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OFFICIAL HISTORY
OF THE
BAY OF PIGS OPERATION

VOLUME I
AIR OPERATIONS,
MARCH 1960 - APRIL 1961
(pages 1-302)

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September 1979

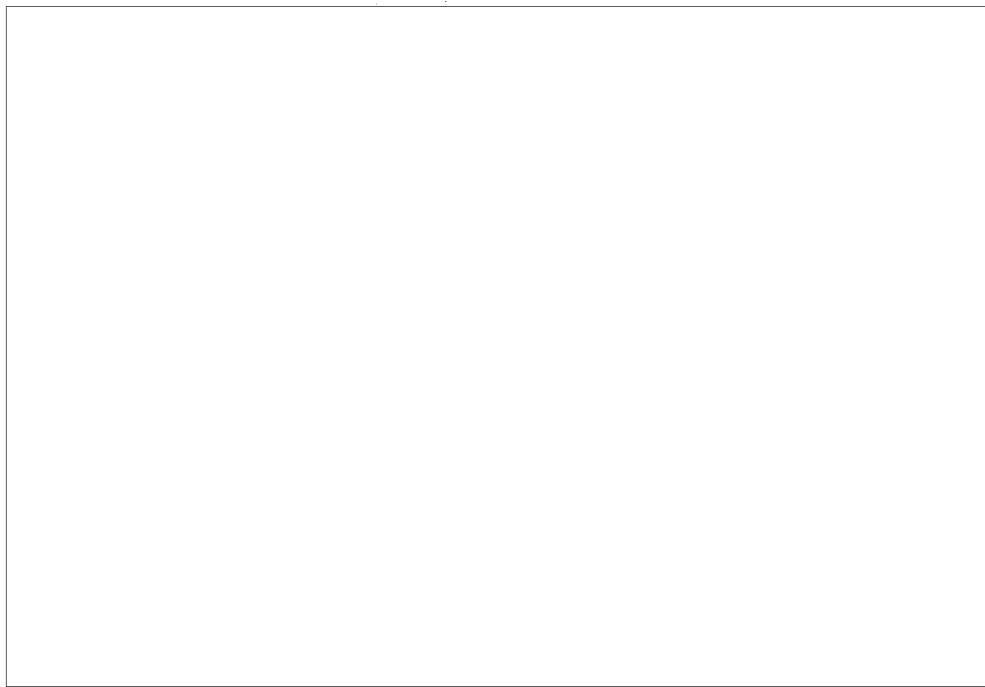
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MAP

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June 1960 - 19 April 1961

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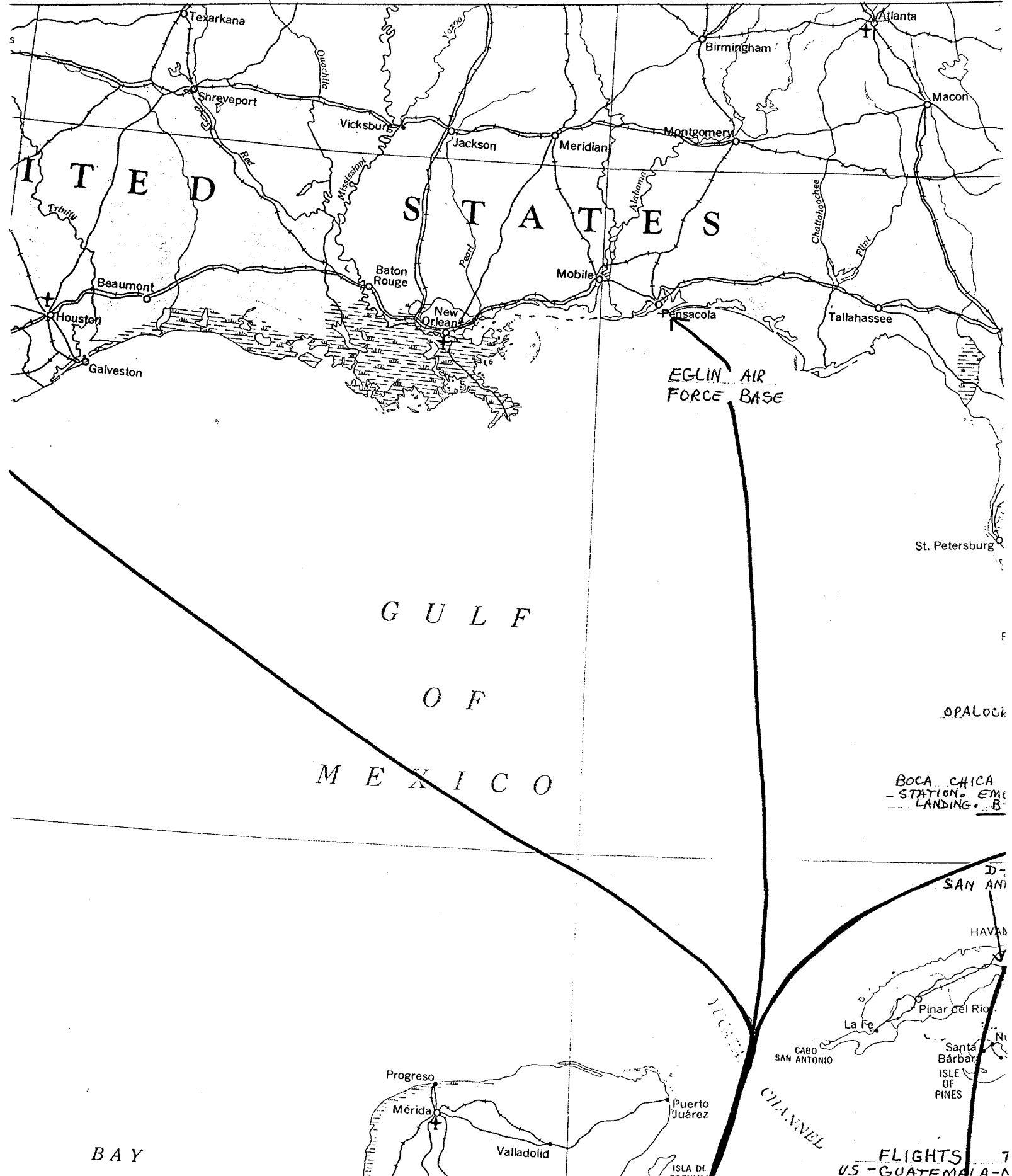
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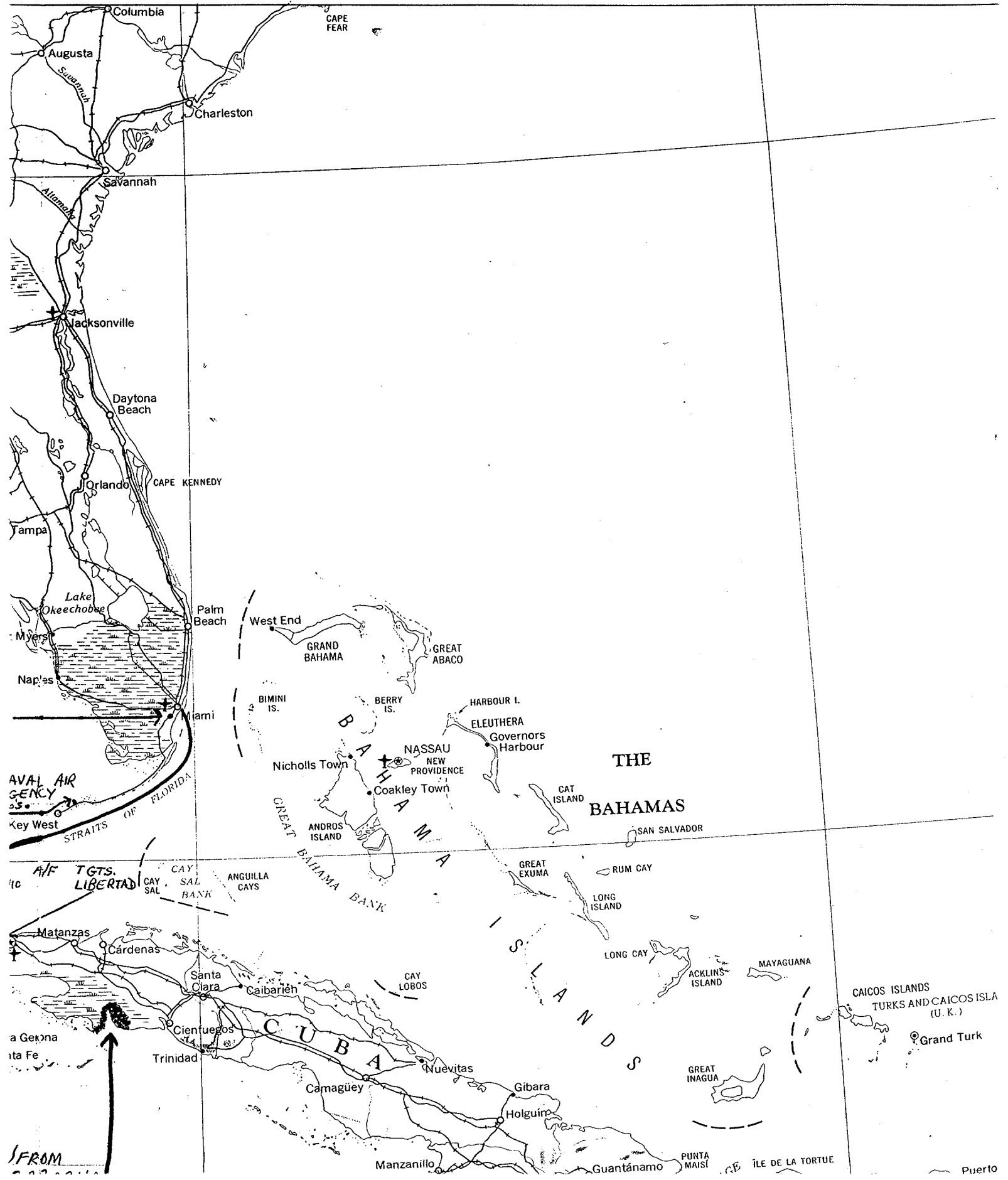
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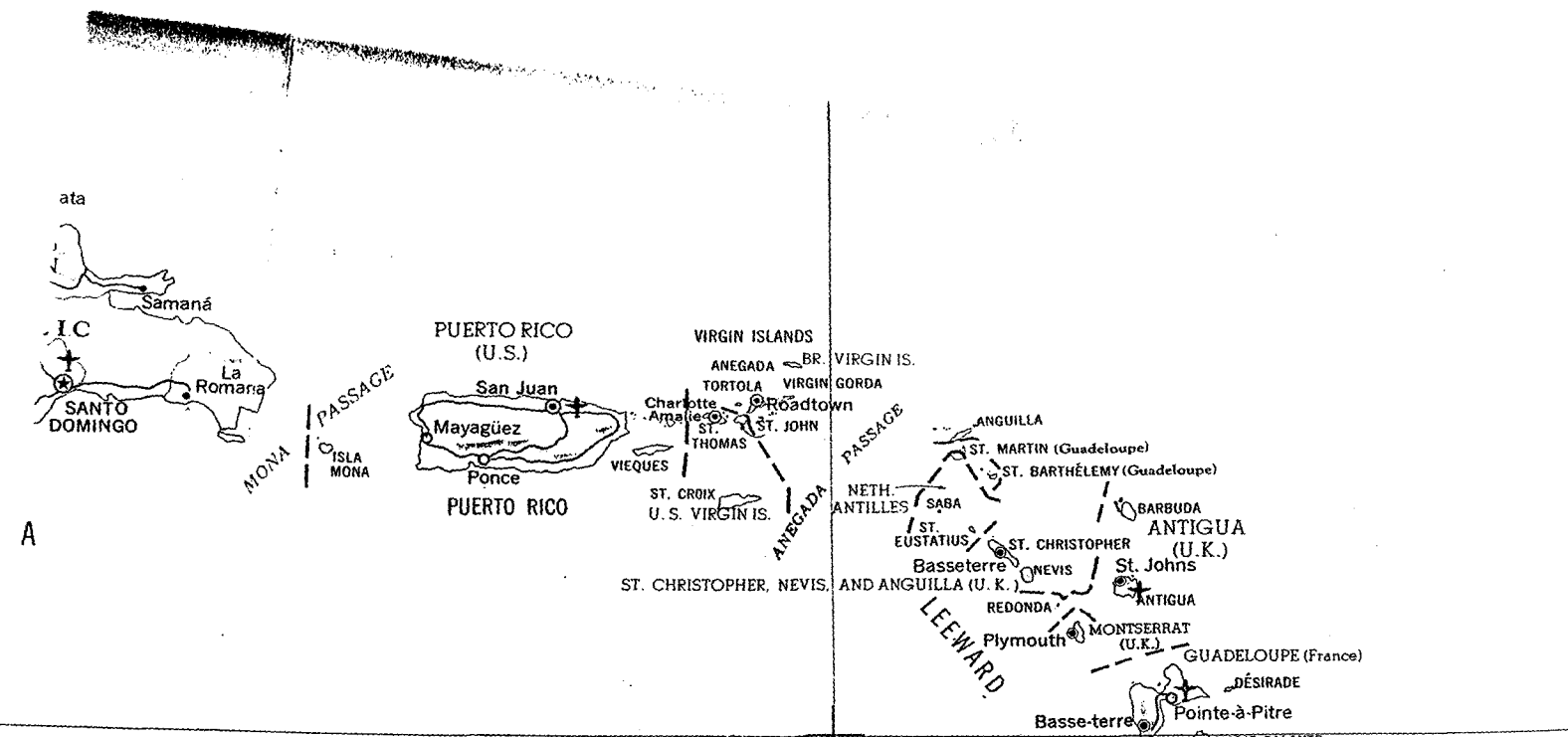
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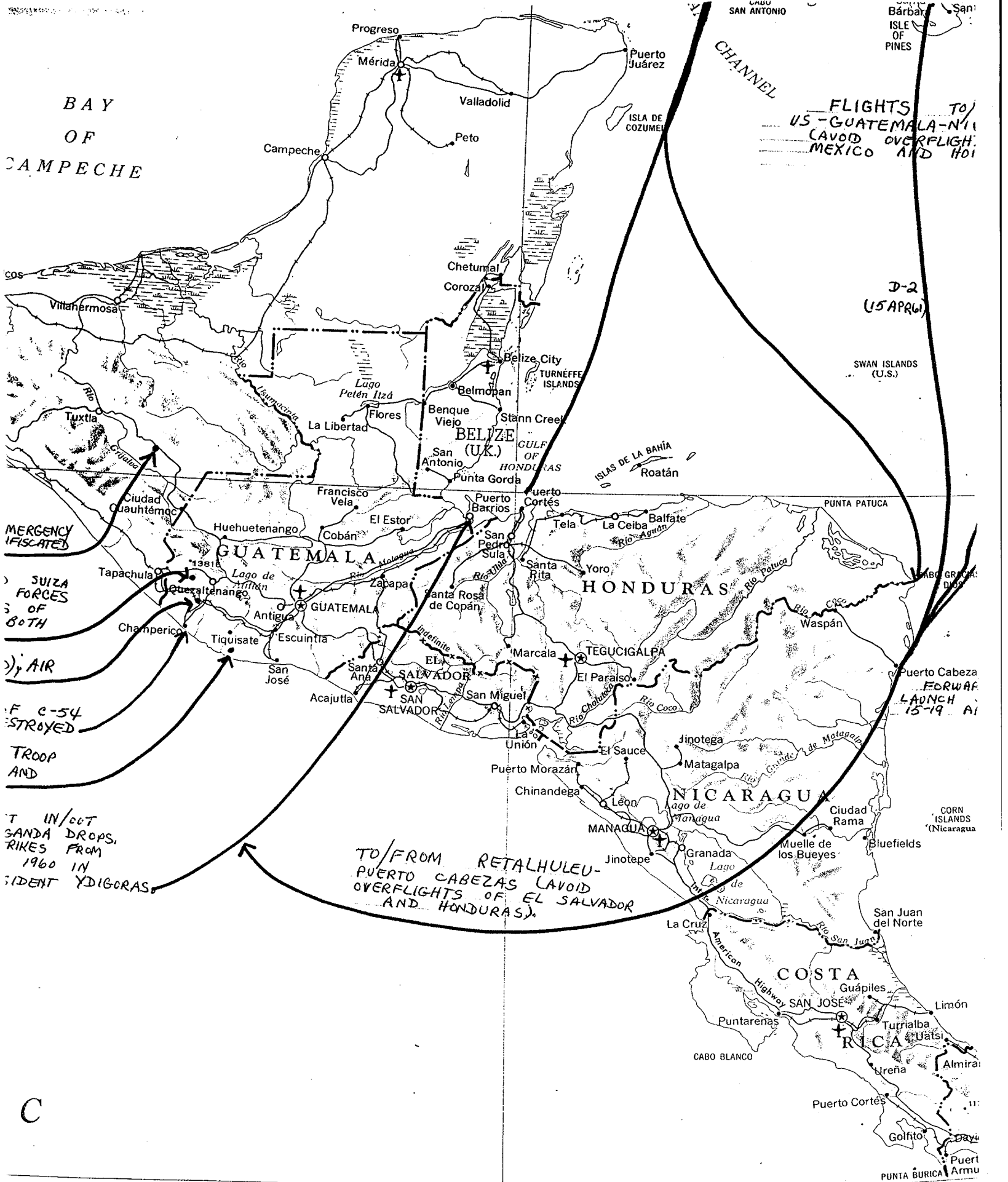
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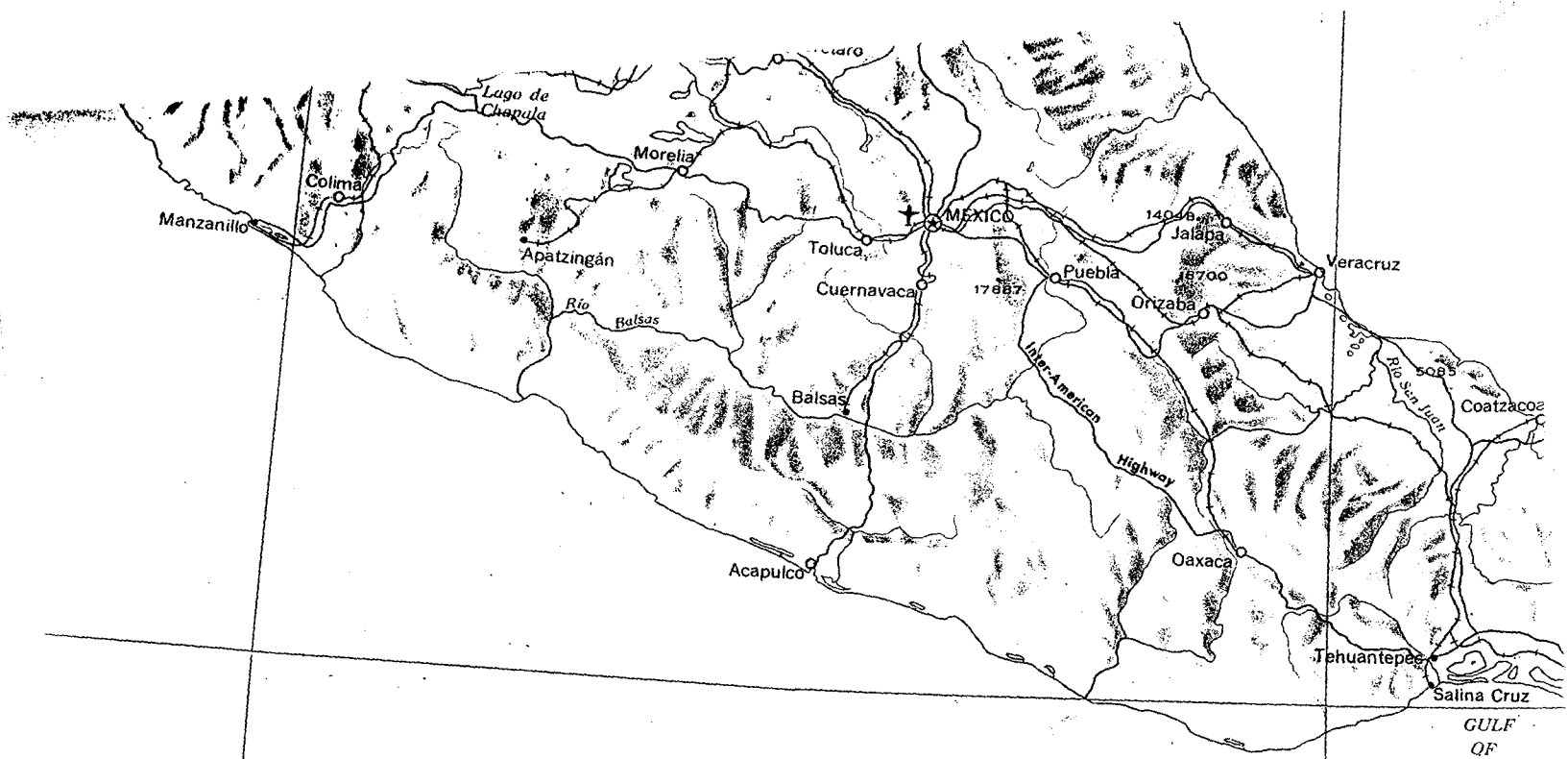
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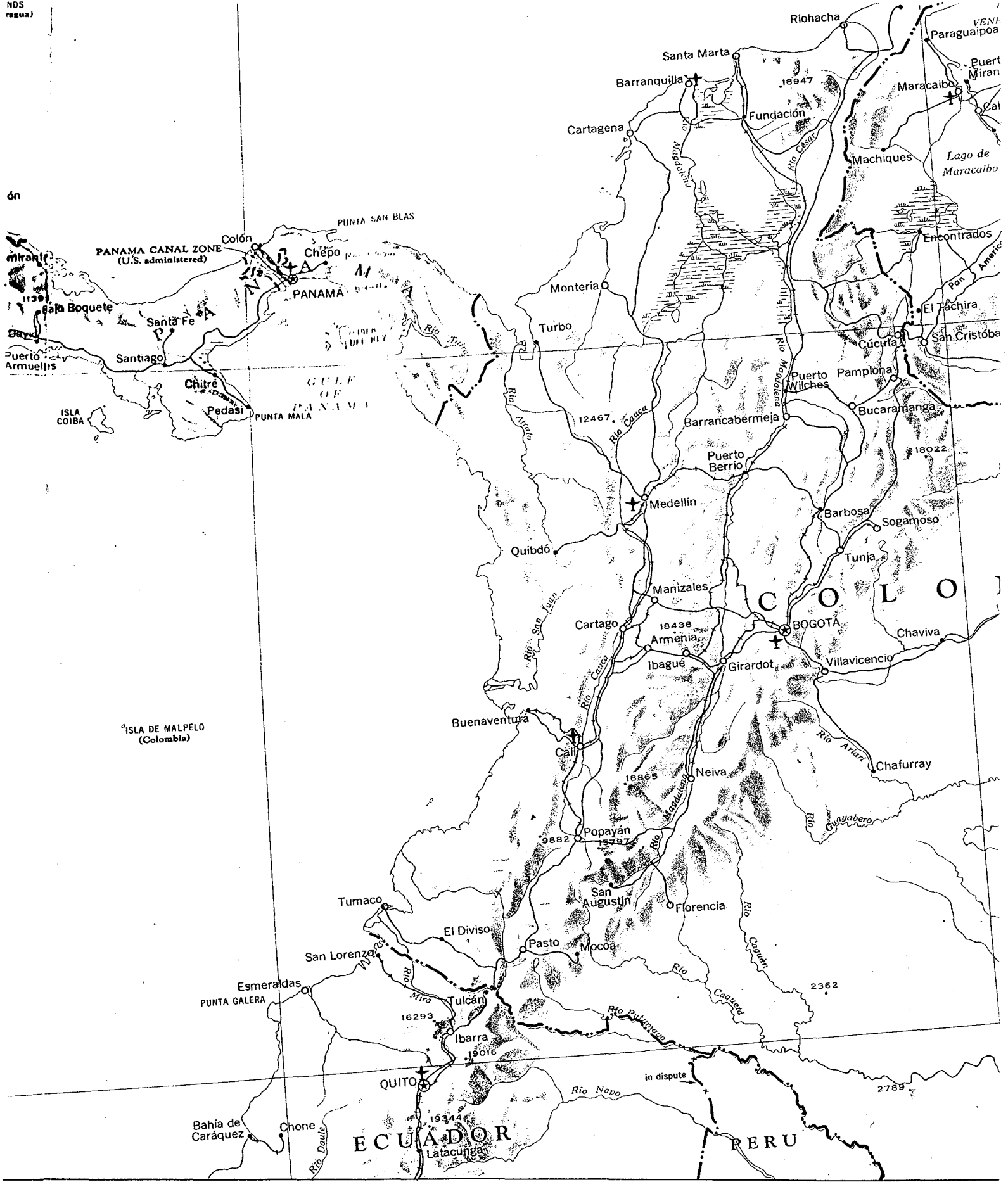
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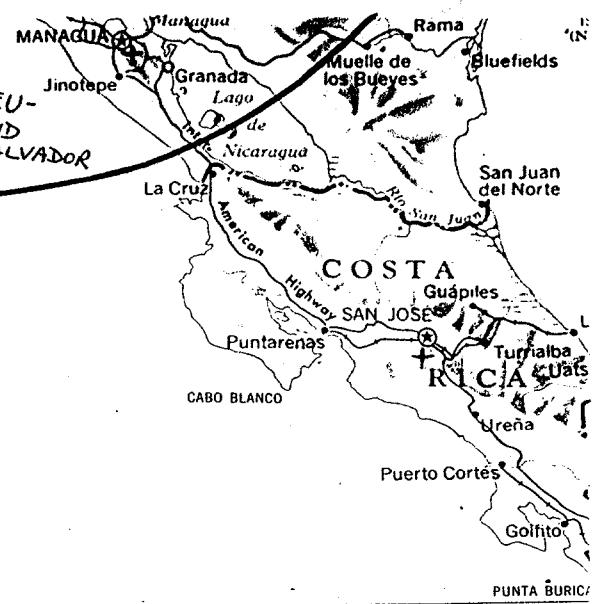
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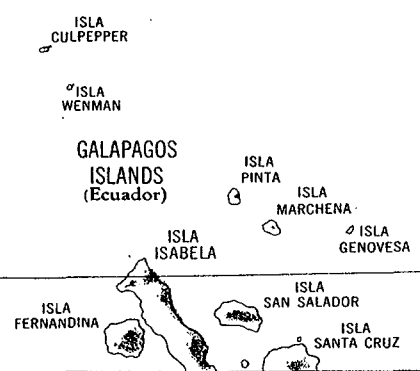
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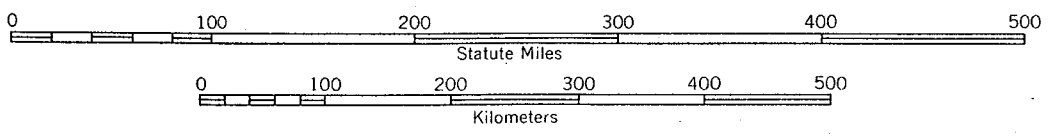
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICIAL HISTORY
OF THE
BAY OF PIGS OPERATION

Volume I

AIR OPERATIONS,
MARCH 1960 - APRIL 1961

September 1979

Jack B. Pfeiffer

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FOREWORD

Air operations over Cuba from 15-19 April 1961 were, chronologically, the penultimate phase of the Bay of Pigs story -- the surrender, incarceration, and eventual release of the members of the 2506 Exile Brigade provide the conclusion of the story. Because what happened in the air not only *could*, but *did*, determine the fate of the US Government's anti-Castro program, the story of air operations is offered as the first volume in CIA's official, all-source history of the Bay of Pigs.

For the reader who wishes to focus solely on the "gut issues" involving air operations, Parts III and IV of this volume are recommended because they encompass, among other stories, the D minus 2 air strike, Adlai Stevenson's role, the "Second-Strike" episode, air combat efforts over Cuba, and the role of USN Carrier Task Group 81.8. These portions of the history also focus on the actions and decisions (or indecisions) of various of the principals involved in the anti-Castro effort including President John F. Kennedy and the White House Staff, the JCS, and

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the CIA. Some of the characters are cast in true heroic mold -- four US and ten Cuban fliers died in the air war and others, both Americans and Cubans, knowingly flew at great personal risk for a cause in which they believed. Although the author attempted to be objective, the reader is sure to find instances where one or another individual or group is cast in a "good guy" or "bad guy" role.

The author also wishes to emphasize that he was in no way personally involved in the Bay of Pigs project, and he was not then -- nor is he now -- a member of the Directorate of Operations. This history originated with a decision made by Mr. William E. Colby (then the DCI) that the CIA should concentrate on writing some all-source histories of its major operations, including, among others, the Bay of Pigs story. It was further recommended that these histories then be sanitized for overt publication. The author believes that within the framework of protection of sources, methods, and privacy the latter may be feasible. Considering the distortions that abound in the overt publications about the Bay of Pigs -- particularly with reference to air operations -- he would favor such an undertaking.

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Among many who assisted the author in his search for relevant documents, he is especially grateful to Latin American Division Records Management Officers (now retired) Jean Krages and On numerous occasions, Robert Cintron of FBIS provided assistance with Spanish translations, and, in addition, volunteered many helpful references. The writer has been particularly fortunate, too, in the willingness of many of those most directly concerned with the air operations -- Garfield Thorsrud, Stanley Beerli, George Gaines, Billy Campbell, C. W. "Connie" Seigrist, and James Cunningham -- to share, for the record and for the first time in practically all instances, their recollections with him. Similarly open were Richard Bissell and Jacob Esterline who spoke not only to air operations, but to the broad spectrum of the Agency's role in the anti-Castro effort which culminated at Playa Giron.

The author regrets that David McLean, who initially was assigned to write this history, passed away so soon after the present author was assigned to work on the history. Mr. McLean's initial exploratory efforts and the guidance he was able to offer helped to get the present author off to a running start.

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Finally, the author would be remiss if he failed to note that without the able assistance, patience, humor, and understanding of the other two members of the History Staff, Eulalie Hammond and Sharon Bond -- for whom there can never be adequate job descriptions -- this volume would have been much more difficult to produce.

Whatever faults, flaws, or errors appear in this volume, they are totally the responsibility of the author.

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We down in the military level had one idea of this invasion -- of why, its purpose, and what it was going to accomplish -- which I don't think they ever realized up at the top. I think they missed the point completely. This invasion of Cuba to us was basically an air invasion All we were going to do with this Brigade was to go in there, take a beachhead big enough to protect an airfield, and let the planes do the dirty work -- for one week, two weeks, or whatever time it took The Cubans seeing these planes just roaming at will up and down the length of Cuba, and Castro unable to dislodge this beachhead ... that's when they would jump off that fence ... we never, down at the lower level, envisioned -- or even asked for or wanted -- this spontaneous uprising that everybody keeps talking about.

Grayston L. Lynch
13 November 1975

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Introduction

In the most simplistic of terms, the US Government's anti-Castro program which climaxed at the Bay of Pigs might have succeeded only if the air operations plans as evolved by CIA had been retained intact. The distortion of those plans for non-military, non-strategic purposes eliminated all margin for error and insured the establishment of the first Communist government in the Western Hemisphere. It is the purpose of this volume to trace the evolution of those air operations from initial, generalized plans suggested in the early spring of 1960, through the detailed tactical/strategic target plan of March 1961, and to the execution of air operations -- as determined at the "highest level" -- between 15 and 19 April 1961. The story begins with the creation of the organizational and managerial structure to carry out Presidential policy; examines the problems of acquiring equipment, trainers, trainees, and training facilities; describes the combat air operations from 15-19 April 1961; and documents to the fullest extent possible the numerous controversial

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episodes concerning the role of Adlai Stevenson, the cancellation of the "Second Strike," the US Navy's air combat role on 19 April 1961, and the record of action and decision of various of the principals most closely involved in air operations.

Air operations involved not only CIA personnel, but also the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other personnel in the Department of Defense and the various military services. Air problems proved of major concern to the highest levels of the Department of State; the United States Ambassador to the United Nations was directly concerned; and, ultimately, they required decisions on the part of President John F. Kennedy. Nearly twenty years after the event, the feelings and emotions of personnel who participated directly in the project still run strongly. Participants' opinions may vary about one aspect or another of the operation, but on one point, there is almost unanimous agreement -- that had the air operations plan been carried out as initially conceived, Cuban troops would not be a factor of any concern to the formulation of US foreign policy today.

Some questions concerning air operations will never be fully answered; but in view of the

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misinformation that has persisted through the years, it is hoped that the story revealed here -- much of it for the first time -- by both participants and principals will at least help set the record straight on the "whats" if not the "whys."

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THE BAY OF PIGS OPERATION

Volume I Air Operations

Part I
Initiation of Air Activity

A. Organization and Management

Whatever form President Eisenhower's anti-Castro plan of 17 March 1960 was to take, it was clear from the outset that air operations would play a key role in the CIA program to oust the Cuban leader.* In response to a request for estimates of special flight requirements for fiscal 1961 and 1962 from the Agency's air arm -- the Development Projects Division (DPD) -- Edward A. Stanulis, Executive Officer for WH/4, the component of Western Hemisphere Division established to direct the anti-Castro program, replied to DPD on 29 March 1960, stating that

because all major requirements should spring from the action cadre, training and the commitment of action cadres in PM operations, I have requested DPD/Comptroller for an extension to 6 April

* For a copy of the US Government's Anti-Castro Program, see Appendix 1.

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for compliance on the part of the WH/D
with the referenced memorandum. 1/*

Project JMARC, as the anti-Castro program was then known, was going to require air transportation for the cadres which would be involved in its planned PM operations.**

By the summer of 1960, it was apparent that JMATE was going to need extensive and continuing, not incidental, support from DPD -- a unit which reported directly to Richard M. Bissell, the Deputy Director for Plans. In addition to the need for aircraft for infiltration, propaganda, and supply drops to dissident groups within Cuba, additional air transport capability would be required to move bodies and equipment to training sites outside the continental

* Specific source references follow the Appendixes. Sources are numbered beginning with 1 for each of the four parts of the volume. Unless otherwise noted, source documents (or notes from such documents) are filed with the CIA History Staff under project HS/CSG 2632. Where the document is not available in History Staff files, the reference note indicates repository of complete document. Unless otherwise noted all documents cited are classified SECRET.

** The project crypt was originally JMARC, but this was changed to JMATE following compromise of the original. Throughout this volume the JMATE designation will be employed except as it appears in quotations.

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United States; and, moreover, direction of a tactical air force was going to be added to the responsibilities of DPD. By July 1960, it appeared that tactical air operations with combat aircraft would play a major role in JMATE plans, and discussion over the most suitable combat aircraft -- Douglas AD5's of USN vintage or Douglas B-26's from USAF inventory -- were becoming the subject of considerable controversy between DPD and WH/4. 2/ To meet the growing need for air support, the Acting Chief, DPD, Colonel Stanley Beerli (USAF) prepared a memorandum for his Branch Chiefs, noting among other items that:

1. As the planning for JMARC is progressing rapidly, it is quite imperative that all facets are considered and further, that all Branches of DPD, as well as other Agency elements involved, know exactly for what DPD considers itself responsible. In this way, I will be assured that no important item is overlooked because of confusion over who or what element was responsible.

2. Because of the importance of JMARC to our national objectives, I am hereby assigning it first priority over all other projects and programs presently assigned. I further expect that all Branches will give prompt and full attention to what is required and will insure that an adequate number of the best people are made available. Because of the heavy workload and tight time schedule, I also expect that, at times, longer than normal work hours will be required.

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3. Each Branch will assign a Project Officer for each major function involved. This individual's primary job will be to insure that the responsibilities of his office are covered and that appropriate officers are kept advised of any changes which may affect the program. A separate JMARC project is established. The DPD Project Officer is Lt. Colonel Gaines. All offices will coordinate everything through him. He will be kept advised of contacts with outside elements. 3/

This memorandum from Beerli is of added importance for it outlines, for the first time, the principal planning stages for the air operations. From 20 July - 15 August 1960 would be devoted to acquiring personnel, equipment, and aircraft and establishing facilities for air training. Between 15 August - 1 October aircrew training, with concurrent necessary construction of airfield and housing facilities would be undertaken; aircraft acquired and sterilized; and plans for final air operations developed. The final phase -- the tactical air operations -- would be conducted between 1 October and 1 December 1960. 4/ To administer the planned air operations, Lt. Col. George Gaines (USAF) was relieved as Chief, Air Section, DPD to become the Project Officer for JMATE; and Garfield M. Thorsrud was assigned to be Acting Chief, Air Section. 5/

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It was also during July that the decision was made to establish air training activity at Retalhuleu in Guatemala. It was pointed out that:

Airfields under previous consideration have, for one reason or another, proved unusable and not available except [for] Retalhuleu. Mr. [Jacob D.] Esterline [Chief, WH/4] pointed out that President Ydigoras, by government decree had transferred this field to the [Guatemalan] Air Force, troops had moved in on 19 July, and public announcement had been made in the press regarding cover buildup ... Although Ydigoras' action apparently is designed to force the US to build a first-class airfield for him, general concensus [*sic*] of opinion is that this airfield is about the only alternative left and that planning would proceed on utilization of this field. 6/

Even as Retalhuleu was being discussed as a probable training site, it was also indicated that consideration had been given to establishing a forward operating base in Nicaragua. At this time, interestingly enough, it was stated "the use of airbases in Nicaragua was discussed; however, since the Cubans refused to go to Nicaragua, this possibility was dismissed." 7/

Once agreement had been reached on the Retalhuleu airbase -- it would carry the crypt JMADD -- and the necessary work to improve the field for training

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purposes had been undertaken, DPD and WH/4 began to get down to the serious business of discussing air operations plans. On 10 August 1960, the first weekly coordination meeting between JMATE's planning staff and the JMCLEAR's staff was held. Among the items that were on the agenda for that meeting were logistical support requirements for JMATE and JMCLEAR, determination of the numbers and types of aircraft which would be involved in supporting JMATE, the relationship between JMATE and JMCLEAR, coordination of cables, location of operating bases for initial air drops into the target country, the processing of DPD personnel by the Western Hemisphere Division (WH/D), aircraft transportation requirements, and organizational control of JMATE activities in Guatemala. 8/

Among the positive results of this first coordination meeting were the appointments of William E. Eisemann as the senior Support representative for JMATE and the appointment of Col. John F. Mallard (USMC) as the senior operations coordinator for JMATE. In addition, provision was also made for the mutual coordination of all cables that pertained to either JMATE and/or JMCLEAR. It is significant in light of

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subsequent charges and countercharges about the chain of command to note the following paragraph which appeared in the Memorandum for Record of the meeting:

Organizational control of JMARC activities in Guatemala. JMARC representatives expressed a desire to have one senior representative designated for Agency control of all activities in Guatemala. JMCLEAR personnel agreed with this concept, with the stipulation that *technical matters pertaining to air activities* be retained under the direct control of DPD. JMARC will develop an organizational chart showing the centralized control arrangements within Guatemala. 9/*

JMATE personnel would break a number of lances over the question of what constituted "technical matters pertaining to air activities"; and personnel formerly associated with DPD in command positions remember these occasions with no fond affection. What it came down to, particularly in the eyes of both Chief, WH/4 and Chief, WH/4/PM (Col. Jack Hawkins, USMC), was "who is in charge?" In a memorandum written in early October 1960, Hawkins pointed out that there was "divided command and responsibility at the operational level" between JMATE and JMCLEAR; and he emphasized that this was not in keeping with either the position

* Emphasis added by writer.

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previously taken by the Deputy Director for Plans (Richard M. Bissell), nor was it in accord with standard military policy. Hawkins emphasized that the objectives of JMATE were not and could not be met under existing conditions. Among other things, he recommended that the JMCLEAR staff be assigned to Chief, WH/4 and integrated with the existing Staff of WH/4; and, secondly, he recommended that operational control of the airbase at MADD, air bases which might be obtained in third countries, and the bomber and transport aircraft be given over to Chief WH/4. Finally, Hawkins recommended that any additional support required for JMATE should be provided upon request by DPD. 10/

Although it had been addressed to Chief, WH/4, Col. Hawkins's memorandum went to Mr. Bissell, the Deputy Director for Plans who responded on 12 October 1960 in a memorandum which, while emphasizing the integrity of DPD as the air unit for the whole of CIA's operations, did make one or two helpful concessions in response to the stated needs of WH/4. Deferring on the question of field command for military operations in which the air and other forces would be employed, the DDP noted the following as approved action:

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A. Operational control of all air forces and facilities required and employed in JMARC will be assigned to Chief, JMARC Task Force.

B. Chief, JMARC Task Force will exercise this control through a newly created staff section for air operations in the JMARC Task Force.

C. AC/DPD will serve as the Chief of the JMARC air section. The staff of the air section will include any and all DPD personnel when actually employed on JMARC business.

D. For DPD business unrelated to JMARC, AC/DPD will continue to report in the usual manner through the DD/P. When and if questions arise concerning the allocation of DPD resources as between JMARC and other requirements and activities, such questions will be resolved by DD/P. 11/*

This was a decision that even retrospectively Mr. Bissell stood by; and because it dealt specifically with a decision that caused bitter intra-Agency feelings, it is quoted here at some length. In discussing this

* It is interesting to note that when approached on the subject of giving Chief, WH/4 the authority he requested (through Hawkins's memo of 5 Oct 60) over DPD, C. Tracy Barnes, ADDP/A, one of Mr. Bissell's principal assistants: "stated that he could see no objection to the proposal and that he thought such a move would be approved by Mr. Bissell since this was in keeping with Mr. Bissell's concept of a task force organization." 12/ Mr. Barnes must have failed to do his homework. His comment was made at a 6 September meeting, but Hawkins's memo didn't go forward until 5 October. Presumably, Barnes should have been able to find out how Bissell felt well before Hawkins's memo went forward.

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decision in the Fall of 1975, Bissell stated:

It was entirely logical to keep the rest of the DPD operation that wasn't related to the Cubans off elsewhere Given the need for an air arm to the Cuban operation -- which meant recruiting and providing for the training of Cuban aircrews, obtaining the B-26's and all other equipment, establishing chains of command and control, assigning operations officers, and the whole business of creating an air capability -- why use DPD for that? Now I think the answer is that DPD had, over the years, a great deal of experience; and I think had developed a very major capability to perform just that kind of task -- that is, to create an operational capability including training, acquisition through deniable channels of equipment, [and] relations with the Air Force involved in this kind of task. So I think in that sense, it was natural to turn to the top echelons of DPD to have the operational air arm. Now ... why was not Col. Beerli made subordinate to Col. Hawkins for the Cuban operation? I think my memorandum [of 12 October 1960] probably states them more persuasively and with more detail -- a great deal more than I could from memory today. But having said that, I want to make two other remarks in hindsight The first remark is that I think that my judgment in response to what I have distinguished as two different questions Why use DPD as the organization to build an air capability, and secondly, in that capacity why not subordinate it to Hawkins. I think my decision on both of those matters was almost certainly influenced by my long association with, and loyalty to DPD and very high regard for the people that operated it. In other words, I think I was prejudiced, if you will, in favor of the DPD

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Beerli remember had been in DPD by that time for, I think, at least five years; so I had known him in a number of different capacities. I had known him out in the Nevada test site; I visited him when he was Base Commander in Ankara, Turkey; he had then been back as operations officer, if I am not mistaken, and then he became the Chief of DPD. I had always regarded him as perhaps the best single Air Force Officer that moved through that operation in all of its years. Now I had a darn high regard for Beerli, so that's answer #1 -- I would admit to probably an element of prejudice on my part. Observation #2 is that with hindsight, I think my first decision still was the right one. Remember that DPD had only absorbed what had been the Air Operations Unit of the old PM Staff, and here you did have a ready-made and a really highly competent organization for the purpose of developing the [air] capability; and I think that to have tried in the short time span of the Cuban operation to have built another organization for that purpose would have been wasteful and duplicative and delaying itself. I think that was a correct decision on my part. The decision that with hindsight I think is questionable, was the failure to subordinate Beerli to Hawkins ... I am inclined to think that was a mistaken decision as it turned out. Now if you want to know, however, the argument for it, I seem to remember feeling that the memo I wrote to Hawkins at least set forth the arguments pretty persuasively; and the argument, after all, by analogy was that you do have in the military, theater commanders, but you nevertheless do have an independent Air Force. I am well aware that this is a subject of certainly decades of debate over this problem in the military; but

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I did have precedents, I think, for making them co-equal arms. I still think that hindsight is a mistake. 13/

Col. Stanley Beerli, who was mentioned by Mr. Bissell, was also interviewed early in 1976 and he fully supported Bissell's position that DPD had sufficient world-wide responsibilities so that it needed to retain its independent status; but by assigning his second in command, Col. George Gaines, as the Air Officer on the JMARC Staff, DPD was able to meet all of its commitments to Project JMARC. Beerli vigorously denied that there was any serious friction between his office and JMARC. He stressed that DPD was, in effect, a service organization charged with carrying out the tasks which were determined by WH/4. DPD might bring to the attention of WH/4 various options available, but the decisions were made by WH/4, not by DPD. 14/

Another aspect that Beerli stressed in favor of retaining DPD's independence was that DPD

had direct communication with our units through our own communications organization ... not just the normal one that the Agency had, but a separate one. DPD had its own secure communications organization through which we could contact Eglin [AFB] directly ... later on Retalhuleu ... and then later, the forward

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base in Nicaragua. The commo facility was physically located in our DPD compound. It increased and expedited the traffic, and gave us a direct control ... to the unit. It was almost a vertical command link directly to the commander in the field. The field commander reported directly to us, and we could provide any report, or support, required by our field units. It was difficult for us to work down in the WH/4 facilities since all our communications with our units had to be conducted at 1717 H St. We would, however, keep Hawkins and the people in the Western Hemisphere Division informed about what we were doing; but we still had to come back to 1717 H to run the communications. If I am confusing you, it is because I am trying to lay out the framework in which we were working to show you that it was a logical arrangement ... that it wasn't a bastard organization which was unable to provide the proper support to JMATE. 15/

In his retrospective view of the chain of command problem between DPD and WH/4, Col. Beerli was extremely critical of the approach taken by Gen. Maxwell Taylor during the course of the Taylor Committee's review of the Bay of Pigs Operation.* Beerli pointed out that what Taylor attempted to do

was to draw some sort of an admission that there was friction between DPD and the Western Hemisphere. There wasn't.

* Established by President Kennedy, the other committee members were Robert Kennedy, Adm. Arleigh Burke, and Allen Dulles.

