

rockets, firearms and ammunition were admitted to the port. A force of 150 guerrilla fighters commanded by Mass Nino Diaz was ordered to standby for a landing on the coast of Oriente Province in a diversionary movement. Guerrilla specialists from a camp in Louisiana were flown to Puerto Cabezas. At Vieques Island, the United States Marine Corps amphibious warfare reservation off Puerto Rico, Cuban rebel frogmen and underwater demolition experts prepared to join the main force. In Miami, the Council's radio operators exchanged messages with Artime's headquarters in Guatemala and then in Nicaragua. Wives, mothers and sisters of the rebel soldiers flocked to the Miami churches to pray for the success of the invasion.

Everybody, it seemed, was in on the secret and knew the details except the hapless Revolutionary Council in whose name the war was to be fought. On Thursday, April 13, the entire Council was invited to New York by the CIA and quartered at the Hotel Lexington for a series of conferences. On Friday night, they were told that an air strike would occur the next morning. Dr. Miró Cardona tossed sleeplessly, awaiting the results.

The results proved to be disappointing. The B-26's took off from Guatemala during the night for their hit-and-run raids on Havana, San Antonio de los Baños and Santiago. However, they failed to accomplish their mission of knocking out Castro's own air force and veered over the northern coast and set course for Florida, their tanks virtually empty.

The first bomber landed at Key West Naval Air Station at 7 a.m. on April 15, with one of its engines feathered. It carried two pilots. At 8:20 a.m., the second bomber came down at the Miami International Airport, one of its engines also feathered and its wings and fuselage riddled with bullets. The second B-26 carried only one pilot.

No sooner had the two aircraft landed than they were involved in a mist of contradictory stories. Castro promptly charged that the bombers had come from foreign bases, but the Revolutionary Council, sitting in New York, issued a communique announcing that the B-26's had been flown out of Cuba by defecting Castro airmen who decided to inflict a little damage before escaping the island. The Council said that six aircraft, including a T-33 jet trainer, were involved, and that one of the "defecting" planes had been shot down.

Late in the afternoon, Immigration Service officials issued a statement attributed to the pilot who landed in Miami to the effect that he was one of four Castro fliers who had planned to defect three months ago. The man was quoted as saying

that the risk was far greater when he and two other comrades were ordered to fly to Cuba before the invasion. He said that he had been ordered to fly to Cuba before the invasion. He said that he had been ordered to fly to Cuba before the invasion. He said that he had been ordered to fly to Cuba before the invasion.

Other photographs showed the plane in painstaking detail. Although the CIA had taken the pains to disguise the B-26 with "FAR" markings, the agency overlooked a crucial detail that was spotted immediately by professional observers who saw the bomber at the airport or in the newspaper photographs. This was the fact that while Castro's B-26's were equipped with plexiglass noses, the aircraft given the rebel pilots were models with opaque noses.

It did not take much time for a group of pilots in Miami who had served in Guatemala to recognize the "defector" as one of their companions from the secret camps. Before night fell, it was common knowledge in Miami that the "defector" was a Lieutenant Zuñiga. His wife also saw the newspaper picture and telephoned a friend to inquire where she could find her husband, whom she had not seen since he left for Guatemalan camps several months before.

Did the CIA expect this flimsy deceit to succeed? All Castro had to do to establish whether any of his pilots or planes had defected was to find out whether any men or equipment were missing.

In the end, ironically, the raid itself was a cruel deception. Reports had been sent to Washington describing the raid as successful, when it wasn't, and this report, tied in with other events, led to the cancellation of a second strike planned for early Monday to assure the complete destruction of Castro's air power. Here we encounter the crowning paradox of the invasion plan. The hundred elaborate wheels turned smoothly to organize the landing force, but one small cog—essential to the movement of the entire machine—fell out of place. The fact that the second strike did not take place was one of the keys of the military failure of the entire plan.

By this time, the invasion plans had passed the point of no return, even if any one had been disposed to postpone or cancel the attack. The rebel army was already aboard the ships, sailing from Nicaragua, under the cover of a squadron

of United States destroyers that led the pathetic little armada of old cargo ships and landing craft toward the Cuban shore to a by now predetermined destiny.

On Saturday night, "Tony" Varona, who was nominally the "War Minister" in the Revolutionary Council, flew hurriedly from New York to Miami for last-minute consultations. He returned to New York on Sunday morning, just in time for a lunchtime conference of the Council in a suite on the tenth floor of the Lexington Hotel.

