

CONFIDENTIAL

December 18, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR

MR. BUNDY

SUBJECT: Travel Controls -- Cuba

1. Attached is a memorandum from Justice recommending to the Secretary of State that we allow Americans to travel to Cuba. In addition to the libertarian argument, one of the strongest points Justice makes is that, practically speaking, we are going to have a very hard time enforcing our present regulations during the Christmas holidays and during the coming summer holidays.

Also attached is an unofficial copy of a memorandum from Abba Schwartz and Abe Chayes to George Ball which in general comments favorably on the Justice proposal. They add that they would not permit Americans engaged in subversive activities to travel to Cuba.

2. Apparently Abe and Abba did not win their in-house fight to permit non-subversives Americans to travel to Cuba. At a meeting on December 13, George Ball decided against any kind of relaxation of travel controls to Cuba but in favor of relaxation of controls to other presently-restricted areas. Abba, noting that Justice was not invited to the meeting, says that Ed Martin made a very strong pitch which appeared to be decisive.

As a result of the meeting, a cable (also attached) was sent to the Secretary in Paris requesting approval for a State recommendation to the President that we give consideration to abolishing travel restrictions to all areas except Cuba. The Secretary concurred.

3. Abba says that a memorandum from George Ball to the President is now on the 7th floor. He expects that George Ball will clear this memorandum with the Attorney General before he sends it over to us. On Saturday, Mr. Ball told Abba that he would do this.

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4. Abba, personally, seems to have had some second thoughts about the Justice proposal which he first approved with slight qualifications. He thinks that the President will find it very hard to change the policy now; coming as his first action vis a vis Cuba, it will make him look unacceptably soft. Abba thinks we can reduce the demand for travel to Cuba this Christmas if we really try -- e. g. issue a press release, get indictments on about 4 or 5 more of the 58 students who traveled to Cuba this summer, and threaten restraining action. We can then reconsider the matter after Christmas.

Gordon Chase

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