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But, of course, with him being a military man, you had to have complete cooperation, complete direction, or else you didn't have a good organizational arrangement. I would vehemently defend that there was not any compromise at any time. Bissell would have been aware of it. 16/

At another point, in commenting that Taylor was trying to suggest that the command relationship was the reason for the collapse of the invasion, Beerli said:

In my opinion that wasn't the case at all because the tasks were clearly defined, discussed, and approved at the WH level and later approved at the Bissell level We knew what we had to do was pre-set. The missions were going to be flown ... DPD's jobs were to see that they [Cubans] were adequately trained; to see that the equipment and everything was properly in good condition; and to be sure that we understood the plan as the Western Hemisphere wanted us to understand it. They made it out -- all that we did was to provide the technical expertise. If there were options, we presented the options to them; and they made the decision. At no time did we ever say "this is the way you've got to do it." 17/

In addition to his reflections on General Taylor, Col. Beerli was also quite conscious of criticisms which apparently were leveled both during the course of the operation and subsequent to the collapse of the invasion by Col. Jack Hawkins, Chief, WH/4/PM who was

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responsible for the training and the paramilitary employment of the Cuban Brigade. Hawkins not only went on record early in October 1960 suggesting that the chain of command left something to be desired, but his subsequent post-mortem of project JMATE and his comments to the Taylor Committee indicated that the lack of more direct control of the air operations by WH/4 was an important factor contributing to the failure. 18/*

Jake Esterline, Chief of Project JMATE, also was quite frank in his expressions of displeasure with the relationships between WH/4 and DPD:

I never felt that we had adequate control of our air arm. This was a very unsatisfactory relationship. Mr. Bissell wanted it that way. We didn't like it. As a matter of fact, the only two people we could work effectively with at that time were [Col. George] Gaines who was a very practical airman and Gar Thorsrud. 19/

Esterline also engaged in the following exchange on management of air operations with an interviewer:**

* When contacted by the author of this volume regarding an oral interview, Colonel Hawkins refused on the grounds of ill health -- he was just recovering from hospitalization and faced even more -- and the fact that his post-mortem report for the Taylor Committee adequately told all that he had to tell about the Bay of Pigs.

** The author of this history.

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JE I felt the same way about the air, I found that it was almost unworkable and impossible because I never knew whether this air thing was going to work with Beerli or not. Most of the time we were highly dissatisfied.

Interviewer Well, DPD was nominally -- the Cuban activity for DPD -- was nominally placed under your control wasn't it?

JE Supposedly, the looks of it, but they ... there were never any teeth in it. It is like saying the Intelligence Community was placed under Helms a few years ago ... I mean it was nominally placed under him, but you know and I know that he never had any control over it.*

Interviewer You couldn't countermand any Beerli orders then?

JE And I never knew whether he was giving ones that weren't compatible with what I wanted to do either.

Interviewer What kind of management plans did you try to work out with Beerli? Daily meetings with him? or written record or how?

JE We kept extensive memos of the things we did, but as a practical matter, I finally got Beerli to name -- to designate -- one person whom I could be working with on a regular basis, and that was Stan [*sic*] Gaines.

* Richard M. Helms, DCI, 30 June 1966 - 1 February 1973.

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When that was done, that made it very much easier for us to operate. Although it complicated Stan [sic] Gaines' relations I think with Beerli. 20/*

Richard D. Drain, Chief, WH/4 Ops, was less inhibited than Jake Esterline in reflecting on the relationships between WH/4 and DPD. Where, on the one hand, he was quite high in his praise of the military personnel in charge of the ground force activity, particularly Col. Jack Hawkins and Lt. Col. Frank Egan, the Army Special Forces Officer who was actually in charge of Brigade training in Guatemala, Drain was harsh in his evaluation of the management of air operations for JMATE:

RD The most unsatisfactory military personnel were those in DPD ... and the trouble with that was that Air Ops had become so enmeshed in the U-2 that, with the exception of a very small unit which you could say loosely was Tactical Air -- but which was buried in this exotic DPD complex -- it was very difficult to find anybody to talk to. We finally did. Gar Thorsrud, who got the point and, almost in violation of the superiors in DPD, gave us the kind of intelligent cooperation that we needed; but until we found him, dealing with DPD was like dealing with a foreign power.

* George Gaines.

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Interviewer* You are now referring specifically to Beerli and Gaines?

RD Yes, mostly Beerli and Cabell.** Cabell was of no help throughout this thing. He never understood it, as far as I could see, and we had to brief every air drop operation to Cabell. I would go along with somebody from Hawkins's shop, Dave Phillips would go along if it would involve propaganda, and than Beerli would be there. Beerli and Cabell would play Strategic Air Command -- moving their hands around and talking about the angle of vector, and this and that. For example, this is where Cabell got his nickname "Rice and Beans," from the project. Once he told us that we were making an uneconomical use of the aircraft in only dropping what we were dropping ... we must fill our airplane up with rice and beans and drop that too. We sat there and tried to explain to him the size of the reception party and the nearness of Castro's security force and that we couldn't really linger over those targets for a long time and just drop forever. "God damnit," he says, "I have to defend my expenses against the Bureau of the Budget ... isn't that right, Stan?" "Yes, Sir, General" ... So that kind of military assistance was not particularly useful. As a point of fact, we ran about 30 drops and never really achieved a thing. We had all the standard errors, like we dropped once on a string of headlights coming out of a movie instead

* The author of this history.

** Gen. Charles P. Cabell, then DDCI.

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of to the reception party, and we had people shoot themselves in the tail and land in Montego Bay. 21/

In fact, Drain claimed that at one point -- when the Cuban air trainees in Guatemala got out of hand -- he was forced to go to Mr. Bissell to ask that a non-DPD officer be put in charge of the Retalhuleu air base. Drain said that he drafted a Letter of Instruction for [] to become Chief of Base where heretofore DPD had claimed that only an Air Officer could run an airbase. [] in fact, took over as Administrator of the Base. 22/*

As apparent from the chart on the chain of command for air operations in Project JMATE, the man caught in the middle between DPD and WH/4 was Lt. Col. George Gaines, Jr.** His observations on the

* Questioned about Cabell's role in target selection and evaluation of air operations at any stage of the JMATE activity, Col. Beerli responded:

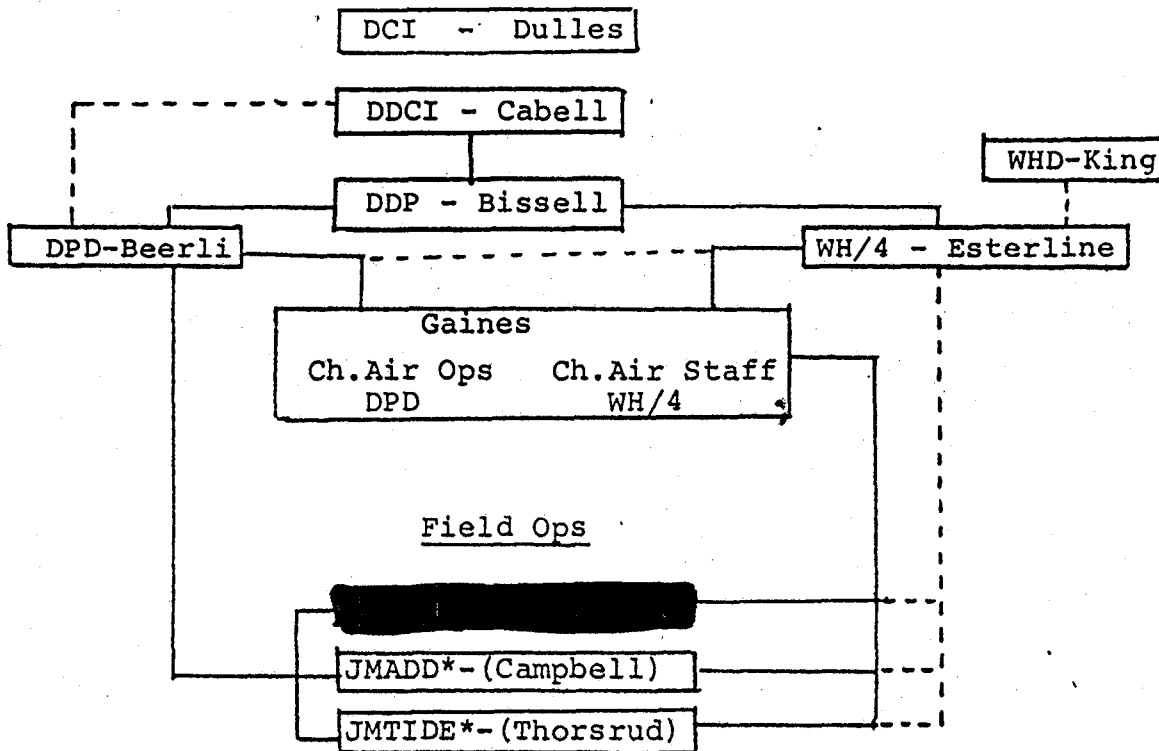
He [Cabell] saw it. He made a very specific effort to see it all. He was very concerned. We made visits to his office frequently to show him what plans we had. He told me, being an Air Officer he said: "I feel that I should be informed at this point just what is going on." 23/

** Chart 1 follows p. 22.

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CHART 1

CHAIN OF COMMAND
JMATE AIR OPERATIONS



_____ Direct reporting
- - - - Indirect reporting

* Nominally command went through COB. In fact, for air ops Campbell and Thorsrud were the channel.

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peculiar position in which he found himself have also been put in the Oral History record. Among other comments, Col. Gaines said:

I was Chief of Air Operations in DPD at the time [of the Bay of Pigs Operation], and I was asked if I would divorce myself from my normal activities to the extent necessary to set up an air arm for ... what later turned out to be the Bay of Pigs ... I was very happy to do that. I had some very good people to help me ... Psychologically it had a traumatic effect on my attitude ... I think you will find, if you go look into the Inspector General's files back in '61, you'll see that I went to the Inspector General two or three times regarding what I called unethical or unprofessional conduct. Then, I believe overall that the effect it had on my career was beneficial. 24/

The following exchange which took place with Col. Gaines during the course of an interview reveals that, like the senior JMATE personnel, Gaines also had some reservations about dual responsibilities:

Interviewer* Could you tell me a little about the command relationships that existed at the time that you went into the operation. You reported to Beerli ...

GG That's correct.

Interviewer And how about Jake Esterline? Did you work with Jake? For Jake? How did that fall out?

* The author of this history.

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GG Well, I had a dual role you see. As Chief of Air Operations I reported to Beerli, and I kept him informed on my activities with the JMARC Project; but as far as the project itself was concerned, I was in my dual capacity there, and my immediate superior was Esterline.

Interviewer Well, where did you sit? Did you sit down there with Jake?

GG No, I sat up in my office ... on H Street and then I went to all the meetings as a Staff member on the Project. We had some space assigned to us down there, but my actual day-to-day operation was in the H Street Building.

Interviewer Were you satisfied with this set up?

GG No, I don't think it was a good set up. I think there should be a clean break because, while there were never any irreconcilable differences of opinion, people who are strictly 100% air, tend to approach a problem differently than people who are using air as a vehicle. I believe that to take an air specialist and put him on a staff for his technical know how would be a better relationship, rather than let him keep the relationship where he was reporting to two bosses. 25/*

* Another of the reasons Gaines offered for assigning an Air Force type to the JMATE staff was that Chief, WH/4 had some "would be pilots" who were advising him; and such advisers frequently caused more problems than were warranted. 26/

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Dick Drain noted that the command difficulties were reflected in field operations; and Billy Campbell, who ran the air operations at Retalhuleu from July 1960 until early February 1961, expressed rather strong feelings about the situation:

When I first went down to the [Retalhuleu] airbase, I was supposed to be working for Col. Stan Beerli. I was told to go down and set up the base and approve the runway operations, with the type of training that we were going to conduct, and determine how long it would take us to do the training ... My job was strictly from the operations end of it. Although DPD sent out a Chief of Base to be responsible back to them, and the office in Guatemala City sent out a directive saying we were responsible to them, and then Jake Esterline's people thought I was responsible to them, and Frank Egan thought I was responsible to him. I ignored the whole damn bunch and went directly to Washington to Stan Beerli and George Gaines ... Then we had to have round table discussions in Washington several times with everybody concerned with that planning -- the initial planning for the targets, etc. -- and with the Cubans.

[redacted] had come in ... He was then termed Chief of Base, and I was the ops type. But I had control of everybody who was flying, and there was always a conflict there. [redacted] was a paratrooper and a real good friend of mine, but he had nothing to do with flying airplanes or training aircrews. That was all my area. Though we did get into many discussions and conflicts with Guatemala City -- what people were we going to do it [flying missions] with, when were we going to

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do it, what were the capabilities -- it boiled down to where I finally retained the authority of operating airplanes sent me on base. 27/*

One can find some signs of progress being made in the management of air operations by mid-summer of 1960. In August, WH Division had agreed and DD/P had approved a tactical air capability for JMATE; operation of the air arm was to be DPD's responsibility; and it would be budgeted out of funds for JMATE. 29/ Even agreement on funding, however, did not end the bickering between the two components. One of the principal problems they faced was one of communication between the elements in Headquarters area -- that is DPD at 1717 H Street and WH/4 Headquarters down on Ohio Drive -- and also communications problems that had to do with instructions between Headquarters and the field.

In early October 1960, C. Tracy Barnes, the A/DDP/A wrote a memorandum to Mr. Bissell complaining

* Billy Campbell's relationship with Frank Egan indicated some degree of interservice rivalry, particularly at the time of the attempted Guatemalan revolt against President Ydigoras Fuentes in November 1960. 28/ (See Volume II of this history, Participation in the Conduct of Foreign Policy.)

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rather sharply about the failure of DPD to coordinate messages concerning JMATE activity with the proper senior officials in WH/4. In one instance cited by Barnes, an expenditure had been improperly authorized; and in another a commendation for the commanders of both JMTRAV and JMADD had been included in a message originating with DPD.* Barnes objected that DPD had no authority over JMTRAV, and he recommended that DPD activities related to JMATE be fully and clearly put under the jurisdiction of Jake Esterline, Chief, WH/4 -- however, this was not the way Mr. Bissell chose to regard the matter. 30**

Although the differences between DPD and WH/4 were to continue in some degree through the course of the project, the records reflecting the disenchantment of one component with the other dropped off significantly after the decision rendered by Mr. Bissell

* JMTRAV was the crypt for the infantry training base in Guatemala, and JMADD was the air training base.

** What might have been an attempted end run by WH/4 to get a similar memo to Bissell asking for the transfer of DPD to WH/4, apparently died aborning on 20 Sep 60 when Rudy Gomez, Acting Chief, Western Hemisphere Division failed to sign a memo addressed to the DDP. 31/

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in October. For purposes of establishing air operations, JMCLEAR had provided an initial budget estimate of some \$4 million dollars for the period from August through 31 December of 1960. The budget was to include TDY travel costs of Headquarters personnel to Eglin and to forward areas; flying hour costs; the transportation of logistics to the training sites and strike sites; the cost of aircraft operations; the cost of aircraft acquisition and reconditioning and such other items as cost for POL, ordnance, aircraft spares, ground handling equipment, and HBILKA (Far East) support. Late in November 1960, when Stan Beerli forwarded to Chief, WH Division some internal revisions of that estimate -- the budget estimate through the end of calendar year 1960 -- he also indicated that he had heard that the JMATE operation was planning to continue for six months beyond 31 December 1960. Beerli requested to be advised of JMATE's operational concept and of the continued support which might be required for JMCLEAR so that these revised figures

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could be included in any overall JMATE budget estimate. 32/*

In discussing the funding for air operations, Bill Eisemann, who was Chief, WH/4 Support pointed out that:

We had earmarked a certain amount of funds for military needs -- for Air Branch needs ... We would obligate those funds, and they [DPD] would pick it up on their own records and do their own buying. They were sort of an independent activity in themselves. They were not really ... under Support in any way, but we had a very close relationship with those guys. We had to have a very close relationship; so they did most of their own requisitioning for ... the aircraft, as an example, and the bombs ... You see, anything on the Air Branch side of the house they handled ... As I recall, back then, when that materiel was issued to the operations,

* Neither in the copy of the August budget that accompanied Beerli's memorandum nor the revised estimated budget do the totals accurately reflect the numbers that are given for each of the categories of expenditures. In the initial estimate, for example, the total is some \$24,000 higher than the sum of the parts. In the revised estimate -- where Beerli said that the total was identical to the total that had been submitted in August because the changes that were being made were revisions within internal categories -- the figure appears to be either \$10,000 too low or \$290,000 too high, based on the various sub-totals by category which appear in the JMCLEAR budget estimate! There is no way to reconcile these differences on the basis of the information presently available.

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it was written off at that point, no matter where the location was, whether it was JMTRAV or JMADD or what have you ... I recollect that we received approval to write off anything once it was issued out of Headquarters to one of the operational training areas or the launch base. In other words, not when it was consumed ... but upon issue. 33/

B. Acquisition of Aircraft

One of the most time consuming activities of Project JMATE from June through September of 1960 concerned the acquisition of combat aircraft. From the initiation of the Project, it was apparent that combat aircraft would be a major factor to the success of the developing anti-Castro effort. In addition to the use of standard transports -- C-46, C-47, or C-54's -- for supply drops, prop drops, infil, and exfil, there was need for aircraft that could conduct tactical strikes on Cuban targets with a variety of ordnance. The choice of aircraft was to be limited by plausible deniability; and, consequently the choice was quickly narrowed to one of two Douglas models -- the Navy's AD-5 or the Air Force's B-26 light bomber.

Prior to DPD's formal involvement in the Project, sentiment in WH/4 was running strongly in favor of the use of the AD-5. In fact in his progress report to

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the DDP in mid-July of 1960, Jake Esterline, in talking about the progress that had been made to implement a training program for Cuban pilots, pointed out that

JMARC had been given assurance by DOD that a total of 12 AD-5's would be made available per requested schedule. The first four aircraft will be turned over between 10 and 15 August. Navy has agreed to supply maintenance personnel, instructor pilots, and an administrative CO. These personnel, about 75 officers and men, will be placed under light civilian cover. Screening and recruiting of 20 Cuban pilots is currently in process at JMASH. 38/*

It was perhaps wishful thinking on Esterline's part that the question of utilization of the AD-5 had been resolved. In a meeting of the Special Group on 21 July 1960, it became apparent that there were too many problems involved in obtaining permission to use this particular aircraft, not the least of which was its deniability as a US aircraft.** Despite the fact that the Australians, the British, and the French did have some incorporated into their Air Forces, none

* JMASH was the crypt for the Forward Operations Base, Miami.

** The Special Group referred to the Designated Representatives under NSC 5412/2 charged with supervising Special Operations. The group consisted of the Assistant Secretaries of State and Defense, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, the DCI, and the CIA secretariat/secretary.

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were in use in Latin American nations. 39/ According to the Defense representatives to the Special Group, Admiral Burke apparently found particular difficulties with the proposal to "sheep-dip" Navy personnel for use as pilot trainers and aircraft maintenance for JMATE.*

Within a few days of the 21 July Special Group meeting, a session was held in the office of the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence; and it was decided that the B-26 aircraft would be substituted for the AD-5 in connection with the JMATE Project. In his memorandum to Jake Esterline, Tracy Barnes, the A/DDP/A also pointed out that DPD would run a cost analysis to compare the merits of bringing in 8 B-26's from the Agency's Far Eastern activities to Project JMATE with the cost of acquiring B-26's

* The former Chief of Security for JMCLEAR indicated that another reason for steering away from the AD-5 was that the Cubans would charge that these were US aircraft flying out of Guantanamo because part of the USN air contingent there was equipped with AD-5's. 40/

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from Davis-Monthan AFB in Arizona.* This cost analysis was to be submitted to the Deputy Director, General C. P. Cabell, through Barnes's office -- an indication of the multiplicity of managerial levels superimposed on WH/4.

Barnes's memorandum also indicated that during the meeting in General Cabell's office on 27 July 1960, it was planned that four pilot trainers, Filipino maintenance personnel, and fly-away kits also would be brought in from the Far East; and a request was going to be forwarded to [redacted] in an attempt to determine whether the SALA aircraft maintenance organization in that country had B-26 mechanics or would be able to obtain B-26 mechanics on short notice. 41**

* Among others who were involved in ascertaining the availability of B-26's, a cable from [redacted] Guatemala reported that the Chief of the US Air Mission to Guatemala, a Col. James Harvey, had informed [redacted] that there were "12 to 16 B-26's in very good condition in Tuscon." 40a/

** A fly-away kit is an aircraft maintenance kit that is designed to provide minimum maintenance parts and equipment for an aircraft when it is operating away from its home base. The kit is normally designed for each type of aircraft by the operator of that particular aircraft and is not a standard set by the technical manuals of the manufacturer of the given aircraft.

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Despite the fact that the decision to use B-26's had already been made by the DDCI and the A/DDP/A, there was at least one last futile attempt by JMATE representatives to reject the choice. The following Memorandum for Record which is presented in full, shows how WH/4 conducted a step-by-step retreat on the issue during a meeting with DPD shortly after the decision to get ten B-26's had been made:

1. JMARC opened by saying they didn't think 10 B-26's would be enough air support for their PM effort.

2. I indicated that 10 would be enough if the strike base was within the original radius of the target (200-500 miles).

3. They then asked about F4U's and P51's with an additional statement of striking from Guatemala. I indicated that these aircraft would give hardly any time over the target.

4. Next they indicated that the B-26 could not function as a close support aircraft. My statement to that was this was the only aircraft available and we would do our best with this problem.

5. Commander Imler stated he wanted each aircraft over target four hours. I stated that the B-26 would not then have fuel to return to Guatemala. He indicated they would have to land on the Isle of Pines.

6. My statement to four was it would be difficult to take a normal pilot and give him 8-10 hours fuel, send him on a

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four or five hour flight, then keep him on target for four hours with no secure base to return to.

7. Colonel Egan finally understood the problem which as we left them was, they will present, in writing to DPD, the targets, time over them desired, and the operating base to strike from. Without these two problems resolved we can't say how many aircraft will be needed.

8. We could get B-26's back from the Far East to add to the 10 we now have but the pilot problem hasn't ever been resolved as yet. Imler again said that he had biographical data on 23, but as yet no firm answer has come back to DPD on the 15 we originally requested.

9. The operations plan will therefore not be written until the specific criteria of the PM operations is forwarded. These criteria will outline general air requirements in support of all PM concepts. 41a/*

Word of the switch to the B-26's in lieu of the AD-5's was immediately sent to Florida with the instructions that there should be a delay in the attempts to recruit aircraft maintenance personnel because of

* The WH/4 representatives were Col. Frank Egan, Col. John F. Mallard, Cmdr. John Imler. The memo is not specified as an MR, and it is unsigned and undated; but it is presumed to refer to a meeting at the end of July or very early in August 1960. The author probably was either Stanley Beerli or George Gaines, and Sidney Stembridge also was in attendance for DPD.

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the change from AD-5's to B-26's. 42/ Late in July, a memorandum was prepared for the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Special Operations) in which it was stated that the Agency had backed off from the use of the AD-5 in favor of the B-26; and it noted the Agency's request that 10 B-26 aircraft be reclaimed from surplus storage and placed in the following combat configuration:

... with eight .50 caliber machine guns in the nose, rocket-launching system, pylon fuel tanks under each wing, and bomb bays capable of accepting either 250 or 500 lb. bombs. Four such aircraft are required by 1 September 1960, the remaining six will be required by 15 October 1960 ... In order to expedite receipt of the aircraft requested above, it is desired that maximum emphasis be placed on timely reclamation of the aircraft to include authorization of overtime for which this Agency will reimburse from funds presently available. It is the understanding of this Agency that the B-26 aircraft are surplus and would be acquired under an interdepartmental transfer at no expense other than labor and associated costs. 43/*

* It is interesting to observe that the response from DPD concerning the cost and availability of B-26's out of the Arizona stockpile went to the Department of Defense at least two days before Jake Esterline, Chief, WH/4 apparently received word about the availability of the B-26's. Again, this would indicate some breakdown in the internal communications between DPD and WH/4. 44/

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As the decision was made to shift to the B-26, there was a sudden increase in correspondence concerning the acquisition of these aircraft. One of the immediate questions that came up in a meeting between representatives of WH/4 and DPD was that of the need for a backup aircraft to support the B-26's. In view of what subsequently developed over the beach at Playa Giron in April 1961, it was unfortunate that this question did not receive far greater attention than it did in late August of 1960. The question being discussed was whether the backup should be provided by fighter aircraft or whether there should be additional B-26's acquired for the strike force. 45/*

* The question of backup support for the B-26's presented problems to the air operations officers who had Oral History interviews with the author. Both Colonel Beerli and Gaines pointed out that if the air operations had been conducted *as initially structured*, there would have been no need for backup fighter aircraft because Castro would not have had any aircraft in the air. It is interesting to observe, however, that the discussion referenced in the text above took place in late July 1960 -- well prior to the time that any planned attack on the strategic targets had been fully developed or, perhaps, even partially developed. Knowing that the Fuerza Aérea Revolucionaria (FAR) had both T-33 jet trainers and Sea Fury fighters in its inventory there seemed to be little point in suggesting that additional B-26's try to fly cover for those employed in bombing Cuba.

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Between 29 July and 11 August, when a memorandum was prepared by the JMCLEAR Project Officer, Col. Gaines, for Col. Moore, the Director of Materiel Management of the Air Force, a very significant modification was suggested in the equipment of the B-26's which were to be acquired from the Air Force. On 29 July, the 8-gun nose had been requested, plus pylons for fuel or napalm, and rocket racks. On 11 August, it again was requested that the 8-gun nose be installed, but if this was not possible, then a 6-gun nose would be acceptable. Of more significance, however, was the plan to add to the plane's firepower by adding three internal guns to both the left and the right wings -- bringing the total of .50 caliber forward-firing machine guns to either 14 or 12. 47/ One can only speculate whether the installation of the additional .50 calibers would have made a significant difference in terms of the effectiveness of the B-26's at the time of the D-2 airstrike. The reason that the wing guns were not installed probably was best explained by Stan Beerli who said -- with reference to other modifications that he was questioned about -- that the restrictions were imposed by time

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and money. How much time did you have and how much money did you want to spend?*

The Defense Department's initial estimate of the cost of the B-26 aircraft was approximately \$11,000 for those which were flyable, and \$27,500 for planes which would have to be taken out of storage. These were base costs exclusive of the added cost due to overtime which had been authorized by the Agency to refurbish the aircraft in as short a time as possible. 48/

The Air Force notified the Agency that four B-26's configured "in accordance with your requirement" would be available from Kelly Air Force Base on 30 August 1960 and that they would be dropped out of the USAF aircraft inventory and made available to the Agency on an interdepartmental transfer -- standard practice at that time. 49/ In apparent response to DOD/USAF concern that they not be tied into clandestine activities, the Agency agreed that once the Air Force

* Among the other modifications suggested at this same time were the installation of the 125 gallon bomb bay gas tanks and the installation of gun cameras. Some of the aircraft did have the bomb bay gas tanks installed, but none had gun cameras.

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delivered the B-26's to Kelly Air Force Base, Agency representatives would then take over and would ferry the B-26's "black" to an operational location. It was stated:

Once the aircraft had departed Kelly Air Force Base, they would proceed "black" to a Latin American covert training location for training of indigenous crews. At this location and at all times after the delivery of the aircraft to the site, the aircraft will be owned by a foreign Agency proprietary organization. This organization will have purchased the aircraft from another US Commercial company who [sic] had owned and maintained the aircraft at a location in the Far East. An inquiry into the history of the aircraft ownership, would reveal that they were originally purchased in the Far East from Air Force surplus a number of years ago, and subsequently sold to a New York broker who in turn sold them to a Latin American Company. It would be further explained that the aircraft proceeded direct from the Far East to the Latin American site. 50/*

There seemed to be no question that the presence of B-26's at Eglin, Kelly, or possibly other of the

* It is not known whether the four B-26's were delivered as scheduled in August or not. It was reported that between 23-26 September 1960 there were two B-26's at Eglin and four at Kelly. The two at Eglin may have been the ones borrowed from the D. C. Air National Guard, and the four at Kelly may have been those scheduled for August delivery. JMADD expressed a desire to have a dual combat configured B-26 included among the four aircraft ready for delivery -- presumably one of the four at Kelly. 50a/

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Air Force bases could be covered for a brief period of time; but the military was quite firm in urging that there not be undue delay in moving these aircraft off of Air Force bases. In addition, the USAF rejected CIA's request for the use of their personnel as crews on "black-flight" operations in C-54's or C-118's between the continental United States and Central America. 51/

The Agency apparently failed to live up to its agreement with the Air Force to move the B-26's from USAF bases; and on 16 January 1961, a memorandum to the DDP from Col. Lergy F. Prouty (USAF), Office of Special Operations/OSD in response to the Agency's request for additional B-26's from the USAF noted:

In compliance with an earlier request for B-26 aircraft, ten were made available to meet an early deadline. At the time of this request, 19 August 1960, it was stated that these aircraft would be removed from the military base to a designated civilian airfield, and then would exit the US. As of this date, six of these aircraft have been picked up; but four still remain on an Air Force Base in the US.

This situation is cited, because it has a direct bearing on future actions to provide B-26 aircraft for such projects. Within seven or eight weeks, the Air Force will no longer have any remaining B-26

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aircraft. This not only means that the USAF will be unable to provide more; but it also means that it will be unable to cover this type any longer. Therefore, any request for B-26's must include provision for removal of this type from USAF bases. This should provide for the four now at Eglin Air Force Base, and should take into consideration the fact that as a result of this situation, none of these aircraft may be returned to USAF bases.

You may be assured that upon receipt of a firm request for these aircraft which include sufficient policy guidelines, this office will be ready to assist with this support without delay. In the interim, necessary action offices in the Air Force have been alerted for this requirement. 52/*

Prouty's memorandum to Mr. Bissell brought a quick response from Jake Esterline for eight -- rather than six -- additional B-26's from the Air Force for Project CROSSPATCH.** Jake's memorandum indicated appreciation for the problem presented to the Air Force as the B-26's were being phased out, but it assured Col. Prouty that when the aircraft were ready

* Col. Prouty seems to have been a thorn in the side of practically every one of the DPD officers with whom he came in contact; and, in addition, mention of his name drew forth expletives of a strong nature from those WH/4 individuals who had even limited contact with Prouty, notably Dick Drain and Jake Esterline.

** CROSSPATCH was the DOD's identification for Project JMATE support.

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for delivery qualified Agency-assigned USAF pilots would be sent to Hill Air Force Base, Utah where they would test fly and test the weapons prior to formal release of the aircraft. The planes would then be ferried to Field 3 at Eglin Air Force Base; and according to Esterline, within 48 hours they would then be ferried back to the Project site where they were to be put to use. The Chief, WH/4 also said that the Agency would assume responsibility for the disposition of all the B-26 aircraft upon completion of the Project and that none would be returned to USAF. 53/

Acquisition of these eight additional B-26's would have meant that a total of 18 had been acquired from the Air Force.* It is not entirely clear whether the Project did in fact receive eight or only six aircraft following the above request; but in any event, at the end of March 1961, in response to a query raised by the Office of Logistics, C. F. Welch (Chief of the Materiel Staff/DPD) noted that there were 16

* These were in addition to two B-26's which had been borrowed from the DC Air National Guard, and subsequently were returned to the DC Air National Guard.

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B-26's which would require maintenance and supply support for a period of 120 days from 30 March 1961. 54/*

Problems of acquisition notwithstanding, there was no question in the minds of the men most closely associated with air operations -- Stan Beerli, George Gaines, Gar Thorsrud, and Billy Campbell -- that the B-26 was the best possible aircraft that could have been acquired for the operation intended. George Gaines, DPD's Chief of Air Operations for JMATE, was most emphatic in his defense of the B-26. He noted that even when the operation still was planned to be one of guerrilla warfare, there were to be combat aircraft on call; and Gaines went on to say that, if possible, they wanted to use the same type of aircraft that the Cuban Air Force had. When queried about the initial attempts to get the AD-5's rather than

* It is not clear whether the Air Force failed to deliver the B-26's at the time that they were requested by Jake Esterline, or whether the 16 rather than 18 total to be supported represents the loss of two B-26's during training operations. Whatever the number, DPD had apparently given serious consideration -- as they had in the summer of 1960 -- to recalling some B-26's from the Far East for use in JMATE, but this transfer apparently did not take place. However, on the last day of March 1961, Mr. Bissell did order Col. Beerli to attempt to get an additional two combat-ready B-26's assigned to Eglin on an alert basis. 54a/

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the B-26's, Gaines allowed that the AD-5 did have good range and combat load characteristics, but he went on to state:

I personally preferred the B-26 all along, because it had a "come-home" engine ... twin engines. The AD-5 was sort of a protégé of some of the other people in the Air Section who thought that we should try it because of its range and combat load. I was more interested in deniability and, of course, the safety factor of the second engine. 55/

Along the same line, Gaines also noted that:

Jake [Esterline] had some would-be pilots on his staff who were trying to tell him how we should employ our aircraft. This caused more friction than it did help. We knew what we could do with the aircraft and we didn't need any Monday morning quarterback telling us how far we could fly B-26's, and still get home. Because we are going to be sitting in them, we want to make damn sure we get home! 56/

Like Col. Gaines, Gar Thorsrud, who actually directed the air strikes against Cuba out of the TIDE base, was unequivocal in his support of the B-26, saying:

I think the B-26 was the best aircraft. With the firepower and the wing-loading of that aircraft ... there were some questions later in the game ... why didn't you have a tail gun? a tail-turret? Well, that went out years ago as far as a tail-turret on those aircraft. It might have saved someone later in the operation, but I think everything should be looked at from the way it was originally planned and changed. 57/

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Thorsrud also pointed out that under the original plan there would have been plenty of loiter time for the B-26's; and according to him, the aircraft could have unloaded all the armament that they carried and still had time for reconnaissance. 58/

In response to a question regarding the configuration of the 8-gun nose, rather than mounting four .50 calibers and 37mm cannon or, perhaps, a 75mm cannon and two .50 calibers, Thorsrud said:

Oh God ... an 8-gun nose ... you can roll a locomotive off that track with it ... Eight .50's ... we had all we needed to take out any of the Sea Fury's, the T-birds -- the jets that they had -- and most of the light tanks, and then we had ... I can't remember all the ordnance that we had ... 500 pounders and frags. We had all the ordnance that we needed to do the job that we were supposed to do. 59/

Col. Stan Beerli also defended the choice of the B-26 as quite adequate for the mission that had been planned for the Brigade Air Force, and he, too, emphasized the twin-engine aspect as one of the more favorable features of the B-26 in comparison to any single engine aircraft. 60/*

* There were one or two aspects of the B-26 however, which were looked on with less favor by the Air Operations people, one was the difficulty that the aircraft
(footnote continued on following page)

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Connie Seigris one of the few North Americans who would fly a B-26 in action over Playa Giron had some particular objections, not to the B-26 itself, but to the modifications that had been built into some of the aircraft which were acquired during the course of the JMATE operation. Going back to the initial request of 11 August 1960 it was suggested that long-range ferry tanks be installed in the bomb bays of the B-26's, Seigris pointed out:

About six replacement B-26's arrived at TIDE at the same time of evening as we (Price, myself, and 4 Cuban flown B-26's) returned from our strike at the Bay of Pigs. These replacement B-26's had ferry tanks strapped permanently in the bomb bays. In my estimation, they were flying bombs -- we never used

presented in terms of an emergency bail-out. Thorsrud, in a discussion of this subject for example, pointed out:

[One of our contract pilots] had bailed out in Indonesia ... He went over the top of the canopy and he hit the horizontal stabilizer and broke his leg ... which probably saved his life ... because when he got on the ground, he had his carbine and his pistol with him ... and he was in such shock that ... he probably would have tried to fight his way out of it if he hadn't done that. It was not an easy aircraft to get out of though. There is a recommended technique ... if all goes well, but if your speed is up, it is going to carry you right up and into the horizontal stabilizer. 61/

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them. Like the T-33's, it was too late anyway to have used them. 62/*

It should be mentioned in passing that despite the strong support for the B-26 from the air operations officers, particularly the Headquarters element, some rather interesting questions evolved shortly after the receipt of the first B-26's at the training base at Retalhuleu. On 25 November 1960 a cable from Headquarters requested MADD "In order complement published technical data at Headquarters, desire you advise us maximum range possible with fully-combat armed B-26 with one hour fuel reserve." 63/ It strikes the non-technical observer that this was a rather strange request to be coming from the Headquarters complement that had pushed so hard for the acquisition of this particular type aircraft -- especially since one of the principal contentions was the suitability of the range for B-26 operations.

MADD responded to the Headquarters query, noting a range of 1,600 NM, or an action radius of 800 NM. 63a/

* The difference between the Agency's initial request for long-range ferry tanks in the B-26's and those noted by Seigrist, was the fact of a permanent installation of the long range tanks; heretofore the tanks had been of the type hung on the bomb shackles and removable.

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Headquarters then made the following inquiry regarding the .50 caliber machine guns on the B-26's:

1. Request confirmation re 300 rounds each of 8 machine guns.
2. T. O. 1B-26B-2-9 states 360 rounds per ammo box which feeds two guns. Four ammo boxes installed each A/C. This would provide 180 rounds per gun.
3. Advise. 64/

It would seem that the cart had preceded the horse, with Headquarters asking the field what kind of a monster they had on their hands.*

The cable traffic between Retalhuleu and Headquarters also revealed that from very early during the training period through the close out of the operation, there would be various types of B-26 equipment shortages that would crop up to the consternation of the air operations people. Of the pieces of equipment that seemed to be in critically short supply during the course of the activity were pylon fuel tanks for the B-26's; and as early as November 1960, cable traffic indicated concern about the shipment

* JMATE apparently queried DPD along similar lines early in September 1960. In response to a 2 September request, Lt. Colonel Gaines forwarded a memorandum to Jake Esterline outlining various characteristics of the B-26B aircraft. (See Appendix 2.)

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of these particular items, and MADD stated it had no spares in this category -- a situation recalled by Connie Seigrist who, 15 years after the event recalled that:

All of our first B-26's had pylon mounted external tanks. But we all attempted to bring the tanks back as we didn't have many replacement tanks. 65/

In addition to the acquisition of B-26's for project JMATE, it was also necessary to acquire aircraft for transport, supply, propaganda drop, and paradrop operations. The aircraft that would be used for these activities were C-46's and C-54's. The initial acquisition of C-46's was from HBILKA, with four C-46's being flown in from the Far East; and there were to be four instructor pilots, a maintenance man, and a logistics (procurement) specialist also brought in from HBILKA. The estimated cost for bringing in the aircraft, training the crews, and other expenses for a period of four months -- the overly optimistic estimate made in early October 1960 -- was \$206,290.00. 66/

Connie Seigrist, then with the Civil Air Transport, ferried one of the first two C-46's from the Far East to Guatemala. He told the following story

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of this particular episode:

I was living in Taipei, Taiwan, in August 1960. I knew there were preparations being made to send a couple of C-46's to Texas. Naturally, all of us pilots were curious to what was in the wind. I asked my boss and a good friend, VPO Bob Rousselot if I could get in on the operation (we were all employed by Civil Air Transport). Although I didn't know what the operation was at the time, and I doubt that Bob knew. Anyway I was accepted and I was immediately given a refresher flight in B-26 gunnery, flying on a CAF Gunnery Range, just west of Taipei (CAF-Chinese Air Force).

W. H. Beale, co-captain; L. C. Cartwright, navigator; S. L. Tong, 1st Officer; and myself as co-captain departed TPE 3 September 1960 flying a CAT C-46 to Oakland. S. L. Tong left the crew in Oakland and returned to TPE. We three flew to San Antonio where we were informed by "Chick," a nickname, a former [redacted] employee (an Agency Company) [redacted] from TPE, that we were to fly to San Jose, Guatemala. I am not really sure, but I believe we arrived late at night on the 9th, or past 12 midnight which could have been the 10th. From that time I never left the operation. 67/*

* In addition to being instructor-pilots for C-46's, Beale and Seigrist were also qualified instructor-pilots for B-26's; Seigrist also was qualified as an instructor-pilot for the PBV. Seigrist was probably the best, and certainly the most active in terms of operational flying, of all the American pilots associated with Project JMARC.

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The C-46 aircraft -- like most of the JMCLEAR aircraft -- were nominally owned by [redacted] [redacted] a legal [redacted] corporation and, also, an Agency proprietary. The aircraft were leased to Manuel F. Goudie, and, in turn, by Goudie to the Cuban exile organization, the FRD. The C-54 work horses which were used to transport the bulk of the troops and materiel from Florida to Guatemala during the training period were similarly under the nominal cover of [redacted]. Unlike the C-46's which actually belonged to [redacted] [redacted], but had conditional sales papers showing the ownership by [redacted], the C-54's (with the exception of two of the aircraft) were leased from the United States Air Force. 67a/

As with the B-26's, acquisition of the C-54's gave rise to additional occasions of displeasure among DPD, WH/4, and DOD. Although the original memorandum was not recovered, it is apparent that a direct approach was made by WH Division to the Department of Defense --

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circumventing the DPD channel -- to provide air resupply to anti-Castro guerrilla forces upon request by WH/4. Chief, DPD, Colonel Beerli, was highly incensed over this apparent by-pass; and among other items that he brought to the attention of Chief, Western Hemisphere Division were the following:

That "the WH requirement set forth in the referenced memorandum would seem to preclude the use of DPD assets which have been developed for employment in other similar type operations."

That DPD had both aircrews and available aircraft capable of delivering 60,000 pounds of cargo per night, and, in addition, had an "experienced task force capable of planning, launching, and retrieving air missions." This delivery capability was far in excess of requirements which had been indicated by WH/4.

Beerli went on to point out that "under certain conditions" requests could be made of DOD for aircraft to supplement the Agency's capability, but it was apparent from the tone of his memorandum that he did not believe that such time had arrived. 67b/

In an internal memorandum from John Mallard (WH/4/SA/Mil) to Chief, WH/4/Ops, Col. Mallard made it quite clear that he believed DPD had overstated its case; and he specified that while Col. Beerli had

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claimed that DPD had five C-54's available, one of these was being held by the Mexican government following an emergency landing and a second had crash landed in Guatemala while on a training flight. The latter had been so badly damaged that its destruction (by burning) was authorized following the removal of some salvagable parts. 67c/ Mallard also suggested that the Agency go forward to DOD asking them to develop a contingency air plan for resupply of guerrilla forces should the anti-Castro program of the US become overt. 67d/

Even as Mallard's comments were going forward within WH/4, Col. Beerli apparently concluded that the "certain conditions" to which he referred in his earlier memorandum had arrived, and he went forward to the DOD with a request (26 October 1960) for "loan or bailment" of four C-54G's on an extremely short deadline (e.g., by 1 November 1960). 67e/ Beerli's request went over like a lead balloon with General Lansdale, OSO/OSD who had received the request. Lansdale had a memorandum hand carried to Mr. Bissell (27 October 1960), the DDP, in which he outlined the impracticability of being able to meet the deadline

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recommended. He suggested the need for improved management practices by the Agency, noted that readying the aircraft from the standpoint of safety and security was time consuming, and concluded "it is suggested that if you determine that 1 November is a more or less arbitrary deadline which can be eased, it would be most helpful to do so for the benefit of both organizations." 67f/

The foregoing kinds of skirmishing would be characteristic in greater or lesser degree throughout the life of the project. It should be recorded, however, that the project did not suffer more than minor inconvenience re the availability of C-54's from the USAF inventory -- none of which in any way affected the outcome.

Through October and into early November 1960, there was considerable correspondence concerning the methods by which the business transactions and commercial activities of [] could be securely backstopped to hide JMCLEAR activities, but these were resolved to the satisfaction of both WH/4 and DPD. Monthly cost for rental of [] aircraft -- 4 C-46's, 8 B-26's, 2 C-54's, and 2 Helios --

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as of early November was nearly \$35,000 a month. All of the aircraft, of course, were presumably leased to Señor Goudie, the FRD's finance man in Miami. 68/

The heavy demand for transport aircraft, of course, was explained by the sharp increases in manpower that resulted from the changing concepts of the anti-Castro program in the Fall of 1960.* The program calling for the infiltration of the three-man guerrilla teams had given way to the invasion program which, by the first week of December in 1960, called for a 750-man Brigade to seize and hold a lodgement in Cuba. A 150-man element of that strike force would either be airdropped or air landed in the lodgement area. Air delivery of supplies to support the Brigade forces plus overflights to support the increasing numbers of dissidents -- who would be attracted to the anti-Castro side as the Brigade's lodgement became more certain -- were estimated to run on the order of two million pounds for the period between 1 December 1960 and 28 February 1961. Of this total, 600,000 lbs. was

* The change in concept of Project JMATE is discussed in detail in Volume III of this history, *Evolution of CIA's Anti-Castro Policies, 1959-January 1961.*

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shown as a requirement for a consolidation of the GW and strike force activities. 69/

Among the types of aircraft which were utilized for the JMATE operation there also was a Constellation, model 1649. Belonging to DPD, it had been acquired for use in another capacity; but, in effect, it was put into serviceable condition following the request of the DDP in November of 1960 for possible use as an evacuation vehicle for personnel at JMADD. On 17 January 1961, the Assistant Chief, DPD, James A. Cunningham, Jr. had prepared a memorandum requesting DDP approval to charge JMATE \$100,000, for getting the Constellation the necessary FAA certification. Of this sum \$15,000 was required for the installation of a weather radar; \$50,000 for a rebuilt spare engine; and \$35,000 for maintenance in the standby capacity for the possible evacuation of JMATE for the remainder of Fiscal Year 1961. Mr. Bissell approved these changes. 70/

As discussed in another volume of this history, WH/4 and DPD initially hoped to solve the problem of aircraft maintenance and servicing through agreements with the Costa Rican organization SALA. Negotiations were terminated by November 1960 when it seemed apparent

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that SALA was about to make excess profit -- also the SALA activity got into a sensitive political area in Guatemala. 71/*

C. Relations with OSO/DOD and the Air National Guard

Reference has already been made to some of the difficulties between Agency components -- DPD and WH/4 -- and both the Office of Special Operations of the Secretary of Defense (OSO/DOD) and the United States Air Force concerning the acquisition of additional aircraft from the USAF inventory. There also were continuing difficulties between the Agency's representatives and the Defense components concerning the

* See Volume II, *Participation in the Conduct of Foreign Policy.*

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utilization of military personnel, particularly air crews, either in support of black flights or for assignments in foreign areas.* Permission for assignment of USAF personnel to foreign countries was not granted during the course of JMATE; and even the military assignees to CIA who were serving in Guatemala, were prohibited from serving in Nicaragua during the immediate invasion period.