Early in the afternoon, the Council was advised that important events were forthcoming and that for reasons of general security, and in order to be ready to return to Cuba, the Council had to slip out of sight. Led by Frank Bender and escorted by ten CIA agents, the members of the Council, still ignorant of what was about to happen, were shepherded downstairs through a back elevator and taken to waiting cars. After a three-hour drive, they arrived at the Philadelphia airport, where they boarded a plane operated by the Immigration Service.

By evening, the aircraft landed at Opa-Loeka, just outside Miami. The members of the Council were led to a house on the outskirts of the field. CIA agents armed with rifles guarded the house. Dinner was served to the Council, and each member was issued a duffel bag containing a rebel uniform and campaign equipment.

When members of the Cuban Revolutionary Council inquired about what was occurring, Bender and his aides shook their heads, professing ignorance. It was midnight when the Council members finally went to sleep.

At that moment, the invasion ships were edging close to the coast of the Bay of Pigs.

II

The scene shifts from the demimonde of the "black" service and the mobilization tumult in Miami and Havana to a gleaming glass house on the East River in New York where the follies of government become the stuff of debate. The place is the modernistic auditorium in which the United Nations Political Committee is meeting. The time is Saturday morning, April 15.

Raúl Roa, Cuba's Foreign Minister, whose spectacles invariably seem about to slither off his nose, is speaking. "I have been instructed by my government," Roa tells the crowded room, "to denounce before this committee the vandalistic aggression carried out at dawn today against the territorial

territory of Cuba with the most flagrant violation. The responsibility for this act of imperialistic piracy falls squarely on the Government of the United States."

The Cuban paused, the room buzzed with talk as Roa returned to charge that the incident "undoubtedly is the prelude to a large-scale invasion attempt, organized, supplied and financed by the United States with the complicity of satellite dictatorships of the Western Hemisphere."

In tense confrontation, Adlai Stevenson began his reply, confident that the information he had received about the raid was true. The Ambassador of the United States held a photograph of one of the planes that had landed in Florida. "It has the markings of Castro's air force on the tail," Stevenson asserted, pointing to the picture, "which everybody can see for himself. The Cuban star and the initials FAR—Fuera Area Revolucionaria—are clearly visible. The two aircraft which landed in Florida today . . . were piloted by Cuban air force pilots. These pilots and certain other crew members have apparently defected from Castro's tyranny. No United States personnel participated. No United States government planes of any kind participated. 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."

With the firmness that springs from conviction, Stevenson turned to the committee and summed up his case: "As President Kennedy said just a few days ago, the basic issue in Cuba is not between the United States and Cuba, it is between the Cubans themselves. . . . The history of Cuba has been a history of fighting for freedom. Regardless of what happens, the Cubans will fight for freedom. The activities of the last 24 hours are an eloquent confirmation of this historical fact."

An ambassador, it is said, is an honest man sent to lie for his commonwealth. But Stevenson had not only been forced to lie, he had thought he was speaking the truth. The man who had to defend the attack before the United Nations was not told the facts about the raid; instead he was given a "cover story" so flimsy that the Cubans were able immediately to place the United States in an excruciatingly embarrassing position.

On Sunday, Castro took the offensive, calling the attack "Cuba's Pearl Harbor," and accurately predicting that its purpose was to destroy the Cuban air force as a prelude to aggression. In a two-hour speech delivered at fever pitch at

A military funeral for those killed in the Bay of Pigs was sent the planes and pilots before the United Nations. He will present the world has a right to call him a liar."

For the first time in public, Castro described his revolution as socialist. Washington officials could not forgive him, he noses. He added that his people would defend this "revolution of the humble, by the humble and for the humble to the last drop of blood." His paraphrase of Lincoln brought forth shouts: "Fidel, Khrushchev, we are with both!"

The United Nations imbroglio prompted a swirl of meetings and frantic messages involving Stevenson, Secretary of State Rusk, White House aid McGeorge Bundy, and the President. A dozen different versions circulate as to who said what to whom. Notwithstanding the conflicting testimony, the outcome was that the President canceled the second air strike planned to assure that Castro's air power was knocked out. To what extent faulty intelligence reports on the first strike contributed to his decision is not known at this time.

Stevenson did not know about the planned second raid, and authoritative accounts insist that he had no direct part in the cancellation. But his reaction to being badly used did play a part in the decision. He was furious, and surely with reason. The President was shaken by Stevenson's reaction.

