro; he presents an orchestration of dissonant themes.

There is the theme of genuine compassion—almost feminine tenderness—combined with crimson ruthlessness. There is his ambition to elevate himself—coupled with a need to bend his knees before a dogmatic political ideology. There is the theme of wanton destructiveness, evident from his boyhood days when he delighted in spraying the beach with bullets, and there is the theme of purposeful reform. But mingled with all of this is the motif of cunning. Notwithstanding his outward impetuosity, Castro has shown himself a gifted strategist in the tactics of entrapment. He does not meet his enemies frontally; he goads them on to self-destruction.

In fighting against Batista, Castro never exposed his hand—ful of guerrillas to a frontal engagement with the army. He waited, he teased, and he finally conquered by forcing Batista to destroy himself. (It is not widely known that the total of actual *military* casualties during more than two years of civil war amounted to not much more than 350.) The same stratagem was repeated when Castro took on the United States. Despite threatening oratory, Castro never provided the United States with a clear pretext for direct military attack—he kept his hands off Guantanamo Naval Base. He waited, he goaded, hoping to entrap the United States in a self-destructive act of folly. With the cooperation of the American government, and especially of the Central Intelligence Agency, he succeeded.

II

In no other country does an intelligence service operate with as much extravagant ballyhoo as in the United States. The MI-5 or the Deuxième Bureau, the British and French equivalents of CIA, are scarcely acknowledged to exist—and only cabinet insiders know the name of any officer except the director. But in America, the CIA has its headquarters right off a four-lane highway in Langley, Virginia, its existence advertised by disarmingly candid signs, "CIA—Next Right."

As with the plant, so with the personnel. The top men

44 The "spooks" of the CIA have become thoroughly Americanized. Perhaps it is not surprising that in a country where celebrity is often a measure of prestige, even men whose names should be kept out of the newspapers feel tempted to puff up their own achievements. Allen Dulles, when he was director, was known to feel that his agency was not getting the public credit it deserved. Possibly this helps to explain why CIA sources themselves began quietly mentioning the Agency's victories, with the Guatemala operation appearing on every list. This tendency became especially marked after the U-2 debacle, which put the CIA on the defensive and made its officers anxious to justify its enormous budget, said to be up to \$1 billion a year. And surely the CIA is the only "black" service that has distributed press releases about its personnel to incredulous reporters.

Thus there is a certain irony in one factor that led to the April 17 invasion: the CIA's increasing involvement in the news. Perhaps agents in the field took their cue from the men at the top; whatever the cause, CIA operatives in Florida and Guatemala seemed almost as conscious about projecting a favorable "image" of their effort as the United States Information Agency. Newspaper and magazine reporters were briefed by CIA agents, and Miami newspapers even took to submitting stories on the Agency's activities to the CIA for "clearance."

The fact is that it was impossible to keep the organizing of a small-scale army secret—especially if the recruiting was on American soil. By the time Mr. Dulles asked the new President what he wanted to do about "the disposal problem," the very publicity surrounding the operation made it impossible for the United States to extricate itself without a loss of face.

Assume that the President wanted to abandon the venture as a bad idea. This would have been taken as a vote of no confidence in the CIA, which had invested its prestige, money and personnel in a scheme that the organiza-

tion adjudged sound. It would have been a blow to the Cubans who were supporting the invasion strategy, and who would be sure to say that the United States was a false friend and a paper tiger. It would have been gleefully hailed by Castro as proof that the United States had backed down.

These were some of the threads in the net of circumstance. Once the original order to organize an army had been issued, and once the army became the best-known "secret" force in the world, the avenue of strategic retreat was sealed off. Like a djinn released from the bottle, the CIA's creation soon seemed to develop a will of its own.

In their first meetings, Mr. Kennedy made it clear that he did not want to commit any American forces directly in the enterprise. What could be Cubans do by themselves? What was the CIA estimate of conditions within Cuba? Could the CIA present a plan for using the force in a way that would not directly involve United States military intervention?

Allen Dulles obliged, and the "disposal problem" shortly moved into another stage as a specific plan was submitted to the scrutiny of the White House, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Council.

III

Meanwhile, "new hands" grasped the levers of state. Inevitably, this was a period of transitional uncertainty and organizational groping as the Government underwent a dislocating change of administration. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the sphere of Latin American policy.

The President came into office brimful of good intentions; his campaign had pledged an Alliance for Progress aimed at giving Latin America massive economic aid and encouraging social reform. During the Christmas season, the President's aides conferred in Puerto Rico with Governor Luis Muñoz Marín, and there was a mood of buoyant enthusiasm about the tasks ahead.

But a familiar problem recurred. The President had no one in his immediate entourage who knew anything about Latin America. During the campaign, his speeches on hemisphere policy had been handled mainly by Richard N. Goodwin, a bright, articulate, 29-year-old Harvard Law School product who had clerked for Justice Felix Frankfurter and who had worked on the House Oversight Subcommittee's exposé of Charles Van Doren before joining Senator Ken-

...a sharp front made by default known because the President's lack of interest in Latin American matters. His frustration still now in the job and uncertain of his terrain earned little personal authority in the discussion of the Cuban plan.

An "old hand" from New York came down to help out. Adolf A. Berle, Jr., was a veteran New Dealer who had served as FIDR's Ambassador to Brazil and as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. He joined the new Administration as the chief of a nebulous task force on Latin America that generated both new ideas and administrative confusion. A stout champion of a prodemocratic hemisphere policy, Mr. Berle was handicapped by his tendency to see current developments through the spectacles of the past. The 65-year-old braintruster was fond of using two analogies to explain United States policy toward Cuba. First, he would say, there were parallels with the immediate prewar period in Latin America, when extensive Axis penetration was abetted by Juan Perón. Then, by a show of firm authority, the United States forced Latin America to choose sides—and once again the United States had to do the same. He would also liken the hemisphere crisis with the postwar period in Europe. The action against Cuba, he would reason, is like the Truman Doctrine, a negative step to contain communism. Coupled with it was the Alliance for Progress, aimed at strengthening our democratic friends in the same fashion as the Marshall Plan.

Working with Berle on many aspects of hemisphere policy was Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., the Harvard historian who had joined the White House staff as a kind of troubleshooter. A shrewd veteran of intelligence service during World War II, Schlesinger brought a discreet skepticism to bear of discussions of the invasion proposal. But as a Harvard don new to the seat of power he was diffident about using his sharp tongue.

These three—Goodwin, Berle and Schlesinger—tended to fill the void in Latin American policy, a void partly caused by the Kennedy Administration's inability to recruit a suitable appointee for the job of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. During the first months, an Eisenhower holdover, Thomas C. Mann, stayed on the job. Mann, a cautious career officer, was appointed at his own request as Ambassador to Mexico in early April. It was not until June, after more than twenty candidates had been considered, that the post was finally filled by Robert Forbes