By mid-September 1960, however, the Air Force was amenable to the use of its aircrews for "black" flights into areas outside of the ZI; but the Agency had to insure that in case the operation was blown the crewmen and their families would have all the benefits that they would have accrued had they not become involved in the Agency's anti-Castro operation. The task of acquiring the resignations from Air Force personnel and preparing the volunteer statements, which each individual was required to sign, fell to the Military Personnel Division of the Office of

* Volume II of this history discusses the problems presented when the Agency attempted to get a specific allotment of Special Forces Trainers for use in Guatemala. A passing reference was made in that discussion to the possible assignment of USAF personnel in the overseas area.

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Personnel. Pending completion of the paper work, utilization of Air Force personnel in black flights was to be suspended; and although it was not specified in the memorandum of consent from the Air Force, it was reported that USAF personnel at the third country training site (Guatemala) were being withdrawn. 73/*

With the initiation of DPD as the operational air arm for Project JMATE, it was quickly realized that there was an urgent need for an airbase in the southern United States that would be suitable as the point of origin (and the terminus) for black flights -- for bodies and supplies -- to Guatemala. Among other inactive airfields in southern Florida which were inspected was that portion of the Marine Corps Air Station at Opalocka, Florida. The 4,000 acre field had been declared excess to the needs of the Department of the Navy in early 1959. Following an

* Why such withdrawal would have been necessary is somewhat confusing in view of the memorandum from Ed Stanulis, the Deputy Chief of WH/4 on 12 September 1960, in which he pointed out to the Chief, WH/4 that at a briefing on 18 August 1960 for President Eisenhower and ranking US Government officials "approval [for use of DOD personnel in the Guatemalan Training Program] was requested and obtained." Stanulis's memo further said that WH/4 needs were spelled out for two USAF Training Supervisors; 15 crew members from C-54's; and two USN medics (one MD and one Corpsman). 74/

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inspection in early September 1960, the Agency determined that a 1,500 acre segment in the north part of the field would be ideal for JMATE requirements -- length of runway, hangers, magazines, warehouses, railroad siding, and relative isolation provided the facilities and security necessary to the planned anti-Castro operations. Because the General Services Administration had started disposal action a year and a half prior to the time of its investigation, the Director of Logistics worked quickly and got the GSA Public Buildings Service Commissioner to agree to withhold disposal action on the north portion of the field and some magazines near the particular airstrip in which the Agency was interested.

Working through channels, representatives of the Office of Logistics -- Col. Thomas A. McCrary, Acting Director of Logistics, and Chief, Real Estate and Construction Division -- contacted Rear Admiral H. A. Renken, Director, Shore Station Construction and Maintenance Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Renken indicated that Navy would interpose no objection to Agency use of the field, and offered whatever assistance was

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required; and the Admiral also advised both the commanding officer of the Opalocka Station and the Admiral in charge of the Charleston District of the decision to support CIA's use of the Opalocka facility. 75/

It is possible that the quick footwork on the part of the Agency's representatives in acquiring rights to the Opalocka facility antagonized some people in OSO/DOD with whom the Agency had been negotiating for the acquisition of an airstrip for a period of several weeks -- but with negative results. Some evidence of satisfaction is apparent in the memorandum of WH/4's weekly meeting with the OSO representatives on 15 September 1960 which stated in part:

The use of Opalocka Marine Air Base was discussed and the OSO representatives *were told* this use for "black" flights had been cleared by Navy through Admiral Rankin [*sic*]. GSA approval had been previously obtained; however, DOD interest was still indicated since the field was guarded by US Navy enlisted personnel and Naval Air Reserve occasionally uses the field. (Col. Prouty was called at 1730 this date *and informed that the field would be used* 16 September. He agreed with this.) A paper on the use of Opalocka will be forwarded to OSO. 76/*

* Emphasis by author.

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Initiation of Agency operations at Opalocka soon became the focus of local business interests which had commercial designs on the property and of the news media. Fortunately, DOD's initial cover story -- that the facility was being used for storage of outdated ammunition by an Army element prior to ultimate disposal -- had been replaced by a more effective story of FAA responsibility for the activities at Opalocka. This was brought to the attention of the Executive Officer/DCI, John S. Erman, on 8 November 1960 by Col. Stanley Grogan, the Agency's public information officer. Grogan noted that Jim Haggerty of the White House staff and Andrew Berding of State had been asked by the Washington representative of the Knight newspapers to discuss allegations that CIA was operating a training camp at Opalocka.

Both the White House and the State representatives referred the newspaper people to the Agency, but when a DOD representative remarked that the facility was under GSA control, the newsmen immediately pursued that lead. The GSA representative did confirm that the Opalocka Naval Base was surplus, adding that it was his understanding that the Navy was using the area

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for classified purposes. When Grogan broached this question with Ed Stanulis of WH/4, Stanulis called Elton Hailey (Director of Information, GSA), and informed Hailey that the cover story was to be that FAA now operated the field and would be doing some classified, experimental flights for safety purposes. Stanulis also informed the Navy liaison officer at Opalocka, to avoid making any public statements or providing information to the press regarding activities at Opalocka. The Navy retained responsibility for base security and maintenance -- at Agency expense -- but the operational responsibility would be attributed to FAA, with all public announcements originating in Washington. 77/*

Immediately following the decision on Opalocka, there seemed to be a greater degree of cooperation between the Agency representatives and their DOD counterparts. Even when the Office of Special Operations pointed out that the Navy would be unable to

* For additional operational details concerning Opalocka the reader is referred to James Burwell, *Logistics Support for Operations in Cuba, March 1960-October 1961*. DDS/OL-7, April 1971, pp. 34-37, 49-55. S.

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provide either search and rescue vessels on an intermittent basis as requested for Agency air operations or to provide much assistance in the vicinity of Swan Island, Chief, WH/4 seemed to be relatively unconcerned.* In fact, his report seems almost cavalier in pointing out to the Acting Chief, DPD that until Project JMATE acquired several ships which might be of some assistance for rescue of airmen downed at sea, it would be some time before such resources would be sufficient to meet the needs of DPD. 78**

By late November 1960, however, relations with OSO/DOD seemed to be going down hill again. Not only would the question of the Army Special Forces trainers be a point of contention, but the whole spectrum of decisions on bases, overseas operations, overflights, use of US military personnel, and other responsibilities was again at issue between WH/4 and OSO. The memorandum of a conference WH/4 representatives had with

* It is for this reason that the DPD operations officers were much concerned about the acquisition of a PBY to be able to perform air-to-sea rescue.

** Swan Island in the Caribbean was the location of an Agency operated radio station which broadcast anti-Castro propaganda to Cuba. (See Volume III of this history, *Evolution of CIA's Anti-Castro Policies, 1959-January 1961*, for more detailed discussion.)

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Capt. Burns W. Spore, the Navy representative of OSO/DOD, concluded among other things that "the conference with Capt. Spore accomplished little, other than to point up the difficulty of obtaining future DOD support under the present circumstances." 79*

On 29 November 1960, a request to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for special operations went forward for the DDP requesting: two operational staff officers who were "recently qualified in air to ground gunnery, rocketry ... and capable of tactical mission planning"; two operations support officers who had "recent experience in tactical mission planning"; and six weapons maintenance supervisors and one aircraft

* It was at this meeting on 25 November 1960, that Jake Esterline strongly suggested that the reluctant attitude exhibited by Capt. Spore towards supporting Project JMATE was a reflection of the pressures that were being exerted by the Department of State which was squeamish about OAS and UN discovery of Agency involvement in the anti-Castro activity. Spore's contention was that DOD was being asked to buy a pig in a poke and that the problems could be resolved if WH/4 would provide more detailed briefings concerning its plans. An interesting note is that reporting on this, and other of the sessions between WH/4 and OSO, was the responsibility of Col. John F. Mallard (USMC), a military assignee to WH/4 responsible for liaison with the DOD. Mallard's reporting throughout the operation reflects high credit on his integrity for it reflects the pros and cons of all parties positions -- and could easily have put him between "a rock and a hard place." Mallard's career may, in fact, have suffered. He refused the author's request for an oral interview, and he declined to respond to written questions.

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and missile ground support equipment repairman for assignment to Project CROSSPATCH (the DOD designation for JMATE). Col. Mallard's note on WH/4's copy of the memorandum made the following cryptic comment:

This requirement has already been forwarded. I have talked to Spore [Capt. Burns W.] who is withholding any action until he is notified this requirement meets with the approval of C/JMARC. Maybe we don't have this authority to withhold action, since the requirement is signed for DD/P. A thermo copy has been provided to both CCD and MMPD. 81/*

As would be pointed out, in a subsequent review of the JMATE operation, DOD did not respond to the request of 29 November; and consequently, on 17 January 1961, another memorandum repeated the request for the weapons and maintenance men. Again, however, DOD failed to respond to the Agency's requirement and the weapons men were never assigned; and the mission planners were selected from Air National Guard personnel in lieu of a response from DOD. 82/

* Although the routing slip with this notation is addressed to WH/4/COPS and to Mr. [Richard D.] Drain, the distribution list typed on the memo itself does not indicate that any copies were provided to WH/4. Mallard's comment presumably is a reference to the fact that Chief/WH/4 must have been unavailable at this time -- at any rate the routing slip shows that C/WH/4 had been scratched out.

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On 27 December 1960, a memorandum was hand carried to Team B, Directorate of Plans, DCS/P&P, Hqs, USAF by Agency representatives requesting the TDY assignment of 47 USAF enlisted personnel to TDY duty at

Hanky-panky over this request continued through February and March of 1961, and on 25 April, after the close out of the Bay of Pigs operation, it was reported that the 47 men still had not been assigned to Eglin. 83/

The fuss over the use of USAF types was not limited solely to the discussions between the Agency and DOD, although this is where the most serious infighting took place, but it also ascended to the level of the Special Group meetings. During December 1960, the Special Group questioned the need for increased numbers of Air Force personnel at both US and foreign bases; and there also was discussion about the increasing use of USAF personnel to fly missions in support of Project JMATE, including over-flights of Cuba. Resistance to involving US personnel frequently came from Deputy Secretary of Defense, James H. Douglas, during the course of the Special Group meetings; and Douglas was supported frequently by Thomas Mann, the

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Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. The Special Group was particularly concerned about the Agency's requests to operate direct supply, or resupply, flights to the dissident elements in Cuba out of Opalocka or Eglin. There were no positive responses given to the problems presented in any of these areas, prior to the end of December 1960. 84/

In a memorandum to the DDP on 21 December 1960, OSD had apparently set 15 January 1961 as the date for pulling out all of the Air Force personnel assigned to the Agency who are on TDY at JMADD. The DDP and the A/DDP/A, Messrs. Bissell and Barnes, respectively, were ready to joust with higher echelons in the Department of Defense; but cooler heads prevailed when it was pointed out to the DDP that Major General Winston P. Wilson, Deputy Chief, Air National Guard Bureau had recently stated that he would be quite willing to have the Air National Guard do anything that it could to contribute to the success of Project JMATE. Consequently, it was agreed that approaches be made to the Air Force to modify the date for the withdrawal of their personnel from JMADD until ANG replacements had been organized. In question were 15 positions which

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the Air Force was filling at the Retalhuleu Base. 85/

The decision to turn to the Air National Guard for qualified air operations personnel in January 1961 was not any hurried decision on the part of DPD planners. Shortly after the authorization for DPD to participate in Project JMATE, contact had been made with General Wilson. Sidney Stembridge, a security officer for DPD, and Lt. Col. George Gaines made the initial contact with General Wilson. One of the reasons for visiting Wilson, was that the ANG in Washington had two B-26's which the DPD representatives asked if they could borrow to train crews. This was agreeable to Wilson; and when additional planes and crews were needed, Wilson took DPD to visit the commanding officer of the Georgia Air National Guard, General Davey -- who in turn sent them to General Reid Doster of the Alabama Air National Guard. General Davey's Georgia Air Unit had phased out of the B-26's, but Gen. Doster's Alabama Group was still familiar with that particular aircraft. 86/

Following the initial contact with General Wilson, Sid Stembridge and a contracting officer from DPD, Lyle Miller, signed up five of the DC Air National Guard.

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between 11 and 15 August 1960 for maintenance work on the B-26's, explaining to the ANG members that the work would be outside the continental United States and would be for a period of thirty days. Cover stories, emergency contact numbers, insurance, and secrecy agreements were all concluded with the CIA representatives; and this was the first contingent of Air National Guardsmen who were signed aboard for service with Project JMATE. 87/

Before the operation closed out in April 1961, there were 33 members of the Alabama ANG, 21 from the Arkansas ANG, 14 from Georgia, 9 from the District of Columbia, and 2 from California who served with the project.* Of nearly 80 ANG personnel, who participated in the anti-Castro effort, 19 served as overflight crews.** The four Americans who lost their lives over

* The California duo were apparently not in the ANG in that State, but "were spotted by Guard or military contacts."

** In addition to those 80 who actually belonged to National Guard Units, another 50 contract employees with either ANG affiliation or spotted by ANG personnel were under contract to one of Project JMATE's cover companies [redacted]

[redacted] or were direct hires. Consequently, the figure commonly used for total ANG participation in the Project is 130.

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Cuba on 19 April 1961 were all members of the Alabama ANG contingent. 88/

Major Billy B. Campbell, who was initially put in charge of the B-26 air training program down in Guatemala, also played a key role with Sid Stembridge in obtaining support from the ANG. In an interview with the author, Campbell made the following remarks:

We borrowed General Wilson's two National Guard airplanes out of Andrews AFB to do the initial training in. These aircraft were much lighter and much faster than the airplanes we finally received, which were the ones from the Far East. Flown back to Kelly Air Force Base and refitted, we flew them all down to Guat City. Getting back to the qualifications and the training, and the people we were training ... among the areas that I was really worried about was the maintenance of the airplanes, the maintenance of the guns on the B-26's, and making sure that we had the proper people to load the cargo aircraft for paradrops. This is why we initially went back and started asking for Americans to come on down and help, and I was the one that proposed to get people out of the National Guard. They had B-26's in Georgia, in Alabama, and in Arkansas at the time. Sid [Stembridge] was well aware of this. In fact, we flew together with Gen. [Reid] Doster on his airplane back in the fall of 1960 to Birmingham; and Doster said you can have all my people who want to volunteer, as long as I go myself. We pointed out to him that we couldn't take a two-star General and

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put him down there in charge of the people. In any event, he did go down and was there in Puerto Cabezas during the operation. This takes us back again, too ... we got the initial maintenance people down and this gave me a cadre of qualified people to take care of the three types of airplanes we had then. 89/

There is evidence that the push for the acquisition of Air National Guard personnel -- even prior to the time that OSO/DOD and the Agency came to the parting of the ways -- was overly successful. In early December Headquarters cabled MADD as follows:

1. Headquarters feels mandatory all (repeat all) ANG personnel be assigned MADD and kept busy.

2. If necessary to provide space, return all personnel, except supply to EGLI.

3. Realize this may create temporary hardship but feel inability utilize all ANG personnel after all out push to recruit may seriously affect relations with ANG. ANG by long odds, most reliable and cooperative source personnel. 90/

That this appreciation of support from the ANG was not overstated was made quite clear in January 1961 when the Agency's representatives again went to General Wilson. They requested five officers and seven additional enlisted personnel, explaining to the General that the USAF was about to withdraw its

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personnel from the project. As usual, Wilson was quite sympathetic; and he immediately called Brigadier General Frank A. Bailey, Commander of the Arkansas Guard. Gen. Bailey was told that the agency representatives would shortly be in contact with him and that he should fully support CIA's request for officer and enlisted personnel. When the contact was made with Gen. Bailey, he was fully cooperative as he had been in the previous instances where Arkansas ANG personnel had been provided to Project JMATE. 91/

As D-Day drew nearer, the underemployment of ANG personnel apparently was a thing of the past; for by 1 March 1961, the Agency again had made advances to the Air Force about the possibility of using USAF personnel in Nicaragua. As in the past, however, DOD's position was that another secret agreement -- this time with the government of Nicaragua -- would be necessary before military personnel could be utilized.* Even as the approach was being made to OSO/DOD, Jake Esterline was suggesting to the DPD that ANG support

* As detailed in Volume II, a secret agreement had to be negotiated with Guatemala before DOD would assign US Army Special Forces trainers to JMTRAV.

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would be easier come by than that from DOD. Jim Cunningham, Assistant Chief to Stanley Beerli in DPD, was pointing out that with the additions of C-54 aircraft to Eglin to support Project JMATE, to say nothing of the problems of handling B-26's which were being delivered to Field 3 from Hill Air Force Base, the problems of loading and unloading, logistics storage, and painting of aircraft at the Eglin Base were so great that DPD might seriously have to consider drafting people from throughout the Agency or going into the open market to obtain blue collar workers. 92/

As a final note on the Agency's relations with OSO/DOD, it should be emphasized that without exception the air operations personnel -- and others familiar with the air operations -- who were interviewed by the author were universal in their agreement that Col. Fletcher Prouty, the DOD/OSO USAF representative, was particularly as the decision was made to withdraw USAF personnel from the overseas base in Guatemala. Gar Thorsrud put it in the following, rather explicit terms:

There was a guy over there [at DOD/OSO] by the name of Fletcher Prouty -- who was -- and he did everything he could to put stumbling blocks

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in front of the Agency, all through that operation ... There were some situations with our liaison with the Air Force through Fletcher Prouty that I think were

[redacted] 93/

D. Initial Planning for Air Operations

It has already been noted that when DPD officially came into the JMATE program in July 1960 various aspects of air operations had been considered in the planning -- infiltration and exfiltration, propaganda drops, supply drops, and the possibility of tactical targets for combat aircraft. Even before being assigned to support JMATE, DPD had anticipated some requirements which would be necessary to the success of WH/4's air operations. As early as 6 April 1960, for example, Casimiro "Chick" Barquin participated in a meeting with representatives of the Photo Intelligence Center "to gather all known sources of coverage of Cuba ... It is my opinion that complete coverage of the island will be required if any PM efforts are envisioned which will be supported by air." 94/

That Barquin's instincts were excellent was verified by a memorandum from George Gaines, Jr., the Chief, JMCLEAR to the Acting Chief, DPD on 2 August

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1960 when Gaines wrote:

It was determined in the meeting of the JMARC Task Force on 2 August 1960 that photo coverage of the target country was necessary in order to adequately affect the JMARC Project. This photo coverage should be done so as to provide JMARC intelligence with a finished product not later than 19 September 1960. The specific requirement is to determine, with the latest equipment available, the *location and type of aircraft in the target country.* 95/*

From the outset of DPD's involvement, it was clear to Gaines that the first step in a successful operation would have to be the elimination of Castro's Air Force.

Such aerial reconnaissance as had been done on Cuba was principally the work of the US Navy. At the time that DPD became involved in the project, the push was on for the use of the U-2; but this had to be cleared not only with the DCI, but also with the Special Group 5412. During the discussion of the first planned U-2 overflight, Mr. Gordon Gray, President Eisenhower's Assistant for National Security Affairs showed signs of trauma -- perhaps residual from the shoot-down of Francis Gary Powers in May 1960; and

* Emphasis by author.

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in the Special Group meeting of 20 October 1960, Gray insisted

that the pilot be carefully selected and that he be thoroughly briefed by a "CIA official, senior enough, to have your [Allen Dulles's] full confidence." He said that he thought it particularly important to direct the pilot not to land on Cuban soil under any circumstances, and also that the pilot be well indoctrinated in the cover story.* 96/

When the Special Group met on 27 October 1960, General Cabell told the group that the U-2 flight was then in progress, and this led to the expression of some controversial opinions between Assistant Secretary for Defense Douglas, and other members of the Special Group. Douglas said that he saw little necessity for running the risk inherent in the U-2 flight, suggesting that the only purpose of the flight was to get photographic verification of the existence of Bloc military equipment in Cuba; but other members of the group disagreed with Douglas's view. Mr. Merchant of State pointed out that there was a minimal risk of serious mishap, and emphasized

* The Powers' shoot-down also appeared to be an issue when the use of the U-2 had been discussed a few weeks earlier during a White House meeting which DDP and WH/4 representatives had with Col. John Eisenhower. 97/

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that there was a considerable need to obtain adequate topographic information. Merchant went on even further, however, and noted: "that it will always be easy to find some reason not to run such a mission, e.g., if it is not the election [upcoming US Presidential election of November 1960], it might be the General Assembly or something else." Undaunted, Mr. Gray said that any subsequent U-2 operations would also be subject to prior discussion with the Special Group before being flown.* 98/

As the reader can well imagine, there was a growing need for overhead reconnaissance of Cuba as Project JMATE progressed. Requirements concerned not only potential air targets, but potential troop landing sites, landing strips for light aircraft for black operations (including seaplane landings), and possible areas for the Brigade landing or deception activities to divide Castro's forces. With the approach of D-Day in early April of 1961, Col. Gaines was meeting with representatives of the Special Projects Branch of DPD

* The Special Group also was to be advised of *any* planned overflights of Cuba -- reconnaissance, supply, or other -- but notification of any but U-2 flights might specifically be waived by the DCI. 98a/

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to formalize the final reconnaissance requirements for Project JMATE. Among other items it was agreed that there would be complete overhead coverage of Cuba beginning as of D-3; there would be both pre- and post-strike reconnaissance of primary targets; and the post-strike photography would be done as soon as possible after the initial D-Day strike, with follow-up coverage on the afternoon of D-Day. Such follow-up post-strike coverage as required, or special photographic requirements that developed during the course of the operation, were also noted in the discussions of 3 April 1961 between Gaines and Lt. Col. Songer of the Special Projects Branch. 99/*

In addition to the early call for photo reconnaissance requirements, there were other considerations of immediacy to early planning for air operations. Soon after Eisenhower's anti-Castro program had been announced WH/4 had deferred on a DPD request for estimates of air transport requirements for its operations in support of the various anti-Castro guerrilla forces in

* At the time that these reconnaissance requirements were being discussed, the operational plan still called for the D-Day Air Strike.

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Cuba. A 13 August 1960 memorandum from Chief, WH/4 to DPD is one of the most interesting documents that has been surfaced in the course of preparing the History of the Bay of Pigs Operation. Jake Esterline made a casual reference to the document during the course of an Oral History interview, but he recalled that the memorandum outlined the anti-Castro program as initially conceived -- not as it ultimately failed. For this reason, there are a number of points the reader might consider apropos of the plans finally put into operation.

Among its key features the document called for the initiation of air support operations against Cuba to begin between August and 15 November 1960. One paragraph of this memorandum read as follows:

Aircraft requirements are predicted on mounting the air and maritime assault for a base or bases within 450 statute mile radius of targets in Cuba. Base to target distances in excess of this criteria are unrealistic and unsupported from continuing air and maritime operations utilizing World War II vintage air and sea support, on a scale compatible with nonattributability to the US Government. 100/

In the discussion of air suppression operations which were scheduled to begin in November 1960, the

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destruction of the Castro Air Force on D-Day was to be achieved by attacks on eight principal airfields; and, in addition, D-Day air strikes also were scheduled for non-military bases with the intent to cripple the mobile reserves in the barracks and to destroy materiel. 101/

Discussing air cover operations during the assault phase, the following paragraph appears:

Provision for fighter escort for air assault forces, air cover of amphibious force, and on-call close air support of ground operational force in all surface operations encompassing approximately 100 square miles of area. Estimated aircraft requirement two fighters on station during daylight hours. 102/

Further examination of this document indicates that there were to be nine apparently small air-maritime infiltrations in the period between August and 15 November 1960; and on D-Day the basic assault was to be a 170 man combat assault force airlifted into Cuba, carrying crew served weapons, mortars, recoilless rifles, small arms, bazookas, and demolitions. To back up the initial strike force, there was to be another 170 man contingency force which "subsequent to delivery of strike force on an on-call basis, for execution within 6 hours of return from first airlift." 103/

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This was the guerrilla warfare plan which Jake Esterline thought might be mounted against Castro's forces. Had this plan been followed, air operations could have been launched only from the Yucatan peninsula or the Continental United States. The only other Caribbean areas that would fit within the air range indicated in the referenced memorandum would have been the Bahama Islands and the Cayman Islands; and Montego Bay in Jamaica would have been at the extreme range for attacks on Havana. Eglin Air Force Base, too, would have been ruled out as the site for a launch from the Continental United States. Also, in terms of the air operation, the extension of the distance between the operational base and the target country ruled out the possibility of using light aircraft for reconnaissance between the ground forces and the air force, and it also eliminated the possibility of using the light aircraft to spot targets so that guerrilla units could take out such targets themselves.

Through early September at least, a 500 mile maximum radius between operational base and target was still apparently the rule. Similarly, the use of USAF/USN airfields and Caribbean possessions of the

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British apparently had not been completely ruled out as of mid October 1960 -- at least Jack Hawkins and Jake Esterline still had thoughts about such facilities. 104/

Frank Egan, Chief of ground forces training for JMATE also made a case for combining the use of bases in the Bahamas and in Florida for tactical air, air transport, and maritime operations. In mid-September 1960, the Acting Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, went so far as to say of the Egan proposals:

While these recommendations have not yet received policy approval, it is felt that operational requirements will dictate approval essentially as recommended, and that this paper combined with anticipated air and paramilitary ground material [*sic*] requirements (Attachments 2 and 3), will enable you to begin the development of base and transportation support requirements. 105/

As it turned out, Egan's recommendations were not approved for the use of either the Bahamas or CONUS as the site for operational strike bases.

In the lengthy memorandum in which he summarized the nature of the combined Air/Maritime guerrilla attack on Cuba, Egan came up with one estimate illustrating a problem that plagued DPD throughout the duration of JMATE -- that the "air experts" on the WH/4 staff would

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make suggestions about air operations which had no necessary relation to the facts. In commenting on the enemy capability to interdict or deny JMATE the use of the Florida and British airbases, Egan stated:

By air attack the Government of Cuba's current capability to mount air strike operations of any magnitude against JMARC bases is considered to be minimal. GOC, however, does possess the capability to conduct small scale air attacks (1-2 planes) utilizing B-26 aircraft. Major limitation to this capability is the current lack of politically reliable GOC flying crews. 106/

The point, of course, which Egan overlooked was that Castro did have the T-33's and Sea Furies which could reach the bases which might be established in either the Bahamas or in the southern part of Florida. The FAR was to be the primary target of much of the photo reconnaissance that has just been mentioned. The August 1960 USAF report identified the various types and numbers of aircraft, including an estimate that among others there were some 30-odd combat types including B-26's, Sea Furies, and T-33's. Of these USAF intelligence estimated that there were 12 B-26's, 6-8 Sea Furies, and 4 T-33's, which might be used for

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reconnaissance or light bombing missions. 107/* But the report claimed that there was at that time a shortage of pilots available for these aircraft and in fact, stated:

The Cuban Rebel Air Force (CRAF) continues to be a highly disorganized force, with very little operational capability. The arrest of some 20 CRAF officers in May stripped the Air Force of its most qualified pilots, including nine that were jet-qualified. ... Although the Cuban Naval Air (CNA) was abolished and integrated with the CRAF, this will not increase the CRAF's capability. Thirteen (13) naval pilots, who were trained at Pensacola during the past seven years were told that because of this training and their orientation, they were no longer part of the armed forces ... Total personnel strength of the CRAF remains unknown. After the arrest in May of some 20 CRAF officers and some 20 enlisted men, the CRAF reportedly had remaining, 4 USAF jet qualified pilots, an unknown number of assimilated transport pilots from Cubana Civil Airlines, and CRAF qualified B-26, transport, and light aircraft pilots. 109/

The canard that Cuban airmen would prove to be an unreliable and undependable factor in any air operations that Castro might mount made little or no

* A report by an ad hoc USIB Committee showed the 1960 inventory for FAR as 14 Sea Furies, 13 B-26's, and 7 T-33's. It also showed 6 "TBM-38." Presumably this was a typographical error for TBM-3S, an aircraft which, had it been operational, would have been of great concern to JMATE planners because of the threat it represented to shipping. 108/

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impression on the principals who were responsible for planning the air operations -- Beerli, Gaines, and Thorsrud clearly were concerned about FAR. In fact, George Gaines is on the record as having said:

We did not have to be told that one aircraft in the air would do us a great deal of damage; and for that reason, our understanding of the operations plan was *that there would be no landing on the island until we had destroyed all air-to-ground and air-to-air capability of the Government of Cuba aircraft.* 111/*

and Stan Beerli noted:

We had U-2 coverage ... and Art Lundahl and his people were giving us detailed readout of where everything was ... especially in terms of what had to be done to knock out the Cuban Air Force. 112/**

It might be well at this point to mention that subsequent to the close out of JMATE, there was speculation that the Air Operations people failed to consider the Castro T-33's as the serious threat that they proved to be. These aircraft had been identified in the Castro inventory in the August 1960 memorandum

* Emphasis by writer.

** Thorsrud also noted that they had U-2 photographs of every serviceable aircraft on the island. 113/

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from USAF intelligence.* Before the end of the year, it was known that the T-33 jets were armed with two .50 caliber machine guns; and, in addition, on the last day of 1960, one source had reported that FAR was in the process of equipping the T-33's with two additional .50 caliber guns. 115**

The question of knowledgeability about the armament or the lack of armament on the Castro T-33's was a subject of some misunderstanding during the Taylor Committee investigations ordered by President Kennedy following the failure at the Bay of Pigs. Col. Stanley Beerli, in testifying before the group, said that the FAR B-26's were the primary concern of the JMATE planners and that the capability of the T-33's had been underestimated because it was believed that they were unarmed. 116/ In discussing the subject with the author, Gar Thorsrud, Chief of Air Operations at the time of the invasion, however, pointed out that there

* As nearly as can be discovered from the records, however, nothing in particular was said about the USAF's statement that they had reports that the T-33's had been designated an interceptor role in FAR. 114/

** No such armament was installed at the time of the invasion.

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was no question in the minds of the people closest to the Air Operations that the T-33's were armed. The question was one of how many .50 caliber machine guns they were mounting -- not that they were unarmed. 117/ George Gaines excused Col. Beerli for not knowing the seriousness with which the Task Force regarded the T-33's because Col. Beerli wasn't actually as close to the air operations details as he (Gaines). Being dependent on briefings for information, Beerli may have been misinformed, or uninformed, about the armament of the T-33's. In any event, Gaines pointed out that "anything that flew with a gun was important to us." 118/*

* Even on questioning Gar Thorsrud, 15 years after the event, one could sense the degree of resentment -- understandably so -- at being asked if the air operations people really did appreciate the T-33, for by no stretch of the imagination could Thorsrud, the Air National Guard pilots, and the contract American fliers be considered novices in combat air operations. Thorsrud also emphasized the fact that the Brigade's Cuban pilots understood what they were going to be up against in flying B-26's into air space protected by the T-33's. Thorsrud was far more willing to elaborate about some of the details of the combat characteristics of B-26's vs. T-33's than he had been when the opportunity was presented to him for such discussion in the course of the Taylor Committee investigation.

In response to a Committee member's question of "Were you surprised at the effectiveness of the T-33's"? Thorsrud's terse answer was: "I've flown T-33's -- they're a good airplane. We weren't surprised at
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With the destruction of FAR aircraft as the principal objective of air operations, the discussions through the late fall of 1960 and early winter of 1961 focused on the number of air strikes which would be permitted vs. the number which were necessary and the order of target priority. By the end of 1960, one of the problems appears to have been over management of Project JMATE. Air operations questions were being discussed in the Special Group and, in addition, Tracy Barnes, the A/DDP/A, was taking a more than active interest in air plans. In mid-December, a Barnes memorandum to Chief, WH/4 strongly recommended that a program of three days of fairly intensive air strikes, then under consideration, be dropped because it would be objected to by Livingston Merchant of the Department of State, among others. Merchant, according

their capabilities once they were airborne." 119/ Chief, Project JMATE, Jake Esterline, also was extremely concerned about the possibilities of jet aircraft being employed against the Brigade's B-26's. In the case of Esterline, the fear was that MIG-15's were going to be introduced into Cuba before the Brigade conducted its operation. It was known, for example, that Cuban pilots were training in MIG's in Czechoslovakia. Although Esterline and some others have suggested that there actually were crated MIG's in Cuba at the time of the Bay of Pigs operation, the author has been unable to confirm this. 120/

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to Barnes, would object because such intensive attacks would clearly indicate that the US was behind the operation and then the Cubans could make a case in the UN which would be difficult for the US representatives to handle. Barnes went on to suggest that:

All of us try to eliminate important opposition whether air or land by all possible means other than air strikes. Various types of sabotage are, of course, obvious alternatives. If the Cuban air strength remains as deficient as it now appears to be and if some sabotage operations can be effected, it would seem that air strikes in support of the landing could be restricted to a small number of planes directed at relatively few targets and making their attack early on the morning of the landing. By relatively few planes, I have in mind, a maximum of three. 121/

Barnes believed that the small number of aircraft would provide a rationale for blaming the attacks on the FRD -- that the FRD could have financed a small number of aircraft, but they could not possibly finance the large number of B-26's being acquired in the JMATE inventory.

In his 28 December 1960 response to Barnes's memorandum, Jake Esterline conceded that it was infeasible to expect a two-week period of air strikes prior to the landing; and Esterline said that neither he nor

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Col. Hawkins had seriously considered that possibility. Chief, WH/4 did stress the fact that a three day period of intensive air strikes could be a critical factor in the success of plans against Castro. He did, however, recognize that there was a political problem for the US Government in continuing the air strikes over this length of time, and he went on to suggest:

Recognizing, however, the difficult political problem this creates for the government community, an acceptable compromise *would be D-Day minus one*. This compromise is somewhat risky as new information coming in from controlled and sensitive sources indicates a formidable array of retaliatory power being pulled together by CASTRO. *Nevertheless, we believe we can live with this compromise if the D-Day minus one strike is made in sufficient strength to ensure negation of the Cuban capability*. I might add that this concept was discussed at some length with Ambassador Wilhauer, who seemed to think he could live with it in his dealings with the Special Group. 122/*

Barnes apparently was indefatigable, for on the same day that Esterline was addressing the above

* Emphasis by author. This reference to the possibility of a pre D-Day air strike -- D minus 1 -- as acceptable to Chief, WH/4 is important in a later part of the story of air operations. This is the earliest positive reference that the author found in the record.

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memorandum to him, he, in turn, was addressing to Esterline -- again -- the question of the number of air strikes or alternatives to air strikes. As he had done earlier in the month, Barnes re-raised as a possible alternative the elimination of air strikes completely. Barnes also suggested the possibility of supporting an enclave on Cuban territory "but not pushing forward with aggressive air attacks." Just how this enclave was to be defended against Castro's forces without strong air support was left unclear. 123/

General Cabell, the DDCI, also got involved in the question of strikes, when on 7 February 1961, he issued some "injunctions" (apparently to Jake Esterline for Esterline had a memorandum for record) listing several items, the last one of the list reading as follows:

Re the D-1 effort, opposition in Defense [DOD] to this was expressed and the Director was inclined to agree. Gen. Cabell said he would hold firm on the concept that D minus 1 was necessary, but that his compromise position with the Director would be that strikes on D minus 1 would not take place before the afternoon

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of said day, extending into the morning
of the attack. 124/*

* To the author's knowledge, this position was never introduced nor defended by Gen. Cabell when push came to shove on the critical issues of follow on strikes to D minus 2 and cancellation of the D-Day strike. It is interesting to note, too, that if the language of Esterline's memorandum is correct, then it was apparently anticipated that there would be strikes (plural) rather than any single strike.

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Part II

Acquisition and Training of Air Crews

A. Basic Plan for Flight Training

The problem of the acquisition of aircraft for the anti-Castro operations was discussed earlier in this volume. This section will concern itself with the recruitment and training of pilots to fly those aircraft, and the initiation of overflight operations. The basic program for training of anti-Castro pilots is set forth in a document which probably originated in July or early August of 1960. It was prepared by DPD with Jake Esterline's concurrence. The Air Support Annex I (Eye) to Paramilitary Operations Plan #1 (Operations Plan 60, AD-5), set forth its initial mission as follows:

A. To conduct tactical air training, designed to produce 12-15 combat qualified pilots in B-26 aircraft no later than 1 November 1960.

B. To conduct air training designed to produce 8-10 C-46 transport pilots as soon as practicable. 1/

In terms of its operational responsibility, the plan went on to say:

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The development of a controllable, deniable air strike force has been levied on QKDAWN, in support of PM Plan #1 of JMARC. The requirement calls for a deterrent force, capable of neutralizing various operational targets such as shipping, docking facilities, economic stockpiles, and, in general, harassment of the target area regime to include marginal close order support to the extent of the aircraft's capability. A task force capable of six month's sustained operation is planned. 2/*

As the nature of the over-all anti-Castro program evolved away from the guerrilla warfare concept through the early fall of 1960, so, too, would the air operations concept change from one of harassment to one of tactical targeting. The basic programs set forth in this initial plan for the training and development of the anti-Castro Air Force would, in large part, continue to be the policies followed at JMADD, the air training base at Retalhuleu, Guatemala. Among the many details spelled out in the plan, some of the following are important in terms of their impact on the ongoing air training operation. 3/

1. The definition of the responsibilities of the Chief of Air Training at JMADD was spelled out,

* The reader might note that in the above statement of utilization of the deterrent force, no mention is made of an attack on Castro's Air Force.

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not only in terms of flight proficiency of the B-26 and C-46 pilots, but also for establishing liaison in accordance with procedures established by [redacted] [redacted] in Guatemala -- a point which would provide some differences of opinion through the months of training ahead.

2. The responsibility for administration of the JMADD Base, particularly the responsibilities of the administrative officer were clearly spelled out to indicate that this individual would be a WH appointee responsible for the personnel services and housekeeping of the base facilities, whereas the Chief of Air Training would be responsible for personnel, aircraft, and services involved in the air operations; and, again, this point provided some differences of opinion.

3. All times were to be reported in Greenwich Meridian Time -- a requirement which, at the last possible point for turning the invasion around or salvaging some of the Brigade, was misinterpreted, ignored, or lost in the shuffle of operational pressures and contributed to the tragic end of air operations over Cuba in April 1961.

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4. Some specifics were also spelled out for [redacted] including the broad responsibility "to insure that KUBARK regulations pertaining to cover, security, travel, finance, logistics, and others are observed." This instruction proved broad enough to provide for some points of disagreement between [redacted] and the DPD representatives ^{at} ~~and~~ JMADD.

5. HBILKA (Civil Air Transport) was charged in the original Air Operations Plan with providing two B-26 instructor pilots, a maintenance supervisor for B-26's, and responsibility to provide C-46 aircraft as required.

6. The Photo Interpretation Center was charged, among other things, with establishing a PI facility at JMASH "for post-strike analysis."* This requirement raises interesting questions: why establish a PI facility in Miami rather than at the strike operations base? or why at JMASH rather than at Headquarters? This seems to have been an unnecessary step in the process of getting post-strike photography analyzed and the results back to the field operation. The

* JMASH -- Forward Operations Base, Miami.

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annex on Logistic Support spelled out in great detail the procedures that would be followed for the acquisition and supply of materiel (and materials) necessary to the air training operation, sharply defining the respective roles of JMATE and JMCLEAR in such acquisitions.

OPS Plan #60 AD-5 also provided for the movement of the two Air National Guard dual-controlled B-26's black to JMADD, suggesting that HBILKA or KWCANINE pilots be utilized to make the transfer. It was hoped that the planes could be returned to the Air National Guard within 30 days, but it did provide that they should be held until replacement aircraft were on hand. Those B-26's which were to be refurbished by the USAF were also to be flown black out of the US to JMADD, and the expectation was that the HBILKA crews would be utilized to the greatest degree possible for such ferrying flights. Interestingly enough, sterilization of the ANG B-26's at Eglin was scheduled to be completed within a period of six days following arrival of the aircraft. The first four B-26's being acquired from the USAF, however, were apparently going to require six weeks. 4/

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For the B-26 pilots, Plan 60 AD-5 provided 20 hours of ground school and a total of 20 sorties with 51 hours of flying time during a minimum of 15 days from the first flight. In addition to the normal standards which might be expected of any flight training program, such as thorough briefings, provisions for rest and meals, flight patterns away from populated areas, record keeping, etc., there were one or two specific items of special interest. Tower operators were to be encouraged to speak in their native tongue (Spanish), and for all flights that were scheduled for more than three hours duration, or when live ammunition was being carried, an instructor pilot (an American) had to be a participant in the flight. In view of some problems which would subsequently be surfaced, it also is interesting to note that:

PBPRIME military interest in this operation must not be compromised. Political discussions between trainees and PBPRIME personnel will not be tolerated. All efforts will be made to assure harmonious conditions and high morale. 5/

The training of C-46 pilots apparently would present less difficulty than B-26 training because it would be primarily a matter of transition and

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training in night navigation. To get C-46 pilots combat-ready would require only five sorties with a total flight time of 21 hours and a minimum elapsed time of seven days; and, additionally, it was provided that the training requirements could be satisfied during the course of local cargo runs between JMADD and the San Jose, Guatemala, airfield. 6/ There was no provision included in Operational Plan 60 AD-5 for the training or transition of C-54 pilots or flight crew.

B. Trainers and Trainees

As already mentioned, pilots from Eglin Air Force Base, HBILKA pilots from the Agency's operations in the Far East, and Air National Guard pilots provided the pool of expertise which would train the Cuban air crews. The first contacts with the ANG were made in Washington, D.C. through Maj. Gen. Winston P. Wilson, Deputy Chief, National Guard Bureau. In all there were nearly 130 members of Air National Guard units, or individuals who were affiliated with -- or closely known by members of Air National Guard units -- who signed on as contract employees of

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Project JMATE and participated in the air training activity as flight instructors or as ground and maintenance personnel -- a cadre without which the Brigade Air Force never could have gotten off the ground. Albert C. Persons, one of the transport pilots from this group, has given a good first hand account of the recruitment process involved in obtaining the services of transport pilots out of the Alabama Air National Guard. 7/

In addition to the Air National Guard personnel, the records show that two United States Forest Service licensed riggers and PDO's served under contract at the TIDE/MADD complexes. James M. Allen was at both MADD and TIDE, and it appears that Fred A. Barnowsky might also have been at one or both of the overseas bases. 8/ Recruitment of Air National Guard and affiliated personnel began as early as August 1960, and continued through the period of March of 1961. 9/*

* Although there is no firm evidence that they participated directly in the actual flight training of the Cuban crews, a number of [] pilots (OSTIARIES) also contributed significantly to the success of air operations. When their original program phased out in the fall of 1959, they had been moved from [] to [] and when JMATE got under way, they served as air crews flying passengers and materiel between the Florida bases and Guatemala. 10/

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It might be emphasized, too, that from the initial Agency contact with Gen. Wilson in Washington the Agency's contacts with the state ANG units were maintained with CO's of General rank.

Once having insured that adequate trainers and senior maintenance personnel would be available, the next step for JMATE was to recruit Cubans for potential service as pilots and air crewmen. One of the first suggestions for a cadre of Cuban pilots originated with Adm. Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By mid-August Burke raised the question of whether the dozen Cubans who had recently completed flight training at Pensacola had been considered as candidates for the anti-Castro movement air force. Burke was of the opinion that these pilot trainees were still in the US. Unfortunately, however, all of the pilots had completed their training before 30 June 1960, and all of them had returned to Cuba -- where they were all deprived of their commissions in the Cuban Armed Forces and grounded! Their training in the United States, of course, being the reason for considering them to be of doubtful loyalty. 11/

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Recruitment of Cuban aircrews was the responsibility of the FRD in the Miami area. Candidates given first consideration were those refugees who had been members of the Air Force, Cubana Air Lines personnel, private pilots, and former armed services personnel. Some pilots had exited Cuba without any problem; but others, such as Eduardo (Eddy) Ferrer who commandeered a Cubana DC-3 at gun point and landed it in Miami, had come out the hard way. 12/ Once the contact was made through FRD channels, then the Agency's representatives got into the act of selecting those who would go into the air training program. In discussing the recruitment business, Billy B. Campbell, who initiated the air training program at JMADD, stated that as early as May 1960:

I was assigned another name (Billy Carpenter) and was asked to go down to Miami and recruit the initial Cubans for the air training effort. Our goal then was to recruit pilots, mechanics, or any personnel that we thought were needed in association with setting up the airbase and initiating training. I met a Navy Lt. Commander and we set up in a motel in Coral Gables and interviewed and recruited the first 75 or 76 pilots, engineers, and mechanics ...

We were told where to go, and people would be fed to us ... We almost blew

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the whole thing the first day of recruiting because the Agency had failed to pay the rent on the motel. The landlady came over to the motel -- it wasn't a motel as such, it was little houses in a cluster -- and she caught us recruiting some of the initial Cuban pilots. We had to make sure that she was paid so that we could continue our job ...

The first operation was to train six B-26 crews, and either two or four C-46 crews, and two C-54 crews ... and I think our target date on that was October 1 [1960] or somewhere in that area. We met our first target date. Then we were given a new target date in November to train more crews. 13/

Eduardo Ferrer, one of the Cubans who was recruited to be a transport pilot, and the individual who had flown a Cubana airliner out at gunpoint, was one of those whom Billy Campbell interviewed. In telling his story, Ferrer emphasized that Campbell's questions were straightforward and were concerned with Ferrer's qualifications as a pilot. From Campbell, Ferrer and the other Cubans were then passed on for the security, medical, psychological, and psychiatric interviews. Except for the initial interrogation concerning their qualifications as fliers, the Cubans took an extremely dim view of the five days of the interrogation to which they were subjected. In reporting on his LCFLUTTER examination, Ferrer found

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that the interrogator appeared to be interested in improving or acquiring a vocabulary of Spanish idioms. Stating that he had no homosexual proclivities, Ferrer used the word *maricón*, which the interrogator immediately picked up, repeating it several times, as Ferrer said, "con un horrible acento." 14/

The group of Cuban pilots found the questions not only repititious, but also farcical. One of the pilot group, in fact, claimed that he had answered most of the written questions with obscenities, rather than telling the truth suggesting that these were no basis on which to judge qualifications of the individuals concerned.*

* Fausto Gomez, the pilot in question, reportedly said:

--- Si yo voy a los camamentos dependiendo de estas pruebas, todo esto es una farsa, porque cuando me cansé de escribir contesté las preguntas con *bull shit ... go to hell ... fuck you ... y así ...*

(If my going to camp depends on these proofs, it's all a farce because when I was tired of writing I answered the questions with "bullshit ... go to hell ... fuck you.") 15/

According to Gar Thorsrud, Gomez's responses and attitude put him at the bottom of the list of candidates for flight training. Thorsrud, however, told the author that Gomez, a former smuggler in the Cuban and Caribbean area, proved to be a competent and loyal pilot. At one point, according to Thorsrud, Gomez's intimate knowledge of the coastal areas paid off in one of the few successful air drops to anti-Castro dissidents in Cuba. 15a/

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C. JMADD: Air Training Base, Retalhuleu, Guatemala

The initial recruitment efforts for air crews began in August 1960, and by 23 September the air training base, with the full cooperation of the Government of Guatemala, had been established at Retalhuleu, in the western part of Guatemala, approximately 40 kilometers NW of the Pacific Coast city of Champerico.* By 23 September Cuban personnel at the base numbered 39 pilots, 2 navigators, 18 mechanics, a chaplain, and a doctor. In addition, 8 PDO's, 2 radio operators, and a number of guards had been recruited from the Cuban infantry contingent training at Finca Helvetia (JMTRAV) and were undergoing training at JMADD -- the crypt assigned to the air base. The US contingent at JMADD consisted of 9 staff, a contract cook, 2 contract PDO's, 6 HBILKA, 3 ANG, a USAF sergeant, and a USAF private who also was a cook.** 16/ When the base began operations, it was made quite clear to all personnel -- Cuban and US -- that Major Billy B. Campbell would be

* See Frontispiece.