In an article in the September 1961 issue of *Fortune*, Charles J. V. Murphy has elaborated the thesis that this last-minute shift, along with other hasty revisions in the details of the plan, doomed the invasion. Clearly, the changes did not improve Operation Pluto's chances for success, but so many mistakes of every order—military, political and psychological—played a part in the debacle that to emphasize a single bad decision might leave the impression that everything else was "sound."

Mr. Murphy ignores, for example, a defect more fundamental than the cancellation of an air strike employing a crude deceit more worthy of the communists and Castro than the United States. This was the total failure to work with the Cuban underground. Viewed strictly as a military venture, the single most mystifying fact about the CIA plan is that it excluded the Cuban people as untrustworthy allies. Many post-mortems have lamented the so-called "political" considerations that led the President to hold back United States military forces. But the political consideration that seems more crucial had less to do with world opinion than Cuban opinion. The role of the Cubans in the plan was that

of tonight's men... The program...
A few days before the invasion, the National Council...
and taken to New York for sessions with the Revolutionary Council. He presented a plan which called for a concerted sabotage campaign in April, with Havana power plants, major highways and railroads as the main targets. He was supplied with two tons of powerful C-4 plastic explosives and was ordered back to Cuba.

But he was not told that the date of the invasion had been set and that the armada was being assembled in Puerto Cabezas. He was fast asleep in a modest Miami home when the news of the invasion came at dawn. His voice broke when he asked one of the authors on the telephone at 5 a.m., "Do you really mean that the invasion has started without us?"
It had indeed.

III

The event itself was accompanied by romantic flourishes in the best cloak-and-dagger tradition. As the flotilla was assembling for the strike, a clandestine radio transmitter sent suitably baffling messages into the Caribbean sky: "Alert! Alert! Look well at the rainbow. The first will rise very soon. Chico is in the house. Visit him. The sky is blue. Place notice in the tree. The tree is green and brown. The letters arrived well. The letters are white. The fish will not take much time to rise. The fish is red. Look well at the rainbow...."

By one o'clock on the morning of April 17, the invasion fleet, composed of four cargo ships and two LCI's (Landing Craft Infantry), and assisted by nearly a dozen smaller landing craft, took positions off the coast of Las Villas Province. The targets were two beaches—Playa Girón, known operationally as the Blue Beach, and Playa Larga, known as the Green Beach—located respectively at the entrance of the Bay of Pigs and at its apex.

The bay jutted into the swamps of Ciénaga de Zapata, a marshy peninsula in the south of Cuba, but there was firm ground at the beaches where the Castro regime had built resorts for the workers. Good hard-surfaced roads led inland to connect with the Cuban highway network. The wild shoreline was exotic, resembling the Florida Everglades, and the night air was buffeted by a breeze from the north. The crescent moon had already set; the only sound was the splash of fish

and alligators and the rustle of tropical birds. Deep in the swamp, Castro himself had built a tin-roofed fishing cabin, about two hours march from the landing area.

At 1:15 a.m., Radio Swan, the CIA-controlled station, beamed to Cuba a statement issued in the name of José Miró Cardona: "Before dawn Cuban patriots in the cities and in the hills began the battle to liberate our homeland from the despotic rule of Fidel Castro. . . . In their unquenchable thirst for liberty the Cuban people today seize arms to obliterate a vicious alien oppressor fired by the vision of inevitable victory, and convinced that the freedom-loving peoples of this hemisphere will make common cause with them. . . ." In the United States, the statement was mimeographed and released as "Bulletin No. 1" by Lem Jones Associates, Inc., 280 Madison Avenue, New York, the public-relations firm employed to "handle" the Cuban invasion.

The battle was joined; the following account is based on both interviews with the prisoners and survivors and on Castro's own detailed account, which has been confirmed by participants as substantially accurate, although there are discrepancies that will be noted.

A few minutes before 2 a.m., frogmen slid into the water from speedboats lowered by one of the assault crafts, and swam to the two beaches to install position lights and destroy any obstacles to the landing. Between 2:30 a.m. and 3 a.m., two battalions of the rebel brigade came ashore at Playa Girón and one battalion landed at Playa Larga. The armada's five tanks were rolled ashore at Playa Girón, with orders to proceed along the coastal highway and link up with troops further north at Playa Larga, thereby securing a long beachhead. A small column was sent to the north toward the town of Jagüey Grande, which had a small airstrip.

