

May 21, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Student Travel to Cuba

1. Every time holiday season rolls around, we face the problem of dealing with American students who want to go to Cuba in violation of our travel controls. Last summer 59 "students" (there were many unsavory, older types) went to Cuba -- 1 died while there, 58 had their passports suspended on return to the U. S., and 4 organizers of the group (one of whom did not go to Cuba) were indicted and are awaiting trial. This summer we expect more students to try to go to Cuba; it is still too early to know numbers but we are guessing in the neighborhood of 100.
2. There are two distinct schools of thought on this subject. One school (e. g. Justice Department), which favors a relaxation of our controls on travel to Cuba, cites our libertarian tradition and the difficulty of controlling travel to Cuba; this point of view is expressed in the Attorney General's memorandum to Secretary Rusk of December 12, 1963 -- attached at Tab A. The second school of thought, which represents current U. S. policy, argues (a) that relaxation would appear as a softening of our policy toward Cuba, (b) that our travel controls are part of a joint effort by the U. S. and other American Republics to isolate Cuba, and (c) that a relaxation of U. S. restrictions would make it very difficult for us to urge Latin American governments to prevent their nationals from going to Cuba -- where many would receive subversive training. A sample of our public posture on this issue is attached at Tab B.
3. On the assumption that you are not contemplating a relaxation of our policy on travel to Cuba, State and Justice are now beginning to study ways and means to reduce the interest in and to control student travel to Cuba this summer. The spectrum of possibilities includes such things as another public announcement of our current policy; the notification of airlines for the purpose of obtaining their cooperation; injunctive action; and criminal proceedings in the event U. S. travel controls are violated. However, before going ahead full-steam on this study, the agencies want to confirm their understanding that there is no change in our present policy and that a relaxation of controls to Cuba is not now in the cards.

McG. B.

I do not want a relaxation of controls _____
I do want a relaxation of controls _____
I want a Government review of the issue _____
Speak to me _____

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