** The Table of Organization planned for JMADD in September 1960 is shown in Chart 2 following page 107.

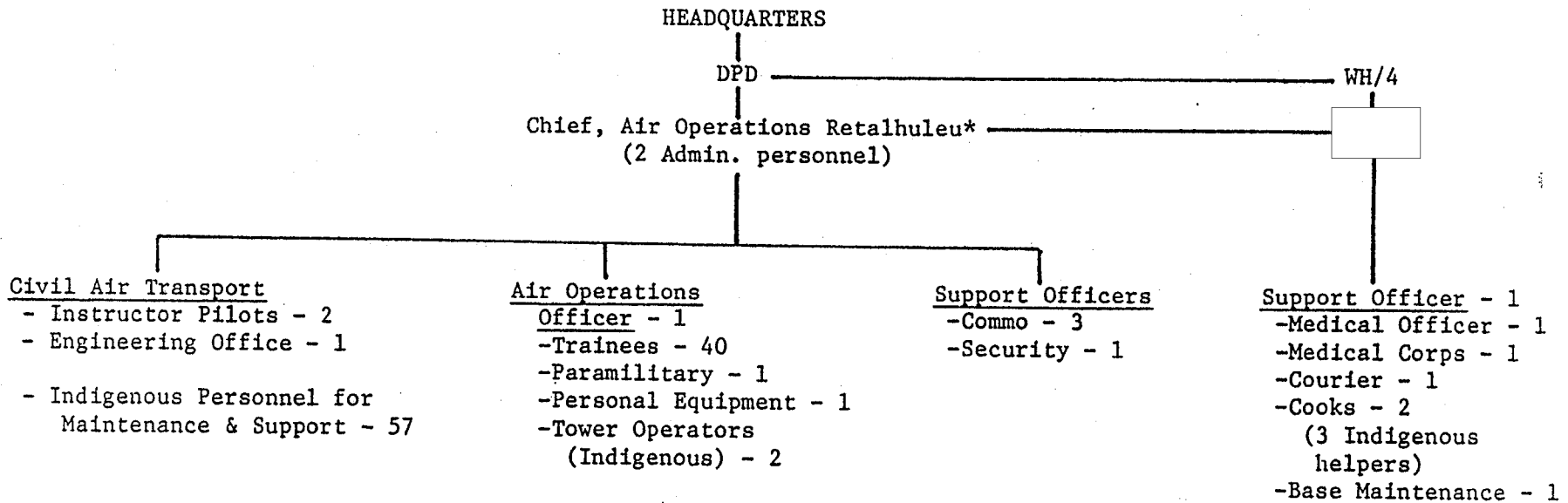
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CHART 2

TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

Air Training Base
Retalhuleu, Guatemala
September 1960



* Aircraft Inventory: 4 Combat B-26's,
2 Dual Controlled B-26's, 6 C-46's

Source: Air Support Annex to
WH/4's Paramilitary Operations
Plan No. 1 (Op. Plan
60 AD-5) 15 September 1960

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fully responsible for air operations at MADD -- including both incoming and outgoing flights; and the line of command from Campbell to Headquarters was reinforced by Headquarters communications at subsequent intervals prior to Campbell's departure in 1961. 16a/ The bulk of this group had come out of Opalocka black; and some like Eddy Ferrer, had been aboard C-54's flown by the OSTIARIES.

Major Campbell and others who were associated with these initial air force trainees were very high in their praise of the qualifications of the group. Many of the recruits had been Cuban military or commercial pilots. The ex-military types were more or less familiar with the B-26, and the commercial group, with both C-46's and/or C-54's. Campbell emphasized that the pilot instructors for this group were of extremely high caliber. Throughout the course of Project JMATE [redacted] at Eglin was subject to constant pressures from all sides, and in the very early days:

We had to maintain our aircraft at Eglin, we had to assist in Guatemala, and we had an operation going commercially down in Ft. Lauderdale with [redacted] [redacted] training crews there. We were

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pretty thin and we needed help. Initially, because the target dates that we had were so early and then they kept changing on us. 17/*

Eduardo Ferrer was in the first group of Cuban pilot trainees to be flown from Opalocka to San Jose, Guatemala.** From San Jose, they were transported by bus to a coffee plantation near the town of Retalhuleu, a drive of some four and a half hours from San Jose. The coffee plantation, Finca Helvetia, was owned by

* 

The Ft. Lauderdale operation to which Campbell referred was run under cover of . The operation was set up for transitioning ANG and contract crews from C-54 operations. The program is discussed in some detail in Persons's book, *Bay of Pigs*. 18/

** As shown on the map (see Frontispiece) flights from CONUS to either Guatemalan or Nicaraguan bases were instructed to avoid overflights of third countries.


On return flights to the US, Thorsrud said many flights came in at heights of 25 feet to avoid Air Defense Command radar and then regained altitude to check with the Miami control tower. 18a/

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Roberto Alejos.* Ferrer reported that there were 44 pilots included in the first group. Arriving in Guatemala in late August 1960 they were joined on 9 September by 14 additional pilot trainees -- bringing the total number to 58. 19** They spent roughly two weeks living in very primitive conditions in a coffee warehouse at Finca Helvetia while waiting for completion of the BOQ and other facilities at Retalhuelu.*** The infantry Brigade was being trained at JMTRAV base about 10 miles away from Helvetia -- also on property owned by Robert Alejos.

* Alejos was a confidante of President Ydigoras and the brother of the Guatemalan Ambassador to the United States.

** The only explanation for the difference in the reported number of Cuban pilot trainees between the 58 indicated by Ferrer and the 39 mentioned previously in the JMADD cable of 23 September 1960 is that Ferrer must have included ground crew and maintenance personnel in his pilot total.

*** Some discussion of the construction of the air base facilities at Retalhuelu appears in Volume II of this history. A full description of the construction effort is contained in Support Services Historical Series OL-11, *Agency Engineering Activity, 1947-66*, Feb 72, Vol. I, pp. 53-67, Vol. II, pp. 131-193. S. For photos of JMADD, see Figures 1-23, pp. 455-478 of this volume. Eduardo Ferrer has some interesting vignettes of daily life of the trainees at both Helvetia and MADD in *Operación Puma*, pp. 50-73.

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When informed by one of the North American trainers that JMADD would soon be ready for occupancy, Ferrer claimed that the Cubans were told that they would be trained in C-46's, C-54's, and B-26's, and that fighter aircraft, either P-51 Mustangs or F-4U Corsairs, would also be assigned. Hearing that the move to JMADD was imminent, the Brigade Air Force proceeded to set up a formal organization of the Air Group -- evidence of the Cubans' concern for titles and status. This problem would plague both the air and the infantry organization throughout the course of the operation JMATE. The pilot trainees were assigned squadrons, squadrons being designated on the basis of the previous experience of the Cuban pilots. 20/*

* The initial breakdown and responsibilities as shown by Ferrer was as follows:

Adjutant Mario ZUNIGA;
Chief of Operations - Luis Cosme
Deputy Chief of Operations - Rene Garcia
Chief of Supply - Mario Tellechea
Chief of Security - Eduardo Ferrer
Chief of the C-54 Squadron - O. Alvarez Builla
Dep. Chief of C-54 Squadron - Jose Perez Menendez
Chief of C-46 Squadron - Juan Perez
Deputy Chief of C-46 Squadron - Pedro Etchegoyen
Chief, B-26 Bombers - Jose A. Crespo
Deputy Chief, B-26 - Joaquin Varela
Chief, Personnel - Leonardo Seda
Chief, Radio Section - Cesar Luaices

Ferrer noted that he also was designated as a Captain in the C-54 squadron. 21/

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Aside from differences because of political beliefs, Ferrer also was quite conscious of the differences that developed between those who were ex-military fliers and those who had served as civilian pilots. He reported that when it was the turn of the ex-military group to be responsible for preparing and serving meals, there was a rigorous drill that was S.O.P. -- "with the tables organized in perfect formation, the bottles of catsup, sugar bowls, and salt shakers equally spaced, and in reach of everyone." 22/

The ex-naval officers were pointed to as being the most meticulous and concerned with form. One of the officers, in fact, reportedly posted a notice in the dining area reading:

This mess has been served by members of the Navy. Conduct yourself like a gentleman and an officer. 23/

Following the move to JMADD, Ferrer pointed out that the training got under way as they had been told some time before, and he emphasized that the training for the C-46 and the C-54 pilots was, in fact, a re-training exercise rather than an initiation of training to pilots of those aircraft. The basic need for the transport pilots was "to learn the procedures of

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the USAF." 24/ Almost immediately however, there began to be some doubt in the minds of the American instructors, as to whether there was need for something more than retraining. Before the end of September, Manuel Gonzales, one of the most experienced of the Cuban C-46 pilots, made such a rough landing that he damaged the landing gear in his aircraft and in the process of attempting to regain control, herniated his diaphragm, and was lost from the program. 25/

In addition to the loss of this C-46, two C-54's flown by the Cubans also were lost before the end of September. One instance was a real comedy of errors. A C-54, under the command of Orlando Alvarez Builla, the commander of the C-54 Squadron, with an experienced co-pilot, navigator, and radio operator -- the cockpit crew claimed a total of roughly 45,000 hours of flying experience -- took off to make a supply drop near the city of Trinidad in the Escambray area of Cuba. Unfortunately, they dropped their load on a power plant. After a series of misadventures, they had to make an emergency landing in Mexico, near Comitán. The aircraft was confiscated by the Government of Mexico, and the crew's release was obtained only through the

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intercession of Col. Antonio Batres, Chief of the Guatemalan Air Force and the personal pilot of President Ydigoras Fuentes. 26/

In the second instance, a C-54 with a Cuban pilot and a North American instructor was coming through the mountains when one of the wings touched an outcropping and tore a third of the wing off. The consequence was a forced landing on the beach near Champerico. Neither the pilot nor the co-pilot were injured, but a Cuban pilot who was on board as an observer suffered a wound and had to be evacuated to a hospital in the United States. 26a/ Needless to say that North American trainers took a rather dim view of these accidents.

The episode in Mexico, in particular, caused considerable consternation. Major Campbell, who was in charge of the flight training operations, made the following comment:

We set up operations ... and prepared the first air crews to fly resupply missions into Cuba. There must be about 7 or 8 hours of tape on the first mission ... We lost that first airplane. Stan Beerli was with me down there [Guatemala], and we both sat up all night long waiting for the bird to come back. This is the one where the air crew dropped a 12,000 lb.

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supply of cargo on top of a power station, mistaking the lights on the power station for our ground support team. It had a side note too ... the air crew in command of that airplane had about 45,000 pilot hours, and they got lost coming back and landed up near Comitán in Mexico. We found the airplane before the Mexicans did, and were refused permission to go in and pick it up. I say, "we" ... one of the officers of the Guatemalan Air Force and Mr. Alejos, I believe, and probably Connie Seigrist were included. They flew to Comitán and landed and came back and said we could pick up the airplane because the air crew had mismanaged their fuel. The airplane had fuel in it, and it could have been taken off and flown back to JMADD. 27/

The series of mishaps in the early weeks of the air training program, initiated a period of declining relations between the Cubans and their American instructors -- the Americans tending to regard the Cuban capabilities with some considerable suspicion. From the early fall of 1960 through the initiation of overflight operations there were constant requests from the field for authorization to use the American pilots in both the transport and in combat training operations. Ferrer, himself, pointed out in considerable detail that there was a negative impact on the American trainers as the result of these early foulups. In this context, too, Ferrer also charged that the North

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Americans consistently looked down on the Cubans. The separation of club facilities, the existence of areas which were closed to the Cuban pilots, and constant patronizing by the North Americans antagonized the Cubans. There is no question that some of the Americans undoubtedly felt superior to the Cuban trainees; but by the same token, JMATE personnel were much more concerned with the security and cover aspects of the operation in which they were involved than the Cubans ever were.

In his own story, Ferrer said that on several occasions he demonstrated that the Cubans, flying the C-46's and C-54's, were competent to do the tasks assigned; and in one instance, he was responsible for carrying out some tests of navigational skills which he claims were performed to the full satisfaction of the American instructors. On another occasion in early November 1960, he was responsible for bringing together a crew for an airdrop in the Escambray. There, despite some problems concerning the signal in the drop zone, the mission was carried out exactly as planned -- Ferrer being cautioned, incidentally, by Billy Campbell following the debriefing, not to

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repeat to the other Cuban pilots the problems that had come up concerning the identification of the drop zone. 28/

Success of the November drop, notwithstanding, airdrop operations on the whole were a dismal failure. Of 68 missions between September 1960 and March 1961, only seven of the drops put supplies as intended in the hands of the guerrillas who were operating in various parts of Cuba.

Ferrer took umbrage with the charge that the basic reason for the failure of the air drops was the inability of the air crews to find the proper drop zones, or that they were less than brave in pushing on through difficult situations. This is a subjective matter and some of the American personnel involved in the air operations still believe that some of the Cubans discharged their cargoes into the sea at the first opportunity and spent the time "tooling" around until the fuel gauges indicated that it was time to return to the base.

Regardless of the question of courage or cowardice, Ferrer was entirely justified in his criticism of the failure to provide for direct contact between the air

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operations personnel and the guerrillas who were seeking support through the air drop of materiel. Considering the success of the maritime infil and exfil operations, it does not appear that this would have been as difficult to accomplish as some of the project planners believed.* Jake Esterline, Chief of Project JMATE, put it in the following manner:

I just felt the air crews weren't telling the truth about what they saw or didn't see, and I knew damn well where they were dropping their stuff because our intercepts -- within six hours -- would let us know exactly how many miles away the [Castro] Cubans

* Stan Beerli made the following comments about the airdrops ...

We had a heck of a time trying to determine if we were getting to those spots. There was really no way to know, and we were getting very little feedback ... We weren't really sure if we were really making it and how effective we were. It was always a great concern to us. Then, of course, there were the crews that would come back and report that they had drifted off to the side of the drop point ... I am sure there was a question mark in their [US] minds that maybe there was some collusion among the [Cuban] crews ... But we had nothing to substantiate that except that we understood that the crews were all dedicated to supporting the operation, and so we hoped they were doing the job. 29/

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had picked up the stuff that had been dropped ... and then the messages coming in from the agents on the ground ... these complaints and these bleats about "What happened to the aircraft? Our fires were there ... they went all around us and they did all kinds of things." 30/

As previously mentioned, the Cubans organized their squadrons by types of aircraft and/or tasks; and almost immediately upon moving to MADD signs of political action on the part of the Cuban cadre were apparent. On 21 September 1960, a cable from Miami to the Director, reported that the pilot group at Retalhuleu was threatening to leave the training camp and withdraw from the FRD because their families had reported that the FRD Headquarters were treating them badly and "in an arrogant or condescending manner and that their pride was hurt." The pilots reportedly were dissatisfied because of various administrative difficulties -- principally the screwup in the delivery of mail from home. JMADD personnel, however, made clear that they would tolerate little or no more nonsense from the Cuban group. One suggestion was that those who were threatening "drastic action" be put on bread and water and incarcerated until they straightened out.

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The crisis was averted by the intervention of Roberto Alejos, the arrival of two B-26's, a step-up in the transition training that was already under way using one of the C-54's, and, perhaps most important, the clarity with which the Acting Chief of Base indicated that procedures would be followed as specified or all air training would immediately cease. It was also directed that the Cubans be made responsible under the same FRD military code that was employed at JMTRAV; and if any of the air trainees were unwilling to accept this, they were to be grounded until they changed their minds. 31/

Even as the pilot trainees at MADD were threatening to strike, DPD prepared a memorandum which raised questions concerning disposal of Cuban air crew members under various unfavorable conditions. The questions concerned such items as: refusal of an airman or air crewman to go on a second mission; refusal to go on a first mission, once having learned of an overall plan; and the problem of handling those airmen who fabricated stories to cover mission failures. In addressing himself to solving these kinds of problems, Chief, WH/4 instructed his Chief of counterintelligence

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[redacted] that the problem should be met by increasing case officer competence to the point where they would recognize problem individuals -- those whose morale was low, who lacked motivation, or who were cowards. [redacted] also was urged to make use of any information on the air training program being acquired by a WH/4 penetration agent who had been infiltrated among the Cuban air crews to report on just such problems. Esterline believed that attempts should be made to rehabilitate -- mentally or physically -- aircrew members who had problems; but if such rehabilitation failed, the FRD military tribunal which was in place on the Base should apply its code of military justice. Those who failed to comply were to be committed to the Base brig, pending transfer to a permanent detention facility. 32/*

* More than a month after the DPD memorandum had raised the questions about the handling of the air crews it appears that Col. Gaines, DPD's principal contact with WH/4, was unaware of the fact that there was a controlled penetration agent among the Cuban air trainees. Chief, WH/4/CI had to point out to Col. Gaines that a priority cable outlining the agent's background, reporting on his polygraph tests, and recommending his use as a penetration agent had gone to MADD in August 1960. Because the subject of a penetration agent had come up in connection with problems of security and cover at JMADD,
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American concerns about the Cuban air crews were not misplaced. As Ferrer himself pointed out, even though things seemed to improve through November, once the Cubans had met certain of the tests that had been posed them, a number of the pilots who were discontent asked to be transferred back to Miami. To Ferrer, this was a difficult time; for among the dozen who, as he said, "renounced the privilege of fighting for their country," were the second in command of the Air Force (Leslie Nobregas), the Chief of the C-54 squadron (O. Alvarez Builla), and the Chief of the C-46 squadron (Juan Perez) -- key figures among the Cuban air group. 34/

The loss of these personnel was rather quickly reflected in air operations at JMADD, for a Director cable of 11 December noted "Headquarter's records indicate curtailment flying, training, combat activities. Request clarification and future plans." 35/ MADD was quick to respond to Headquarters questions,

Col. Gaines also was requested to report any such problems to Chief/WH/4/CI. According to DPD's Security Section, the penetration agent was a useless boob who was widely known for what he was -- an informant. 33/

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pointing out that the stand down of "operational training flights" had not affected MADD's "operational capability." Moreover, the air base attributed part of the stand down to completion of the B-26 air training program per Ops Plan 60 AD-5. 36/*

The departure of the 12 pilots from the training program, also meant a restructuring of the Cuban cadre, a position which was supported by the field. A cable to Headquarters, for example, pointed out that the trainees had requested a T/O for an air group showing military rank structure and emphasizing that those who were in training at MADD -- and who might be participating in overflights -- should have first opportunity toward obtaining rank. The Cubans were supported in this position by the field which cabled Headquarters:

 . If trainees permitted to wear rank,
 and realizing they would be cadre for
 the new air force, morale would improve,
 the Cuban commander would have positive

* Even before the partial stand down, MADD had reported that six B-26 pilots had completed their training program, including rocket firing. Noting that there were 93 rockets available at MADD, the message closed with the suggestion "let's go"! 37/

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control of troops, trainees would have more pride in themselves, and, most of all, would believe the FRD is supporting them. 38/*

Headquarters deferred on the question of rank, however, suggesting instead that the continued use of different colored baseball caps and, perhaps, the addition of scarfs would be adequate identification for the different flight groups. A promise was made that some sort of rank designation would eventually be permitted the Cubans. 39a/

Whether and which of the Cuban air trainees would be available was at question throughout the training activity at MADD. Toward the end of March 1961, when COB MADD was suggesting R&R for various of the Cuban

* Ferrer indicated that there was extreme concern among the Cuban trainees about this question of rank at the time of the defection of the dozen men. He pointed out that within the C-46 squadron when he proposed advancing two of the C-46 trainee group, he ran into opposition from Col. Villafana, the Chief of the Air Group, and Luis Cosme. (The latter became the second in command, after the Nobregas defection.) Villafana and Cosme suggested that pilots who were available in the Miami area had more experience and were better qualified for the positions which Ferrer wanted for his squadron trainees. In fact, so serious and violent did the discussion between Cosme and Ferrer become, that it nearly ended up in a shoot-out between two highly emotional Cubans. 39/

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pilots, the cables that went forward to Headquarters stated in very specific terms that "Señor So & So was most trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly," etc., and sure as hell would return if given three days R&R in Miami. Those who had stuck it out through the training program did return from their R&R's, including at least one, Osvaldo Piedra, who lost his life in a B-26 over the Bahia de Cochinos. Some of those who bugged out of the training program, apparently had qualms of conscience -- or at least made inquiries about the possibilities of returning; and it appears that at least one of the defectors did return on 12 or 13 April 1961. Two others, however, "Stalled, then defaulted. Suggest they be forgotten." 40/

Connie Seigrist recalled that in addition to the normal problems and stress of training, the political discussions and differences would occasionally become quite heated. Seigrist has written:

The biggest and most continual problem concerned the dislike for our Cuban Air Commander ... I have forgotten his name [Col. Villafana]. He was the Commander throughout. One of the Cubans explained that it was his (the Commander's) background dating back to Cuba. I was sent (flew a C-46) to Mexico City to persuade some AWOL Cubans to return to MADD. Not

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a single AWOL would return to MADD with me, as they said they would not serve under him. Although, overall I felt then, and now, it was not a serious impact.

I do not remember the exact number of the R&R Cubans who refused to return, but there were a few and [it was] well known by all that they would not return. They packed their belongings at MADD and took [them] with them, not to return. Surprisingly, some that [*sic*] packed out did return. They, (AWOL's) as a rule, were non-producers and were not missed. 41/

Seigrist apparently had an unusually good rapport with the Cuban pilot trainees, including those who bugged out at the end and also those who were contemplating a return from Miami to the air bases. "Simpson" [Seigrist] was the one the Cubans looked to for reassurance should they decide to come back. 42/ In his own words, Seigrist said:

The only thing I kept intact was my pseudo of "Seig Simpson." I believe the Cubans had high respect for me, and I also believe they knew my name, because they had everyone else pegged immediately. But because of their respect, they were not really interested in exposing me. 43/*

* Aside from the fact that he was a top pilot and instructor, that Seigrist flew a B-26 out of MADD in support of the Government of Guatemala at the time of the November 1960 attempted overthrow of Ydigoras Fuentes also added to his favorable reputation among the Cubans. See Volume II of this history, *Participation in the Conduct of Foreign Policy*.

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Life with the Cuban air trainees at JMADD was undoubtedly made even more difficult because few of the North American trainers were fluent in Spanish, even though Gar Thorsrud expressed a more pragmatic approach to the problem: "There was some language problem, but an airplane is an airplane; and they overcame it by physical actions and signs." 44/ Even though most of the other principals involved in air operations also tended to disregard the language barrier as a significant problem insofar as the training went, it is interesting to observe that in December 1960 MADD made a specific request to Headquarters for a Spanish speaking CI representative -- "request made due to increasing possibilities more trainees will try to leave base. In addition, will be asset to security." 45/*

* Eduardo Ferrer, of course, was quite conscious of the lack of ability to communicate with the North Americans who did not speak Spanish. The cable traffic requesting increments of personnel to JMASH, to JMADD, and to JMTIDE reflects a strong interest on the part of the people involved in the day-to-day operations to have assignees available who were fluent in the language. The December request to Headquarters from MADD for someone fluent in Spanish had been preceded by a similar suggestion at the end of October in the course of a meeting called by Lt. Col. George Gaines, Chief, JMCLEAR. Several returnees from JMADD met with [redacted] Chief, WH/4/CI and other
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In an October meeting at Headquarters where, among other items, the question of the Spanish language competence was discussed, it was apparent that there was ongoing friction between DPD and WH/4 representatives -- with each side seeming to want to pass responsibility for the identification of the problem cases to the other. DPD suggested that its Air Commanders should not be responsible for determining the stability of Cuban personnel, and indicated that such decisions should be made prior to sending personnel to JMADD for training. WH/4 representatives, however, were of the opinion that those actually in the field were best able to finger those with personality or other problems that made them unsuited for flight training. Col. Gaines, in fact, vigorously recommended that the whole operation at MADD be closed out, because of the insurmountable security problems and the lack of discipline among

security officers from WH Division (as well as other security officers and personnel from DPD) to discuss various problems at the air base. A recent DPD returnee from JMADD reported that:

Not one American speaks or understands the Spanish language and the Cubans do a great amount of talking on the flight line and the mess hall. It would, therefore, be of significant value to plant an American there who does speak and understand Spanish. 46/

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the Cubans. Gaines even suggested the possibility of moving the training activity to Nicaragua -- limiting the training to the actual number of pilots required to carry out the air strike and the support types who would be a minimum number required to support that strike effort. 47/

Difficulties between administrative and operational personnel at MADD continued from the fall of 1960 through the early winter of 1961 -- the situation being further complicated by the desire of [] [] to play a more active role vis a vis MADD. Toward mid-February 1961, for example, [] asked DPD to appoint a Chief of Air Operations for MADD and to station him permanently at the Base. Because of the numerous shifts and/or rotation of personnel between the airbase and Headquarters, [] was apparently unable to keep track of who was on first. [] cabled Headquarters that "to prevent this type confusion now, and in future, [] will not allow any personnel to depart MADD without his concurrence." 48/

Apparently Headquarters was not too enthralled with the suggestions from [] and a 2 March 1961 cable to MADD indicated that the movement of personnel and

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aircraft would be decided by Headquarters or Eglin and stated specifically that the determination of Agency interests would be decided by Chief, Air Ops, and/or the COB, at MADD. One paragraph of the Headquarters message read:

Order provide positive CIA control one CIA Air Ops Officer, will be kept MADD as Chief all air operations. He will be responsible insuring peculiar CIA requirements accomplished and overall objectives achieved. Deviations will be reported to Headquarters immediately by COB or Chief, Air Ops. 49/

This response was inadequate for Ernie Sparks, who was the off-again-on-again COB from the time of the establishment of MADD throughout the course of that activity. In response to the Headquarters direction just cited Sparks requested:

To avoid confusion MADD due constant rotation air ops personnel, request CLEAR [JMCLEAR] designate by name CIA Air Ops Officer ... FYI MADD has had six changes involving four people acting as Air Ops Chief in past five weeks. 50/*

* It is perhaps understandable in view of the long term association that Sparks had with the somewhat and sometimes mad MADD operation that the following Director cable to Eglin Air Force Base was sent:

Request 100 packages Tums, anti-acid tablets be procured and shipped to MADD via first avail acft. Package should be carried and marked for Santoro [Ernie Sparks] on inner marking. 51/

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A Letter of Instruction to Gar Thorsrud (24 March 1961) eliminated much of the difficulty between COB and Chief, Air Ops at MADD. Thorsrud's letter clearly spelled out his responsibility as Chief, Air Ops, as distinguished from the responsibilities of COB at MADD -- or at TIDE since Thorsrud's LOI also made provision for him to continue as Chief, Air Ops at TIDE when the move to Nicaragua took place. 52/* Even before he actually took over as Chief of Air Operations at JMADD, Thorsrud had been in and out of JMADD and was well acquainted with the training situation there. He recalled that when he first arrived at MADD in January of 1961, the basic training was largely completed, and unlike some of the other problems that had been faced by Billy Campbell -- who had to depart MADD earlier than anticipated because of restrictions imposed on USAF personnel by DOD -- the flight training had been largely completed. Thorsrud stated:

[Morale] wasn't a problem for me, because by the time that I got there, the operation was getting close, and everyone was trying to pull together ... We set up a little bar down there. When I came

* See Appendix 4 for copy of Thorsrud's LOI.

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down there was a kind of a segregation ... of Americans and Cubans and everyone else. I just set up a little beer bar, and when the flying was done, everyone came in and talked together. There was a lot of comment, and some of these more outspoken Cubans said ... "if we are successful and we land ... we are all going to be fighting again, just to see who has got control." They'd tell these stories on themselves, so there were plenty of political factions, but I'm not up to date on what they were. 53/

In addition to the problems of interpersonal communications, communications between the field and Headquarters or between the field bases at MADD and TRAV also caused headaches. Shortly after the Cuban personnel at MADD began to fly operational missions, propaganda drops, and supply drops in December 1960, MADD sent a detailed cable to Headquarters complaining bitterly about two aspects of the communications problem. One complaint concerned the use in operational messages from Headquarters of mission names which were completely unknown and unidentifiable to the field, and as MADD said:

These names are entirely foreign to our operations section. Our only means of identifying any mission is by the assigned mission number. We would be aided immensely, if at the time a mission number was assigned an operation, your messages would also identify any previous reference that had been made to the operation by name only. 54/

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Further in this same cable, it was pointed out to Headquarters that various of their messages concerning drop zone times or control times had been received without identifying the time zone. MADD reported:

It was apparent that the time was not ZULU. Therefore, it was necessary to reason that it was Cuban local time ... To prevent confusion, suggest all times be identified by the time zone, or that all times *that are vital to the success of all operational mission be stated in ZULU only.* 55/*

In response to another question concerning mission approvals, Headquarters spoke very firmly to the field concerning its (Headquarter's) responsibility for weather forecasting as related to approvals for given missions; and specified that:

Mission approvals from Headquarters are based on intelligence, political, security, and other considerations usually known only at Headquarters as well as review of weather forecast to determine general mission feasibility. 56/

Once Headquarters approval had been received, however, the message authorized the launch-base commander, or designated officers at given sites, to cancel or

* Emphasis by author. The criticality of this last statement concerning the use of ZULU time will be discussed in detail later in this volume.

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delay any mission based on their responsibilities or safety of flight considerations. Go-no-go permission had to do with such things as aircraft and equipment status, crew proficiency, and numerous other considerations. While Headquarters also claimed the responsibility for providing the appropriate bases with recap weather forecast for return routes, [] was authorized to provide MADD with return flight approval based on the weather forecast -- a question which had been of some concern to MADD. Headquarters claimed responsibility both for designating stations which would be responsible for maintaining communications with aircraft in flight and also primary responsibility for giving directions to crews in flight. Eglin had been delegated the responsibility for providing inflight control using the commo facilities JRIMM or YOGURT as necessary to insure that action messages got to airborne aircraft engaged in current support missions. Current support missions being designated as the Egli/FIG/MADD/EGLI route.*

There was also a communications breakdown between Headquarters and the field in the early part of

* JMFIG was a cryptonym for the Opalocka airfield.

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February 1961 when JMTRAV complained that the base was receiving trainees and supplies with little or no prior notice. JMTRAV requested Miami/Opalocka or Eglin Air Force Base to provide them with details concerning the ETA of passenger or cargo flights, and they asked for an advance notice of 24 hours. Similarly any outgoing flights from MADD for CONUS were to be brought to their attention so that they could plan movements of passengers, cargo, or whatever from TRAV to the other bases. 57/

The push for air drop operations antedated the opening of JMADD when as early as 1 September 1960 a strong pitch was made to provide an arms drop to supporters of Manolo Ray in the Escambray region of Cuba. One of the first suggestions, apparently, had been to use the OSTIARY crews out of Eglin Air Force Base to fly the mission; but recognizing the difficulties of using these particular pilots, the second suggestion, since the Cuban crews were not yet ready, was to use an HBILKA crew. Although discussed with the Special Group, the plan was rejected by the DCI. 58/

In the interval between the Mexican disaster and the completion of the training of the Cuban pilots and the initiation of operational flights, the DDP, Mr.

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Bissell, outlined the procedures that should govern all overflights of Cuba, except U-2 overflights. * Addressed to the A/DDP/A, to Chief, WH Division, to Chief WH/4, and to the Acting Chief, DPD, Bissell's memorandum of 24 October 1960 specified, among other things, that prior to any authorization to the field for an operational overflight, the DDP and the A/DDP/A -- or one of them and the DDP's Assistant for Executive Branch Matters (EBM) would be included in a briefing of the operational plan. The Assistant for Executive Branch matters, Thomas A. Parrott, was included so that he would be informed when the question was presented to the Special Group. Bissell made WH/4 responsible for arranging the briefing; and the minimum aspects of the operation which were to be covered were a detailed flight plan, the communications plan, and the methods for communicating with the reception party. DPD was given the responsibility for briefing on the detailed flight plan.

The Bissell memorandum further provided that once the senior echelon of the DDP had been briefed, that

* The referenced Mexican episode is described on pp. 114-115.

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group would then be responsible for briefing the DDCI, General Cabell, on each planned overflight. In emergency situations, however, the DDP did suggest that a single briefing could be held for all of the individuals mentioned, providing that the briefing was arranged through his office. Once an overflight was approved, Chief, WH/4 and Acting Chief, DPD were authorized to communicate the plan to the field. It was stressed, however, that both Chief, WH/4 and Acting Chief, DPD were to limit their instructions to matters that had already been reviewed by the DDP, or the DDCI. The final caveat entered by Mr. Bissell was that:

No flights shall be dispatched until the Special Group has been advised of the plan or the DCI has specifically waived this requirement. 59/

In a memorandum subsequent to that of the DDP, Richard D. Drain issued a memorandum to various WH/4 Section Chiefs, providing even more explicit details concerning overflights of Cuba.* In addition to

* On 12 December 1960, when the memorandum in question was issued, Drain was Acting Chief WH/4. During the course of Project JMATE he appeared in a number of different capacities, including both Executive Officer and Chief of Operations.

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restating that all briefings on overflights would be arranged through Chief WH/4, Mr. Drain's memorandum of 12 December 1960 made the WH/4 Special Assistant for Military Liaison responsible for notifying both State and DOD in advance of planned overflights -- and also as to the results of the overflights. The Drain memorandum also had an added fillip regarding the Special Group which did not appear in Mr. Bissell's 24 October memorandum -- "*each member* of the Special Group will be advised in advance in each instance of a leaflet drop, as in the case of supply drops." 60/

There is no evidence, however, that specific attempts at individual briefings were ever employed, insofar as can be determined. Briefings on overflights were presented to the Special Group, whoever was there. As previously mentioned, the Air Support plan for Project JMATE (AD 5-60) scheduled the initial flight training for the Cubans to be completed in November 1960. Beginning in that month, there was a stir of activity concerning the use of the JMADD contingent for drops of propaganda leaflets. Interestingly enough, the initial request for authorization for prop drops over Cuba seems to have originated with

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Col. J. C. King, Chief, WH/D, on 9 November 1960. At that time King prepared a memorandum for the DCI requesting approval for overflights from Agency controlled fields in Guatemala for the purpose of propaganda drops. Routed to the DCI through the DDCI, King's memorandum was not sent to the DCI, but was sent to the DDP instead. 61/

By mid-November, the cable traffic reflected a high level of concern about leaflet drops. The B-26's -- acquired for a combat role -- were going to be put into service for both the propaganda activity and re-supply missions. Attention was immediately focused on the problem of the tail numbers game -- with Headquarters telling the field to be sure and obtain

sufficient numbers from Guat AF to allow assignment of a MADD number for each B-26 in present inventory. This will allow the same number utilized for each individual aircraft any time presence at MADD. 62/

The problem with flying B-26's from Retalhuleu to Cuba, however, was that they couldn't make the round trip without refueling. Consequently, it was worked out with Roberto Alejos, President Ydigoras's right hand man, that Puerto Barrios, on the east coast of Guatemala, would be made available for refueling the

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aircraft on both launch and recovery from the Cuban overflights. In late November 1960, however, the cable traffic -- but no other record -- reveals the evolution of a major air strike to be launched out of Puerto Barrios by six B-26's carrying both ordnance and leaflets against unspecified targets in Cuba.

The air crews were given a cover story of being recruited by the FRD in the US and then being transported to an unidentified airfield in Honduras where they were presented with combat-ready B-26's. Scheduled for launching on 26 November 1960, Puerto Barrios airport was having its supply of avgas built up to 8,000 gallons capacity, most of which was being airlifted from MADD in 55 gallon drums. Aircraft ordnance would be loaded on the B-26's at MADD rather than being hauled overland to Puerto Barrios or being airlifted in by C-46's or C-54's. Authentic Cuban tail numbers had been obtained from two FAR aircraft and they were to be used on the B-26's. Unfortunately, however, available records did not reveal the intended targets for the ordnance. 63/

Originally planned for 26 November 1960, the first of the B-26 missions was not actually flown

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until 5 December. By that time, however, the combat role had been eliminated -- again for unknown reasons -- and the mission became strictly a resupply drop for Manolo Ray's MRR. After an apparently exact job of navigation and identification of the drop zone lights, the pilot failed to open the bomb bay doors on his first pass over the drop zone; and after making second and third passes without any sign of drop zone lights, he returned to Puerto Barrios to refuel en route back to Retalhuleu. Billy Campbell's comment to Headquarters, with regard to the mission put things in proper perspective: "Pilot head up and locked." Headquarters felt it necessary to cable apologies to Havana for the failure of the drop plan for the MRR group, and also to raise the question of whether that drop zone had been so badly blown by the three aircraft passes above it that it should no longer be considered for use. 64*

Of the other B-26's which had been declared ready for operations in November, two flew a propaganda drop on 12 December 1960. They worked the western

* The US had not yet broken diplomatic relations with Cuba, and Havana Station was still in operation.

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end of Cuba, from the Isla de Pinos to Cienfuegos, including Havana; and on the same night, a C-54 dropped leaflets in the Manzanillo area. Except for one B-26 which tried to unload leaflets through a side hatch rather than the bomb bay -- making it impossible for them to get the full load out -- the mission was quite successful.*

Reporting on the operation, JMADD cabled: "Successful completion of missions has made trainees happy and eager to repeat. Highly recommend fast follow-up any type mission using as many aircraft as possible. Believe time right for airfield strike, if political situation warrants. Don't stop now. Let's go." 66**

Aside from the bad luck associated with the initial drop mission in September 1960 and the abort in the first week of December when the bomb bay doors

* One B-26 carried 1,700 lbs. of leaflets; the other B-26, 1,000 lbs.; and the C-54, 1,000 lbs. 65/

** In addition to its combat supply drop and leaflet drop role, Billy Campbell reported that there also were plans to use B-26's for dropping infiltration teams into Cuba. In response to a question of how such personnel would exit this particular aircraft without suffering serious injury or killing themselves, Campbell noted that they had developed a platform for use in the bomb bay. He also stated that a couple of the aircraft had been modified to handle as many as 12 people. 67/

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wouldn't open, the missions flown from October through the end of December 1960 -- principally propaganda drops -- were successful, averaging about one a week during that period. Marine Col. Jack Hawkins, Chief of WH/4/PM, however, was very dissatisfied with the air operations. On 4 January 1961, Hawkins claimed that for the ten B-26's which were available to JMADD, there were only five Cuban pilots of "high technical competence" and six others were "of questionable proficiency." For the seven C-54's available to MADD and for the four C-46's, Hawkins claimed that there was "one qualified [Cuban] C-54 crew on hand at this time and three C-46 crews." On the basis of these estimates Hawkins made a strong appeal for the employment of US contract pilots in his memorandum to Jake Esterline, Chief, WH/4. 68/

From the first of the year until the middle of March 1961 there was a significant increase in the number of air drop operations that were launched out of JMADD. All three types of aircraft available to the Brigade were employed -- B-26's, C-46's, and C-54's. As the number of overflights increased, so did the ground opposition in terms of small arms and

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anti-aircraft gunfire, to the point where in early January 1961, the DDCI, Gen. Cabell agreed that only the B-26's would be used in propaganda drops over the city areas and that the C-46's and C-54's would do their prop drops in the less-inhabited parts of the island. 69/*

It seems that there was probably more propaganda material than the air operations could have handled under the most ideal conditions. On 15 February 1961, it was noted that 75,000 leaflets asking teachers to support a student strike were available from Miami for an upcoming drop and that 100 pounds of materials bearing the "fish symbol" also were to be used in a drop aimed at Villanueva University in Havana. On 18 February, a cable from MADD stated that there were approximately 18,000 pounds of leaflets "occupying about one third of the available warehouse space required for man-pack storage. Request deliveries leaflets to MADD to be withheld until present supply reduced." 70a/

For those who questioned the validity of risking air crews and aircraft on propaganda drops, it is difficult to imagine that they were particularly

* The increase in anti-aircraft fire probably coincides to the increasing quantities of Soviet heavy weapons, including 37 mm. anti-aircraft artillery, which Cuba claims it began to receive in the final months of 1960. 70/

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enthusiastic to hear from Headquarters with reference to a Havana drop that:

Again qualitative rather than quantitative dispersion will be required, since leaflets are directed to a specific group now being suppressed by Castro. These missions carry small amounts, only because of the importance of hitting the select groups. Headquarters feels that these small quantity runs are most important to overall mission. 71/

In order to deliver to these select groups, the directions given to the Cuban aircrews sounded like directions being given to a city taxicab driver. For one drop it was stated that "Villaneuva University located on south side Fifth Avenue between 172nd and 176th Streets. Fish to be dropped after University drop on way out.* Fly down Fifth Avenue and COP between Hotel National and US Embassy." 72/

Before mid-March, with the exception of the propaganda drops, which were considered 100% successful, DPD began to show increasing dissatisfaction

* The fish symbol was one of the more widely used during the course of the anti-Castro movement. Samples of this, and other propaganda leaflets appear in Appendix 2. In all there were 23 leaflet drops between 12 December 1960 and the collapse of the Bay of Pigs Operation. About 12 million leaflets were dropped in addition to assorted publications. 72a/

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with the supply drops. Both the Headquarters and field elements of DPD agreed on the need for improvement in such areas as the rapid transmission of agent reports on the effectiveness of the drops, particularly on such matters as time spent in the drop zone compared to brief instruction and the in and out routes over potential drop zones. On matters of improving the navigational training for the crews, there was no dispute; nor was there any disagreement on the suggestion that it would help some of the weaker Cuban air crews if Cuban instructor-pilots flew with such crews. DPD was not going to take full blame for the failure of the drop missions. While admitting the need to improve the quality of the air training program, Col. Beerli emphasized the need for better support from the recipient dissident groups in Cuba. DPD wanted better lighting and identification of drop zones, elimination of blind drops, wider use made of beacons, and permission to make drops from higher altitudes. 73/

Although the question in Cuban crew discipline worried DPD throughout the course of the JMATE operation, the performance of the Cuban trainees -- excluding the initial disasters of the first month of

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operation -- appears to have been quite satisfactory. With the exception of one B-26 mishap in late March 1961, such other aircraft as were lost during the period of air operations out of JMADD were the result of damages suffered during the course of missions over Cuba; but no aircraft were lost, nor were deaths or injuries suffered by any of the crews. In one such instance a C-54 was forced to land at Kingston, Jamaica, and this presented a problem in diplomatic relations between the US and Great Britian which was satisfactorily resolved and the aircraft recovered. The C-54 had been badly shot up in an attempt to carry out three supply drops over the Escambray area, and according to Eduardo Ferrer, it had not only lost one engine, but also suffered numerous punctures in its fuel tanks and was rapidly losing fuel when it made the landing at Kingston. 74/

In other instances, B-26's made forced landings at the US Naval Air Station (NAS) at Boca Chica, Florida. This base, incidentally, was highly praised by one of the DPD officers stationed in the area of Boca Chica who had responsibility for providing assistance to downed aircrews who might turn up at this NAS.

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[redacted] (an intelligence officer) said of one episode at Boca Chica where a B-26 was repaired, refueled, and the crew rested,

I believe any future incident such as this need be no cause for Headquarter's concern. Due to the frequency of other air and sea operations by other agencies of similar nature, Navy at Boca Chica is witting and accommodating. 75/*

Insofar as can be determined from the available records, the only aircraft accident in which one of the Cuban trainees was involved concerned a B-26 training flight which landed with wheels up and locked at the San Jose airfield. A cable from JMADD to

* The question of availability of emergency landing strips was a continuing concern to air operations personnel. In addition to Boca Chica, Grand Cayman Island was a much used emergency strip whose use, if not officially sanctioned, had the unofficial blessing of the British Government.

[redacted] 75a/

Toward the end of March 1961, WH/4 and DPD representatives planned to raise the question of bulldozing an emergency strip on Navassa Island with the Navy. Navassa is a US possession, two miles long, and lies between Jamaica and Hispaniola. There is no evidence that this suggestion got beyond the talking stage. 75b/

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headquarters reported "in 5 hours and 30 minutes, 5 ANG pilots voluntarily and unassisted, with minimum equipment and a lot of initiative and a lot of imagination, raised Ref B[26] A/C, lowered gear, replaced damaged props, and flew A/C to MADD." 76/

This local initiative went over with a dull thud in Headquarters. Although stating that Headquarters appreciated the "initiative, enthusiasm, imagination" of the Air National Guard pilots, Washington pointed out that engine malfunction or structural failure with the resultant loss of crew or equipment would represent an "irreplaceable loss to us in addition to being an embarrassing situation in explaining the circumstances." As a grudging afterthought, Headquarters added: "in this instance, due to successful outcome, you are commended." 77/ A subsequent cable from Gar Thorsrud, Air Commander at MADD, undoubtedly mollified Headquarters DPD, for Thorsrud pointed with reference to the repairs that:

Of the five ANG pilots, three are ex-B-26 crew chiefs, one is a certified [FAA] A&E mechanic, two are qualified maintenance officers, and three were civilian test pilots. On this basis it was felt they were technically qualified to determine air worthiness.