As the invaders waded onto the beach and through the mangrove swamps, they encountered little initial resistance. Small militia units guarding the beaches were easily overcome and a few residents of the area joined the attacking force and were given weapons. All together, an entire militia army was dumped on the shore, with 867.8 tons of supplies and weapons for 4,000 men. The extra arms were for "friendly forces" which were expected to join with the invaders.

The news of the landing found Castro in Havana, where he heard by telephone from Jagüey Grande that the invasion was on. Immediately, the Premier alerted his tiny air force and his large army and sped toward the invasion area, setting up his field headquarters at the Australia sugar mill, north of

Playa Larga and from at least a few miles from the beach.

At daylight, Castro's aircraft roared into the Bay under strict orders to concentrate on rebel shipping and to ignore the battlefield. That first day, Castro had available only two T-33 jet trainers, two Sea Furies and two B-26's. The rest of his air force was immobilized for lack of spare parts, according to subsequent Cuban accounts. But he knew how to use his six aircraft, and his resourcefulness was decisive in winning a quick victory.

Shuttling between the San Antonio base on the northern coast and the invasion area, his pilots displayed considerable ability, but they were abetted by luck. At 6:45 a.m., Captain Enrique Carreras Rolas, a 38-year-old pilot, flew his Sea Fury toward the 3,000-ton cargo ship *Houston* (also known as the *Agua*), and hit it with four five-inch rockets. The *Houston* carried the 5th Battalion of the brigade, most of the communications equipment, and Captain Artime.

At the time, the *Houston* was proceeding toward Playa Larga to discharge her cargo. Hit in her prow, the ship ran aground on a sandspit two miles from the beach. Within the hour, the LCI known as *Marsopa*, which had acted as the control ship for the operation, was sunk by other pilots, along with eight other small landing craft. Before 8 a.m., therefore, the armada had already been seriously damaged.

Meanwhile, some 175 paratroopers had been dropped inland to secure control of the access roads to the beachhead. It was Premier Castro's opinion, when he toured the battlefield with one of the authors in July 1961, that the paratroopers had been dropped too close to the battlefield to be really useful in cutting off communications—and, indeed, during the battle their prime concern became fighting their way to the beachhead.

In other respects, Castro said he thought the choice of the landing area was excellent and that it came as a surprise to him, although he was expecting the invasion that day. The strategic concept, Castro felt, was sound in theory: the coast was lightly defended and a sudden landing offered a reasonable chance for establishing a fair-sized beachhead before the defenders could bring reinforcements from other parts of Cuba. But the expansion of the beachhead would have been possible only if Castro had been blocked from sending reinforcements from his army of 250,000. The underground, which might have performed this task, was excluded from the operation. Diversionary landings were also not carried

out, enabling Castro to bring the full force of his militia to bear on a slim beachhead held by some 1,500 troops.

By 8 a.m., Castro had ordered into action an understrength militia battalion from the Australia sugar mill, while another battalion advanced from Cienfuegos. Other militia units from neighboring Matanzas Province were ordered toward the battlefield, and, in Havana, tanks and artillery were being loaded on flatbed trucks to be rushed to the invasion area.

In the air, the paratroop drop was followed by a flight of B-26's that strafed and bombed Castro troops on the ground. In the day's combat, the invaders quickly had five of their twelve B-26's shot down, while Castro lost a Sea Fury and a B-26. The swifter moving T-33 trainer jets gave Castro a crucial advantage in felling the lumbering B-26's.

During the course of the first day of battle, the rebel brigade moved about twenty miles inland and held 43 miles of the coast. This was the peak of its success before the tide turned. The invaders never had a chance; despite their extensive training and their elaborate equipment, the rebel brigades were exposed to relentless air attack and had virtually no indigenous support within the island to hamper Castro's massive counterattacks. Already it became clear, on the first day, that the invasion force could not be resupplied. Supplies could neither be flown in nor transported from floating depots. The major supply ships had to stay out of range of Castro's jets.

There was a pathetic footnote as the first day was drawing to a close. The taped voice of Captain Manuel Artime, the erstwhile golden boy of the CIA, was heard over Miami's WMET. Introduced as "Commander in Chief of the Army of Liberation," the 29-year-old, little-known Cuban was solemnly proclaiming: "I, Manuel Artime, convoke the Cuban people to revolt in fulfillment of my promise of a year ago." By that time, Artime himself was somewhere in the dark swamps amid the shambles of the Bay of Pigs. Later, he was taken prisoner.