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Regret Ref B did not contain sufficient information and may have led Hqs to believe MADD running an unsafe operation. Will request Hqs approval future similar actions. 77a/

The other two accidents to JMADD aircraft which appear in the records, both concern Col. Tony Batres, the personal pilot of President Ydigoras Fuentes of Guatemala. In one instance, Col. Batres had borrowed the Agency's L-28 Helio while his Aero Commander was down for maintenance, and MADD's initial report of the accident said that the plane had been "damaged" on landing at Guatemala City. In fact, the plane had struck a grass covered log in the middle of a sod runway which was on the property of the President of Guatemala -- not the air strip at Guatemala City. The plane was more than damaged -- for all practical purposes it was ruined and, in fact, it was recommended that the aircraft be dismantled and returned to JMADD by C-46 or by truck and that the aircraft be scrapped for parts. 78/*

* In addition to pushing the main gear structure up through the bottom of the fuselage into the pilot and the co-pilot cockpit, the other damages were reported as follows:

Broken engine frame, a ripped and buckled bottom fuselage and cabin floor,
(footnote continued on following page)

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In an attempt to salvage the Helio that Col. Batres had piled up on the sod runway at President Ydigoras's plantation, a C-46 was dispatched from MADD, with an American pilot and an American co-pilot, plus 5 Cubans and 4 Guatemalans to assist in the salvage operation. In approaching the sod field at the Ydigoras plantation, a sudden gust of wind caught the C-46 and threw the left wing tip into the top of a coconut tree, with the result that the plane, despite the best efforts of the American crewmen, hit a clump of trees, cart-wheeled, and was totally destroyed in the subsequent fire. Fortunately, however, the crewmen and all passengers on the aircraft escaped serious injury. Less fortunate however, was a Guatemalan worker who had been picking coconuts in the tree that the plane hit on its initial approach. He was killed when he fell out of the tree to the ground.

a warped right wing tip, probable engine damage, probable propeller damage, a windshield popped out, a buckled top right wing, rudder controls ripped loose, a bent control column, fuselage tube framing was broken, the left fuselage door entrance buckled, and the right stabilizer slightly buckled. 79/

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Col. Batres had actually witnessed the crash, and when the father of the Guatemalan worker threatened legal action, Col. Batres covered for the Agency by saying that he had been flying the plane. The Guatemalan Air Force provided cover by claiming ownership of the plane. [] sought Headquarters permission to authorize \$5,000 to settle the claims, including legal fees, of the father of the deceased worker who was threatening to go to court. Apparently this was the way the matter was finally settled. 80/

D. JMTIDE: Strike Base, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua

As a training program for the Cuban fliers at JMADD was intensified and as an increasing number of air drop missions were being performed, negotiations were under way to establish a strike base (JMTIDE) at Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.* One of the first problems to be resolved with reference to the establishment of JMTIDE was that of selecting an efficient manager to be Chief of Base. Apparently having learned from the experiences at JMADD that an efficient base

* For more details on the Agency's negotiations for the base at Puerto Cabezas, see Volume II.

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administrator was an absolute necessity, James A. Cunningham, Assistant Chief, DPD, approached Col. L. K. White, the Deputy Director for Support, early in December 1960 to discuss the appointment of a qualified support officer to be the base manager. Cunningham stated:

We were keen on having a Chief of Base who would effectively control the management and base operating end of the effort so as to avoid criticism arising from unpredictable changes in the scope and cost of the facility. 81/*

The concern regarding the choice of a COB for JMTIDE paid off for, short lived though it was, at no time during the operation of TIDE was there the sort of friction between the Chief of Air Operations and the COB that occurred at MADD.

The JMTIDE crypt was assigned on 10 December 1960 and four representatives from Headquarters went to Nicaragua in January 1961 to negotiate with President Somoza concerning the renovation, use, and operation of the JMTIDE base. With the full cooperation of the Nicaraguan Government, the construction activity

* In his discussions with Col. White, Cunningham also noted that it would be beneficial if the appointee to be COB were fluent in the Spanish language.

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got under way; and although the base was not ready for occupancy as initially scheduled (e.g., by the first week of February 1961), the communications link between the base and in Managua had been established. 82/

With the base at JMTIDE being completed and readied for operation, Garfield M. Thorsrud received a Letter of Instruction on 24 March 1961 assigning him as Chief, JMATE Air Operations at JMADD and JMTIDE; and he was instructed to designate an Acting Chief for JMADD, Air Ops in his absence. It was made quite clear that Thorsrud had authority over all things related to the planned air operation -- personnel, materiel, logistics, or whatever. His responsibilities as Chief of the air operation were distinct from the duties of the COB's of MADD and TIDE. Thorsrud was responsible to the Chief, JMCLEAR (Gaines), who in turn was responsible to Chief, JMATE (Esterline), and to the Acting Chief of DPD (Beerli). 83/*

Thorsrud had been involved in the JMATE activity in a marginal capacity prior to this time. In mid-July

* A copy of the Letter of Instruction to Thorsrud appears as Appendix 4.

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1960, he had been assigned as Acting Chief of the Air Section when Lt. Col. George Gaines was relieved as Chief, Air Section, DPD and assigned as the DPD Project Officer for JMATE (e.g., JMCLEAR). 84/ Thorsrud's responsibilities were principally outside of the JMATE Project area until the Letter of Instruction.

In the cable to the Base at MADD, announcing Thorsrud's imminent arrival, there were two or three items of interest. Concerning the ongoing problem of obtaining an adequate number of air trainees, the cable contained the following comment:

Request Villafana be contacted to determine any knowledge Cuban trainees or pilots presently in Cuba who might be defected. Event potential defectors known, expedite names, positions occupied, etc. 85/

Perhaps this was an unintentional reflection of the suggestion in the same cable that Thorsrud be briefed on "all facets air activities, including idiosyncracies/attributes personnel involved air mission." More interesting to the recipients on the MADD end of the cable, however, was the

request MADD paint white stripe, 36 inches wide completely across runway, five hundred feet from normal approach end. Measure four thousand feet down

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runway from white stripe and paint second white stripe same measurements as first. Teegen [Thorsrud] will explain specialized B-26 training program on arrival. 86/

The request to paint the white stripes on the runway was a result of decisions made in Washington, one aspect of which called for B-26's to land on an air strip at the invasion site in Cuba -- an air strip which, at best was just over 4,000 feet in length.* In describing the training activity at MADD for the short field landings, Billy Campbell noted that one means of encouraging the Cuban B-26 pilots to land within the white stripes was a promise of a tour of guard duty for those who after touching down, failed to stop their roll in the interval between the two stripes. 87/**

* It is interesting that one of the arguments used when the operational plan was changed from the Trinidad site to the Bay of Pigs was that the B-26's would not be able to operate from the 4,000' asphalt runway at Trinidad.

** In an oral interview, Mr. Campbell indicated that the tour of guard duty was without parachute attached. Recalling the somewhat wistful nature of Mr. Campbell's comment on this subject, one suspects that perhaps in his cadet days in the Army Air Force, Mr. Campbell had pulled similar duty -- but with parachute attached.

The 4,000 foot landing roll was shorter than the 4,500 foot roll for a loaded B-26 (over a 50' obstacle). See Appendix 2.

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The cable to JMADD notifying the base of Thorsrud's appointment also mentioned (in alias) Gen. George R. (Reid) Doster, the Commanding Officer of the Alabama Air National Guard. As stated earlier in this volume, Doster worked very closely with Agency representatives to secure the services of Alabama Air National Guard personnel -- ground crews and flight crews -- to support the training and, eventually, the air operations against Castro's Cuba. In early February 1961, subsequent to his efforts to obtain ANG personnel to support the JMATE operation, Doster himself

requested that he be allowed to participate in JMCLEAR activities as Chief of Tactical Aviation at the forward strike base. Gen. Doster's request was based on the fact that he had personally recruited crew members, operations supervisors, and maintenance personnel from his own ANG units; and he desired to complete a "package" capability. 88/

The request by Gen. Doster was discussed with Mr. Richard Bissell, the DDP; and with Mr. Bissell's approval a contract was prepared for the General. Almost immediately upon his arrival, Thorsrud got together with Gen. Doster, Col. Villafana, the Commanding Officer of the Cuban Air Operation, and Luis Cosme, Chief of Operations for the Cuban air contingent, to discuss

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procedures for bringing the Air Force up to peak performance. Among other things that fell out of this discussion, was the selection of two Cuban B-26 pilots to go into the short field training exercise preparatory to the initial landings at the airfield at Playa Giron.*

The C-46's were to be checked out for night formation proficiency; and as the cover plan to disguise the actual movement of the air operations from MADD over to TIDE, gaggles of 5 to 6 aircraft were to fly with other training exercises on and off the JMADD air base. R&R's for both Cuban and American air personnel were to be cancelled as of 26 March 1961. 89/ On 31 March 1961 the use of Air National Guard pilots on C-54's as co-pilots for the move from MADD to TIDE was approved, the subject apparently having been under serious discussion since the first week of March 1961 when Col. Gaines had scheduled a visit to the base at JMADD "to check out procedures, possible use of US pilots." 90/

Thorsrud's arrival at JMADD raised the morale of Cuban air trainees because it was apparent that the

* The author had been unable to ascertain the identities of the two Cuban pilots who were so selected.

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operations for which they were trained so long were about to begin on full scale. The Cubans were probably also aware that Headquarters had been requested to provide the materiel for use by the Cuban air personnel for the assault phase, including personal side arms and ammunition, submachine guns for the aircraft, light machine guns for base defenses at JMTIDE, watches for pilots, co-pilots, and navigators, binoculars, and other equipment. 91/

Cuban morale undoubtedly received an additional boost with the opening of Gar's bar. In a cable to headquarters on 31 March Thorsrud requested authorization for:

1. Purchase of operational beer/ cigarettes commencing 31 March on arrival Cuban crews.
2. Plan giving Cuban[s] same privilege as Americans while at JMTIDE. However, most Cubans without funds ...
3. If approved, please advise EGLI ...
4. For EGLI: Upon receipt answer Par. 3, advised Donigran [Doster] and Dunn [R. J. Durnin] to pick as much beer, cigarettes, and general commissary [commissary] items as allowable. 92/

In addition to painting the MADD landing strip for practice STOL operations, another painting problem

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that surfaced as early as October 1960 concerned the color, identification, and insignia of the Castro B-26 aircraft. The availability of oil paint was noted in the early weeks of air training operations, and it continued to present difficulties in the final weeks of JMATE. As the time to move the B-26's from MADD to TIDE approached, there were two problems -- one being painting the B-26's identically to the B-26's of Castro's Air Force, and the other being the question of painting B-26's for the transfer to TIDE so that they would appear to be part of the Nicaraguan Air Force. In the operations out of both JMADD and JMTIDE, the hope of maintaining plausible deniability for the B-26's lay in the possibility of disguising the B-26's as aircraft of either the Guatemalan or Nicaraguan Air Force. It is difficult to understand, therefore, why on 22 March 1961, Headquarters was raising questions about the availability of painting materials for putting Cuban markings on the B-26's still stationed at JMADD. Headquarters also recommended to both MADD and TIDE that the specific marking which would identify Brigade aircraft from Castro's FAR aircraft -- the painting of a three foot wide light blue stripe around the

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B-26 wings outside of the pylon tanks -- might be undertaken almost immediately.

Whether it was in the supply line or whether it was simply an oversight, the question of paint for the aircraft at JMTIDE, seemed to be serious. As late as 14 April, TIDE was appealing to Eglin for all colors of oil paint, even a partial shipment, and making a specific request for red, white, blue, and silver lacquer, masking tape, and paint brushes for special shipment via Southern Air Transport C-46 on a flight to TIDE. 93/

Billy Campbell shed some light on the problem of painting the B-26 aircraft when, in response to a question if the planning couldn't have been a little better, he noted as follows:

You are getting into a problem area here ... we had three different areas working on this one. The main fleet of B-26's was sitting at Eglin. The ones that we had borrowed had come in through Kelly. The ones that we took down ... we started off in Guatemala with two National Guard airplanes that we had borrowed from the Air Guard, Andrews AFB. So they then picked up six B-26's out of Kelly which had been flown in and cleaned up -- no markings. We flew those down to Retalhuleu. Then we began to get other airplanes in at Field 3, where we had the capability of

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changing the markings. Then we got into a problem -- that you were on a US military installation and you couldn't do that. Then we had the problem where if you'd fly them anywhere else in the United States and try to reconfigure, then you've got another problem because you would have to do it at night, ... So the planes were flown in, if I recall correctly, from Eglin as Air Force aircraft and flown down to Guatemala unmarked ... and reconfigured and flown from there on into Puerto Cabezas, unmarked. Then, at Puerto Cabezas, the Cuban markings were put on them, and this is where we needed the paint. 94/

Even as the discussions were being held concerning the painting of air strips and the aircraft, progress was being made toward assembling the necessary aircraft -- 10 C-54's and 4 C-46's -- to provide the airlift from Retalhuleu, Guatemala to Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua. The movement of aircraft involved not only flights from Guatemala to Nicaragua and return, but also flights of aircraft from Eglin Air Force Base to Roosevelt Roads (Puerto Rico) and thence to TIDE, or from Eglin Air Force Base directly to TIDE. Inasmuch as the transfers were going to be made after dark, the problems were made even more difficult. Although TIDE was scheduled to become operational on 1 April 1961, the airlift of the ground forces from JMTRAV was not to begin until D-8 and was to

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continue through D-Day. The actual opening of JMTIDE, however, was delayed until 2 April 1961 because leaders of the recently organized Consejo Revolucionario Cubano (CRC), Jose Miro Cardona, Antonio de Varona, Antonio Maceo, and Manuel Artime were still visiting in the MADD/TRAV area; and rather than begin the airlift out of MADD while these people were still present, the operation was delayed for 24 hours. 95/*

Once the political representatives of the Cuban exiles had departed the base at JMADD, operations at TIDE went into high gear. By 2 April, a gunnery, bomb, and rocket range had been located some 45 miles north-east of Puerto Cabezas in the vicinity of the Cayos Miskito Island. In a three hour period on 3 April, 11 aircraft had arrived at JMTIDE -- six B-26's, three C-46's, and two C-54's -- with the transport aircraft scheduled to return to MADD for additional cargo and passengers. These aircraft brought in 169 Cuban personnel; and on that same day, two of the B-26's were sent out to inspect the bomb and gunnery range

* Eduardo Ferrer stated that this visit of the Consejo took place at the end of February 1961, but he was a month early in his recollections. 96/

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with Capt. Quintana of the Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional riding in one of the B-26's as an observer. On 4-5 April, 17 sorties were planned for the First Pilots of the B-26's, with the pilots to ride in both the left and the right seats of the aircraft. The ordnance load for these sorties was to be two 500 pound bombs, four 200 pound fragmentation bombs, four rockets, and 800 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition. 97/*

With the move to TIDE, it was not only the B-26 pilots who went into advanced training -- the C-46 pilots, too, were immediately engaged in upgrading their skills and improving their techniques. According to Eddy Ferrer, the Cuban pilots also spent their time assisting the ground crews in aircraft maintenance and arming bombs and rockets -- the ordnance activities being conducted under the supervision of the armorers.

Insofar as Ferrer was concerned, it appeared that the living conditions for the air crews at JMTIDE were an improvement over the situation at JMADD. The

* Interestingly enough, "five sorties on live bomb range [5 Apr 61] cancelled due lack Nicaraguan markings." 98/ The paint shortage which had been raised with Headquarters was no joke!

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quarters, messing, and other facilities were not noticeably better than they had been at MADD; but the fact that the airstrip was both longer and wider, added to the mental comfort of the pilots. 99/*

At the same time that the advanced training for the aircrews was going on, plans were made to airlift the ground troops from JMADD to JMTIDE for embarkation on the ships which were being assembled to transport them to Cuba. Because of delays imposed by Washington, the bulk of the Brigade cargo had been airlifted to TIDE before the troops were ready to be debarked. Initially, it had been planned that troops and cargo would be flown in simultaneously. Major Billy Campbell, who had been in charge of air operations at JMADD prior to Thorsrud, was called back from Eglin to coordinate the administrative airlift details with Gar Thorsrud.

* The one lament that Ferrer did raise about facilities at JMTIDE concerned the latrines. Apparently some of the quick-lime used in the latrines for sanitary disposal got on the seats of the johns and the Cubans were coming up with sore butts. Consequently, some chose to go, pistol in hand, into the nearby woods to perform nature's functions -- the pistols being necessary, according to Ferrer, for protection from the wild animals which roamed the areas near the Base. 100/ For photos of JMTIDE, see Figures 24 through 33. Also see DDS Historical Series OL-7, James Burwell, *Logistics Support for Operations in Cuba, March 1960 - October 1961*, Fig. 70-88. S.

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With Campbell handling the airlift end of MADD, a lift of nearly 1,300 troops was to be completed in a period of less than 4 days, leaving only a handful of new trainees at JMTRAV and, at JMADD, the 160 airborne troops who would be flown directly from JMADD to the drop zones in Cuba on D-Day. 101/

During the period of transition from JMADD to JMTIDE and in the interval before the first of the operational air strikes, the records reflect numerous indications of a serious shortage of Cuban pilots for the planned air operation. This is contrary to the belief of all of the principals who were most directly involved in the air operation. Richard Bissell, however, claimed to have been seriously concerned about the number of air crews:

I do clearly remember that one of the limiting factors in the whole operation was the number of competent Cuban air crews that could be found, recruited, and trained. I remember saying to [Col. Stanley] Beerli that I wished he had a lot more [aircraft], and he said "No point ... we could get more B-26's easily enough, but we don't have the crews to man them and we just can't find them. We are training all the competent Cubans -- pilots, co-pilots, air crewmen -- that we can find, and this is as much of a capability as we are able to develop." 102/

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Additionally, too, it has already been noted that when Gar Thorsrud took over as Chief of JMADD-JMTIDE air operations, one of the first sessions he had with Col. Villafana and Luis Cosme was to find out whether they could recommend any additional Cuban aircrews who might be picked up for training -- or who might be defected out of Cuba if they had not already fled to the United States. Of less than a dozen individuals whose names were produced as a result of this meeting, six in fact, arrived at JMTIDE, prior to D-Day -- none of them, however, are known to have participated in the air operations over Cuba. But at least one of the Cubans who had gone through the training at JMADD, Fausto Valdez, a C-54 commander did return from Miami to JMTIDE in time to participate in the air operations. 103/

Examination of the cable traffic between Headquarters and JMTIDE for the ten day period prior to D-2 (15 April 1961), when the first tactical air operation against Cuba was launched, indicates that there was a very narrow margin between the number of trained pilots, particularly B-26 pilots, and aircraft that were available for the planned operations.

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On 6 April 1961, it was reported that there was some doubling up in the training effort -- four of the C-54 captains were reported to be qualified to fly B-26's or C-46's in addition to the C-54's which were their primary responsibility. 104/ The situation was compounded by the fact that at this same time, JMTIDE was reporting

Review aircrew capability TIDE reveals critical shortage C-54 and C-46 aircraft commanders due loss trained personnel various causes. Trained pilots ... [Miami area] should be dispatched immediately TIDE order to provide better indigenous crew air drop capability. All three personnel ... [in Miami] are A/C commanders in C-46 or C-54. 105/

Where both George Gaines and Gar Thorsrud were of the opinion that this last minute flurry of activity regarding the acquisition of the additional Cuban pilot personnel would have made no difference at all -- had the initial air operation plan been carried out -- Col. Stanley Beerli, who was Acting Chief of DPD at the time, went a step further and suggested that the supply of Cuban pilots who were really qualified to go into the air operations training program of JMATE had already been put into the program:

The ones that were screened ... that had any sort of potential, were taken

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whenever we could get them. But near the end, as you know, everyone got a little bit apprehensive, as we got near the D-date; and they were beginning to think, "do we have enough"; and people were saying, "well, maybe we ought to have a few more pilots here and there." 106/

But like Gaines and Thorsrud in response to the question of whether more pilots could have changed the course of the action, Beerli said:

I don't think so, because what you are doing here ... you're not going to send aircraft in there that are going to be shot down. Once we let that T-33 off the ground, it raised havoc with us. Then there was no number of aircraft ... there was no number of crews that were going to do it. 107/

In addition to the problem of insuring adequate numbers of air crews to fly the three types of aircraft that were involved in the operation, there were additional difficulties that cropped up at TIDE, prior to the D-2 air strike. Through D-2, as a matter of fact, one of the problems of considerable importance concerned the availability of 230 gallon drop tanks for use on the B-26's. These were necessary to extend the range of the aircraft. TIDE was going to Eglin requesting supplies of these tanks -- while at the same time, Headquarters was going to Eglin and saying that the

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230 gallon tanks were in such short supply that if they were shipped to TIDE, they should not be dropped in the course of the air operations except as a last resort.

Not only was there a question about the availability of the drop-tanks, but TIDE originated a request the day before (14 April 1961) the first air strike for an inflight test of the drop-tanks to see if their release damaged the aircraft. Moreover, TIDE's message said: "Request documentary film of test." Faith in Headquarters judgment seems to have been in short supply! A rather interesting response from Eglin pointed out that various of the Headquarters personnel were thoroughly experienced with the drop tanks, including dropping them from B-26's. Headquarters informed TIDE that there was only minor damage that might be expected to the flap areas of the wings, and that this was so minor that it didn't interfere with the flight characteristics. In the cable reporting this, the comment was made "that no noise or anything occurs to frighten the pilots." 108/ At best these last minute questions about drop tanks for the B-26's appear to indicate a serious oversight of an issue that should have been

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studied, diagnosed, dissected, and determined long before D-Day.

In the days immediately before the instigation of tactical air operations, another difference between JMTIDE and Headquarters concerned TIDE's request for parts and spares, including fly-away kits and incidental materials relative to the maintenance of B-26 aircraft. A sharply worded protest was directed by Headquarters to JMTIDE on 8 April 1961 questioning "the tremendous volume of items requested ... Most requirements you request previously shipped your activities." 109/

TIDE went back to Headquarters in very positive terms stating that:

1. Original mission TIDE distorted beyond recognition. Instead of forward air base providing support maritime (i.e. unlimited storage diesel fuel and arm packs) TIDE now primarily engaged support maritime operations.

2. Investigation reveals TIDE base logistics and PDO personnel unloading ships, loading and shifting cargo between ships, plus providing provisions and records keeping. In addition, approximately 250,000 pounds cargo shipped MANA, thence TIDE, thence ships. Also, aircraft parts and equipment for MADD dropped on TIDE extremely short period of time. These actions conducted concurrent providing quarters and

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rations 350-400 personnel on base built and manned to support approximately 200 personnel.

3. Recommend following actions provide timely and orderly accomplishment all missions simultaneously:

A. Personnel experienced KUBARK air (repeat air) logistics be sent to TIDE TDY to support this operation.

B. Five motor scooters be made available immediately for operations, security, commo, armament, airborne section supply and maintenance. 110*

Although the bickering between Headquarters and the field over the need for various support items for the air operations continued, even through the course of the invasion itself, it can safely be said that the logistics support for the Air Operations, through the

* In discussions the author had with principal air officers regarding the change of the target from TRINIDAD to ZAPATA, the question was asked if this change in location made any significant difference in terms of air operations. Both Cols. Beerli and Gaines suggested that this did not make any particular difference, and Gar Thorsrud, who was the Air Operations Commander at JMTIDE, recalled only some of the maintenance problems about the actual use of the air strip at Playa Giron -- the need for pumping equipment and ground support equipment was more difficult than would have been experienced had the air strip at TRINIDAD been available. Thorsrud, as well as Gaines and Beerli, apparently forgot about the difficulties that were caused to the logistics support effort at TIDE with the dispatch of the B-26 items intended for Playa Giron mentioned in the discussion above.

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period of training at both JMADD and JMTIDE, and through the course of the invasion itself, was highly successful.*

Having then assembled the strike aircraft, having completed the advance training, and having laid in the necessary ordnance, the next aspect of the air story to be discussed, must be that of D minus 2 (D-2).

* One of the most needless cables that was sent by Headquarters to the field concerning supply items was the following of 10 April 1961 which read:

Request every effort be made to prevent further cracking of [B-26] windshields, since this one of critical supply items.

The field response to this on 12 April was:

Concur, Will stop cracking windshields. lll/

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Part III

Initiation of Combat Air Operations

A. D minus 2 (15 April 1961)

Initiation of tactical air operations against Cuba on 15 April 1961 evolved as insurance for the planned invasion -- in fact it came to be the keystone of the operation. This tactical air strike caused a real brouhaha in the United Nations and put Adlai Stevenson -- the US Ambassador to the UN -- in the center of a controversy concerning the ultimate outcome at the Bay of Pigs which, even today, brings harsh words and bitter recriminations from Agency personnel who were involved -- some quite marginally -- in the JMATE project. From this first tactical air operation, there also evolved the controversial episode commonly referred to as the "second strike." Eventually, this issue would involve not only all of the key Agency personnel assigned to Project JMATE, but also Mr. Richard Bissell, the Deputy Director for Plans; Lt. Gen. Charles P. Cabell, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence; the Secretary of State, Dean R. Rusk;

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the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy; and the President's brother, Attorney-General Robert F. Kennedy.

Although there has been much written about air operations over Cuba between 15-19 April 1961, much of it has been pure speculation or exaggeration, with only limited segments being demonstrably accurate -- the most reliable stories were those told by Eduardo Ferrer and Albert C. ("Buck") Persons who served as transport pilots. Because it has been examined from an all source basis, what follows may help to clarify -- if not resolve -- some of the issues about which there has been the greatest dispute.

Final decisions on what, where, and when the tactical air operation was to be mounted was discussed, debated, and decided in the Headquarters area -- the principals most directly concerned with the overall air operation more frequently than not were relegated to the sidelines as observers. The ball, in terms of the management of the air operation, was being carried principally by Mr. Bissell and General Cabell. Even before the departure of President Eisenhower, the new Administration had been informed in specific detail

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of the nature of the anti-Castro operation; but it was not until mid-March 1961 that the Kennedy administration really opted into the anti-Castro program.

Between 11 and 15 March 1961, the issue of the TRINIDAD Plan -- the agreed choice of CIA and the JCS as the best site for the invasion -- was debated; and at the direction of the President -- following the advice of ^{the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the} Mr. Rusk -- the CIA planners and their JCS counterparts were directed to find an alternative site for the upcoming thrust against Castro. The result was a decision to launch the invasion of the Cienaga de Zapata from the Bahia de Cochinos. The change in the invasion site forced a number of significant alterations to be worked into the planning. In the version finally submitted to JFK, TRINIDAD would have provided tactical air support concurrent with, but not prior to, the amphibious and airborne assault on Cuba; and earlier versions had called for a preliminary strike, principally at Castro's airfields, during the period D-3 to D-1. The revised plan targeting the ZAPATA area required the landing of troops and the concurrent movement onto the beachhead airstrip at Playa Giron of B-26 aircraft. Operating

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these aircraft from the beachhead was intended to support plausible deniability re US responsibility for the attacks and also to protect the invading Brigade from Castro's planes.

One impact of this decision has already been mentioned -- the need to provide ground support for the two B-26's to be operated from the Cuban beachhead forced a drastic revision in the loading program for one of the supply vessels in order to insure that appropriate materiel, POL, and parts would be available. Personnel adjustments also had to be made so that ground crew would be waiting at the beachhead airstrip when the B-26's arrived. The aircraft and materiel, in turn, had to be replaced by Headquarters; and Headquarters, in turn, complained about the field's mismanagement of supplies. The change in invasion sites also forced an additional effort on the part of the reconnaissance and photo interpretation people to identify the most suitable possible landing strip for B-26 operations. In the end, the 4,000 foot strip at Playa Giron was chosen -- a decision reached after having rejected the possibilities of using the airstrips at either Trinidad or Soplillar, both of which were

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Plung into volume

*Airfield and Seaplane Stations
of the World, Vol. 6, pp. 87-88,
March '58*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
AIRFIELD EVALUATION

Cuba, Page 81
Vol. 6, Mar 58

COUNTRY: Cuba

CLASS: 4

NAME: TRINIDAD

COUNTRY CODE: 520

INSTALLATION NO.: 8017

ALTERNATE NAME/S:

MAP REF: WAC 586

ALT. (FT.): 50

Grau San Martin

CHT. ASSOTW VOL.: 6-01

DATE LATEST INFO: Feb 58

COORDS: 21 48 N
80 00 W

LOCATION AND LANDMARKS: Just SW of Trinidad; 32 miles SE of Cienfuegos;
32 miles WSW of Sancti Spiritus; 37 miles S of Santa Clara.

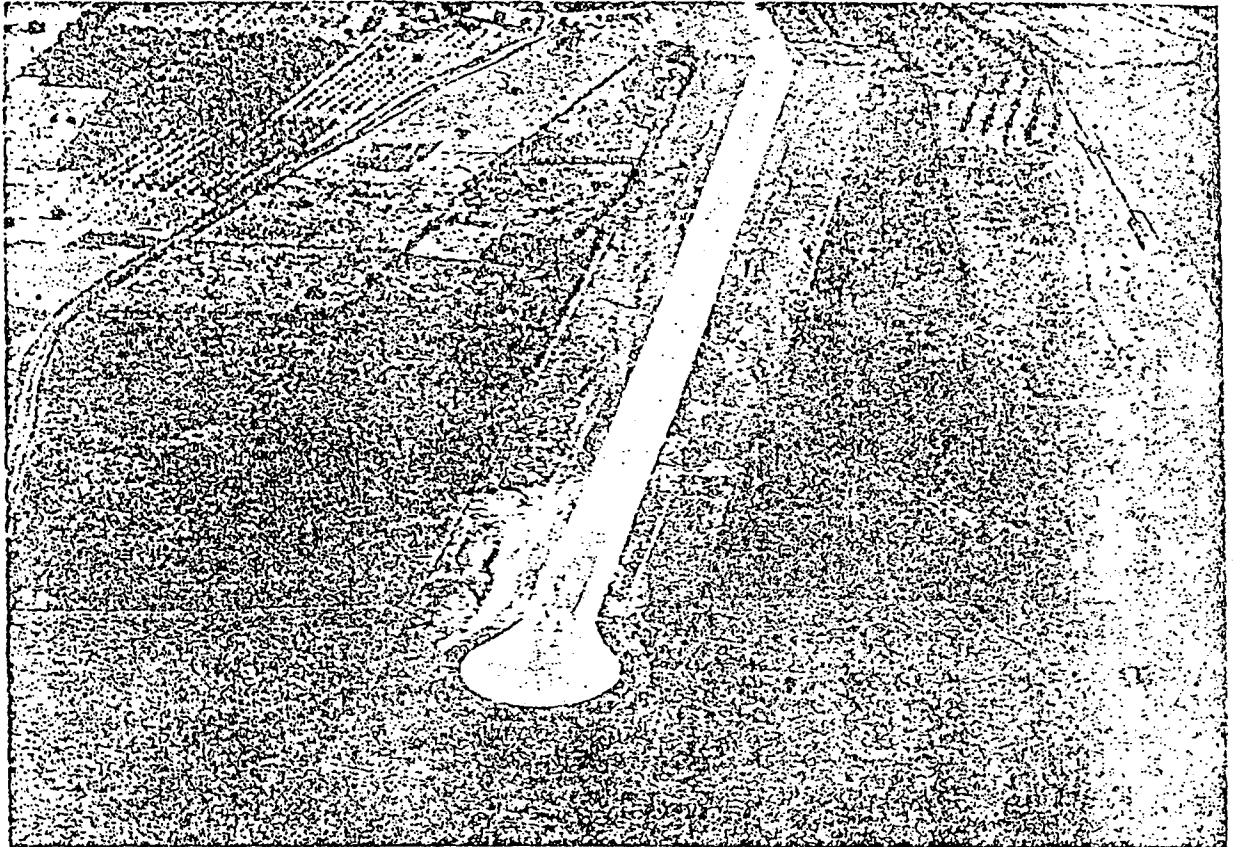


PHOTO OR SKETCH DATE: Mar 55

RWY DIMENSIONS:

ORIENTATION:

SURFACE:

CAPACITY:

EXTENSIBILITY:

4000' x 120'

NE/SW

Asphalt,
excellent

C-54
(by use)

Unlimited SW

NOTE: Extensibility NE limited by urban buildup.

TAXIWAYS AND PARKING: Turning circle at SW end of runway. Parking for large aircraft at N end of field; ample parking for light aircraft on grassed areas.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
AIRFIELD EVALUATION

NAVIGATION FACILITIES—(1) RADIO (2) COMMUNICATIONS (3) AEROLOGY (4) LIGHTING:

- 1) None
- 2) Telephone; telegraph and cable in Trinidad.
- 3) Forecasts available by telephone from Jose Marti Airfield, 150 miles NW.
- 4) None

SERVICES—(1) POL (2) REPAIRS (3) JET STARTING UNITS (4) OXYGEN SUPPLY (5) OTHER:

- 1) None 2) None 3) None 4) No info 5) No info

FIXED INSTALLATIONS—(1) HANGARS (2) PERSONNEL ACCOMMODATIONS (3) MISC BLDGS:

- 1) None
- 2) Poor quality hotels in Trinidad.
- 3) Small administration building.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES—(1) ROAD (2) RAIL (3) WATER:

- 1) Secondary paved road joins Central Highway at Sancti Spiritus.
- 2) Single-track railroad in Trinidad, joins island network at Santa Clara.
- 3) Small freighter and lighter accommodations at Trinidad. Excellent port facilities at Cienfuegos.

OPERATORS: Civil: Aviation Company of Cuba.

USERS: Civil: Aviation Company of Cuba.

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT: Trinidad was rebuilt and officially opened in Mar 53 to encourage tourist trade. The runway will support medium transport aircraft, however the lack of facilities restricts it to limited operations of this type.

judged to be too short for the B-26 operation.*

Another significant difference between the TRINIDAD and the ZAPATA air strike plans was that TRINIDAD anticipated the use of six US pilots, each in a B-26 which was scheduled to strike one or another of the fields on which Castro's combat aircraft were stationed. The ZAPATA plan made no such provision for US airmen, and as has been pointed out previously, the use of US pilots was a point of considerable contention between Headquarters and the field -- and in Washington between CIA and State/White House air experts -- throughout the course of the training activities at JMADD and at JMTIDE. 1/

In planning for tactical air operations, the question was raised of the need for the number softening, pre-D-Day strike (or strikes) prior to the actual day of the invasion. During meetings of the Special

* The B-26 pilots had been training on 5,000 - 6,000 foot strips at both JMADD and JMTIDE; and, as noted later in this volume, during final training, the candidates for flying the B-26's into Playa Giron were practicing landings between the two white strips 4,000 feet apart on the runways at JMTIDE and JMADD. The author has been unsuccessful in attempts to discover why no serious protest appears to have been made over the rejection of Trinidad on the basis of the airstrip. The field was 4,000' x 120'.

~~Interestingly enough, a photo analysis of the Playa Giron area in October 1960 reported only a 2,500 foot patch with landing strip, but by April 1961 this had been extended to 4,000 feet. (2)~~

Correct figures are 4000' x 120'

4000' x 120'
The Trinidad airstrip was reported to be ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ excellent condition and capable of handling C-54's. ~~TOP SECRET~~

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Group on 8 and 15 December 1960, the issue of spoiling raids and tactical air operations out of Puerto Cabezas had been raised, but not resolved; and in planning for the 5 January 1961 meeting, Tracy Barnes was instructed to ask the Special Group for approval for air strikes beginning on D-1. 2/ The need for such a strike ^{also} had been advanced as early as 16 January, by the Department of Defense, when the Joint Staff reviewed the Agency's thinking about the operation against Castro. The actual responsibility for incorporating the D-2 air strike into the ZAPATA plan as it finally evolved has been a subject of some speculation; but it appears clear that Col. Jack Hawkins, Richard Bissell, and C. Tracy Barnes were responsible for devising the D-2 strike and the "defector" story that went with it. 3/ None of the principal air officers -- Thorsrud, Gaines, Beerli, Campbell -- nor Chief WH/4 was able to pinpoint the actual individual or time when the decision was made that the inclusion of a pre-D-Day air strike was essential to the success of the operation.

The records provide evidence that the push for a pre-D-Day air strike received strong support from McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's National Security

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Adviser. In a most interesting Memorandum to the President, dated 15 March 1961, during the period when the Agency, and JCS were in the process of revising the TRINIDAD plan, Mr. Bundy noted among other things that:

Even the revised landing plan depends strongly upon prompt action against Castro's air. The question in my mind is whether we cannot solve this problem by having the air strike come some little time before the invasion. A group of patriotic airplanes flying from Nicaraguan bases might knock out Castro's air force in a single day without anyone knowing (for some time) where they came from, and with nothing to prove that it was not an interior rebellion by the Cuban Air Force, which has been of very doubtful loyalty in the past; the pilots will in fact be members of the Cuban Air Force who went into the opposition some time ago. Then the invasion could come as a separate enterprise, and neither the air strike, nor the quiet landing of patriots would in itself give Castro anything to take to the United Nations. 4/

This recommendation by Bundy was undoubtedly the result of his contacts with Hawkins and Bissell. In his May 1961 post-mortem of the operation, Hawkins claimed that both the pre-D-Day and D-Day strike concepts went to the President; and in response to a query on the subject, Mr. Bissell could not recall whether the plans went directly to President Kennedy

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or "some of his [JFK's] principal aides." McGeorge Bundy was probably the recipient of the Hawkins-Bissell message calling for two strikes, for Bundy wrote:

I have been a skeptic about Bissell's [Cuban] operation, but now I think we are on the edge of a good answer. I think that Bissell and Hawkins have done an honorable job of meeting the proper criticisms and cautions of the Department of State. 5/*

There is, however, evidence to indicate that President Kennedy himself was involved at least twice -- on 5 and 6 April 1961 -- in discussions of the planned defection operation and the concomitant pre-D-Day air strike. David W. Gray** specified that on 5 April, the President, Secretary McNamara, General Lemnitzer, and State and CIA representatives met at the White House and discussed, among other things, "fake defections and preliminary [air] strikes." 5a/

* In response to a question concerning the validity of Hawkins's statement that he (Hawkins), Bissell, and Barnes had originated the D-2 strike and defector operation and that the President had been briefed on both D-2 and D-Day strike plans, Bissell told Sherman Kent (on 23-24 March 1977) that Hawkins was correct, except as noted above, that Bissell could not recall if it was the President or "some of his principal aides" who had been given the detailed plans.

** Major General (USA), Chief, Subsidiary Activities Division, J-5, and the JCS liaison officer with the JMATE project.

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In reference to 6 April, Gray did not list the participants; and he reported that Bissell outlined the defection plans, with air strikes and diversionary landings. 5b/

In another reference to "results of meetings with the President on 4, 5, and 6 April," Gray stated that "Planned 'Defection' air strikes" had forced revisions in the CIA plan. 5c/*

It is difficult in retrospect, to understand, how one of Bundy's position, could seriously believe that the mounting of a tactical air strike would not be used against the United States in the ^{UN} ~~UN~~ forum by Castro. Certainly there had been enough publicity on the training efforts in both Guatemala and Nicaragua and on US support for the FRD's anti-Castro efforts to indicate that the White House Staff had not done its homework if, in fact, Bundy really believed the US would not be held culpable. Bundy's reference to the possibility of "a quiet landing" -- per the structure of Secretary Rusk -- also seems to offer a placebo

* During the period 5-7 April 1961, Jack Hawkins, [redacted] (WH/4/CI), Dick Drain (C/OPS/WH/4), and Mr. Bissell, among others, appear to have been most closely involved in planning the B-26 defection-deception operation. 5d/

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for the President. Even without an accompanying air strike, how could a landing of 800 - 1,200 men with tanks, heavy machine guns, mortars, and recoilless rifles be considered quiet?

Although uncertain concerning the origin of the D-2 and defector plan, both George Gaines and Stanley Beerli of DPD recalled that they were firmly in favor of the idea. Gaines who was Chief of Air Operations for DPD on Project JMATE stated:

We wanted something to insure success of the absolute, total annihilation of retaliatory capability when we put our troops ashore. One strike early in the morning we didn't think was sufficient to guarantee the degree of success that we needed. So several schemes were proposed, and we checked them; and finally we decided that -- and I think the decision actually was made in Bissell's office -- that what we would do would be to pursue the course of a fake Cuban Air Force defection. We had intelligence enough available to us that we knew the names of the people who still were active -- even though they may have been part of a dissident element to some degree -- they were still active in [the] Cuban Air Force. So we decided what we would do was stage, very near to the time of the actual strike, a fake defection. Purportedly one of Castro's own pilots would become disgruntled, and take an aircraft, shoot up his own Air Force facilities, and seek asylum in the US. The damage done during that fake strike would give us the insurance that we

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needed. In other words, whatever damage we could do -- we were hoping for something around 50% -- if we could knock out 50% on that strike, then when we went in with our morning strike, just a couple of days later, we could be more sure of getting everything that could hurt the ground troops and the ships. The timing was arranged that closely to the actual landing because it would keep -- the short period of time -- would keep the analysis of the overall damage from being complete by the time the total invasion occurred. We were going to hit three, not one ... which would purportedly have been his act [the notional defector]. We are going to hit three bases [Libertad, San Antonio, and Santiago]
.....
I think there were several of us that thought that we needed a little bit more of an edge than putting all our eggs in one basket for that one strike to be totally successful. I was one of the people who was apprehensive about trying to guarantee 100% success with one effort, and I think that the discussion among us ... we sort of ... this decision evolved. 6/

Gaines's opinion is supported by Stan Beerli, who was the Acting Chief of DPD, during the course of Project JMATE. Beerli, for example, noted:

I think we determined that ... if we could have an air strike on D-2, and then follow it up with an air strike after we had an assessment, that we could accomplish the air control mission. But, we would like to have had an air strike ... maybe we wanted air strikes ... maybe

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as far back as D-6. But ... you risk your covert operation when you start doing that ... You couldn't depend on doing it all at one ... on one strike. In other words, if you would like to establish the fact that you have control of the air before you hit the beaches. You have got to go before D-Day, unless you are prepared for air-to-air combat -- which we were not. The thing is, I don't think the air operation really ever got seriously nailed down to a schedule until after we went to the second landing site. You see, the air people would like to have gone in and neutralized it all before the ground force was there. But, of course, ... you start compromising your covertness ... What you did was to alert the world press that something was probably going on. In other words, we couldn't do everything we desired to do to guarantee neutralizing the Cuban Air Force in one day. 7/

Unlike Cols. Beerli and Gaines, Gar Thorsrud, who was Air Commander at JMTIDE, and would be responsible for setting the tactical air operations into motion, was far more optimistic about what might have been attained by the single D-Day air strike using the full force of B-26's as originally intended. Thorsrud said:

The tactical strikes -- or if you want to call them strategic -- really didn't matter whether it was TRINIDAD or Playa Giron, because we had to knock out the air -- the enemy air capabilities, and I was in on the tactical planning on how we hit those fields. The time of day, and the type of weapons that we were going to use. That was for the first day of the operation. That was to go in simultaneously

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with the invasion, and we had napalm earmarked for the 75 tanks that were lined up on the soccer field, and we had .50 calibers -- the 8 gun nose B-26's, which was a helluva lot of fire power -- to hit the parked aircraft ... There was just no doubt in anyone's mind that, with the element of surprise, at the crack of dawn that first day, that there wouldn't have been anything left on those ... on any of those fields. 8/*

With the decision made that there would be a pre-invasion strike on D-2, it is easier to understand the reason for the intensification of the training activity as the air operation was moved from JMADD to JMTIDE. That the Cuban crews were ready to undertake tactical air operations, had been attested to by both George Gaines and Gar Thorsrud. Gaines made quite a point of the increased capability of the B-26 contingent, noting:

The B-26 capability -- combat capability -- was exceptional. They had come

* It was not until he was reviewing this volume that Thorsrud learned of the origin of the D-2 effort. He was highly incensed to learn that such a strike was being considered even as he was being appointed air commander for TIDE and MADD on 24 March 1961. Thorsrud claimed that the first he heard of the plan was when notification of its approval was cabled to him as a *fait accompli*. As the only Agency staffer who had first hand experience in a similar air effort --

-- Thorsrud said he was either ignored or forgotten by the Headquarters planners. To say he was unhappy to learn how the decision was made is an understatement!

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from the last place in combat capability, as far as proficiency was concerned, to what I would consider first place among the three airplanes -- the 46, the 54, and the B-26. They were good. Now, the American Air Staff -- USAF -- didn't realize how good they were, and probably doesn't to this day; but they were unusually good combat crews. They had not had any seasoning in combat, so when I say they were unusually good, I'm not talking about the psychological factors that go into combat. I'm talking about the technical proficiency in putting the gun on a target and bomb on a target. They didn't have the guts that an American would have displayed, but on the other hand, they might have had a little bit more intelligence than the average American combat pilot. When they were asked to fly in sorties up to the beach and provide some cover for the people on the ground, the Cubans didn't want to do it because of the danger; and so the Americans volunteered to do it, and we lost some. The C-54's and C-46's ... for a long time, the 54's were the prima donnas of our entire Cuban Air Force -- the Brigade air force -- because ... a lot of them were ex-Cubana Air Lines [pilots], and capable. [They] were sort of looked up to as the old senior pilots with ... thousands of hours. But, as time went on, the C-46 people got more and more proficient too; and they turned out to be kind of brash, johnny-come-latelys who really did a good job. I would say the C-54's turned out to be technically competent, and the C-46 people were much better than would originally have been expected. 9/*

* Like Thorsrud and Gaines, Stan Beerli also was high on the technical competence of the Cuban pilots. More than the others, however, Beerli did indicate some (footnote continued on following page)

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Within the first week of the move to JMTIDE, and the rush into the final training activity in anticipation of D-2, Gar Thorsrud received a set of final instructions concerning the B-26 operations. The nature of these instructions emphasized that complete authority for target selection, except for tactical close support targets assigned by the Brigade Commander on the beach, would reside at Headquarters. It was stressed that B-26 aircraft commanders should understand this, because deviation from Headquarters authorized targets "could jeopardize the entire operation. Innocent victims or non-tactical target destruction can bring world reaction and/or intervention against this effort." 11/*

In addition to the final instructions for the Air Commander of JMTIDE, there was a continuing

reservation about the emotional makeup of the Cuban crews for tactical air operations. For this reason, he was more sympathetic to the frequent requests from the field for the authority to use US pilots during the course of air operations -- even before the tactical air operations began. 10/

* Complete text of these final instructions appears in Appendix 5.

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flurry of activity regarding the risk of capture briefing materials that were forwarded for the Cuban crews. There were instructions that this information also be passed on to the American crews in case they were used in the combat areas; and there was an on-going hassle over the number of aircraft that would be involved in the initial strike at the three airfields -- Libertad, San Antonio, and Santiago. Initially it was planned to use a total of six B-26's, two at each of the three fields. As will be noted later, when the plan matured, Headquarters did agree to assign three B-26's to attack both Libertad and San Antonio, with the remaining two aircraft being sent to Santiago. An additional B-26 was assigned as a spare in case of mechanical failure of one of the eight attacking aircraft, and a tenth B-26 was assigned to the "defector" operation which will be discussed later.

There also was a deception aspect built into the planned attack on the Libertad and San Antonio airfields. Two of the three B-26's assigned to Libertad and two of the three assigned to San Antonio would bear identical tail numbers. At each airfield, two

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aircraft with unidentical tail numbers would make the first strikes, and then the third aircraft -- with an identical tail number to one of the other aircraft -- would make its pass. The theory was that this would make the Cubans believe that a total of only four aircraft were engaged in the strike at San Antonio and Libertad. In fact, this proved to be the case at least for a few days; for Castro, in his 23 April 1961 TV spectacular on the invasion, specified that there had been two aircraft at each of the three airfields. 12/*

Another of the problems that faced the planners of the D-2 operation concerned procedures regarding both US Navy and US Air Force aircraft. USN aircraft operating in the area of Nicaragua and Cuba during the initiation of tactical air operations were advised to stay clear of both the south coast of Cuba and of Nicaraguan air space. TIDE reported that Nicaraguan Air Force P-51's had been alerted to intercept any nonscheduled aircraft approaching the TIDE base.