The confusion on the beachhead had a fitting counterpart in the misadventures of a small group of guerrilla fighters who were supposed to mount a diversionary attack in Oriente Province. The odyssey of this wandering army was so typical of the entire effort that it warrants a brief description.

According to the CIA plan, Major Nino Diaz was to take a contingent of 152 men to the eastern coast of Cuba and join with defectors to set up a guerrilla front. Major Diaz had once fought with Castro's rebel army in the Sierra Maestra and he knew—and was known in—Oriente Province.

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A week before the invasion had been planned an aircraft was loaded with cargo, topped off the type used to ship bananas. The vessel flew a Costa Rican flag and the Diaz guerrillas were disguised in the garb of Castro's rebel army. Morale was high, even though there had been the usual dissension during the training period over the admission of Batista officers into the guerrilla force. The core of the unit was provided by fifty seasoned guerrilla fighters; the rest had been sent by the CIA to increase the size of the force. About a third of the men had received only a week's military training before boarding the ship. At embarkation time, the members of the force knew nothing about the April 17 invasion plan.

Stealthily, the craft headed for Cuba. By April 14—three days before the invasion—Diaz was poised to land at 10 p.m. at an uninhabited coastal spot between the cities of Baracoa and Guantánamo. The prearranged plan called for Diaz, to send a small boat near the shore to await a signal light from the underground. But to the surprise of Diaz, instead of a few signal flashes, the shore blazed with inviting lights. Suspicious of a trap, he waited until the following day to try again. This time it became clear that Castro's militia had been forewarned and was waiting to spring in the darkness on the guerrillas. Jeeps filled with militiamen could be seen on the roadway leading to the shore.

Diaz radioed to Guatemala and reported that it would be suicidal to land at the designated place. His first orders were to land anyway; Diaz refused. Then his creaking ship was ordered to another part of the island to join up with the main invading force. On April 17, in the morning, the Diaz guerrillas heard by radio that the Bay of Pigs "is ours" and were told to await offshore for instructions. The tiny army was jubilant, even though food and water had by this time run dangerously low.

Then came the bizarre twist. Two ships from the invasion armada came within sight of Diaz's craft—but the "regular" invaders were apparently confused by the encounter with a ship flying a Costa Rican flag and loaded with soldiers wearing Castro uniforms. The two "regular" ships bore down on Diaz, and the startled guerrillas soon became aware of the confusion of identity and in consternation began preparing to fight against their own side. Diaz's men desperately signaled and shouted, but to no avail. At the last moment, however, contact was made by walkie-talkie and an armed clash averted.

Subsequently, the Diaz guerrillas learned the truth about the invasion's failure and the ancient cargo ship began heading toward Key West, Florida. Headquarters in Guatemala radioed Diaz and told him to keep away from Key West because the

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press was there. The homeless army changed course and then encountered a U. S. Navy destroyer. An argument ensued between the naval commander and Diaz, whose troops were by now thirsty, hungry and totally demoralized. Finally, the 152 wandering troops—still wearing their Castro-style uniforms—boarded the destroyer and were taken to Vieques Island, the U. S. Marine reservation off Puerto Rico. Members of the brigade still muse about how close they came to firing on fellow freedom fighters during the invasion melee.

V

The news of the invasion came with shuddering impact to Miami, where Cuban exiles huddled around radios; to Havana, where secret police began herding opposition suspects; and to an unbelieving world that followed the confused accounts of the battle.

In New York, at 4 a.m., Lem Jones Associates issued the second war bulletin on behalf of the Revolutionary Council. The communiqué was telephoned to Mr. Jones by a former Cuban judge who, in turn, received it from the CIA. It went as follows:

THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL

Via: Lem Jones Associates, Inc.
280 Madison Avenue
New York, New York
Oregon 9-5636

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 1961

Bulletin No. 2:

The Cuban Revolutionary Council announces a successful landing of military supplies and equipment in the Cochinos Bay area of Matanzas Province.

Overcoming some armed resistance by Castro supporters, substantial amounts of food and ammunition reached elements of internal resistance engaged in active combat.

For many months various revolutionary groups now integrated in the Cuban Revolutionary Council have been distributing a variety of revolutionary supplies and equipment to selected sites in Cuba.

The remote, thinly populated Zapata Marsh area of Matanzas Province has served as a zone in which munitions and equipment were cached for eventual use by resistance fighters in the Escambray and elsewhere.

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Members of the Cuban Revolutionary Council meet secretly at Miami hotels to discuss with the dramatic events unfolding in Cuba. Their views will be made known to the press solely through the Cuban Revolutionary Council's spokesman, Dr. Antonio Siles.

Indeed, the Revolutionary Council was "totally occupied" with the drama. The members of the Council were trying to find out what was happening in the war they were supposed to be leading but did not even know had begun. Penned up in a deserted house near Opa-Loeka airfield, Council members first heard about the invasion when one of the Cubans happened to turn on a radio and heard a Miami newscast quoting from the dawn proclamation issued in the Council's name. Bender told the questioning Cubans to stand by and be ready to fly to the beachhead and establish a "Government in Arms."

In Miami itself, the Cuban community was pulsing with excitement. Within hours after the attack, reports were circulating of imminent victory and of attacks all over the island of Cuba. The first evening editions of the Miami press displayed maps of Cuba showing imaginary pincer movements by rebel forces and carried detailed descriptions of wild battles written by reporters who spared not an adjective in describing a war they never saw.

As newsmen poured into Miami hotels—the closest spot to the beachhead—agents for the Revolutionary Council began signing them up for trips to the battlefield. In mounting excitement, reporters pored over a third bulletin from Lem Jones, which said:

CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL

Via: Lem Jones Associates, Inc.
280 Madison Avenue
New York, New York
Oregon 9-5636

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 1961

Bulletin No. 3:

The Cuban Revolutionary Council wishes to announce that the principal battle of the Cuban revolt against Castro will be fought in the next few hours. Action today was largely of a supply and support effort to forces which have been mobilized and trained inside Cuba over the past several months.

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there were mobs before the American Embassy in Moscow, crying, "Cuba da, Yankee nverg!"

At the United Nations, Ambassador Stevenson was in a defensive and difficult position, but, with dignity, he tried to put the best face on matters. In answer to the Cuban charge of direct intervention, Stevenson stressed a technical distinction: "No offensive had been launched from Florida or from any other part of the United States." In reply to accusations by Foreign Minister Roa that the invaders were hired mercenaries, the American Ambassador replied tartly: "Many of them are Dr. Roa's friends and associates of long standing. They make a rather impressive list: the first Provisional President of the Revolutionary Government, Dr. Manuel Urrutia; the first Prime Minister, Dr. José Miró Cardona; the first President of the Supreme Court, Dr. Emilio Menéndez." Throughout, Stevenson reiterated one theme, "What Roa seeks from us today," he asserted, "is protection for a terroristic regime from the natural wrath of the Cuban people."

For his part, Foreign Minister Roa had one major argument that he embroidered in a dozen patterns: "The government of the United States has exported war to us... My heroic country is proving again the story of David against Goliath." And, notwithstanding Mr. Stevenson's eloquence, that was how millions of people in the world saw it.

VI

The day began early for President John F. Kennedy, the American most keenly concerned with the battle on the Bay of Pigs.

At 5:15 a.m. on Monday, Brigadier General Chester Clifton, the President's military adviser, heard by telephone that the invasion had begun. He told his informant to call Mr. Kennedy at the President's weekend retreat in Glen Ora, Virginia. By 5:30, the President was up and around, and he soon turned up at the White House to study the first fragmentary reports. They were not encouraging.

Secretary of State Rusk, at his regular news conference, which came a few hours after the first invasion reports, made the first official statement on the event. "There is no secret about the sympathy of the American people for those who wish to be free," he said, adding with emphasis: "What happens in Cuba is for the Cuban people themselves to decide." Rusk declined to answer any questions about United

States material, training or financial assistance to the rebels. But it stressed that "there is not now and will not be any intervention on the part of United States forces." Even what he had seen of press reports, the soft-spoken Secretary observed, he would not characterize the action "as a large-scale invasion."

The day progressed, and by sundown the gloom was already evident. No discernible uprisings had yet occurred and the militia was apparently fighting for Castro. That evening, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., had a few select friends for dinner at his Georgetown home when a message came that cast a pall on the gathering. The news was discouraging to those who had access to candid dispatches rather than the extravagant press accounts of multiple landings, mass defections and bloody uprisings—laced with planted rumors about various eminent Cubans killing themselves or being captured by wrathful insurgents.

Tuesday began with the President's regular breakfast meeting with congressional leaders. One legislator asked Mr. Kennedy what the chances were for success. "Forty per cent," the President replied, adding that much depended on the degree of support the invaders received from the Cuban people. Another question concerned a note that Premier Khrushchev had sent to Washington. The President replied that he doubted the Russians would send "volunteers."