* Castro observed the attack on Libertad from the nearby General Staff quarters where he was attending a meeting.

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Technically the Nicaraguan pilots were supposed to provide warning before shooting at strange aircraft, but TIDE suggested that it would be advisable not to tempt them.

With reference to the coastal areas of Cuba, TIDE pointed out that there had been at least two instances where USN aircraft had strayed over Cuban territory and had been lost. In one instance "One [USN plane] shot down by rebel forces backed by KUBARK." 13/*

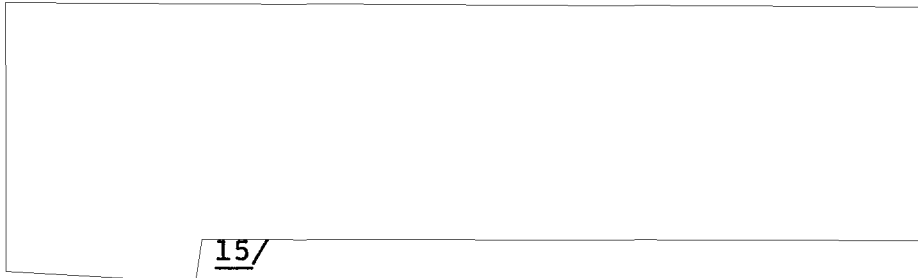
A set of rules had been delivered to the Commander in Chief, Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) providing rules for identification and engagement at the time that the Cuban air operations were being monitored out of Nicaragua. The main concerns of CONAD were to prevent Castro's aircraft from entering United States air space for possible attack under the guise of Brigade aircraft and to prevent the destruction of Brigade aircraft, which might be headed for the United States air space on an emergency basis. 14/

* Whether the information about the shoot down of the USN aircraft by Agency-backed rebels in Cuba has ever been revealed, is not known.

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In the context of possible violations of air space by Brigade aircraft being forced to make emergency landings, Headquarters told TIDE that:



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The planned air operation for D-2 was not finally set until 14 April 1961 at 2100Z, when a message to TIDE from the Director specified the commitment of eight aircraft against three airfields, the airborne spare in case of an abort of an aircraft assigned to either San Antonio or Libertad, and one aircraft for the special defection operation. 16/ As mentioned, there had been considerable niggling between Headquarters and the field in the period 12-14 April for the assignment of a third aircraft at both San Antonio and Libertad. Gar Thorsrud was very much concerned about the need for the extra aircraft, and then Lt. Col. Gaines arrived at JMTIDE to conduct the final briefings for the upcoming air strike, he too was convinced; and, consequently, the decision finally was made favorable

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to the wishes of the Air Commander at JMTIDE. 17/

On 10 April 1961, Lt. Col. George Gaines was at JMTIDE to begin the briefings for CIA staff personnel and advisers on the D-2 and D-Day air targets. The briefings began at 1300 in the afternoon, continued through that day and on through 11 April until the final preparations for the attack plan were worked out. On 12 April, the six Cuban combat crews, plus the spare crew, chosen for the D-2 strike, were moved into isolation -- an area surrounded by concertina wire adjacent to the operations compound and guarded by two security officers. Here, they were given a general operations and intelligence briefing and the crews were assigned to the individual targets. Beginning at 0800 local time on 12 April, the crews studied the targets with the advisers and intelligence officers in a series of two hours on - one hour off sessions throughout the day. 18/ Each crew was called on to present its attack plan for a specific target from memory, and Col. Gaines said the system worked well:

We had the Cuban pilots go over and over and over their role, and striking those three bases, to the point where

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they knew exactly from what compass headings they were to arrive at the base and when they switched from 50 calibers to bombs and when they switched from bombs back to 50 calibers ... Which direction they pulled up in ... Whether they made a 90 or 270[?] degree turn to come back in on their second run. They could do it in their sleep, they had done it so many times on photographs ... aerial photographs. We got an unexpected amount of damage because they had followed their briefing right down to the "T" ... I think if we could go back and look at the training that they had received and the job that they did ... they did a job on those three air bases that our first line American fighter pilots would have been proud to claim as their own handiwork. 19/

1? consistent with Davis comments + 507. (44.183-184)?

The crews were served their meals within this isolation compound; and if they had to leave the area, they were accompanied by their operations advisers and security personnel. A cable going back to Headquarters from TIDE on 13 April 1961 at 0953Z made the following comment about the Cuban air crews:

Concensus [*sic*] here that crews were highly motivated and appear eager for strike. Morale could not be higher. Selection of crews was very competitive, as all 17 crews volunteered. As for combat readiness, believe this group could compete with any comparable selection USAF pilots. 20/

This cable was probably prepared by Lt. Col. George Gaines, and it is interesting to note that there

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was a rather significant modification of the language which appeared in this cable from Col. Jack Hawkins's cable from TIDE of the same date (but at 1802Z) in response to a Headquarters request concerning the readiness of the Cuban Brigade. In the much publicized cable of 13 April 1961 Hawkins stated among other things the following:

Germosen [Lt. Col. George Gaines, USAF] informed me today that he considers the B-26 squadron equal to the best US Air Force squadron. 21/

The "best US Air Force squadron" is not necessarily the same as "any comparable selection USAF pilots."

Eddy Ferrer, although not a B-26 pilot, wrote that the whole situation surrounding the target briefings highly irritated the Cubans. He pointed out that when the Constellation carrying the VIP contingent arrived, they met exclusively with US personnel to lay out the strike plan. Ferrer says that the Cubans were totally excluded and ignored, despite the fact that it was their country, their fight, and, moreover, they had a better knowledge of the terrain and the people than the Americans who were taking full charge of the show. Ferrer stressed that there were nearly

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20 ex-Cuban Air Force and ex-Navy pilots at TIDE, whose expertise was completely ignored in the initial stages of the briefing and planning operation. Ferrer, too, pointed out that when volunteers were requested, all of the B-26 crews stepped forward. Unfortunately Ferrer said that the feeling among the Cubans was that the Americans regarded anyone from south of the US border down to Patagonia as "uncivilized, savage Indians." The eight Cubans who were not selected were particularly critical. Although it cannot be confirmed, Ferrer also reported that Gen. Reid Doster had lost his composure and had thrown his flight bag against the wall, cursing out the Headquarters idiots who had conceived of the D-2 air strike employing only eight B-26's. 22/

As a C-46 pilot, Ferrer had not been a participant in the briefings for the B-26 bomber pilots, however, Connie Seigris's comments on the briefings tend to support some of the reactions that were stressed by Ferrer. Seigris wrote:

There was a Staff briefing for our Staff personnel first. I was not invited -- I was not Staff. There was some VIP from D.C. that gave this briefing. I

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always thought it was Mr. Bissell, but again I am not sure.* The VIP left, and Gar and Gaines gave we management personnel our briefing. Gen. Doster from ANG attended, along with myself, the troop commander (American) [Col. Egan], and someone else I don't remember.

I do recall vividly, I objected to the plan. The reason was because of the stand down period. I felt we could only win by striking hard and fast, day and night, and could gain victory in 48 hours. I felt the 2 day stand down would prove our undoing as it would permit Mr. Castro the time he needed to organize his air and ground, and become unbeatable. *Col. Gaines informed me the plans were made by brilliant people, and it wasn't our duty to pick the plan apart, but to abide by it. I was sick at heart and have never forgotten that moment I learned of the 2-day stand down. It was like working for a traitor and, yet, not knowing who the traitor was. I just could not believe our Joint Chiefs would permit our President to go ahead with that part of the plan.*

I had made friends with the Cubans, and they came to me afterwards actually crying and very upset when they found out about the stand down. They expected me to explain this -- I could not -- it was an impossible situation for me. I have never felt worse or more hopeless. 23/**

* Carlos Rivero, author of *Los Sabrinos del Tio Sam* (Havana, 1976, p. 98), also claimed that Bissell, "who always kept his identity secret," was at the briefings; but Bissell was not in attendance. Possibly the VIP in question was Colonel Hawkins.

** Emphasis by author.

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The commitment of the D-2 air strike was to destroy Castro's air force. One of the persistent questions concerning that air strike was whether Castro's T-33's were the specific targets for the attack. The plan of attack, however, called for the destruction of all combat, or potential combat, aircraft. Both Gar Thorsrud and George Gaines clearly recognized the superiority of the T-33 to any of the aircraft that the Brigade would be mounting, and the fact is that when the D-2 airstrike was set up, all of Castro's operable T-33's were believed to be located at the three airfields which made up the D-2 targets. Stan Beerli, however, was quite emphatic about the nature of the planned air attack on D-2, with regard to the T-33's saying:

If you had said prior to the mission [D-2], had we made a specific point to go after the T-33's, the answer is no. 24/

The question of the T-33's as primary targets is mentioned at this point because both Richard Bissell and Stanley Beerli apparently indicated to the Taylor Committee during the post-invasion investigation that among the reasons for the defeat was an underestimation of Castro's air capability and, particularly, a

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belief that the T-33's were not armed. 25/*

Before discussing the actual strike on 15 April 1961, the second aspect of the D-2 operation must be explained ... that is, the planned "defector" operation. The scenario for JMFURY -- the crypt which was assigned to this particular aspect of the project -- read in part as follows:

At or about 0800Z (0300 EST), on Friday 14 April [1961], a Cuban pilot, selected from the group now on alert in TIDE, will depart TIDE in a specially prepared B-26 for a point 15-20 miles off the coast of Cuba.** He will arrive at this point, at or about 0610 (local). He will then fly

* No satisfactory explanation is found in the record for either man having this particular belief. Beerli admittedly recognized the fact that the T-33 was a trainer; but as DOD had pointed out in response to an Agency request, the planes were equipped with two .50 caliber machine guns. Perhaps both men were too far from the actual air operations to be fully briefed on all of the details of the air equipment, but this seems doubtful in view of the serious debates which had taken place concerning the choice of aircraft to be employed by the exile Brigade facing opposition from Castro's T-33's and Sea Furies. Unfortunately, however, in its final report on the Bay of Pigs, the Taylor Committee did fault "the intelligence ... as to the evaluation ~~of~~ effectiveness of the T-33's." 25a/

of the

** The date for the pre-D-Day air strike had initially been set for D-3 (14 April 1961), but on 12 April 1961, Headquarters notified TIDE that the JMFURY project had been set back to D-2 or 15 April 1961. 26/

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to Miami International Airport. Time of arrival will be at or about 0740 (local). He will send a "MAY DAY" distress signal while off the Florida coast and inform US authorities that he has defected from the Cuban Air Force, is having engine trouble, must land in Miami, and requests asylum. The US Customs and Immigration and Naturalization authorities will take him in hand after landing. The pilot will inform these authorities that he defected from the San Antonio de los Banos airbase; that he had, before leaving the area, attacked this base; that two colleagues had also defected (from Campo Libertad base), and had attacked other Cuban air bases.

The pilot will be held under maximum security for his protection; a press interview will be scheduled in which he will answer questions along lines set forth in preliminary briefings. He will be escorted that night by black flight from the United States to TIDE, by KUSODA [Security] personnel. 27/

Both pilot and aircraft were to be reamed, steamed, dry cleaned, sterilized, and sanitized in order to make it appear that a legitimate defection from Castro's Cuba had occurred. The aircraft itself was to be painted identically to the B-26's of the FAR (Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria), and it was also to be given a tail number identical to one of those used on a particular Castro B-26 which was known to be inactive at the time. The pilot would be chosen on the basis of

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"individual motivation, emotional reliability, and security awareness, as currently adjudged and on the basis of DPD's extensive period of work with these pilots." 28/ According to the scenario, none of the pilot's colleagues would know the details of this mission, either before or after its completion. His return to JMTIDE would be by a C-46, which would be stationed at Miami, and upon his return to the Air Base at TIDE, it would only be stated that he had been damaged by gunfire, and this was the explanation for his return by the C-46.

In terms of the down time at Miami, pilot Garcia (a phony name dreamed up for the pilot) would be under the control of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officers who were briefed about the operation to the extent necessary to insure the security of the activity. The pilot would be debriefed and held in custody by the INS; and his cover story and such briefing as INS was directed to permit, would be totally in Spanish. INS was told to prohibit all picture taking, and nothing was to be said about the relatives or friends of the pilot. In addition to deceiving the other Cuban fliers, Agency personnel

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at the JMWAVE Base also would be in the dark as to the identity of the supposed defector. 29/

Once the plane landed at Miami International, David Phillips, Chief, WH/4 Propaganda was to call the base and tell them that he had received a report that a Cuban military aircraft had landed somewhere in the Miami area and asked the base personnel to check out this lead and to get the full press coverage of the incident.*

In addition to the high standards which the pilot had to meet, the project outline appealed to the pilot to keep his mouth shut out of respect for the success of the operation which was upcoming -- and perhaps not incidentally, a sum of \$10,000 was

* In his book, *The Night Watch*, published subsequent to his retirement, Mr. Phillips claimed that about 13 April 1961, "Abruptly I became involved in the air action ... It was my assignment during the next 24 hours to stage manage the incredible charade." 30/ From the record, there is no question that Phillips probably contributed significantly to preparing questions (in Spanish) to ready pilot "Garcia" for questions by US reporters, but he implies a larger role in this episode than can be supported. Also, as noted later, Phillips story is in error when he states that there were to be two "defectors" -- one in Miami and one to Key West.

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to be deposited for him in a New York bank. He could withdraw the money on the basis of a personal check at the rate of \$2,000 a year for a five year period if, according to the scenario "over this five year span ... no word on the deception aspects of the mission leaks out." 31/* One further incentive to the chosen pilot was that his children, if any, or his first two, were to be educated in the United States at company expense.

In charge of this deception operation for DPD, was Casimiro Barquin, who apparently huddled with the chosen pilot, Mario Zuniga, in isolation from the eight crews who were being briefed for the airfield missions. According to at least one report, Barquin was in charge of makeup and disguise for Zuniga, in case he should be inadvertently photographed while down in Miami. The aircraft itself, in addition to being painted to resemble the FAR B-26's, was to be given a weather-beaten look, by rubbing the markings

* On 18 April 1961, the Chief, WH/4/CI requested that such an account for Zuniga be opened in a New York bank. 32/ Presumably the pilot collected the full amount.

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with dirt, holes were to be punched in it, to simulate bullet holes, and phony maintenance logs and litter similar to that traditionally found on Cuban military aircraft were to be included in the B-26 that Zuniga flew into Miami International. According to Eddy Ferrer, the cowlings were taken off the engines of the B-26 and shot full of holes. They were then replaced over the engines. When Zuniga went into Miami, these at least would appear realistic. 33/

On a course that would take him over a less dangerous part of Cuba enroute to Miami, Zuniga was also to fire the eight .50 calibers that were mounted on the B-26. One unconfirmed story indicates that he may have failed to do this, and when the plane was spotted by reporters in Miami International, the muzzle covers were still on the guns.*

Before turning to the story of the actual D-2 operations -- both deception and tactical attack --

* The author has not been able to establish the validity of this story. It seems inconceivable, however, with the attention being given to the aircraft that such a stupid mistake could have occurred. Phillips, *The Night Watch* (p. 106), also repeats this story.

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mention should also be made of another interesting deception operation which never materialized. Shortly after noon on 14 April 1961, Headquarters received a cable from TIDE, originating with Col. Hawkins which read as follows:

Request large scale sonic booms over Capital [*sic*] night following JMFURY and over other major cities if feasible same night. Suggest arrange with Col. Clarke, USAF, at Pentagon, through Gen. Gray. 34/

Based on the author's interview with Richard D. Drain, who was Chief, Operations from WH/4 at this time, the rationale for the sonic boom was that:

We were trying to create confusion, and so on. I thought a sonic boom would be a helluva swell thing, you know. Great ... Let's see what it does ... break all the windows in downtown Havana ... distract Castro. I remember briefing the appropriate authorities in the Department of State about this, because they had to know about it -- I don't quite know why --, and "yes, Gen. LeMay, I can tell you exactly who turned that down -- Department Assistant Secretary of State Wymberly Coerr" ... and LeMay said, "Thank you very much, young man. Now can you tell me why that sonofabitch turned it down?" I said, "No sir, General, the reasoning was unclear to me, but it had something to do with Berlin." LeMay said, "Jesus Christ!" and slams the phone down; and frankly that was typical of the Department ... So I told LeMay in answer to his question ... "Sure, I know who turned it down in

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State." He [LeMay] obviously never got it unturned, because we had no sonic boom. 35/*

The D-2 air strike at San Antonio, Libertad, and Santiago was based on a targeting operation that had been conducted at Headquarters, an operation in which both Cols. Beerli and Gaines played a most active role.** According to Stan Beerli

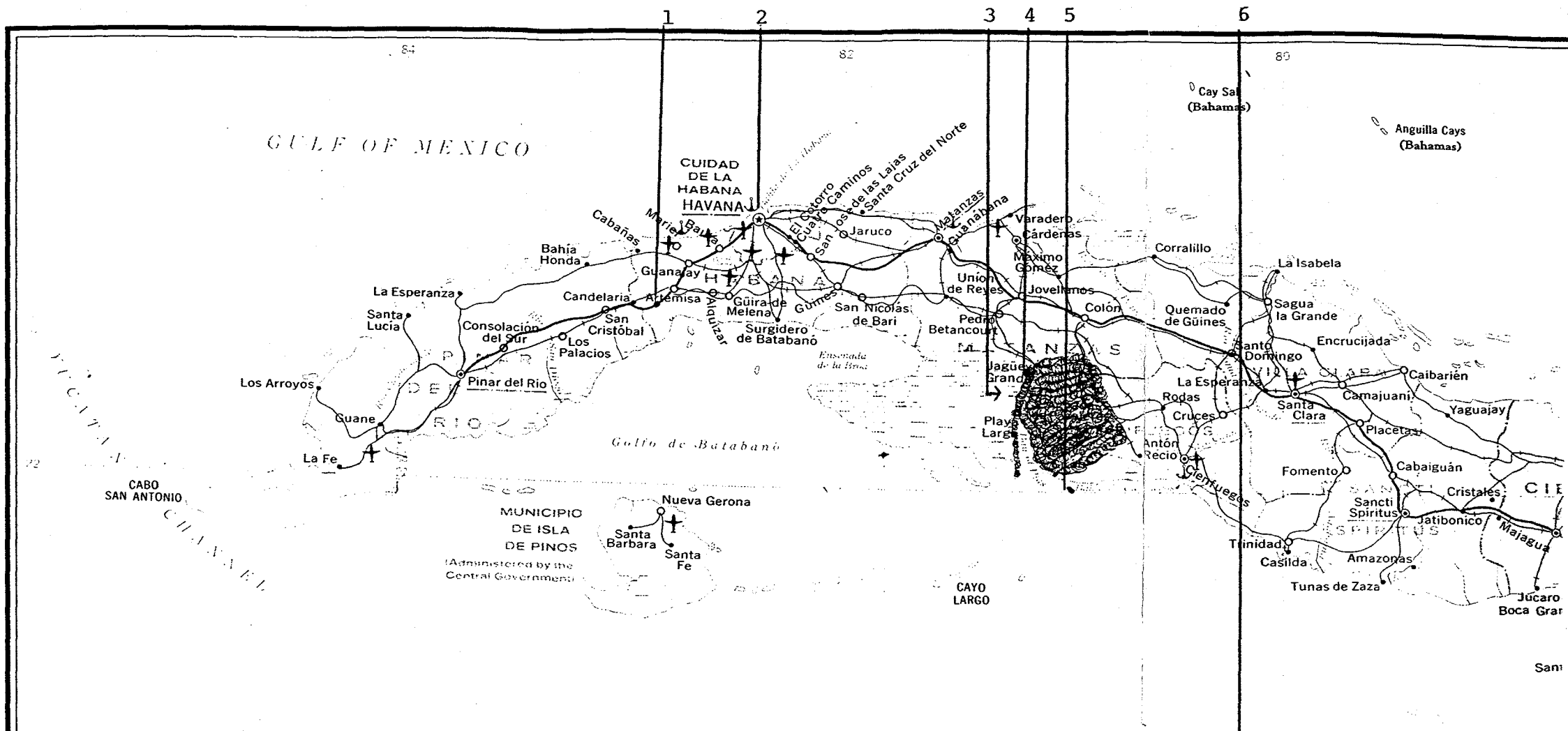
We did that [target planning] right there in Washington, based on U-2 photography and prime intelligence ... knowing where everything was ... and at that time, the priority was on the Cuban Air Force. 36/

* An unsigned chronology of events related to the Bay of Pigs, dated 23 April 1961 and submitted to the Taylor Committee by the Agency, noted among other items that on 14 April 1961: "Consulted General Cabell, Mr. Bissell, and Mr. Braddock in State re using sonic boom. Mr. Braddock said Acting Assistant Secretary Coerr could not approve as too obviously U.S." 35a/

It is probable that this chronology was prepared by Richard D. Drain, C/OPS/WH4, from his personal notes. For 23 April 1961, Drain noted that he came to the office "to do Chrono record for diary." On 14 April 1961, Drain wrote that among other items, "Consulted Cabell, Dan Braddock, Bissell re sonic boom." 35b/ The need to prepare the Chronology for the Taylor Committee triggered the additional information about Assistant Secretary Coerr which otherwise might have been lost to the historian working exclusively from the written record left by COPS/WH/4.

** See map following p. 206.

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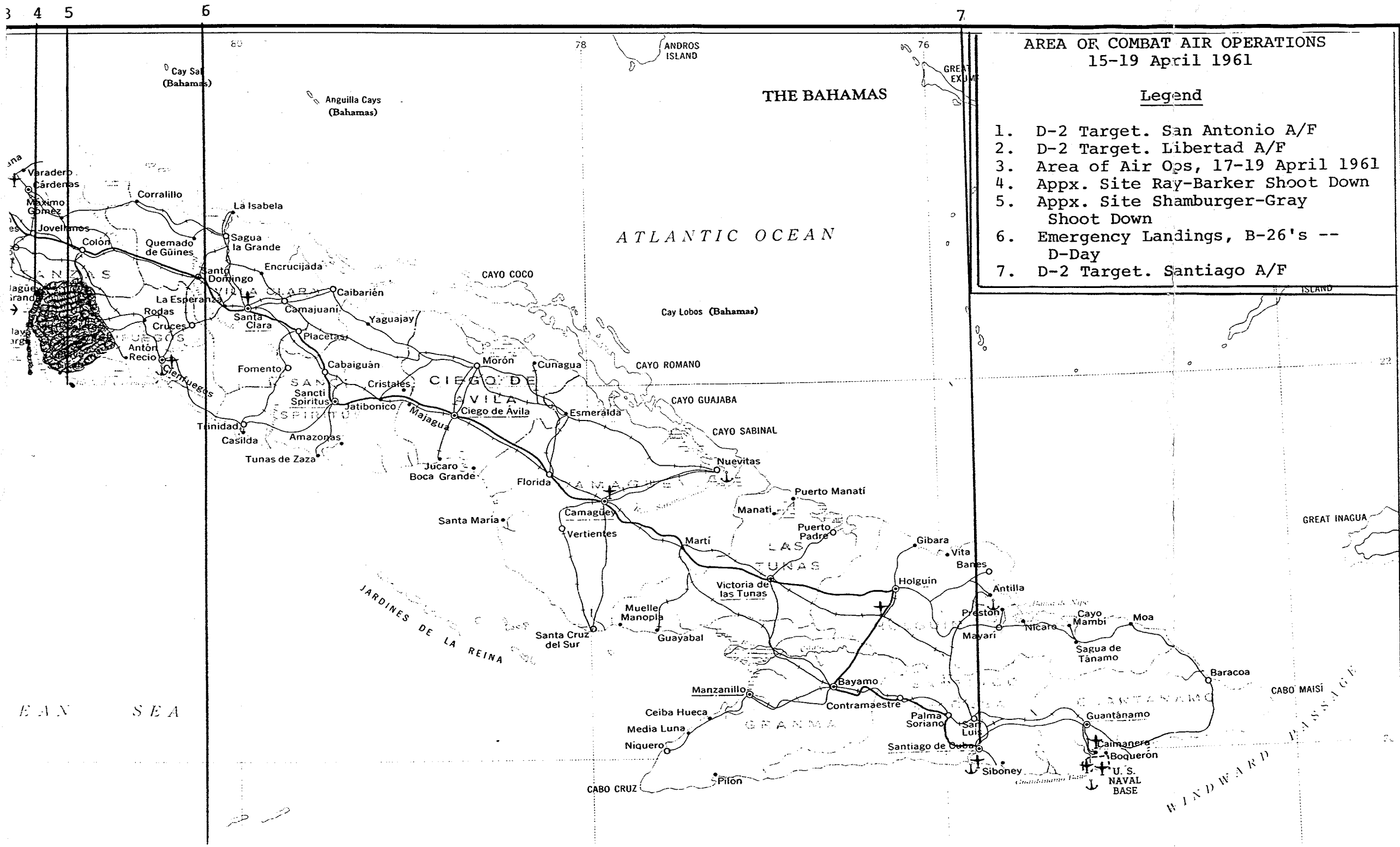
CUBA

<p>----- Provincia boundary</p> <p>⊕ National capital</p> <p>Matanzas Provincia capital</p> <p>✈ Airfield</p>	<p>⊕⊕⊕ Railroad</p> <p>———— Central highway</p> <p>———— Other surfaced road</p> <p>↓ Major port</p>
---	---

Populated places

- ⊙ Over 50,000
- 10,000 to 50,000
- Under 10,000

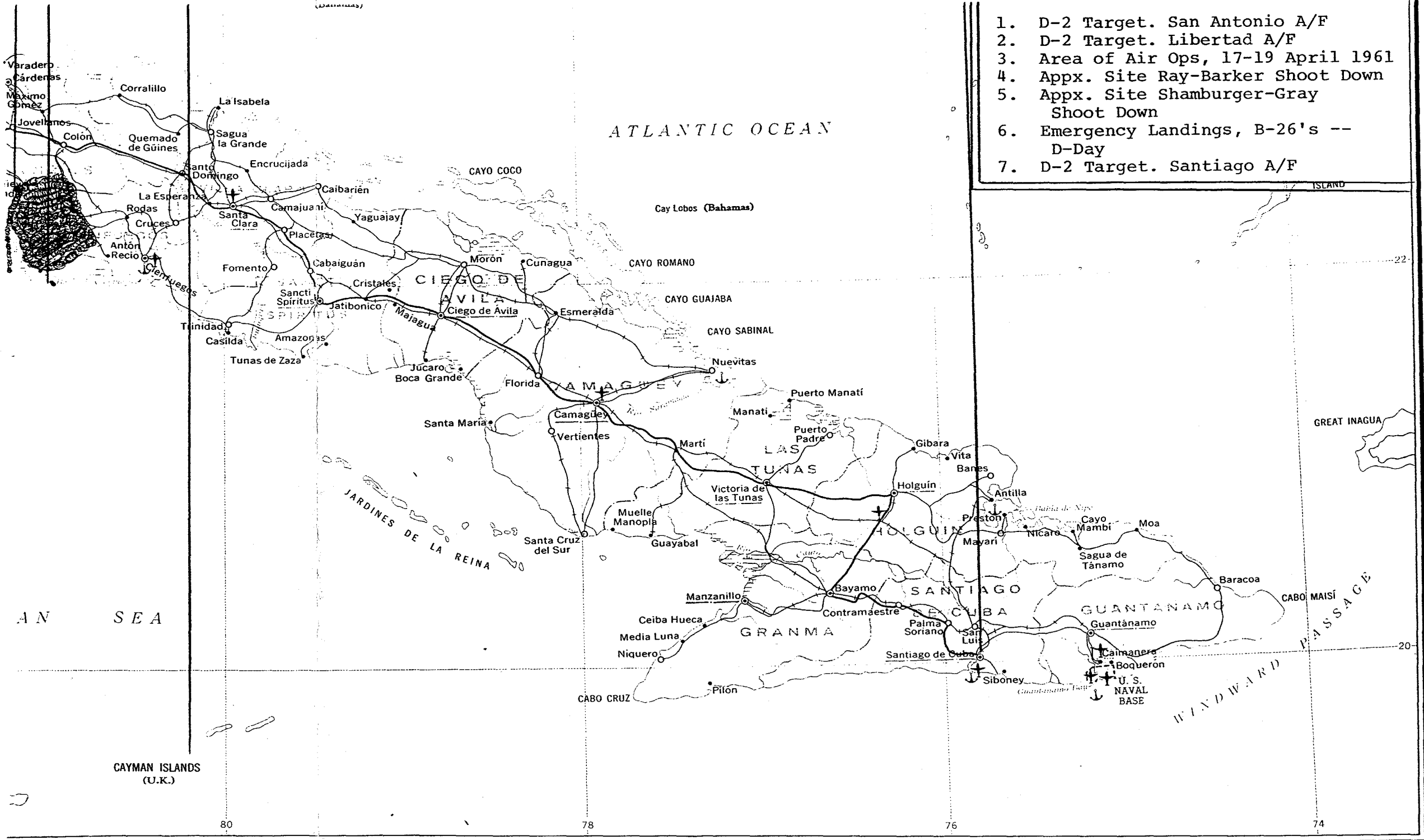
Scale 1:2,450,000



AREA OF COMBAT AIR OPERATIONS
15-19 April 1961

Legend

1. D-2 Target. San Antonio A/F
2. D-2 Target. Libertad A/F
3. Area of Air Ops, 17-19 April 1961
4. Appx. Site Ray-Barker Shoot Down
5. Appx. Site Shamburger-Gray Shoot Down
6. Emergency Landings, B-26's -- D-Day
7. D-2 Target. Santiago A/F



1. D-2 Target. San Antonio A/F
2. D-2 Target. Libertad A/F
3. Area of Air Ops, 17-19 April 1961
4. Appx. Site Ray-Barker Shoot Down
5. Appx. Site Shamburger-Gray Shoot Down
6. Emergency Landings, B-26's -- D-Day
7. D-2 Target. Santiago A/F

CAYMAN ISLANDS (U.K.)

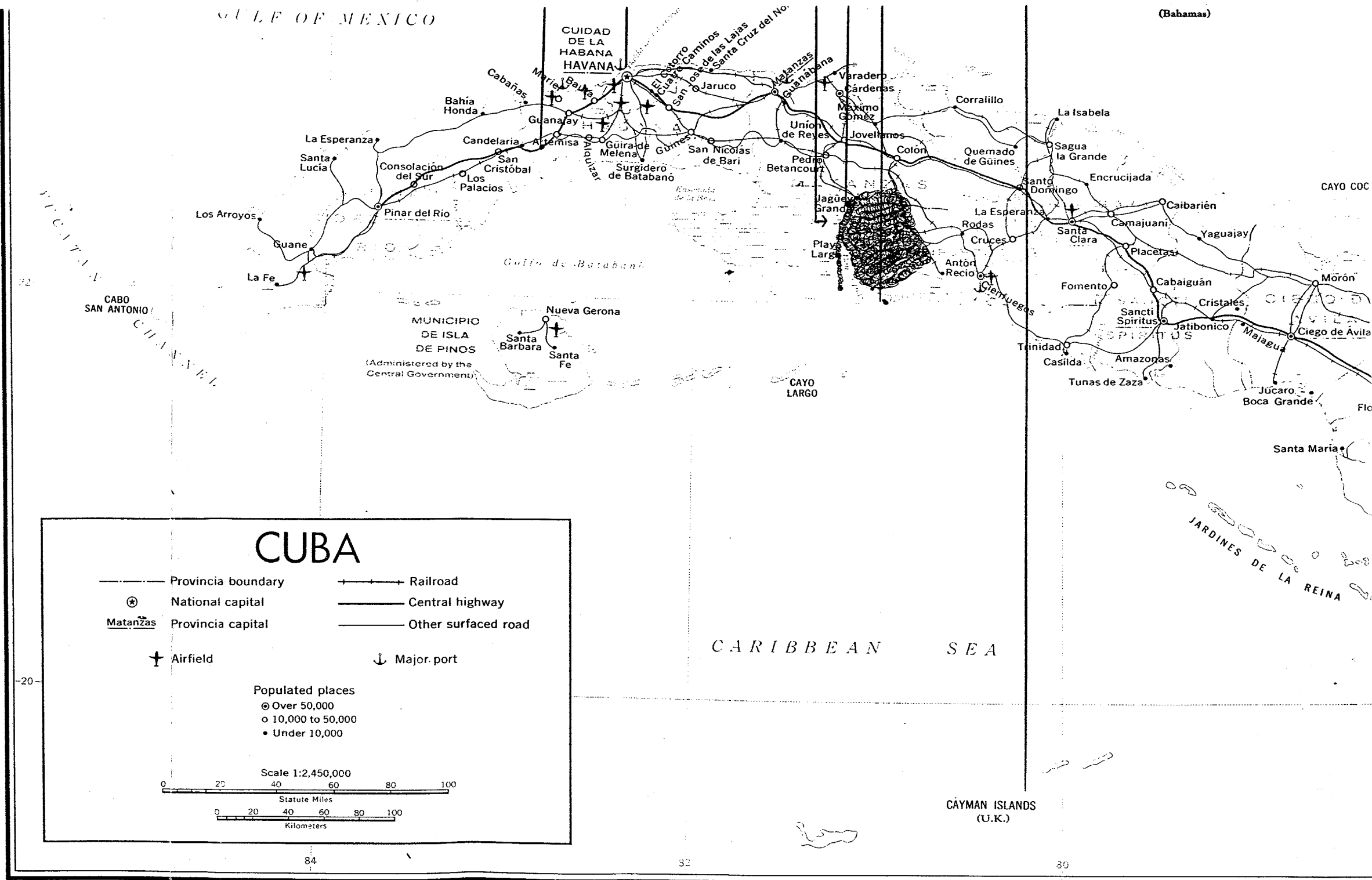
WINDWARD PASSAGE

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Beerli also stated:

The one big concern that I remember we were preoccupied with, but could do nothing about ... we knew where their aircraft were and we had designed a number of missions that had to be flown to knock these out. But we were concerned that maybe what they would do after the first mission was to take the [undamaged] ones and deploy them ... especially, go into the Havana International Airport, and then we would have their aircraft mixed in with the airliners. That would really have given us a problem. 37/

The best available U-2 photography of the three Cuban airfields had been taken on 11 and 13 April 1961. On 13 April, there were five B-26's and five F-47's or Sea Fury aircraft at Campo Libertad. At San Antonio de los Banos, on the same date, there were at least five B-26's, one T-33, and one F-47 or Sea Fury -- the PI readout, however, noted that haze and partial cloud cover had obscured most of the San Antonio airfield. The Santiago airfield had been photographed on 11 April, and there were two B-26's, one T-33, and one derelict F-47 or Sea Fury aircraft identified on the photography. In addition to the aircraft at Libertad, at least 140 trucks and 130 pieces of artillery were identified on the infield between

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the runways and taxiways. 38/*

The reader familiar with the problem of bomb damage assessments given by participating air crews -- in contrast to the read-out of post-strike photography -- can appreciate that a similar difference of opinion occurred following the D-2 air strike against Castro's air fields. Although no copy of the PI read-out made immediately following the attack is available, a review of the post strike photography for this history stated that:

Analysis of 15 April 1961 photography revealed that air strikes had been made against the air fields at Campo Libertad, San Antonio de los Banos, and Santiago de Cuba. No damage to any of the runways and only minimal apparent damage to the combat aircraft was observed. The only confirmed damage to combat aircraft was the destruction of a B-26 at Santiago de Cuba. A C-47 cargo plane and another unidentified probable cargo plane were also destroyed at Santiago de Cuba. A C-47 cargo plane was destroyed at San Antonio de los Banos airfield. The edge of a taxiway was cratered at Campo Libertad airfield. There could have

* These trucks and artillery pieces were still present when the Campo Libertad airfield was resurveyed by the U-2 on 23 April 1961, so apparently, these were not part of the artillery that were called into action at the Bay of Pigs.

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been additional damage to aircraft from cannon fire that would not be visible on the photography ... The combat aircraft at Campo Libertad Airfield on 15 April 1961 consisted of four B-26 and five F-47/Sea Fury aircraft. All of these aircraft were parked in out of the way areas, rather than in the main operations area of the airfield and were probably unserviceable. No movement of these aircraft was observed between 11 and 20 April 1961. 39/

The combat mission report prepared by Col. Stanley Beerli following the D-2 action, a report which was prepared on 15 April 1961 stated as follows:

Santiago: Both aircraft returned to base safely. Pilots reported airfield completely destroyed and fires everywhere. One B-26 reported destroyed by rockets, one T-33 probably destroyed by .50 caliber fire, and one C-47 destroyed by .50 caliber fire. All aircraft on ramp reported afire. AAA reported as heavy and determined. Aircraft repeatedly exchanged fire with AAA positions until AAA ceased. One aircraft returned base with numerous holes, complete hydraulic failure, and one hung rocket. However, it landed without incident.

San Antonio: Two aircraft returned base safely and pilots reported attack destroyed 75 percent of field. Operations building was destroyed and one T-33 on alert exploded. Two additional T-33's were possibly destroyed. Smoke from bombs partially obliterated target and precluded accurate damage assessment. Heavy AAA was reported. One aircraft landed at Grand Cayman Island because of low fuel.

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Libertad: One aircraft returned to base safely and pilot reported target partially destroyed. All bombs fell within confines of the base. (Press reports stated one bomb scored direct hit on an Air Force ammunition dump and explosions were still occurring 30 minutes after the attack.) Heavy AAA was reported. One aircraft was damaged by AAA and forced to feather engine which was on fire. Companion aircraft accompanied toward Key West, but observed damaged aircraft in uncontrolled crash into ocean. No parachutes or survivors were observed. Second aircraft, now low on fuel, continued to Florida and landed at Boca Chica. Extent of damage not yet determined.

Special Aircraft: The special aircraft landed at destination as planned.

Airborne Spare: One airborne spare aircraft aborted on take off, due to engine trouble. 40/

The difference between the PI report and the crew debriefing was highlighted in a cable from TIDE to Headquarters on 16 April 1961, defending the aircrews' reports:

1. Considerable discrepancy exists between D-2 strike crew debriefings and [U-2] reports in regards to damage assessment. Granted that strike crews and excitement may have tendency to overstate, nevertheless, this does not account for so great a discrepancy. Concensus [*sic*] TIDE that 250 [lb.] frags and 50 cal. guns have caused considerable damage that is not possible for [U-2] to see.

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2. Strike crews were debriefed separately and had no opportunity to collaborate on each other's assessment. Yet, under separate debriefing, crews verified what other crews on same target had said. 41/*

The best source for bomb damage assessment concerning D-2 strike came from the Cubans -- particularly from Castro himself. Based on Castro's own statements of 23 April 1961, when he appeared on the "People's University" TV broadcast in Havana before a live audience and told the story of the Bay of Pigs, it appears that the TIDE assessment of the damage was more accurate than was revealed through the photographic intelligence available from the U-2 flights. On 17 April the photography showed four T-33's, 13 B-26's, and two Sea Furies at San Antonio de los Banos. 42/ On that date, Castro claimed that his Air Force had at its disposal two jets, two Sea Furies, and two B-26's; but according to the Chief of the Revolutionary Air Force, Capt. Raul Curbelo Morales, the situation was even worse than had been painted

* Appendix 6 provides examples of the cable traffic received in Headquarters following the return of the B-26's from the D-2 strike.

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by Castro, for of the six aircraft that were available, four weren't fit to fly. 43/

Assuming that Castro may have had an inventory of as many as 30 combat aircraft (20 B-26's, 6 Sea Furies, and 4 T-33's) prior to the D-2 air strike and that he had available on 17 April only six aircraft, then 80 percent of his combat aircraft were down, at least on D-Day. Some of the downed aircraft were undoubtedly unserviceable because of malfunctions unrelated to the bombing attack on 15 April, but other aircraft may have suffered gunfire or bomb damage that was not visible on the photography. 44/

The debates, discussions, and problems attendant upon the mounting of the D-2 air strike were as nothing compared to the problems following the attack. These problems are discussed in the following section.

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Part III

Initiation of Combat Air Operations

B. Post-Strike Contretemps

The post-strike philosophy of air operations personnel affiliated with project JMATE was probably best summed up by Col. George Gaines, who said:

We had the key to Cuba already in our hand. All that we had to do was to eliminate those few other airplanes and our landing Brigade would have owned Cuba. 45/

Not only would this represent the belief of everyone who was even remotely affiliated with the air operation, it also was the belief of many of those who were closely associated with the JMATE project in capacities other than air operations. The manner of dealing with the few aircraft available to Castro would come to be the pivot about which reputations were made and unmade, tarnished and shined. In the first glow of victory, "Carpenter, Barnes, and crowd" from JMADD told TIDE to "Give the boys our congratulations." 46/* Even as Gar

* The Barnes referred to in this cable was not C. Tracy Barnes, the A/DDP/A, but was the alias used for a military assignee to air operations at Retalhuleu.

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Thorsrud was requesting additional B-26 replacements he cabled:

Suggest B-26 be loaded with operational beer on bomb bay racks in the rear gunner's compartment. 47/

Even though convinced that the D-2 air strike had done more extensive damage than was apparent on the U-2 photography, air operations personnel at JMTIDE -- and Col. George Gaines who had returned to Headquarters -- wanted a second strike at the aircraft. Gaines was convinced that because of the 48 hours concentrated briefings they had received that the B-26 pilots could easily manage the re-attack. Gaines was concerned that any potential combat aircraft had been left untouched; and in an Oral History interview he stressed that the air and ground force leaders and Chief, JMATE agreed that no troops would be landed as long as there was any combat capability available in Castro aircraft. Gaines stated:

We knew we had to get every single gun that could be put in the air before we put our soldiers ashore. Jack Hawkins and I agreed to that over and over. We said, "we don't land anybody," and Esterline agreed to that ... that we don't land anybody until we can stop a goat if it goes down the highway. Our air

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cover will be constant, and if a Castro tank moves, we knock him out. 48/

Gar Thorsrud also commented about the D-2 strike:

The tactical surprise on that first strike was aimed at getting those aircraft, and if you didn't you're in trouble -- they didn't get them, and we were in trouble ... There was plenty of concern among the pilots at Puerto Cabezas because they knew they had to get them [the T-33's]. I don't know what was discussed at the Headquarters at the Staff levels, but that was the primary target -- to get those T-birds first. It was their ass that was going to get shot down if they didn't; and so there was no doubt in any pilot's mind what they were after first when they got to that airfield. The first thing they looked for, was any aircraft taking off on the runway; then to the taxiways; and then to the parking ramps -- where they were briefed by their targets -- by the pictures -- where they were supposed to be located. But the first thing they were to look for was that runway, or something just breaking ground; and then back to where the aircraft was supposed to be parked if they weren't alerted ... What would you be looking for first? If there is only one aircraft that is a threat to you? That's what we were hoping to do, even with the six [*sic*] aircraft that went in, instead of the 22. We still had to get those aircraft. 49/

Even though he claimed to have only six aircraft available following the D-2 air strike, Castro also said that the 15 April air strike was a bust -- claiming that as a result of the air strike he actually lost

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only two combat aircraft, one at San Antonio and one at Santiago (plus a transport at San Antonio, a Cubana C-47 at Santiago, and several smaller aircraft). Castro stated that the attack on Libertad was a net loss to the invaders, since there were no operable aircraft on that base and at least one of the attacking planes was hit. Moreover, he claimed that unserviceable aircraft had been dispersed about Libertad and the other fields. Review of the pre- and post-strike U-2 photography lends some credence to Castro's claim about the dispersal of unserviceable aircraft, but the photography clearly indicated which aircraft were being used for decoy purposes. 50/

The two combat aircraft that Castro claimed were destroyed in the course of the D-2 attack probably were dual-controlled B-26's -- according to one of the FAR pilots, Jacques Lagas, the only dual controlled B-26's available to the Fuerzas Aerea Revolucionaria. Loss of these particular aircraft help to explain why, despite the high number that were spotted on the Castro airfields, so few B-26's actually participated in the combat; even on those occasions on 18-19 April, when

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Brigade aircraft were not in the area. 51/* Lagas pointed out that after the D-2 strike -- and the loss of the dual-controlled planes -- a number of Cubana Air Lines pilots showed up, requesting that they be given transitional training to fly the B-26's. Lagas said that efforts had been made many weeks prior to 15 April to get these pilots to take the transitional training, but none of them had taken advantage of the opportunity; and after 15 April it wasn't possible!

Painting identical tail numbers on the Brigade B-26's -- as already noted -- did deceive Castro as to the actual number of planes that were involved in the attack; and painting the planes the same color as FAR aircraft made it possible for the aircraft at Libertad to come in low, as though they were making a landing approach, before beginning their actual strike against the airfield. In addition to the damage to the aircraft and airfields, the 15 April

* Lagas was a Chilean pilot who flew for the Castro Air Forces. He later became disillusioned, or was persuaded to become disillusioned, and returned to Chile;

Based on the other evidence available, there is little reason to doubt the truth of what he had to say about the Bay of Pigs air operation.

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strike resulted in the deaths of eight Cubans and the wounding of some 40.* 52/ Castro lost no time in denying that the attack on the airfields had been by dissident members of the FAR; and Castro's Foreign Minister and UN representative, Raul Roa, readied charges against the US as the instigator of the air attacks for the UN session on Monday 17 April.

As the attack on the airfields was in progress, the planned deception operation for the B-26 flying to Miami International was carried out successfully. Señor Zuniga put his plane down, was taken in tow by Immigration and Naturalization, notification was made to WAVE, Zuniga remained silent, and the press gathered

* The D-2 air strike was not without cost to the Brigade air force for the B-26 piloted by Daniel Fernandez Mon, with Gaston Perez as navigator, was shot down by ground fire and crashed into the sea. Gar Thorsrud has suggested that rather than ground fire, Mon's plane was caught in the blast of a 500 lb. bomb (260 lb.?) that he dropped when too low, damaging the aircraft to the extent that it caught fire and crashed. Thorsrud stated that this was the report from one of the other pilots. In Ferrer's book, Capt. Osvaldo Piedra -- the pilot of the 3rd aircraft involved in the attack on Libertad -- stated that Mon and Perez were ready to make a third pass over the field when the plane blew apart in the air and fell into the sea in flames. 53/ Hugh Thomas is in error in his statement that no Brigade aircraft were lost on D-2. 54/

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to get the story.* Unfortunately, however, the B-26's piloted by Jose Crespo in the attack on Libertad was hit by ground fire; and Crespo was able to make an emergency landing at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station in Key West. Fortunately, neither Crespo nor his navigator, Lorenzo Perez Lorenzo were injured, and

* Even after it had been exposed as false, the cover story which required Zuniga to land at Miami after the first air strike continued to cause problems. The pilot's first story was that the B-26 belonged to Castro's air force, and the plane of course carried Cuban markings.