The Khrushchev note was firmly worded: "As to the Soviet Union, there should be no misunderstanding our position. We shall render the Cuban people and their government all necessary assistance in beating back the armed attack on Cuba." That afternoon, the President set aside a reply drafted by the State Department and dictated his own answer. At around 7 p.m., the reply was handed to Mikhail A. Menshikov, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States. The note began: "You are under a serious misapprehension in regard to the events in Cuba..." and quickly came to the point: "I have previously stated, and I repeat now, that the United States intends no military intervention in Cuba. In the event of any military intervention by outside forces we will immediately honor our obligations under the inter-American system to protect this hemisphere against external aggression." It concluded:

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that you should recognize that free peoples do not accept the claim of historical inevitability for Communist revolutions. What your

government believes is its own business, what it does in the world is the world's business. The great revolution in the history of man, past, present and future, is the revolution of those determined to be free.

During the afternoon, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. heard of the plight of the Cuban Revolutionary Council, still confined by armed guards in a desolate shack. As the news of impending defeat finally reached the nominal leaders of the invasion, they clamored to be allowed to rejoin their own people. A call went to Washington, Schlesinger went to the President, who agreed that both Schlesinger and Bertle ought to fly to Opa-Loeka that night and confer with the Council.

By cruel circumstances, Tuesday evening the President had to put on white tie, tails and a smiling face for the traditional White House reception at which Congressmen are formally presented to Cabinet members. Nearly 450 persons were at the festive affair, and at 10:15 the President and his lady descended the main stairs into the entrance hall. Mrs. Kennedy wore a sleeveless, floor-length pink and white sheath, and a diamond clip bobbed in her bouffant hairdo. At a signal, the Marine Band struck up *Mr. Wonderful* and the President and First Lady whirled around the floor, smiling graciously at the applauding guests.

This was the incongruous setting when the President was informed that Richard M. Bissell wished to see him. Kennedy asked the CIA official to come to the White House, and others were summoned to join him. Secretary of State Rusk was called from a formal dinner for the Greek Premier, and he came to the President's White House office with Secretary of Defense McNamara, General Lemnitzer and Admiral Burke. An intense discussion lasted until the early morning hours. Bissell made an appeal for the use of United States airpower to help the otherwise doomed invaders. Admiral Burke concurred. But Secretary Rusk vigorously dissented, pointing out that the President himself had pledged that there would be no direct U.S. intervention. The President, whose confidence in his military and intelligence chiefs had been shaken and who was keenly aware of his own explicit pledge, could not be persuaded to plunge further down an uncertain path.

After hearing the arguments, the President turned down the appeal for a last-minute salvage operation. At this point, the "disposal problem" had come to its pathetic final disposition.

If *Fuefria* was harrowing for President Kennedy, it was calmer days for Fidel or someone who were clinging the craft to a tiny patch of Cuban shoreline. The day began slightly after midnight, when a battery of 122 mm howitzers began shelling the beachhead in support of militia units armed with Belgian and Czech submachine guns and Czech "four-mouth" rocket-throwers. Units of Soviet-built T-34 tanks, heavy artillery and anti-aircraft artillery, surrounded the beach perimeter. As Castro was to say later, "then, the attack was incessant, and we attacked them incessantly." Commanding the government forces was Captain (now major) Guilego Fernandez, a 6-foot regular army officer who was imprisoned by Batista.

The blackness of the tropical night concealed a bloody exchange. Castro's tanks rumbled up the perimeter of the rebel-held area, supported by the anti-aircraft guns firing at flat trajectory. Rebel tanks and artillery returned the fire; the swamps and beaches echoed with a roar of guns. Castro was massing his forces; from his headquarters at the Australia sugar mill, he deployed around the invaders a company of tanks, four batteries of 122 mm. howitzers, one battery of 37 mm. cannon, and a whole array of supporting units.

Inexorably, the superior force told. The Premier's troops forced the invaders to yield the village of Cayo Ramona, and as the rebels retreated another Castro battalion moved west to Playa Larga. By daybreak, his forces bolstered by additional tank and artillery companies, Castro was able to level an attack on Playa Girón itself, while other militia units divided the rebel army by cutting the columns retreating from Cayo Ramona from the main force nearer the beach. By 10 a.m., the invaders were forced to fall back still further to protect the rear guard.