Taking this story at face value, Harris and Company, a Miami advertising agency which claimed the Cuban Government owed it money for tourist advertising, obtained from the Superior Court of Dade County a writ of attachment on the aircraft. The advertising agency had previously tried to attach Cubana Airlines planes to satisfy a judgment against Cuba.

The B-26 had been under US Customs guard since arrival. To keep the Dade County sheriff from seizing it, DPD arranged with the Customs Service to have the US Attorney in the Miami area file action under Section 1934, 401, Title 22, of the US Code. This section dealt with the unauthorized entrance into the United States of arms, armed vehicles, or aircraft and specified that such equipment would be forfeited to the Secretary of Defense for disposition. Federal action would supersede the Dade County writ.

On 27 April Chester Emerick, Assistant Commissioner of Customs for Investigations, informed DPD that the action had been filed and that the US Marshal had taken over custody of the B-26. DPD then planned to have an Air Force crew move the plane at night to Field 3 at Eglin Air Force Base. 55/

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the plane was repairable. The aircraft, as chance would have it, bore the same identification -- No. 933 -- that was carried by the plane which Zuniga had landed at Miami International Airport; and the discrepancy was quickly noted by reporters. 56/ The landing of aircraft No. 933 at Boca Chica, was only one of the misfortunes with regard to the great deception operation that had been a part of the D-2 air activity. The Navy apparently offered to provide a cover story -- that the plane burned up -- but actually would allow the plane to take off for TIDE after dark on 15 April. 57/ No action was taken on the offer.

The B-26 piloted by Alfredo Cabellero in the attack on San Antonio de los Banos developed engine trouble on the return flight and was forced to make an emergency landing on Grand Cayman Island. The spare aircraft which had been intended as a replacement in case difficulties were encountered by the planes heading for either San Antonio or Libertad was forced to abort before it could join in the attack. 58/

On 16 April 1961, Fidel Castro was in charge of the funeral services for the eight individuals

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who had been killed in the D-2 air strike; and in the course of his funeral oration, Castro damned the United States Government and the Central Intelligence Agency up one side and down the other for their unprovoked Pearl Harbor-type attack on Cuba. He also challenged the United States to provide the name of a single "defector" who had participated in the D-2 raid. 59/

In an attempt to divert the upcoming UN accusations which would be filed on Monday, 17 April, the day on which the invasion was scheduled, Dave Phillips, Chief, WH/4/Propaganda, spotted an opportunity to protect the cover story and suggest a means by which Castro's call for the identity of any FAR defectors could be countered. Phillips, who was fluent in Spanish, heard a live broadcast from Cuba reporting that early on the morning of 15 April a FAR jet piloted by Orestes Acosta had been lost at sea; and Phillips also was aware that a live broadcast from Havana on 15 April had stated that one of the planes attacking the airfields had been shot down at sea. Having heard both of these broadcasts, the WH/4 propaganda chief then advised a US journalist that the Cubans had claimed that a jet "which was among the attacking

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forces had been shot down at sea and that this jet was flown by Acosta." 60/

[] Chief, WH/4/CI on hearing this story, was of the opinion that this would counter the Castro claims concerning the failure of the United States to identify any of the attacking pilots. In addition, [] noted that he and Phillips had discussed some follow-up action:

A. That the UPI be requested to check to determine if jet pilot Acosta had a wife. If so, it was agreed that a US money collection drive be initiated to provide for the widow's well being.

B. If such a widow, providing she exists, claimed her husband was an ardent Fidelista, then Mr. Phillips and the undersigned [] agreed that a collection be initiated on a nationwide basis for the unhappy but brave widow subjected to such coercion by Fidelista security forces. 61/*

A further part of the D-2 story concerns Gar Thorsrud's request to Headquarters for a follow-up

* There is no further reference to the suggestion advanced by Phillips, and in all probability it came to naught in view of the proximity to the invasion. When the UN debate began on 17 April, the Brigade forces had already landed at Playa Larga and Playa Giron; and it had already been proved that the B-26 involved in the deception effort did not belong to Castro's Air Force.

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strike to complete the destruction of Castro's combat air capability. Thorsrud has stated:

We were at this time, however, more concerned with eliminating the remaining T-33's that U-2's had also confirmed were operational at Havana. We therefore proposed a strike ... during daylight, coming out of the sun, and we talked all day Saturday [15 April] on this, and said ... how can we do this. We all got together in the operations room, and they said -- these pilots flew out of Havana -- they said that sun is just big and golden and that you could come out of the sun and no one will see you coming ... We had it planned to ... come in off the coast of the western tip of Cuba ... skimming right out of the sun, where you've got the sun shining down on those T-birds ... We had U-2 photos clearly depicting where they were. They weren't in bunkers, or they were half bunkered. Six aircraft were going after those two T-birds and not coming back until they got them. They turned the plan down. Not only did they turn that down, then they turned down the next request ... We said, "O.K., we were turned down. It's maximum effort this morning ... we've got to get them"; and then they wiped that out. They might just as well have closed the whole operation right there and called off the landing on the beach, because that decision wiped out the whole operation right there. 62/

Thorsrud was referring to his cable of 16 April 1961 in which he recommended B-26 strikes against both the Libertad and San Antonio airfields. His request

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to Headquarters read as follows:

Approach to target will be directly out of the sun. One pass only. Pilot proficiency and familiarity with the area makes this pattern feasible. Haze should make AAA sighting extremely difficult into the sun. Bomb load NBR 2 will be 6 each 600 lb. [500 lb.?] GP on one aircraft and 10 each, 260 lb. frag on the other. All pilots volunteered. Crespo, #2 target with Piedra wing. Garcia and Herrera target #1.

Above will allow max utilization aircraft and crews turnaround for D-Day strikes. Targets 1 and 2 will not be hit on D-Day if pilot report successful mission.

TIDE in process of preparing ref sorties. Consensus here, above best tactics. Advise soonest. 63/

As already indicated, however, Headquarters rejected Thorsrud's appeal for the follow-up strike on D-1.*

* The Thorsrud cable requesting the D-1 strike raises some interesting -- but unresolved -- historical problems. As noted, Thorsrud himself indicated that after reviewing the results of the strike, the remainder of the day -- Saturday, 15 April 1961 -- was spent discussing reattack; and he said that a request for such reattack, on D-1 (Sunday, 16 April 1961) went forward to Headquarters. In reproducing a copy of this cable for the writer of this history, the Cable Secretariat copy of TIDE 654 (IN 3752) carries a date to be 20 April 1961 (0144Z) and the same cable is included in the DPD records -- if the date were correct, a cable arriving in Headquarters four days after the original request
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and one day subsequent to the collapse of the 2506 Brigade. There is no explanation for this discrepancy, but Headquarters did get the request; for on 16 April 1961 a cable from the Director to TIDE (at 1714Z) read:

Ref: TIDE 654. Regret unable approve strike per ref. Will advise D-Day strike schedule soonest. 64/

In view of this Director response, it is reasonable to assume that there was some unexplained hang-up in reproduction of the cable by the Cable Secretariat, otherwise, there would have been no response from Headquarters rejecting the suggestion advanced in TIDE 654.

In a subsequent cable to Headquarters (TIDE 710, 17 Apr 61), Thorsrud referred back to TIDE 654 and asked as follows:

Request authority launch strike at San Antonio, Libertad, and Santiago airfields five minutes prior to sunset, as requested ref [TIDE 654]. Also, launch afternoon strikes today on basis pilot debriefings. 65/

One further discrepancy is that, in his 17 April cable requesting restrike at the airfields, Thorsrud also specified Santiago as well as San Antonio de los Banos and Libertad. The original request (TIDE 654) specified only the two fields, San Antonio de los Banos and Libertad.

Eduardo Ferrer introduced another version of the D-2 air strike operation in his book *Operacion Puma*, claiming that the first strike on D-2 was the one which actually took place, but also claimed that a second follow-up strike was set up for the same crews at 1400 hours on the afternoon of 15 April 1961. In addition, Ferrer alleged that there were to be two follow-up strikes by the same crews on 16 April 1961, along with strikes against other military targets, bridges, and roads; and that on 17 April, two more strikes would be made to complete the destruction. In short, three successive days of air strikes. 66/ →

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Once having initiated tactical air operations against Cuba, the immediate question that comes to mind is why the planners scheduled a 48 hour break between the initiation of these operations and the strike which was planned for D-Day, 17 April 1961. Testifying before the Taylor Committee Col. George Gaines seemed opposed to the D-2 strike in favor of a D-1 and D-Day air strikes. When queried about his opposition, however, Gaines responded as follows:

I wouldn't use the word "opposed." I recommended that timing, militarily, would be better if you hit them on the day before D-Day -- or D-1 -- and then go back the next day and get all of them. Once you start hitting them, don't have the interlude for them to move airplanes or create defenses. Nobody goes into a fight by popping a guy in the nose and then standing back five minutes and letting the guy get his bearings ... and come to you. I was overruled, and so ... I was not adamantly opposed ... I just thought it was a better plan to go D-1 instead of D-2. 67/

The Taylor Committee investigation also revealed some vast differences of opinion between representatives

Cont'd from p. 225 → Obviously Ferrer, who was assigned to fly transport missions, usually in C-46's, has confused the various on-again-off-again target plans and target lists which he had heard about from the B-26 pilots.

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of the Department of Defense and the JMATE principals concerning D-2. To CIA, the D-2 operation was aimed at the complete destruction of the FAR -- and when it was apparent that that objective had not been achieved, Thorsrud requested permission for a follow up strike on D-1 to complete the job. Unfortunately, at least two senior military officers displayed varying degrees of ignorance concerning D-2 objectives, with perhaps the strangest comment of all being made by Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, member of the JCS, and a most active participant in Special Group meetings on the anti-Castro effort. In testifying before the Taylor Committee, of which he himself was a member, Burke spoke as follows about D-2:

None of the Chiefs [JCS] felt that the D-2 strikes were good militarily, but they could see that it was an important aspect of the plan politically. *The D-2 strikes were not built or designed to knock out any great amount of the Cuban Air Force. This was to be done by the D-Day strikes.* 68/*

More abysmally ignorant than Admiral Burke, was the Chairman of the JCS, General Lyman Lemnitzer. Testifying before the Taylor Committee a day in

* Emphasis by author.

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advance of Burke, the General offered the following remarks about D-2:

The D-2 strikes were added for non-military reasons. We would have preferred to do without the D-2 air strikes. *They were never intended to accomplish the destruction of the Castro Air Force.* They were to lend plausibility to the story that the D-Day strikes had been launched from within Cuba ...

I'd like to point out that the D-2 air strike was never expected to wipe out Castro's entire [Air] Force. It was the D-Day strike which was the important one. 69/*

How the deception aspect of the D-2 strike -- particularly considering the 48 hour stand down -- could possibly have lent "plausibility" to the D-Day strike, the General failed to explain. Unfortunately, however, he was not called on for clarification.**

* Emphasis by author.

** Of the senior military personnel called before the Taylor Committee only General Decker of the Army is on record in support of the D-2 air operation. Decker testified:

The advantages of pre-D-Day strikes would be that Castro's aircraft would be knocked out prior to the landing. I was in favor of pre-D-Day strikes two or three days in advance. 70/

General David Gray who was responsible for liaison between the Joint Staff and CIA said nothing pro or con about the D-2 strike, emphasizing in his testimony only that the Joint Staff's understanding of the air operations plan was that there would be D-Day air strikes out of Puerto Cabezas beginning at dawn. 71/

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Secretary of State Rusk's testimony before the Taylor Committee ~~was~~ ^{disingenuous.} ~~with~~ Rusk claim^{ed} ~~ed~~, among other things, that he and the President ~~were not~~ "clear" ~~that~~ ^{that} there was to be a D-~~2~~ ² strike; ~~D-2~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~testimony~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~ignorance~~ ~~apparent~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~testimony~~ ~~of~~ ~~General~~ ~~Burke~~ ~~and~~ ~~General~~ ~~Walt~~ ~~Rusk~~

and he also told the Committee that "there was an inadequate appreciation of the enemy's capability in the air." 71a/
Less than two years after this display of innocence, Mr. Rusk compounded his error when the subject came up during an appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. In a briefing on 16 January 1963, Rusk told the Committee that with reference to the BOP:

It is also true that in terms of the deficiencies of information that turned up after the event, that the count of planes on the island [Cuba] from sources on the island as well as other resources turned out to be inaccurate. There were some planes in hangars and so forth that were not hit with [sic] the strike that did take place, and more planes, in fact, turned out from the Cuban side than had been anticipated. 71b/

Rusk's comment is completely unsupported by any evidence that has surfaced since the collapse of the invasion. To the contrary, one area in which the

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plans and operations personnel of JMATE were on sure ground was in the number of potential combat aircraft available to FAR from 11-19 April 1961.*

Col. Gaines was quite correct in his assessment of what might happen if the enemy were given breathing space between initial air attacks and D-Day -- from Castro to common laborers the D-2 air strike got the Cubans together. The high point, of course, was Castro's oration at the funeral of the eight who died in the attack. The speech was given on 16 April and was attended by thousands of Cubans. Castro, as usual, portrayed the evils of the Agency and US imperialists; and, predictably, ordered all military units on the alert, ready for action. 72/

In his television address of 23 April 1961, subsequent to the collapse of the invasion, Castro himself

* Mr. Rusk has continued to pop up with interesting statements related to the Bay of Pigs, apparently claiming that Allen Dulles confided to him that he never had much faith in the Bay of Pigs operation and had reservations about the outcome. Leonard Mosley, a Dulles biographer, states that Rusk said of Dulles "that he [Dulles] never once mentioned those doubts during the cabinet meetings." One wonders why this information was not surfaced long ago. 71c/

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appeared at a loss to understand the reason for the D-2 air strike rather than a D-1 or a D-Day air strike. He emphasized that militarily the nature of the air strike itself was a give-away to the impending invasion, and he was able, in effect, to reinforce his reinforcements.* The strike on the airfields was clearly different than the harassing tactics which had been employed heretofore against the Fidelistas -- sabotage of sugar mills and industrial facilities and fires in cane fields were not in the same category as an air operation which obviously sought to destroy the revolutionary air force. The message to Castro and his leaders was clear. The Army, the Militia, and the people were given common cause; and it stimulated their will to resist. 73**

* It also served as a signal to Castro to adopt vigorous measures to insure that the attacks did not provide the catalyst for a "spontaneous" uprising to overthrow the regime. Mass arrests of potential dissidents began "just a few hours after the air attack on 15 April." 72a/

** Clarence F. Welch, the air materiel chief for DPD during Project JMATE, told the author that shortly before the D-2 operation he was in attendance at a meeting on the project at DPD Headquarters at 1717 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. In the course of that meeting, Welch claimed that two Department of State attendees
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Among those most directly concerned by the appearance of the Brigade B-26's were the pilots of Castro's Air Force. Most of these men were well known to members of the Brigade Air Force; and as Eddy Ferrer noted, during the final days of training in Nicaragua, there were frequent sessions where the individual FAR pilots were discussed and rediscussed as potential enemies in the skies over Cuba. Some of the more experienced FAR pilots had actually received training in the United States. Among others, there were several Nicaraguan pilots who would participate in the air action; and of nine Chilean instructors who had been working with Castro's Air Force, one, Jacques Lagas, joined the Castro Air Force and participated in the air operations against the Brigade.*

were adamant that there be a breathing space between the first air strike and any subsequent follow-on strike. According to Welch, when Hawkins heard this, he (Hawkins) audibly stated that if this was the case, the operation should be cancelled *in toto*. Welch said Bissell either "didn't hear, or didn't choose to hear" the remark. Welch said that Ralph Brown, a logistics officer assigned to the project, also heard the remark. Welch told the story because he believes Hawkins's reputation was unjustly tarnished because of his key role in the operational planning. 74/

* As mentioned earlier, Jacques Lagas would eventually write a book, [redacted] complaining bitterly about the influence of the Communists on the Castro Air Force at the time of the Bay of Pigs.

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According to Ferrer, the Brigade pilots also discussed the capabilities of the equipment which would be flown by Castro's pilots -- particularly the US built Lockheed T-33's. Even though subsonic, the T-birds were far faster than the B-26's; and they carried two .50 caliber nose guns and had provision for mounting rockets on the wings. The Sea Fury, the British fighter aircraft which was the fastest non-jet aircraft ever to be produced, mounted four ²⁰~~27~~mm cannons in its wings; and Castro's B-26's were basically identical to the B-26's in which the Brigade air force had trained. The Castro B-26's were still configured for bomber-reconnaissance activity and mounted 6 wing guns and 4 tail guns (presumably two tail guns in each of two turrets, top and bottom). 75/*

C. The Stevenson Story and the Second Strike

Reference has already been made to the attempts of Gar Thorsrud and other air operations planners to

* One other feature helping to distinguish FAR B-26's from those of the Brigade was the plastic nose of the FAR compared to the metal nose of Brigade planes. See photos pages 535, 537.

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get authorization for a follow-up strike against the Castro airfields that were taken under attack on D-2, and it has been noted that such requests were denied. The only other scheduled air attack in addition to D-2 was to be mounted against selected targets -- including reattack on the airfields at San Antonio, Libertad, and Santiago -- on D-Day. It has also been emphasized that with the shift from Trinidad to Zapata for the D-Day invasion, two B-26 aircraft would put down on the beach at Playa Giron and begin operations from that airstrip. The plan for D-Day consisted of 11 primary targets to be attacked by 15 B-26 aircraft. Four of the primary targets -- the three airfields which were struck on D-2 plus the Managua military base -- were to be attacked by two B-26's each. Five other primary targets, in fact, were double-headers requiring single B-26 aircraft to hit two separate facilities. The remaining two targets also were to be attacked by single B-26's. With the exception of the Managua military base -- where napalm was to be employed against the tank park -- all other targets were to be attacked with rockets, machine guns, and either fragmentation or demolition bombs.*

* See Appendix 7 for a list of the D-Day targets.

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As of 16-17 April, the list of 11 targets -- which had been pared down from well over 20 targets -- represented the maximum which Headquarters authorized for the available aircraft and crews. Destruction of the targets on the list would do much to insure the success of the planned operation. This list of D-Day targets came to be the focus of one of the major disputes concerning the Bay of Pigs -- "The Second Strike Controversy." This section of the history of JMATE air operations will attempt to put that controversy in perspective.

The cancellation of the second strike -- for on 16 April all of the targets, including restrikes at the D-2 airfields, were cancelled -- turned a long planned, much discussed, tactical air operation into a 100 percent ground support mission for the invasion troops. By denying the requests from the field for a strike to eliminate (or at least reduce even further) Castro's fighters, it forced the Brigade B-26's into an unplanned and unwanted air combat role. Many of those who were most heavily involved in the JMATE operation and much that has been printed lays the blame for the cancellation of the second strike

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almost exclusively to the opposition from Adlai Stevenson, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Some have contended that Stevenson was fully briefed about both the planned D-2 air strike and the subsequent D-Day air strike -- others are less sure about the degree of Stevenson's knowledgeability. Because it has been established that Stevenson was given a briefing on the planned invasion on 8 April 1961 by a CIA representative, for many he has become the villain in the piece. For this reason a serious effort has been made to determine the degree of Stevenson's (and his UN colleagues') knowledgeability regarding the planned air operations against Castro's Forces.

The D-Day air strike was to be against both Castro's air force and Cuba's principal military and communications installations; but as the planning progressed, the D minus 2 strike was evolved both as insurance for keeping Castro's Air Force on the ground, and politically it was intended to help maintain the fiction of plausible deniability. By late January 1961 when the DCI, the DDCI, the President, and the JCS were all given briefings on the PM aspects of Project JMATE, references were made to a D-1 air

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strike. When briefed on 31 January 1961, the JCS representatives queried the wisdom of the D-1 air strike because they were afraid that it would alert the Cuban forces to the imminence of an invasion. The Agency's response was that while this might be true, the risk of having Castro's aircraft in opposition to the landing was greater than the possibility of an alert that would result from the pre-D-Day strike.*

The responsibility for briefing Ambassador Stevenson on 8 April 1961 at the UN Headquarters in New York City was delegated to C. Tracy Barnes, A/DDP/A. What Barnes was instructed to tell about the upcoming operation and what he told has been the subject of much speculation; but the Agency has been charged with everything from outright deception to sheer ineptness^g in terms of the Stevenson briefing. In his book *One Thousand Days*, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., who was then a member of the Kennedy White House Staff, spoke of the briefing as follows:

* In fact, it was reported that the DCI tended to agree with the JCS in this evaluation, but "General Cabell [the DDCI] said he would hold firm on the concept that D-1 is necessary, but that his compromise position with the Director would be that strikes on D-1 would not take place before the afternoon of said day, extending into the morning of the attack." 76/

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In preparation for the debate [US Cuban debate in the UN], Tracy Barnes and I had held a long talk with Stevenson on April 8 [1961]. But our briefing, which was probably unduly vague, left Stevenson with the impression that no action would take place during the UN discussion of the Cuban item. Afterward, when Harlan Cleveland, the Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, Clayton Fritchey of the United States Mission to the UN, and I lunched with Stevenson at the Century, he made clear that he wholly disapproved of the plan, regretted that he had been given no opportunity to comment on it, and believed that it would cause infinite trouble. But, if it was national policy, he was prepared to make out the best possible case. 77/

The question of what Stevenson was or was not told became critical following the D-2 air strike against Cuba on 15 April 1961. Appearing in an emergency session of the UN Political and Security Committee on the afternoon of 15 April -- an emergency session that had been called at the request of Raul Roa, the Cuban Foreign Minister -- Stevenson stated that the attack on the airfields had been conducted by defectors from Castro's own air force. In the course of this discussion Stevenson presented the photographs of the B-26 which Zuniga had landed in Miami International Airport to support the defector cover story, but the

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story was soon blown because the photograph of the B-26 from TIDE which was given to Stevenson showed a metal nose, rather than the plastic nose characteristic of the FAR aircraft.*

One writer, in speaking of the Bay of Pigs operation, stated:

A prominent victim of the air strike was Adlai Stevenson, at the time the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Ironically enough, along with Senator Fulbright and Chester Bowles he was one of the few with some prior knowledge of the invasion project, who was completely opposed to it. However, he

* Interestingly enough this must have been an agonizing time for Señor Roa. In mid-July 1960, one of the daily reports of Dave Phillips's propaganda activity noted that there was "a defection pitch for Cuban UN delegate. The sky is the limit if this one can be accomplished dramatically in the UN meeting." 77a/ A memo from Jake Esterline to Mr. Bissell on 11 April 1961 revealed the identity of the Cubans:

Our contact with Raul Roa reports that this defection attempt is still alive although Roa would make no firm commitment [*sic*] or promise on whether he would defect in the U.N. Roa has requested that no further contact be made at this time. 77b/

The planned defection did not come off, and Roa continued as Castro's Foreign Minister until the 1970's. Currently (1979) he is Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly and a member of the Council of State.

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was kept in the dark about the actual plans and so on the very afternoon of the attack [15 April 61], in a verbal dual with Raul Roa at an emergency meeting of the United Nations Political [and Security] Committee, he accepted as truth the misinformation he received from Washington. 78/

Charles Murphy who wrote one of the few articles that was favorable to the Agency in terms of the Bay of Pigs operation, stated that after Stevenson's embarrassment of 15 April:

From this hapless moment on, Stevenson's role becomes unclear. There was a subsequent published report that he had intervened to block the second strike. Stevenson has flatly denied, and continues to deny, that he even knew about the second strike, let alone that he demanded it be called off. 79/

A notorious ex-CIA employee who also has written about this episode noted:

It was later alleged that Stevenson had been kept in the dark about invasion preparations. In self defense, Barnes was to produce a record of his briefing of Ambassador Stevenson well prior to invasion date. The Barnes-Stevenson memorandum was furnished Lyman Kirkpatrick, CIA's Inspector General at the time. 80/*

* The ex-employee was E. Howard Hunt.

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*Review, plug
in note on
evolution!*

Unfortunately, however, the former Inspector General of CIA has no recollection of such a memorandum coming from Mr. Barnes -- nor do the records of his former office or of other repositories within CIA provide any such memorandum that Barnes might have written, either at that time or later, concerning the Stevenson briefing. 81/ The only piece of evidence that can be attributed to Barnes is contained in a memorandum which he wrote more than two years after the fact, concerning comments which appeared in Wise and Ross's book, *The Invisible Government*. With reference to the book's relation of the Stevenson episode, Barnes wrote:

*D-2
Stinks
and that
Barnes was
of
organization
how could
he ignore
D-2 of
Stevenson*

*(see pp.
73-75
Stevenson
p. 2)*

I can best provide an answer by first giving a brief statement of what, in fact, occurred. I would like to say that my entire statement is based on my recollection, without having reviewed documents or other evidence, so I would not like to be held to the accuracy of minute details without a further check. Generally speaking, however, I know it to be correct ...

The rash of publicity, however, much of it inaccurate, plus the presence of Roa in New York, with the threat of a UN presentation, made it seem advisable to provide Stevenson with an up-to-date briefing of the exact status of the operation. Consequently, such a briefing was arranged for Saturday, 8 April [1961], and I was chosen to give it. In addition to Stevenson, Arthur Schlesinger was present as were a number of Stevenson's staff, including

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Francis Plimpton, Charlie Yost, and Charlie Noyes. Although Stevenson did not know me well, we had known each other slightly for a good twenty years, and there was no doubt in his mind as to my association with CIA -- in fact, the briefing had been announced to him as a CIA briefing. *I told him about the then status of the operation in detail. I also explained to him that as of this date, it was impossible to state whether or not, such an operation would ever take place, since the final decision was entirely in the President's hands, and he had not yet made up his mind.* I did state that the President had called a meeting for 12 April, for another review of the entire matter, and it was possible that he would announce a decision after, or shortly following, this meeting. My recollection is that I did not mention to Stevenson the air raid which occurred on Saturday, 15 April, since this plan, as I recollect it, was not worked out until after the briefing. I did, however, explain to him in some detail not only the essentiality of achieving the control of the air, but also a number of the air proposals which had been made, including those which had as of 8 April, been turned down. If it is important, I could check the matter of the 15 April raid. If my recollection is faulty and the plan for this raid had been completed on 8 April, I would have told it to Stevenson, since I told him all the significant aspects of the invasion plans then in effect, or under consideration ... *Stevenson, a week later, following the 15 April raid sent a message to the Secretary of State and the DCI, saying that I had given him an inaccurate assurance on one point, i.e., that no invasion would occur while the Cuban matter was before the UN. What I did say, was that no invasion would occur*

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prior to, or during Roa's presentation on Monday, 10 April. I said this because at that time, after the delays mentioned above, Roa was definitely expected to make his postponed attack on the floor of the UN on 10 April, and it was so scheduled. Obviously, I could have said nothing else in view of my other statements that no decision of any kind existed as to the invasion, and that nothing could be known prior to the Wednesday, 12 April meeting called by the President. In fact, at the time the Stevenson message was not taken in the least seriously ...

It is alleged that I did not mention that an invasion was about to begin over the weekend, nor that I indicated that one was even imminent. As indicated above, I could not do either, since the only decision authority had not spoken. 82/*

Barnes also noted that Stevenson was specifically told about plans that included any aspect of US involvement in the JMATE anti-Castro operation. 83/ Stevenson's

* The provenance of the document from which this quotation is taken has not been determined. The author inherited a Xerox copy from miscellaneous files collected by David McLean, but was unable to locate the original or a carbon copy. Consequently, it is impossible to determine whether the emphasis shown in the quotation came from the Barnes's original copy or was added when McLean made his copy. Similarly, the author's copy reflects at least one grammatical change and two spelling corrections (from "eminent" to "imminent" and from "eminence" to "imminence") which may or may not be part of the original. At the time that Barnes wrote the referenced memorandum he was Chief, Domestic Operations Division, DDP; and Gordon Mason, to whom the memorandum was addressed was a Special Assistant to the DDP.

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remembrance of the briefing was, according to Hugh Thomas, that it left something to be desired:

Tracy Barnes of the CIA came up and briefed us here on the Delegation [to the UN] ... He assured us that this was simply a question of helping the exiles and this was not in any way a US operation. In the light of what happened, I suppose this can be regarded as less than candid.*

It is not known if Barnes was ever called on to retrace his steps concerning the briefing for Ambassador Stevenson, but if he did so, no written record has been recovered.** As for his comments about setting the date for the D-2 strike, it has already been pointed out that Barnes himself had been involved in promoting such action as early as January 1961, and the need for such a strike had been generally accepted by mid to late March. By 1 April when it was anticipated that D-Day would be 10 April, rather than 17 April, the cable traffic between TIDE and Headquarters indicated that the briefing team that came from Headquarters

* Quoted in Thomas, *Cuban Revolution* (Harper & Rowe, 1977), p. 530 as told to Thomas by Stevenson on 6 February 1963.

** Various attempts to locate the "Tracy Barnes papers," like similar attempts to recover the "J. C. King papers," have come to naught.

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should be prepared to brief in TIDE on 4 April, with 5 April being reserved for coordination of air/ground and maritime operations. The briefings were to be completed by the night of 5 April at the latest. 84/

The briefing team was delayed, however, because in the period from 4-6 April, the President and his White House staff were still discussing the merits of a pre-D-Day air strike with representatives of the Agency, the JCS, and State.* By the morning of 6 April the pre-D-Day defection and deception strike had been approved, and Barnes clearly should have included this information in his briefing for Ambassador Stevenson. Inasmuch as Barnes did not depart Washington until Saturday 8 April -- the day he briefed Stevenson -- there is no way that Barnes could have been ignorant of the decision to make the D-2 air strike and follow on with the D-Day air attack.**

* Lt. Col. Gaines and the other members of the briefing team for the D-2 and D-Day strikes began their briefings at TIDE at 1300 hours (local time) on 10 April. They probably departed the Headquarters area at 0800 hours (local time) on 9 April. The target folders and briefing aids would have been completed at least by 1 April in all probability. 84a/

** On 8 April 1961, Barnes departed Washington on Northeast Airlines Flight 106 at 0745; and he returned on a Northeast flight departing New York at 2215 on that same day. 85/

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The only explanation that can be offered for Barnes's failure to clearly recall whether he had or had not briefed on D-2, may be attributed to a personality problem. In discussing the nature of the mission to the USUN in New York, the following comments were made by the then COPS/WH/4 with respect to what Barnes was supposed to tell Stevenson:

Knowing Tracy, I've always had severe doubt that Tracy made it very clear to the Ambassador. Now he was sent up there to make clear to him ... the whole works ... I think Tracy, dealing with Adlai -- in a way, they were two of a type -- dealt with him, probably the way Tracy just intuitively dealt with everybody -- very pleasantly, kind of elliptically, lots of smiling and graciousness, interjection of completely non-connected events, shook hands, laughed, and said what a great time he'd had; and came back and announced that he briefed the Ambassador. I wasn't there, but that was the form that Tracy would customarily employ. What Adlai Stevenson needed, not that it would necessarily have done any good, was the worst case presentation of what was going to happen. Even then, he may have wet his pants, as he did; and I have no confidence that Adlai Stevenson heard from Tracy what Tracy himself probably felt that he had told him. But Tracy just wasn't clear in that kind of a way ... I'm sure that he and Tracy had long, fruity chats with each other because, for some

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reason, Tracy had great faith in him. 86/*

The same source, when asked if he had seen a memorandum from Barnes on the subject of his meeting with Adlai Stevenson, responded as follows:

No, no, but I remember hearing at a ... staff meeting at this time ... hearing from Jake, as he ticked off the events of the previous 24 hours, that Tracy Barnes had been up in New York and had briefed Stevenson. So Tracy undoubtedly came back and told Bissell, and Bissell told Esterline, or Esterline was there when Tracy was debriefing himself to Bissell, but I

* Jake Esterline, Chief, WH/4 had an almost identical reaction to Barnes's briefing of Stevenson. Jake said:

Well, I think when you talk to Dick Drain, you will find out between his records and mine that we were very unhappy when Dick [Bissell] sent Tracy up to brief ... We understood the Ivy League ties involved in this thing, or what not, but we didn't really feel that Tracy understood it well enough himself to brief anybody. I guess it was Hawkins and Dick [Drain] and I who were quite disturbed about this because it was so important at that time -- that this guy knew exactly what the hell we were talking about. We just didn't think that Tracy really understood it that well, or if Tracy did, he couldn't articulate ... he wouldn't articulate it that well. Tracy was one of the sweetest guys that ever lived, but he couldn't ever draw a straight line between two points, and with a briefing of that sort ... 87/

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never saw any memorandum for the record ... Well, I'll tell you, even Tracy Barnes, who was not all that meticulous and punctual would have been very well advised to have written a memorandum on this subject. After all, Allen W. Dulles would want to know -- and more than just a telephone call -- what the hell had gone on. It's customary in the DDP when you have a meeting of this sort -- that is, to say with somebody as important as the Ambassador to the United Nations, and on a fleeting, transitory problem -- to do a memorandum of conversation for the Director, at least; because he might be asked, at the next meeting of the 5412 Group, or something: "By the way," says Under-Secretary of State, "you had a man who saw Adlai Stevenson?" I mean, you can count on Adlai Stevenson doing a memorandum; and we had better goddamn well have ours, too. Now, that would not necessarily be the kind of a memorandum that I would necessarily see, and all I needed to know, if I even needed that, was to hear it, and I know I heard from Jake ... "Oh, by the way, one of those things that happened yesterday, was Tracy got his ass up to New York and briefed Stevenson." 88/

Examination of the cable traffic between the USUN Mission and the Secretary of State clearly indicates that Stevenson accepted the deception story at face value, and that he was completely in the dark about the fact that the D-2 strike at Castro's airfields had been the work of the Agency sponsored Brigade -- either that, or Stevenson was the world's best and greatest liar. In his statement on 15 April 1961 in response

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to the Cuban complaint, Stevenson was well aware of the fact that Roberto Verdaguer and his brother Guillermo, both officers in FAR, had defected on 14 April in a Cubana airlines cargo airplane and had landed at Jacksonville, Florida. This was on the day prior to the air strike. 89/

The actual defection of two Cuban airmen, may in fact, have caused problems in the subsequent decisions which were made regarding the planned air strike for D-Day. After cabling the Secretary of State about Jose Miro Cardona's statement for the Cuban Revolutionary Council -- which was addressed to the members of the United Nations and which repeated the deception story -- the US Mission to the UN then cabled the Secretary of State as follows:

Miro Cardona statement (US/UN Telegram 2877) given to only a few UN delegates, according to Garvia [*sic*] Amador. Cuban Revolutionary Council depending on press to give ample publicity so that all UN delegates will have been informed of statement before resumption debates Monday. Recommend USIA give full publicity. 90/*

* Garcia Amador seems to have contributed additionally to the confusion which would grow out of the D-2 air strike. USUN cabled the Secretary of State as follows:

Garcia Amador states that reported bombing of Habana known in advance to
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If Stevenson had believed that he was playing with the hot potato of a deception operation, it seems highly unlikely that a message such as this would have been forwarded to the Secretary of State, nor would Stevenson have followed that cable up with another one also dated early in the morning of 16 April reading as follows:

Confirming TELECON request to ARA for use in Cuban debate, desire urgently on Sunday: 1) Revolutionary background of Verdager brothers. 2) Detailed info on Cuban acquisition and possession of defecting FAR B-26's which will serve to discredit Roa's statement that it is easy to paint up aircraft to look like FAR plane. 92/

It was not until shortly after 7:30 p.m. on 16 April 1961 that Stevenson's Priority/Top Secret/Eyes Only cable to Washington for the Secretary of State and Allen Dulles was received revealing the Ambassador's second thoughts

Miro Cardona. He states plan called for four Cuban FAR (rpt FAR) planes to carry out attack from within Cuba. Three of aircraft reportedly followed through with plan, while fourth apparently at last minute did not take part. He claims two of aircraft are accounted for in Florida. Third aircraft has not shown up and believed to be one reported shot down. 91/

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about the upcoming discussion in the UN over the Cuban question. The cable stated:

1. Greatly disturbed by clear indications received during day in process developing rebuttal material that bombing incidents in Cuba on Saturday [15 April 61] were launched, in part at least, from outside Cuba.

2. *I had definite impression from Barnes when he was here [8 April 61] that no action would be taken which could give US political difficulty during current UN debate.** This raid, if such it was, if exposed will gravely alter whole atmosphere in GA [General Assembly]. If Cuba now proves any of planes and pilots came from outside, we will face increasingly hostile atmosphere. No one will believe that bombing attacks on Cuba from outside could have been organized without our complicity.

3. I do not understand how we could let such attack take place two days before debate on Cuban issue in GA. Nor can I understand if we could not prevent such outside attack from taking place at this time why I could not have been warned and provided pre-prepared material with which to defend US. Answers I made to Roa's statements about incident on Saturday were hastily concocted in Department, and revised by me at last minute on assumption this was a clear case of attacks by defectors inside Cuba.

4. There is gravest risk of another U-2 disaster in such uncoordinated action. 93/

* Emphasis by author.

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About this same time, the Department received another Priority cable from Stevenson for the President and the Secretary of State asking for guidance to meet the Soviet charge that armed attacks against Cuba were being launched from the United States territory. He requested authority to go on record as favoring the motivations of the Cuban refugees in the US who were anti-Castro, but "I wish to make clear, however, that we would be opposed to any use of our territory for mounting an offensive against any foreign government." An advance copy of this message went to the Secretary of State at 9:15 p.m. on 16 April. 94/

That Stevenson was in the dark regarding details of the planned anti-Castro operations being sponsored by the Agency is clearly evident from the reports of the various USUN and Department of State officials who were present at the Tracy Barnes briefing and/or who worked with Stevenson during the crisis that evolved following the D-2 air strike. Correspondence with these individuals reveals that Barnes did not, in any way, provide details about the anticipated tactical air operations -- neither its objectives nor its dates -- or about the deception activity. He

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apparently did indicate that there was an upcoming invasion, but none of those in attendance at the briefing recall any mention of numbers of troops or the anticipated D-Day date.

The only discrepancy that has been found in the comments of any of the participants who were queried concerns Arthur Schlesinger's remark in his book, *One Thousand Days*, where his statement that "our briefing, which was probably unduly vague" differs from his response to the author's question.* Schlesinger's letter stated:

I have checked my journal with the following result. I had an appointment with Dean Rusk on the morning of April 8, 1961 (in a vain effort to get him to oppose the Cuban adventure), and for that reason was late in setting off for New York. I now quote the journal: "I then took a plane to New York. I went immediately to the office of the US Delegation to the UN. Tracy Barnes (CIA) and Bill Bowdler (State) had preceded me and were already deep in discussion with AES about a proposed response to Roa. We discussed aspects of this most of the morning. Then, AES, Harlan Cleveland, Clayton Fritchey and I went to the Century for luncheon. AES made it clear that he wholly disapproves of the project, objects to the fact that he was given no opportunity to

* See page 238 for complete text of Schlesinger's paragraph.

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comment on it, and believes that it will cause infinite trouble. However, he is substantially the good soldier about it, and is prepared to try and make the best possible US case."

As I recall it, Tracy Barnes was to provide the detailed tactical briefing and this presumably had been accomplished by the time of my arrival. Perhaps Bill Bowdler may recall what Tracy in fact told Stevenson. Looking at your four points, I would say that Stevenson certainly understood No. 2, [that there would be a D-Day invasion by anti-Castro troops] ... but I assume[d] that Tracy had said something to him about your points 1 [that there would be a D-2 air strike] and 3 [that there would be a D-Day air strike]; and that we did not make point 4 [the specific date of either D-Day or D-2] clear to Stevenson, leaving him under the impression, as I wrote in *A Thousand Days*, that the invasion would not take place while the Cuban item was under discussion at the UN. I do not know why Stevenson was not informed more precisely about the date. It was probably because the date had not been finally set in Washington, and we supposed that that question could be faced farther down the road. 95/

Obviously there is some reason for speculation about the accuracy of the comments in *A Thousand Days* since Schlesinger was not in attendance during the full course of Barnes's presentation (he was delayed in Washington for his meeting with Rusk), and he *assumed* that there was probably mention of the upcoming D-2 and D-Day tactical air operations. If D-2 was

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mentioned, it is hard to imagine that it could have been in any context other than that it was to be carried out by the CIA trained, anti-Castro Cubans. Thus, presumably, any references that Stevenson picked up about the 15 April 1961 air strike against Castro should have alerted him to the probability that this was what he had, in fact, been briefed about. Moreover, as previously discussed, the D-2 date had been firmly set at the time that Barnes and Schlesinger were in New York to do the Stevenson briefing.*

There are other witnesses, however, who were closer than Schlesinger to Stevenson during the course of the activity beginning on 8 April and continuing through the D-2 strike. One of them in particular seems to have recalled, in precise detail, the course of events and actions taken by Ambassador Stevenson during this period. Richard F. Pedersen, then Chief of the Political Section of USUN operation, has reported the following details:

I was present with Amb. Stevenson and Amb. [Francis T. P.] Plimpton in the briefings by Tracy Baines [*sic*] (and Arthur

* See page 245.

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Schlesinger) in 1961. The answers to your specific questions are explicitly "no" in each case.*

In fact, the briefing totally misled Amb. Stevenson, Amb. Plimpton, and me as to the scope and timing of what was underway.

The effect of the briefing was this:

(1) that the CIA was involved in plans for an internal uprising on the island. (This had to have included mention of outside Cuban assistance though I do not now remember this as a fact.)

(2) That nothing would happen from US territory.

(3) That no US forces or personnel would be involved.

(4) That whatever happened, would have the appearance of an internal Cuban event.

(5) That nothing would happen during the session of the General Assembly, then underway. (I asked this question myself.)

* The questions were to determine if Stevenson was told that: 1) there would be an air strike against Castro's airfields on D-2 (15 April 61); 2) there would be an invasion of Cuba by a force of some 1,200 anti-Castro Cubans; 3) there would be an air strike (or a series of air strikes) on D-Day (or on D-Day and subsequently as necessary) against a series of tactical targets; 4) the actual date of the D-2 air strike was 15 April or that the upcoming invasion was set for 17 April.

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There was no mention of dates; no mention of an "invasion" by a force of Cubans; no mention whatsoever of anything like a "D-DAY"; no mention of US air strikes; and no mention of a date. (I do not recall any mention of air strikes by non-US forces either, and am fairly sure there was none.)

The three key factors for us were: appearance of an internal uprising, no U.S. participation, and nothing during the General Assembly session. I am very clear about these matters, as I was responsible for our handling of the Cuban item then before the General Assembly. Foreign Minister Roa kept delaying debate in order to have the item available, when and if something happened. Confident that nothing would happen during the General Assembly, and having no idea of the degree of U.S. involvement, we cooperated in this tactic. Our negotiating position on the substance of draft resolutions pending on the subject, based on the same assumption, also was wrong.

I was also intimately involved in the false statements of Gov. Stevenson, which he made about the two aircraft in Florida just before the invasion. It was obvious at that point that something was accelerating (though we were completely uninformed about an invasion). Nevertheless, we were fully assured from Washington that the two planes in Florida were legitimate Cuban aircraft which had defected.

I wrote the first draft to this effect myself. This was then rewritten in Washington, where it was cleared by Secretary Rusk himself and, I was told, by the responsible person in CIA. When Mr. Sisco telephoned the redraft back on Saturday morning [15 April], I commented about half

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way through that the draft was not a denial. Mr. Sisco said that it was and that the rest of the text would show that. It did, although it may well be that we strengthened the words on the phone.*

I then took the text to Governor Stevenson, telling him that the Department had verified that, whatever else was happening, the two planes concerned were legitimate defecting planes of the Cuban Air Force. As we by then had pictures of these planes in New York, as well as the statements of the pilots, both of which were also legitimate if the Washington text was true, we added those elements to the statement he later made to the Committee.

As we were obviously dealing with a delicate matter on which it was important to be right, I suggested to Gov. Stevenson he verify the statement again directly with Secretary Rusk. He asked his secretary to make the call, but just at that point Mr. Sisco called him. Gov. Stevenson then verified the statement with Mr. Sisco instead, and we shortly went into the Committee where he made it. (All of the above took place in a small working office we then had in the UN building itself.)

Foreign Minister Roa attacked our statement in the Committee so robustly that I began to get concerned again. Saturday afternoon I asked one of our staff members to get corroborating details on the planes -- engine numbers and other data -- that we could read into the record during the next debate to prove that these two planes were from the Cuban Air Force.

* Joseph Sisco was Deputy Director of the Office of UN Political and Security Affairs located in the Department of State in Washington, D. C.

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On Sunday morning, I was told that Washington had finally said that pursuant [*sic*] of that line of inquiry would not be fruitful. It was then clear that our Saturday statement had been false. I prepared a Top Secret telegram of complaint from Stevenson to the Secretary (or the President) and, accompanied by Wm. Bowdler, now Ambassador to Pretoria, took it to Gov. Stevenson at the Waldorf. I told him the Saturday statements had been false and showed him the telegram, which he signed -- probably, though I do not remember for sure, with changes of his own. He was understandably very disturbed.*

After we left, he must have called the President or the Secretary, or both. In any case, McGeorge Bundy then came to New York. As I recall, they had breakfast Monday morning, which I believe was when the invasion was taking place. My impression is that the timing was determined so that he [Stevenson] would only be told after the invasion was already underway. I do not know what Stevenson was then told, or what he said about possible air strikes. But as both the President and he by then had said that nothing would take place from U.S. territory, and that no U.S. forces would be involved, he certainly must have been opposed and must at that point have been consulted about the strike.

* Stevenson's protest apparently had little or no impact on the Department for a cable was sent to him on Monday, 17 April 1961 at 1213 hours, providing him with some "language for contingency use if Cubans make show with bomb and rocket fragments [from attack on D-2]." 95a/

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As I recall, the nature of the President's statement on non-involvement of U.S. Forces and territory was worked out with Mr. Schlesinger on the day of the briefing by Amb. Barnes. But you may want to check with him on that. 96/*

* Others queried in addition to Mr. Pedersen, on the subject of the Barnes briefing were Francis T. P. Plimpton, Charles W. Yost, and Charles P. Noyes. Among other things, Mr. Plimpton said: "I do not recall any mention of an air strike against Castro's airfields, either before or on D-Day"; and, in addition, Plimpton stated that he was "in complete accord with everything" that Mr. Pedersen had written to the author. 97/

Charles W. Yost was present at part of the briefing which Barnes gave to Stevenson, but having taken no notes, he did not recall any of the specifics. 98/ Charles P. Noyes, too, was vague on being briefed on the operational plan, noting that: "As I recall it, we were trying to prepare ourselves to conduct a defense in the UN against what we assumed would be a violent attack on Cuba." 99/

The author also sent inquiries to both Harlan Cleveland and William Bowdler, but neither had responded as of this writing. Mr. Cleveland, however, sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State on 12 April 1961 requesting guidance -- as Stevenson himself did in the cable cited above for 16 April 1961 -- for the UN Ambassador in an upcoming speech on Cuba. Cleveland's memorandum raised the question of the validity of comments in the planned speech which denied that the US was supporting and promoting the anti-Castro efforts which were being so widely publicized. Cleveland closed his memorandum with the following:

If I may add a general comment, I confess to some concern as to whether the Cuban matter has not been held so tightly, no doubt for good and sufficient reasons of security, as to make impossible a really adequate review of its foreign policy implications. Certainly neither Ambassador

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Stevenson nor I have been in it enough to make a professional judgment on the U.N. aspects. Compared to the full staff process that I think has been going on for months on the Congo, I wonder whether a fuller discussion on Cuba might not produce a better policy with which we could live longer. 100/

In transmitting a copy of his memorandum to Stevenson on the same date that it was prepared for the SecState, Cleveland called Stevenson's attention to the paragraph cited above. 101/

Mr. Cleveland also has offered a somewhat different version of who told what to Stevenson concerning the D-2 strike than that specified above in Mr. Pedersen's letter. In an address to a CIA audience in the Spring of 1977, Cleveland stated, among other things that:

At the UN General Assembly, Ambassador Adlai Stevenson was defending U.S. non-involvement in the refugee raids on Cuba, as they were being called. He asked Washington for the true story [of the D-2 raid], as many of you will recall, and the CIA provided the State Department with a false cover story, which Stevenson used his global credibility to trumpet as the truth. The cover blew off in less than 24 hours. Stevenson was a kindly and mild-mannered man. I've never seen anybody so sore in my life. And it is to his eternal credit, as far as I am concerned, that he didn't get sore at me even though I was the person who handed him the paper with instructions to trumpet it. 102/

The writer has not been able to resolve the question of whether the "cover story" re the D-2 strike went to Stevenson via the Sisco-Pedersen, Sisco-Stevenson route or whether it went from Cleveland to Stevenson as noted above. T. Walter Johnson, Stevenson's official
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Keeping the various aircraft that entered the scene in Florida properly identified -- Zuniga's B-26 at Miami, which was part of the D-2 deception story, the Brigade B-26 which had been shot up during the D-2 strike and was forced to make an emergency landing in Key West at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station, and the aircraft which the defecting Verdaguer brothers had landed at Jacksonville on 14 April -- has added further confusion to the Bay of Pigs story. According to Schlesinger, Secretary Rusk:

Seems for a while to have confused the phony defector at Key West, with the authentic defector at Jacksonville. Apparently it was not until late Saturday afternoon that he understood that the Key West plane was part of the CIA plot. 105/

As just indicated, the B-26 that landed at Key West was not a part of any intended "CIA plot," and the deception effort concerned Zuniga's landing at Miami not the Verdaguers' landing at Jacksonville.

Schlesinger then made a most unwarranted charge against the Agency stating:

biographer, says Cleveland told him (Johnson) that he had given the story to Stevenson. 103/

The author did not contact Clayton Fritchey, the only other person who might be knowledgeable about the Barnes-Stevenson meeting on 8 April 1961 because of Fritchey's journalistic interests. 104/

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Why CIA should have misled State has never been clear. Possibly the Agency having worked out its deception plan, felt obliged to deceive even the rest of its own government; or possibly the CIA source, if in the Intelligence Branch, was himself "unwitting." 106/

If Schlesinger's sequence is correct in saying that on Saturday, 15 April 1961, following the air strike, that Harlan Cleveland contacted State's Bureau of "Interamerican Affairs" (actually the Bureau of American Republic Affairs) which, in turn, called the CIA and if these inquiries went to "the Intelligence Branch" (CIA's Directorate for Intelligence), it was an inexcusable screwup by State. ARA/State should have known enough to go to either Secretary Rusk or Adolf Berle in its own house or to the Western Hemisphere Division in CIA's Directorate for Plans for information on the anti-Castro project. Rusk's confusion about the aircraft would seem to imply certain ineptitude on his part or on the part of his immediate staff rather than by the Agency. Moreover, considering the comments that had been made concerning Tracy Barnes's *instructions* in contrast to what Barnes apparently *said*, it would seem

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more reasonable to blame Barnes alone, not the CIA, for Stevenson being confused. Schlesinger's harsh criticism was unjustified.

Schlesinger also stated as follows:

The collapse of the cover story brought the question of the second air strike into new focus. The President and the Secretary understood this strike as one which would take place simultaneously with the landings and have the appearance of coming from the airstrip on the beach. It had slid by in the briefings, everyone assuming that it would be masked by the cover story. But, there could be no easy attribution to defectors now. Nor, did the fact that the planes were B-26's flown by Cuban pilots save the situation; despite the great to-do about "Cubanizing" the operation, they would still be United States planes in the eyes of the UN. 107/

There is an inherent paradox in Schlesinger's comment about the second strike "sliding by" in the briefings, because it would be masked by the cover story. If "everyone" assumed that it would be masked by the cover story, then apparently everyone was aware of the plan to hit Cuban targets on D-Day. In view of the written record of Mr. Bundy favoring a pre D-Day attack, it is difficult to imagine that the principal White House staffers were not fully aware of what was intended in the way of air strikes against Cuban soil.

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Schlesinger does go on to pin Rusk down as the one principally responsible for the cancellation, stating:

Rusk, after his talks with Stevenson, concluded that a second Nicaraguan strike would put the United States in an untenable position internationally, and that no further strikes should be launched until the planes could fly (or appear to fly) from the beachhead. Bundy agreed, and they called the President at Glen Ora. 108/

Then, according to Schlesinger, when Rusk and Bundy had the President on the telephone:

Rusk said that the projected strike was one which could only appear to come from Nicaragua, Kennedy said, "I'm not signed on to this"; the strike he knew about was the one coming ostensibly from the beachhead. After a long conversation, the President directed that the strike be canceled." 109/

What Schlesinger conveniently overlooked in the above comments regarding the cancellation of the second strike was the fact that the prohibition was not only that the strikes must appear to come from the beachhead, *but there was no provision in the new directions for strikes against any tactical air targets.* The B-26's were to support and protect the troops coming into the beachhead, and strikes against the airfields -- the key to the success of the entire invasion operation -- were automatically ruled out.

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Stewart Alsop, who also wrote about this period, has a significantly different version of the events which resulted in the cancellation of the second strike. Alsop has Rusk calling Tracy Barnes early in the evening of 16 April to come to his (Rusk's) office in State Department to straighten him out about the various aircraft. At the time that Barnes was doing this, McGeorge Bundy also arrived at the Secretary's office and supported Barnes's version about each of the three aircraft. At this point, according to Alsop:

Rusk shook his head, and remarked, "I guess I got mixed up." Rusk evidently realized that he had unintentionally misled Stevenson. Briefly, he discussed with Bundy whether he, Rusk, ought to join Stevenson at the UN to give him support in the furious debate which was certain to break out on Monday. It was decided instead, that Bundy should go to New York to backstop Stevenson. Rusk asked Barnes to go down to the floor below, where Stevenson's speech for the next day was being drafted, and to make sure that the speech contained no errors of fact.

Barnes did so, and went back up to Rusk's seventh floor office at about eight o'clock. By this time, Bundy had left to fly to New York, and Rusk was alone. He remarked casually to Barnes that the second air strike had been called off. Bundy, it transpired, had telephoned

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the President, briefed him on the course of events, and explained that he was going to New York to backstop Stevenson in the UN, and to help him deal with the inevitable furor over the second air strike.

"What second air strike?" asked the President. He had been well briefed, but apparently he had forgotten this part of the plan. In any case, the evidence of American duplicity produced by the Cubans in the UN and Adlai Stevenson's anger at being misled had both deeply worried the President. So, he told Bundy to order Rusk to cancel the second air strike. 110/

There is a difference of opinion reflected between the Schlesinger book and the Alsop book, also in terms of how the word of the cancellation was passed on to CIA. According to Schlesinger, Bundy, upon hearing from the President "promptly passed on the word to General C. P. Cabell." 111/

According to Alsop, when Barnes, who was still in the State Department reading Stevenson's speech presented himself back to Rusk's office, Rusk told Barnes that there would be no second air strike, and at that point, according to Alsop:

With Rusk's assent, Barnes called his superior, Bissell, and asked him to come right over. He told Bissell of the President's order, but told him not to worry

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too much -- the order made no sense, and was sure to be reversed. 112/*

Which version of the story is more precise is impossible to determine, but one can look at the reaction which the news, once received by Gen. Cabell and Mr. Bissell, precipitated at that level. It was not until the close out of the Bay of Pigs activity that Gen. Cabell and Mr. Bissell went on record with their version of the events which transpired among themselves, Secretary Rusk, and President Kennedy. In a memorandum of 9 May 1961 for General Maxwell Taylor, Gen. Cabell and Mr. Bissell forwarded a three page memorandum which is reproduced here in full.

1. At about 9:30 p.m. on 16 April (D-1) I was called in the CIA headquarters for the Cuban operation by the Special Assistant to the President, Mr. McGeorge

* Schlesinger's book appeared in 1964, Alsop's book appeared in 1968. In a memorandum prepared for the DCI on the Alsop book, it was reported that:

Mr. Barnes confirms his conversation with Secretary Rusk and that Mr. Bundy, who had arrived during the conversation, backed him up on the details, as reported by Alsop. Thus, the cancellation of the second air strike by President Kennedy was apparently based on a misunderstanding of which CIA was unaware until too late to correct. Mr. Barnes also confirms his subsequent conversation with Secretary Rusk in which Alsop reports Barnes's learning of the cancellation and calling Mr. Bissell. 113/

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Bundy. He notified me that we would not be permitted to launch air strikes the next morning until they could be conducted from a strip within the beachhead. Any further consultation regarding this matter should be with the Secretary of State.

2. I called the Secretary and asked him if I could come immediately to his office and discuss this decision. Mr. Bissell joined me at the Secretary's office where we both arrived at about 10:15 p.m.

3. The Secretary informed us that there were political considerations preventing the planned air strikes before the beachhead airfield was in our hands and usable. The air strikes on D-2 had been allowed because of military considerations. Political requirements at the present time were overriding. The main consideration involved the situation at the United Nations. The Secretary described Ambassador Stevenson's attitude in some detail. Ambassador Stevenson had insisted essentially that the air strikes would make it absolutely impossible for the U. S. position to be sustained. The Secretary stated that such a result was unacceptable.

4. In the light of this he asked that we describe the implications of the decision. We told him that the time was such (now almost 11:00 p.m.) that it was now physically impossible to stop the over-all landing operation as the convoy was at that time just about beginning to put the first boat ashore, and that failure to make air strikes in the immediate beachhead area the first thing in the morning (D-Day) would clearly be disastrous. I informed him that there would be four effects of

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the cancellation order as it applied to strikes against Cuban airfields.

a. There would be a great risk of loss of one or more of the ships as they withdrew from the beach. This would be serious but not catastrophic *provided* that the unloading had proceeded as scheduled and all planned unloading had occurred by daylight. In view of the fact that this was a night landing and close timing was required, it was pointed out that the probability of smooth performance here was doubtful. (As it turned out, the unloading was not accomplished in the time planned.)

b. The disembarked forces in the beachhead would be subjected to a heavier scale of air attack than would otherwise have been the case. In view of the fact that the Cuban Air Force was inadequate for massive air attacks, the attacks to be expected under the new circumstances would be damaging to these forces but not decisive.

c. Failure essentially to neutralize the Cuban Air Force very early on D-Day would have its most serious effect on the use of the Expeditionary Air Force's B-26s to isolate the battlefield. The B-26s were being counted upon to attack approaching Cuban ground and Naval elements and close-in artillery and tanks. No fighter cover was being provided for the B-26s and they would thus face the prospect of serious attrition during these battlefield operations. The beachhead could then be overwhelmed by the superior surface attack which could be brought against it.

d. Loss of efficiency would result from this late change of orders.

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5. After considering the foregoing, the Secretary of State agreed that strikes could be made in the immediate beachhead area but confirmed that the planned air strikes against Cuban airfields, a harbor, and a radio broadcasting station, could not be permitted and the decision to cancel would stand. He asked if I should like to speak to the President. Mr. Bissell and I were impressed with the extremely delicate situation with Ambassador Stevenson and the United Nations and the risk to the entire political position of the United States, and the firm position of the Secretary. We saw no point in my speaking personally to the President and so informed the Secretary.

6. Our immediate problem then was quickly to dispatch the necessary order to the Air Base in Puerto Cabezas carrying out the instructions to stop the planned air strike and to require re-planning and re-briefing of crews. (This was barely accomplished as the order to cancel caught the crews in their cockpits.)

7. Our next task was to try and compensate for the loss of effective air strikes. In order to protect the shipping as it withdrew from the beachhead, I arranged with the Navy to stand by pending authority to give fighter cover. At 4:30 a.m., 17 April (D-Day), I called on the Secretary of State at his home and reiterated the need to protect the shipping. The Secretary telephoned the President and put me on the phone. After I made the request the President asked that the Secretary be put back on. After conversation with the President, the Secretary informed me that the request for air cover was disapproved. 114/

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The memorandum was initially signed by C. P. Cabell, General, USAF, Deputy Director (of CIA). Typed beneath Cabell's signature was the following: "the foregoing conforms to my recollection" and this was signed by Richard M. Bissell, Jr., Deputy Director, Plans.* Clearly, according to Cabell and Bissell, political considerations negated the military importance of the D-Day strike. Paradoxically, however, the Secretary of State did agree that the B-26's could be used to fly beach cover for the invading forces. How it was expected that this limitation would be less of a risk to the US in the UN is inexplicable.

* Conspicuous by his absence at this critical time was Allen W. Dulles, Director of Central Intelligence. Dulles was in Puerto Rico fulfilling a previous commitment to address the Young President's Organization. The author was told by Mr. Dulles's former Special Assistant, Walter Elder that it was decided that plausible deniability could best be supported if Dulles made his planned speech. Cancellation, it was feared, either would be a tip-off to the upcoming attack or would lead to charges that CIA was behind the invasion -- charges which were made in any event. However, since Dulles did not depart Headquarters until Saturday, 15 April 1961, arriving in Puerto Rico that evening, this would seem to have been a rather weak rationale -- Dulles was actually in Washington as the D-2 air strike was in progress. Dulles departed Puerto Rico on 17 April, arriving at Friendship Airport around midnight. 114a/

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Insert to footnote or indicated

The travel voucher for his trip shows Dulles departed for Puerto Rico from New York (probably on Pan American flight 253 at 6:15 p.m.) and returned from San Juan to Baltimore International Airport. Presumably Dulles, his wife, and ~~the~~ ^{Walter} Elder, his special assistant, flew from Washington to New York on 15 April on an agency aircraft since there is no indication of billing for a commercial flight for this portion of the journey. 11/24/51

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Several years after his resignation from the Agency, Mr. Bissell offered some additional significant thoughts concerning the cancellation episode. During an Oral History interview for the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Bissell surfaced the following information which for the first time openly revealed that the JCS may have had serious reservations about the essentiality of the air strikes.

In a meeting that General Cabell and I had with Dean Rusk early Sunday evening, which has been described in various books, he offered us the chance to speak to the President on the telephone in his presence and seek a reversal of that decision. We did not take that opportunity, feeling, frankly, that the cause was hopeless. Rusk had called the President; Rusk had laid this matter before the President; Rusk had told the President that we felt very strong that this strike was a military necessity. Rusk had then stated his own reasons why, given developments in the U.N., another air strike would be politically disastrous and the President, to Rusk, had reaffirmed his decision. Cabell and I felt that there really was a negligible chance that we could induce the President to change his mind.

Moreover, I think it has to be repeated that in some quarters, at least, there was a doubt as to whether the air attack was such an absolute necessity. Dean Rusk himself had been a participant in World War II operations in Burma of an irregular warfare type, and he had said on a number of occasions that operations of this sort

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did not depend nearly so heavily on air cover as did conventional amphibious operations by organized troops.

More than that, a fact that is very little known is that the Joint Chiefs, more than once in their discussions of the operation, had expressed some doubt about the absolute essentiality of these air strikes. I don't want this remark to be subject in any way to the interpretation that the Joint Chiefs did not favor these air strikes, or did not believe that they improved the military chances. But they attached less critical importance to them than did, for instance, the Marine colonel, who was really in direct charge of the planning of the operation. I think that knowledge of this attitude on the part of the Joint Chiefs may have had a little influence on General Cabell's and my decision that we won't pursue the matter further with the President that Sunday night. I think knowledge of this attitude by the Joint Chiefs may well have been reported to the President, although it never was in my hearing. And if so, I'm sure it would have influenced him very significantly.

Later that night General Cabell went and made another appeal, first to Rusk and then, from Rusk's apartment, on the telephone to the President. This was an appeal for the authority to use U.S. Naval air -- I think it was in as far as the three mile limit. This was a much milder request than the request for another strategic strike by the Cuban aircraft. And yet it was turned down by the President. I must admit I have always taken that as an indication, as has Cabell, that our original judgment was correct, that the President would not have been moved by our appeal

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to him. I still think it was a mistake on our part not to make the appeal. 115/

As told to the Taylor Committee, Rusk's version of the meeting with Cabell and Bissell showed significant differences from that just quoted. After stating that neither he nor the President realized that there was going to be anything other than the D-Day air strike, Rusk said the President:

Didn't think there should be second strikes in the area unless there were overriding considerations ... [Bissell and General Cabell] *indicated that the air strikes would be important, but not critical.* I offered to let them call the President, but they indicated they didn't think the matter was that important. They said that they preferred not to call the President ... Since Mr. Bissell and General Cabell didn't want to talk to the President on the matter, I felt there was no overriding consideration to advise him of. I didn't think they believed the dawn air strikes were too important. 116/*

If, indeed, the Cabell-Bissell memorandum of the cancellation is accurate in its statement of the effects of the cancellation, it is difficult to understand how Secretary Rusk concluded that the CIA duo

* Emphasis by author.

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regarded the second strike as of marginal importance.* Without it, they had indicated probable loss of vessels and defeat of the invasion force -- hardly minor considerations.

McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's National Security Adviser, too, submitted some interesting comments to the Taylor Committee concerning the cancellation of the D-Day strike.** After initially emphasizing that "it was clearly understood that the air battle should be won," Bundy subsequently commented that:

* Apparently Rusk was out of communication with Thomas Mann, one of State's principals throughout the Bay of Pigs planning. While often at odds with Agency personnel on details of the operation, Mann has claimed to have been a strong proponent of control of the air over Cuba:

[The Zapata plan] was based on the assumption that we would be able to control the air. We would have complete control of the air ... It was clear that control of the air was of the essence. In fact, the plan called for a standby of our own [US] planes in case anything went wrong ... 116a/

** Bundy was apparently more perceptive about the accuracy or completeness of the official record than other of the witnesses before the Committee because he forwarded a memorandum with his own version of what he had told the Committee on 1 May 1961 in lieu of the non-verbatim record being made by the Committee secretary.

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One startling omission, in retrospect is the failure of any of the President's advisers to warn of the danger of the T-33's. I suspect that one reason for the [President's] later decision not to launch an air strike on the morning of D-Day was that this capability of the Castro Air Force was never put forward as significant. 117/

The question seems obvious. How could the National Security Adviser contemplate winning "the air battle" unless the T-33's -- which were positively identified as available and armed well prior to D minus 2 -- were destroyed? If Bundy expected to give the Committee a valid case for poor military judgment by JMATE and the Joint Chiefs, Rusk's testimony on the political nature of the cancellation left him high and dry.

When Cabell and Bissell returned to the operations center shortly before midnight on 16 April, they passed the word on as to what had transpired at the White House; and despite the efforts of Col. Hawkins, Jake Esterline, and Dick Drain, who pointed out that the cancellation of the D-Day strike against the airfields would probably mean the failure of the whole operation, Gen. Cabell reportedly replied that "the Agency had been given its marching orders" and would comply. 118/

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Shortly after 0100 hours Washington time on 17 April 1961, Stan Beerli sent a cable to TIDE, which read in part as follows:

Complete plan amended to place all B-26 aircraft at disposal of Brigade Commander, and Task Force protection. Targets outlined in Ops Plan 200-1, Attachment #1, Appendix 2 to Annex B. are cancelled. 119/

The TIDE acknowledgment of the receipt of Beerli's cable clearly reflected discouragement on the part of Thorsrud, the Chief of Air Operations at the strike base. It read in part:

1. Refs received and reluctantly complied with. Complete plan amendment per refs received 170715Z [0115 hours local time; 0215 hours Washington, D.C. time] with all pilots in cockpit ready for start engines. Needless to say this less than desirable operating procedure when 12 aircraft timed for take off between 0730Z and 0800Z.

2. Realize it desired to give maximum protection to Brigade, however, believe per [*sic*] change will not afford as much protection as original strike plan. The only real offensive danger to the Brigade is enemy fighters and bombers which are better hit on their home field -- not (repeat not) over the beachhead. 120/

In this same cable, Thorsrud went on to request authorization to launch an airfield strike five minutes before sunset on D-Day; and he also requested permission

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to launch strikes on the afternoon of D-Day on the basis of debriefings of pilots who had been flying operations over the beach. 121/

To suggest that Thorsrud was upset by the cancellation of the D-Day strike understates the case. That it was an extremely emotional experience for him comes through quite clearly in his description of the events as they had occurred 16 years prior to the time that the author talked to him:

There were only two people in that commo shack, the sergeant who was my commo officer and myself. This message came in FLASH PRECEDENCE! I couldn't believe it, neither could he ... A lot of things that went through my mind right at that point were: "What do they know that I don't?" "There must be a reason for this." "They said to divert a couple of aircraft to cover the ships in the Isle of Pines area." "God, maybe there is something happening politically that I don't know about." "Maybe there is some reason to this."

When I thought about it -- maybe five minutes, because I had to stop the aircraft -- I finally said, well, I don't have any choice. I've got to take the order, but I thought of every way that it could have been a mistake. I thought of every way that there must be other reasons behind it, because in my own mind, I knew it was over. I knew it was over right then -- the minute that I read that message. I went out -- and

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you've got to picture this situation -- the PBY had already taken off. It had to take off at midnight to get there by daylight. The 46's were lined up to go -- they were the next slowest, so they were launched next. We had firepots and lights. We had all kinds -- three quarters of them didn't speak English, so we couldn't cancel it by an English order. We were launching the 26's by the distance that they had to go -- to Santiago and to Havana and all the other places by their elements. All the aircraft were started. They were all taxied in position. It was almost like a World War II movie of a strike -- there were over 30[?] aircraft on that one strip, getting ready for takeoff when that message came in. The lead aircraft -- the lead B-26's -- were loaded with napalm for that line up of tanks that we had; and the guys had photos of those tanks there. Fresh, a few hours before. They would have wiped out that tank force. Do you know what it means to de-arm an armed aircraft of napalm -- the problems and all? Unbelievable. When it was called off, it was bad enough. There was enough gloom around that place when someone came up with that assinine defector's operation. But that morning ... In fact, we said ... that's in the cable traffic too ... I forget my exact words ... but it was either a ... I think ... I sent one personally to the Director, and I think the Cubans came in and asked to send one personally to John F. Kennedy ... Villafana and his group ... and I said, "Of course you can. I will send it to Headquarters, and I am sure that it will be relayed to him."

Everyone knew that the operation didn't have a prayer. So, we launched those six guys in the morning, and I think four of

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them were shot down -- or three of them were shot down. They were just sending guys as fodder into the cannon. It was just unbelievable! And how that decision was made, I don't know ... I remember going over to the operations room, and I remember going back over to the commo shack ... at the teletype ... at the hard copy that matched mine, and ... Well, I'll never forget that few hours; and then it got worse ... each day ... and that was the end. Each day it got worse -- you could end your story right there. In fact, you could almost end your story with the defection part, because air was the key to that operation. 122/

Being on the scene with the pilots who were going to conduct the air strike, Thorsrud was most directly affected. However, other of the principals in Project JMATE obviously reflected at some length about the cancellation of the second strike. Mr. Bissell, one of the principal actors in the scene in Dean Rusk's office the night of 16 April 1961, offered the following comments which, if correct, help to explain Rusk's position:

[Adolf Berle] was quite an activist. Now Rusk himself was not. Rusk was always afraid of this operation ... Rusk was all for a powerful guerrilla effort -- anything that could be done along that line. But, he consistently argued for reducing the sound level, and, as you know, had everything to do with abandoning the TRINIDAD site ... Rusk's influence always was to avoid the noisy actions. Do everything

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you can not to make this look like an invasion. Make it look like a guerrilla landing. Make it look more like Castro's original operation in Oriente. And I think it is a matter of record that his opposition or his recommendation was what led to the cancellation of the second air strike. I am sure that his opposition contributed to the cancellation of the original plan's second of three air strikes. I want to say also, though, that Rusk, after the fact, was always generous. He never said, "I told you so," at least to my knowledge or in any report that has ever reached me. 123/

Recognizing that it was in hindsight, Mr. Bissell has expressed regret that he did not take the opportunity to speak to President Kennedy at the time that Rusk offered him the chance on 16 April. 124/ While Bissell wondered whether he acted properly at the time that the second strike was being called off, both Jake Esterline, Chief, JMATE and George Gaines, who ran the JMATE operation for DPD, had different retrospective views concerning not only Bissell, but particularly General Cabell.

Jake Esterline, in fact, holds Cabell principally responsible for the failure of the Bay of Pigs operation, and he has stated as follows:

[Cabell] was the guy ... he was the Air Force General. He was the fellow

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that the people would have listened to, and ... he was the equivocator that let the thing get away from him that night. He came in ... I'll never forget him coming in with a cigar, and he said "Well, we are going to have to ration-
alize a little bit here." ... Hawkins and I looked at each other, and I said, "General are you saying that we are not going to get that airstrike," and he said "Yes." Hawkins said, "Well, we've lost. We are going to lose every ship." Cabell said, "Colonel," he said, "I don't know that that's right, I don't think I agree with that." ... That's when I wrote out a resignation to the Agency. That was before the first shot had ever been fired ...

Cabell said ... there was not going to be an airstrike. Well, he equivocated, he didn't speak in forthright terms to whomever of Kennedy's group he was talking to. He didn't tell them that "it is going to be a disaster if this doesn't happen." If he'd said that, and they had said, "well, you are not going to get the airstrike. Call it off," at least we might have still had a few hours to try and call it off. Now, whether they would have come back or not, is something else ...

What I am really saying by this is if we were running this operation at this point -- Hawkins and I -- Cabell, who was not very deeply informed on it, shouldn't have been the one that was up there giving the facts in cold terms of what would happen if any further diminishment of the capability took place. Now, I would like to think that the reason that he failed so miserably was that he wasn't adequately informed and didn't know ... As I had said at that time, he had clay feet ...

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He never spent enough time around, in my judgment, to be informed to the point that he should have been. I don't think the right person was going up to talk is what I am saying. We [Hawkins and Esterline] were the only ones that really knew, at that point, the total details of the operation and knew what the risks were in detail and what further diminishment of capability would be. When the equity became so great, I don't think just because a person was a GS-18, or because he had four stars on his shoulder that he should have gone himself ... He should have at least had one of the principal lieutenants charged with the operation -- and that would have been Hawkins or myself. I have never understood why they would presume to go up when things were so critical and not have one or the other -- it didn't have to be me if I was too thorny for them. It could have been Hawkins, but somebody who knew intimately what, how soon, or how easily disaster could come should have been there. 125/*

* Esterline and Hawkins apparently tried -- unsuccessfully to resign from Project JMATE when the switch was made from TRINIDAD. The above referenced attempt is supported by Esterline's testimony on 22-23 May 1961 to the Taylor Committee when in discussing cancellation of the D-Day strike he said: "I decided the operation was lost at midnight on the 16th [of April 1961]. The next day I told Mr. [J.C.] King [Chief, WH/D] that I couldn't continue because we were lost." 126/

In a very emotional phone conversation with William D. Pawley on 21 April 1961, Jake stated that he had resigned "last Sunday [16 April]" and that "I have quit the Agency." Esterline also indicated that the resignation hadn't been accepted because he was being sent to Florida for R&R. 127/ Dave Phillips has a more colorful description of the scene with Jake sitting "at a typewriter, a bottle of whiskey at his elbow, and wrote out his resignation several times. Bill tore them up as soon as they were typed." 128/

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In addition to Cabell, Esterline also faults Bissell, having pointed out:

It was a continual plea to Bissell that we had to destroy all of those planes on the ground. Those air strikes had to go, and it might even have to be ones beyond the programmed points if we didn't get all the aircraft. ... I really feel from my own recollection that if we [Hawkins and Esterline] had known that we were going to be cancelled out on that very critical air strike, we would have tried to stop the operation, because we knew ... we expected to lose every ship ... not just two. 129/

In his recollections of the situation at the time of the cancellation of the D-Day air strike, George Gaines reported that he had just returned from the Puerto Cabezas briefings, and walked into the office in time to be told that the President had cancelled the D-Day strike. Gaines stated:

At that time I told Stan Beerli, and later on, Bissell, that "this thing is doomed. It cannot go if we don't get those airplanes." 130/

When asked if he himself had recommended that the whole operation be called off at that stage, Gaines said:

No, ... the President -- when he cancelled it -- did not arbitrarily override everybody. He said unless there are "operational reasons" dictating otherwise,

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we'll cancel tomorrow morning's strike. Well nobody had told him that there were "operational reasons."

At the moment he made that decision, he thought that there was a chance -- a good chance -- of success without that air strike. He should have been informed, right at that moment, that operational reasons do dictate that we continue ... that we go ahead ... because if we don't, we can't land those troops, Mr. President. 131/

Concerning Cabell's responsibility and degree of familiarity with the operational implications of the cancellation, Gaines pointed out that Cabell was not too well aware of the air plan:

He had been briefed. We had our regular briefings to keep him up to date, but he had been apart from the military community for such a period of time that his operational expertise had been eroded by time. This was my whole argument ... that the President deserves some operational information because he has killed the entire project if we cannot make that strike. 132/

Making this point to both Beerli and later to Bissell, Gaines stated further:

I got the impression that there were so many political considerations involved that they did not want to go back and beard the President in his office, or ask for a special audience, when it would have been much better had we done so ... I really believe that Beerli should have been more forceful in this -- and I don't

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mean to be critical of Stan, because Stan was trying to do the right thing. But, Stan was military, and I was telling Stan -- military to military -- this cannot succeed; and I believe if he had been forceful in his presentation to Bissell, Bissell might have done it. Bissell was the type who would do something if he believed in it. But, Cabell is the one on whom the ultimate responsibility must lie, he was the man that Bissell -- and Dulles and the President -- was looking to for professional operational advice; and he didn't get it. That's my personal opinion. 133/

Beerli was far less harsh on Cabell than either Esterline or Gaines and pointed out that:

He [Cabell] made a very special effort to see it [air operations plans] all. He was very concerned. We made visits to his office frequently to show him what plans we had. He told me, being an air officer, he said, "I feel that I should be informed at this point just what is going on." 134/

Beerli apparently was less concerned about who did what -- or should have done what -- than he was about the impact that cancellation of the second strike had on operational planning. As with the other air operations planners and JMATE principals, he, too, believed that if the two attacks had gone forward as planned, Castro's Air Force would have been destroyed on the ground. But in his retrospective view of the D-Day cancellation, Col. Beerli offered another

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consideration which the others involved in the operation -- particularly Thorsrud -- recognized, but failed to articulate so clearly. Beerli's comments do much to explain to the layman some of the critical problems that began to surface at TIDE even before the close of D-Day:

This is something again that probably hasn't been emphasized. If we plan an attack on D-2 and another on D-Day, you get everybody cranked up. You get the schedule and everything else going. So you go to D-2, when everything is going well, and then you've got everybody ready to go on the D-Day. They've all worked, they've all been rested, and then you cancel it. Then you start it again, but you get everybody out of cycle. Therefore, you've got yourself in a hole, because your maintenance people and everybody else are working up to a point, and then you delay it. Then you want to start again. Well, then you're wearing your people down. In other words, by the cancellation of that mission, you have compounded the problem back at the base on rest schedules, mess schedules, and everything else. You might be able to do it as an exception, but in the long run, if you are going to do it for four or five days ... again ... on again, off again ... you know what that does. It is like any schedule that you would set up -- you start wearing people down and you get nothing to show for it. 135/

Subsequent to Gen. Cabell's death (25 May 1971), a 15 page hand written note surfaced among the General's

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effects. Attached to the handwritten memorandum was a cover comment which read:

These notes very valuable, because they were made when memory was fresh.
C.P.C.

On the foolscap itself, at the top of the first page, appears the comment:

Written soon after my appearance.

The first sentence of the notes then explains:

That these notes are further to the statement submitted by me and Mr. Richard Bissell to the Taylor-Kennedy-Dulles-Burke Board on [9 May 1961].

As it adds to what has already been discussed about Cabell's reaction to the news that the second strike was to be cancelled -- and because he is accused of serious shortcomings on the cancellation of the D-Day air strike -- it is believed worth repeating the verbatim text of that note:

When Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Assistant to the President, called me at Project Headquarters the night of [16] April [1961], he made it quite clear to me that the decision had already been made by the President cancelling the air strike on Cuban airfields planned for the morning of [17 April 1961]. (This decision was made without consulting in advance with me as Acting D.C.I. or anyone else in CIA.)

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Mr. Bundy further made it quite clear that the President had left for Glen Ora and that the Secretary of State would act for him in the event that I wanted to discuss the matter, and in fact the Secretary of State had the President's "proxy" in the case. He, Mr. Bundy, was leaving immediately for New York to "hold Ambassador Stevenson's hand."

I immediately contacted Mr. Bissell, Project Chief [Bissell was DD/P; Esterline was "Project Chief"], and made an appointment for the two of us to call on the Secretary of State in his office at the earliest feasible moment.

When we reported to the Secretary, he gave us a long explanation of the political impact of the now cancelled air strike. He made it quite clear that a new criterion or policy for the conduct of the overall operation was now in effect. Whereas in the preceding weeks and days I had formed the clear impression that the policy was that once launched, the operation must not be allowed to fail, the new policy was to accept the possibility of failure of the operation, but not accept the political implications of U.S. involvement which flowed from the air strike. This was so even though that strike was by Cuban air crews in aircraft staged from Central America.

I pointed out the jeopardy to the success of the military phase of the operation caused by the cancellation of the air strike. The landing itself would be jeopardized unless: (a) it attained complete surprise; (b) all ship and boat movements and unloadings (including ammunition) were completed without hitch *prior to dawn*; and (c) paratroop operations all were accomplished according to

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plan. I pointed out that it was most unlikely that all these favorable results would ensue -- in fact it would be a miracle if they did. As to holding the beachhead after an assumed successful landing, this was dependent upon friendly control of the air over the beachhead. Air control was necessary for our B-26 aircraft (slow piston-engined) to be able to render close battlefield support in the beachhead. This close support was particularly necessary by virtue of the fact that there was only a small amount of artillery and armor in the landing force and the B-26's had to substitute for them. The B-26's also had to interdict the movement of enemy reinforcements and weapons to the beachhead by land. The B-26's had as well to hold off enemy reinforcements coming by sea, and prevent enemy sea bombardment, in view of the fact that there was no friendly naval combat support.

I pointed out that, in view of the fact that we had no friendly fighter aircraft to cover the beachhead (none could be based within range), the only way we could get air superiority over the beachhead was to catch the enemy fighters on the ground by the strike just cancelled.

All my arguments were directed at the implications of the air strike cancellation to the success of the military phases of the operation. These arguments were to no avail, however, because actions required for the success of the military operation, that is the establishment and holding of the beachhead, were no longer the issue.

The only issue now was the fact that the air strike was judged to be politically

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unacceptable and therefore it had to be cancelled. The only person there qualified to address himself to the political implications of the air strike, was the Secretary of State, the man holding the President's proxy for action.

The Secretary then suddenly called the President on the telephone, reported our discussion, which he did with accuracy, including the gist of my analysis of the military implications of the cancellation. He reiterated the political unacceptability of the air strike and recommended that the cancellation stand. He then turned to me to see if I had anything else to say to the President, I said, "No", as I believed that all had been said. The Secretary had given all my military arguments, but [these were] overbalanced by the political implications. There was now a great urgency for action if I were to be able to carry out the orders of my Commander-in-Chief. This was no time for repetition of arguments. Rather it was time -- perhaps already *past* time -- to transmit to the Central American air base the command to cancel the strikes. As it turned out, our cancellation order caught the crews in their cockpits preparing to take off in a very short while.

I knew of the difficulties facing me of getting across the order, first to our Staff. The order hit them like a bolt from the blue. We had tried to think of all the things that could go wrong with the operation and to be prepared with corrective actions. This development was completely unexpected and caused great consternation in the Staff. However there was no time here either for argument about the President's order. We had first to get out the stop order in a manner that would be understood and accepted by those

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emotional Cubans, already under the great tension which precedes immediate entry into battle. Then we had to do some fast work to pick up the pieces and thus do what we could to salvage the operation and mitigate the terrible difficulties facing it.

When we first got word of the cancellation, Mr. Bissell and I had agreed that the time had passed to turn back the landing force and so cancel the entire operation. The landing force was already entering the area of expected enemy observation and its U.S. Naval escort was dropping back. An order at this time to turn back, might not have been received, and if it had been, there would have been questions at least and possibly refusals to obey, in either case, with resulting serious confusion -- *all in the face of the enemy.* (This too I explained to the Secretary of State.) Whereas, had the decision to cancel the air strike been received a few hours before we would have had the option of cancelling the whole operation. At this late hour we had no such option. 136/

In contrast to the memorandum which he and Mr. Bissell signed jointly on 9 May 1961 explaining the cancellation of the second strike, in this undated version *Cabell emphasized that Kennedy's mind had been made up at the time that CIA was informed that the strike was off; and it was a decision which had been reached without consulting anyone in the Agency.* The handwritten notes also emphasized the obvious, that military success was no longer the principal

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criterion for action -- the criterion now was that the air operation be politically acceptable. Recognizing these difficulties, however, Cabell proceeded to play the "good soldier" in saying that the time for discussion was past and that it was imperative to follow the orders of the Commander-in-Chief. According to this version of the cancellation of the strike, Cabell and Bissell together agreed that it was too late to turn the fleet about "in the face of the enemy"; but Cabell noted that had the cancellation been ordered some hours earlier, there would have been no problem about scrubbing the whole operation. Considering the actual status of the fleet at the time the decision was made final -- little or none of the unloading had actually started -- and considering that the first firefight had not yet taken place and alerted Castro's troops, it is difficult to understand why the attempt was not made to halt the operation, to recall everything that was in motion and, if need be, to use the B-26's to try to provide short-time cover for the withdrawing ships.

The expressions of concern that orders to turn about might have led the Cubans to seize the vessels

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and proceed with the invasion seem highly exaggerated in light of the subsequent performance of the invading Brigade. The action of the troops aboard the *Houston*, the long runs made by the *Atlantico* and the *Caribe* on D-Day also would indicate that if it had been clearly specified that there would be absolutely no air cover -- or that Castro troops were ready and waiting -- there would have been little, if any, resistance to a recall order.

Following the collapse of the invasion, the issue of the cancellation of the air strike scheduled for D-Day became highly political, particularly following Castro's release of the Brigade prisoners in December 1962. One of the most demonstrably partisan performers was President Kennedy's brother, the Attorney General, Robert Kennedy. In the course of his participation as a member of the Taylor Committee to investigate the Bay of Pigs, it was apparent that, whatever else, he intended to protect the good name of the President.* Concerning the cancellation of the second

* Interestingly enough, the sessions of the Taylor Committee were not recorded verbatim; and the researcher usually must speculate on the identity of a given questioner. On many questions which have obvious political overtones, it is apparent that Mr. Kennedy is speaking.

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strike, Robert Kennedy, in an interview session with *U.S. News and World Report* (28 January 1963) added some new fillips to further confuse the story. Kennedy charged (correctly) that *U.S. News and World Report* had claimed on various occasions that President Kennedy had "withdrawn US air cover" and that as a result of that withdrawal the invasion had failed. The Attorney General stated that no US air cover had actually been promised -- and had he stopped with this comment there would have been no problem. In a question and answer session with the reporters, however, he went on to deny that any consideration had ever been given to the possibility of providing US air cover -- but as pointed out earlier in this volume, this subject had been extensively debated throughout the course of Project JMATE. More controversial and inaccurate was Kennedy's subsequent version of the "truth" concerning the planned air strikes.

Robert Kennedy also said that the President understood that, after the D-2 air raid, there was to be another attack on Castro's airfields on the morning of D-Day.* The excitement at the UN, however, caused

* The plan called for both reattack and the addition of military and communication targets. See pp. 233-234.

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the President to have second thoughts and call off the planned air strike on Monday morning, unless those who had the responsibility felt that it was so important that it had to take place, in which case, they were supposed to call him and discuss it further. Kennedy seemed to imply that the President would have changed his mind. However, this overlooks the call General Cabell made early on the morning of 17 April to request USN air cover. Moreover, Robert Kennedy went on to say that the attack on the airfields took place later that day -- that is, later on Monday, 17 April. No such strike was authorized, even though Thorsrud had requested it. It was not until near midnight Monday and before dawn on Tuesday morning (18 April) that the abortive reattacks were launched.

More disturbing was Kennedy's response to the question "Wasn't there to be air cover of the beaches from Central America?" Kennedy's answer was as follows:

That is correct -- and that was not disturbed. All of the planes that were supposed to be utilized were utilized -- all in the planning. I might say they proved to be inadequate. The air cover at the beaches was definitely inadequate -- but not because of some last minute decision by the President or anyone else. 137/

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That simplistic statement totally ignored the basic concept of the planned D-Day air strike which was to kill off the remainder of Castro's aircraft, interdict a major portion of his armor, and disrupt his communications. If the air cover for the Brigade on the beach was inadequate -- although on D-Day it appears to have been successful, but at heavy cost -- it was because B-26's were no match for Sea Furies and T-33's. Moreover, the cancellation of the strike made it impossible for the Brigade B-26's to operate off the airstrip at Playa Giron, and hence, coverage of the beach areas -- even without the losses to FAR -- would have been spotty. In response to the question of who did the planning, Kennedy responded:

The plan that finally went into effect was approved by our military -- the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency. This wasn't something that was planned by a few fellows over at the White House and then put in operation. However, the President had to give approval to the plan, and he quite properly has accepted the responsibility. 138/

The point most conveniently ignored by the Attorney General was the fact that the White House did interfere with the air plan (a) by changing the initial site for the landing from TRINIDAD to ZAPATA, and

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(b) completely revising the planned air operation against Castro's Air Force and military targets.*

* The critical issues mentioned above were lost in the flurry of political reaction to other statements which Kennedy made about air cover -- principally, that JFK had made it quite clear that there would not be any US air support for the planned invasion nor would there be any additional US support for the invasion effort in the way of troop advisors or cadre leaders. When Kennedy's remarks -- many of which first appeared in the *Miami Herald* on 21 January 1963 -- hit the press, there was an immediate uproar. Richard Helms, who was then Deputy Director for Plans, prepared a memorandum for the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs in the Department of State pointing out that the comments of the Attorney General were of great concern to the Cuban community and threatened to blow Jose Miro Cardona out of the leadership of the Cuban Revolutionary Council; and they also were causing extensive criticism of the Brigade's military leaders, Manuel Artime and Jose Perez San Roman. If these Cuban leaders knew that neither US air support nor other US assistance had been promised, then the invasion should not have been permitted to take place. On the other hand, Tony Varona, who had frequently opposed the FRD and the CRC for their extreme dependence on the US prior to the invasion, was coming more to the fore as the leader of the exiles. 139/

The Attorney General's 28 January 1963 session with *U.S. News and World Report* was his second attempt to deflect criticism from the Administration following release of the Brigade prisoners by Castro. On 11 January 1963, Jose Perez ("Pepe") San Roman, when interviewed while paying a "courtesy call" to Robert Kennedy's offices, denied that he "had called unsuccessfully during the invasion for cover by jet airplanes." San Roman also said that he had not been told that the US would provide air cover for the operation. 139a/ His latter statement was true insofar as can be determined, but he was less than candid about events on the beach. The cable traffic between TIDE and Headquarters for
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President Kennedy himself suffered semantic aphasia over the question of US air cover, defending his brother's position that no US air cover had been promised the Cubans and saying that the Attorney General's interview by *U.S. News and World Report* describing the cancellation of the strike on the morning of 17 April 1961 was correct. The President, too, claimed that the strike was postponed until Monday afternoon; but again, this was less than the truth. The restrike was authorized for just before dawn on Tuesday morning when two separate flights of three B-26's each tried unsuccessfully to find the airfields -- the other military and commo targets which had been scheduled for the D-Day air strike weren't even considered.

17-19 April 1961 reflects the increasing calls from the Brigade for jet support over the beach. 139b/

In the fall of 1964 in a *Reader's Digest* article Richard Nixon also attempted to make some political points concerning the White House's action at the time of the invasion. Nixon stated:

He [JFK in talking to Nixon on 20 April 1961, at the White House], did not mention the fatal advice -- given him by some of his liberal State Department and White House advisers -- to cancel the two air strikes -- and, in effect, destroy the plan. 140/

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Perhaps the most serious charge leveled by Robert Kennedy in the course of his 21 January 1963 interview with the *Miami Herald* was his reference to Castro's T-33's. According to the President's brother, "We underestimated what a T-33 carrying rockets could do. ... It wasn't given sufficient thought. They caused us a great deal of trouble." 141/ As has already been demonstrated and as evidenced by the cable exchanges between the field and Headquarters, there was little question in the minds of the JMATE/DPD principals (Esterline, Hawkins, Thorsrud, Gaines, among others) that the T-33's could make or break the invasion.* Similarly former JMATE personnel found little to commend in Robert Kennedy's additional comments when he stated:

* Hawkins did appear to waffle a bit during the Taylor Committee hearings on the question of the T-33. During an undated conversation with an unidentified committee member -- or members -- Hawkins was asked if the importance of getting the T-33's was appreciated. He replied:

I think so, but I think the T-33 turned out to be a more effective aircraft than we had anticipated. I don't believe we thought they would be as dangerous to us as the B-26's. 141a/

This was an unjustified comment by a non-airman and it was never supported by the principal air operations officers.

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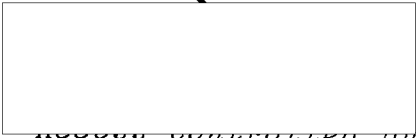
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The President inherited people with major reputations and he accepted their advice. There was not sufficient air cover at the beach. This was a mistake. There were not enough men and equipment. That was a mistake. Underestimating the T-33's -- that was a serious mistake. The planning was inadequate, just inadequate. 142/

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