From all accounts, the outnumbered invaders fought bravely and well. They used their equipment intelligently and returned fire as best they could. Considering that the rebels had no command center, no air cover, no ambulances and no place to retreat to, they performed creditably and gallantly.

"If we only had more ammunition," an insurgent who was taken prisoner told one of the authors, "we could have held out—maybe even won." But the stores of ammunition went down with the *Houston*. Aloff, the rebel position was no better. Three more B-26's went down Tuesday and Castro

had clear control of the air. At this point, the Premier claims in his account that F-86 Sabres appeared, but this does not square with other versions. It is possible that Castro was referring to Navy jets that were in the air over international waters.

By early afternoon, the press releases in Miami and New York had acquired a gloomier tone. Bulletin No. 4 issued by Lem Jones Associates at 1:20 p.m. stated:

Peasants, workers and militia are joining the freedom front and aiding the rapidly expanding area already liberated by the Revolutionary Command.

The Cuban Revolutionary Council announces that Cuban freedom fighters in the Matanzas area are being attacked by heavy Soviet tanks and MIG aircraft which have destroyed sizeable amounts of medical supplies and equipment.

These humanitarian supplies were destined for the Cuban freedom fighters who are shedding their blood to overthrow the shackles of Communism.

The Cuban Revolutionary Council is deeply grateful for the countless messages of support and encouragement pouring in from all parts of the world. Such demonstrations of international sympathy are convincing proof that freedom loving people of the world repudiate the Communistic slavery imposed by Castro over the Cuban people.

As Wednesday dawned, the perimeter held by the invaders had shrunk to the two beachheads of Playa Girón and Playa Larga. All during the night, the rebels had been shelled and a sense of defeat eroded morale. Behind Castro's lines, ambulances were careening to Havana with the wounded—but there were no ambulances for the battered invading forces.

In the air, insurgent B-26's made a vain attempt to bomb Castro's headquarters at the Australia sugar mill. Two more B-26's were downed, bringing the total lost by the invaders to ten. According to one version, jet fighters from the U.S.S. *Boxer* were supposed to have provided an air umbrella for one hour for the rebel bombers, but by mischance the B-26's came too early and the jets were still sitting on the carrier. This story, elaborated by Charles J. V. Murphy in his *Fortune* article, has not been officially confirmed. But Ulysses Carbo, one of the invaders, remarked to a reporter afterwards of that Wednesday morning: "I laid in the bushes and saw your airplanes, but it was too late." Assuredly, he was

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FIG. 1. The planes that had retreated to a point beyond range for a one-hour air monopoly for the invaders.
Manabito, in New York, Lem Jones Associates, Inc., issued Bulletin No. 5.

In spite of continuous attacks by Soviet MIG's, heavy tanks and artillery forces the Revolutionary Command has completed the planned first phase of their military operation in the south of Cuba. This phase involved the successful establishment of contact with guerrilla groups in the Escambray mountains.

Numerous elements of the forces from the Cochinos Bay area have completed a movement north of Cienfuegos from which they will be able to reinforce the patriots already fighting in the mountains.

It can also be revealed that additional guerrilla units have infiltrated central Matanzas Province. The heroic action of a small holding force which resisted Soviet tanks, artillery and aircraft during the last twenty hours, made possible this result.

According to the Command's last information this force continues its valiant fight against tyranny.

By midmorning, Castro was moving in for the kill and had arrayed his forces along classical warfare lines, bearing down on the beaches with his 122 mm. howitzers, tanks and infantry. By 10 a.m., the Premier's troops had driven the rebels from the village of San Blas. The end was near in the afternoon; by 6 p.m., Castro's tanks began a relentless encircling thrust. Only one out of five rebel tanks was still in action. Slowly, the first invaders began surrendering as Castro's armor applied pressure. Some of the invaders eluded capture by fleeing in small boats and boarding a U.S. destroyer in international waters. Others tried to scramble through the swamps and somehow reach the Escambray mountains eighty miles away. It took five days for Castro finally to round up virtually all of the surviving invading army, some 1,200 troops in all. During the last waning hours, a radio ham in New Jersey heard a faint signal. "This is Cuba calling. Where will help come from? This is Cuba calling the free world. We need help in Cuba."

Playa Girón fell at 5:30 p.m. The news of the defeat was flashed from a walkie-talkie to the nearby U.S. destroyer. Castro himself exulted: "The invaders have been annihilated. The revolution has emerged victorious. It destroyed in less

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