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*original Executive Order  
request*

6 December 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR : John H. Wright, Chief  
Information and Privacy Division, OIS  
FROM : Jack B. Pfeiffer  
SUBJECT : Mandatory Review Request

1. As specified in Attachment 1 to this request, I submitted an UNCLASSIFIED version of my manuscript on the Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs to Charles E. Wilson, Chairman, Publications Review Board on 8 November 1984 on the assumption that his concurrence was required on the classification of the manuscript prior to my seeking possible non-official publication. My presumption was based on HR 6-2, Revised: 7 August 1984 (1677).

2. As indicated in Attachment 2 to this request, my assumption that the Publications Review Board was the proper reviewing authority was in error.

3. Following Mr. Wilson's suggestion, I contacted Gay Haran of your office; and she subsequently informed me that you and she believed that the appropriate procedure for me to follow was to request a mandatory review of my manuscript through IPD. To that end, I submit the enclosed manuscript of The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs. (See Attachment 3)

4. Inasmuch as my Agency employment is scheduled to terminate on 31 December 1984, it would be most helpful to have your decision soonest.

5. Please let me know if I can be of assistance to you in this effort.

Three Attachments as specified

*Jack B. Pfeiffer*

Dr. Jack B. Pfeiffer

ATTACHMENT 3

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

THE TAYLOR COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION  
OF  
THE BAY OF PIGS

9 NOVEMBER 1984

JACK B. PFEIFFER  
CSI/OTE, 1036 COC

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>	
Chapter 1	Introduction	1
Chapter 2	Organization and Procedures of the Committee	11
Chapter 3	Testimony of the Witnesses	24
Chapter 4	The Taylor Committee Report	177
Chapter 5	General Taylor's Retrospective Views	222
Chapter 6	Assessment of the Taylor Committee Investigation	231
	Epilogue	252
Appendix A	Topics for Discussion by the Taylor Committee, 25 April 1961	253
Appendix B	Letter for the President from McGeorge Bundy	256
Appendix C	Protecting the Kennedy Image	258
Appendix D	Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion (Zapata), 11 May 1961	261
Appendix E	Letter to President Kennedy from General Maxwell D. Taylor, 13 June 1961	272
Appendix F	Bitter Recriminations: The Navy CAP at the Bay of Pigs, 11 April 1961	274
Source References		293

# The Taylor Committee Investigation

## of the Bay of Pigs

### Chapter 1

#### Introduction

More than twenty years after the event, CIA personnel who were closely involved in the Bay of Pigs (BOP) operation continue to speak bitterly about the outcome. That the criticism of the Agency for its "fiasco" began even as the search for survivors from the beaches at Playa Giron and Playa Larga was underway--and continues to the present--has done nothing to mollify the feelings of those who were involved that they have taken a "bum rap" for a political decision which insured the military defeat of the anti-Castro forces the Agency had been authorized to organize and train for the overthrow of Fidel Castro.

As a result of the collapse of the anti-Castro invasion effort, reference to the Bay of Pigs continues to be used by any media expert, academician, politician, or demagogue who chooses to snipe at the Agency. As late as 1979 one worshipper of John F. Kennedy published a volume which, among other charges, claimed that <sup>at</sup> the time of the Bay of Pigs, the Agency acted "out of control and independently," "covered up," and was "routinely, daily, committing unconstitutional acts against its own citizens in its own country."\*

\* Wyden, Peter H. Bay of Pigs (New York; Simon and Schuster, 1979, pp. 7-8).

This volume critically examines the investigation of the Bay of Pigs operation conducted by General Maxwell D. Taylor at the behest of President John F. Kennedy during the period from 22 April - 13 June 1961. An almost immediate spate of rumors and leaks were that CIA's blunders were responsible for the "debacle." The relatively recent publication of most of the Taylor Committee's report probably will do little to change that impression among the general public.\*

This volume reviews in detail the testimony of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee. It focuses on the errors of fact, the omissions of critical information, the exchanges between witnesses and interrogators, and it assesses the validity of the Committee's findings on the basis of the documentary evidence available at the time of the investigation. The failure of the anti-Castro operation PLUTO would mark the definitive break between the Kennedy and Eisenhower administrations. As a youthful, liberal, and untested Kennedy brought together the likes of Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Douglas Dillon, Adlai Stevenson, and Chester Bowles at the cabinet, or near-cabinet level, he was faced with the task of orchestrating their endeavors with Theodore Sorensen, McGeorge Bundy, Walt Rostow, Richard Goodwin, Arthur Schlesinger, and Sargent Shriver among other White House advisers; and,

\* Operation Zapata (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1981).

of course, Attorney General Robert Kennedy crossed all lines as the President's alter ego. If the interplay among these principals and the highly educated, articulate, and often abrasive members of their various staffs and departments was not enough, there was the additional problem of evolving relations with the new Congress. This would be less of a problem with the Senate where the President had closer ties than with the House, but each had its full quota of egos to be massaged, special interests with which to contend, and post-election fences (both inter- and intra-party) to be mended.

As the new administration moved into operation, it faced the usual domestic issues of the economic health of the nation, social welfare, resource and defense policies, and clearly emerging civil rights issues. In the international area there were, in addition to the continuing problems of any new administration of reassuring members of the Western alliance that the US could be depended on to be the linchpin of the alliance, the ongoing challenges presented by the USSR and its Eastern Bloc allies and by China and its surrogates in SEA, especially in Laos and Vietnam. Almost simultaneously with its installation, the new administration also showed its concern for developing active programs to meet the challenges presented by the African nations and Latin America. The Food for Peace program, the Peace Corps, and the Alianza para el progreso were well into the planning stages even as the Kennedy troops were waiting in the wings.

In addition to the ferment of his own administration's shakedown, when competition for presidential attention, approval, and favor was extreme, President Kennedy inherited the anti-Castro program which had been initiated formally and officially on 17 March 1960 by President Eisenhower and handed over to the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of State for implementation. Following his own initial interest in the developing program, President Eisenhower's personal involvement dropped off sharply by the late summer of 1960. Following the November elections, however, there was a resurgence of interest on the President's part, and it was clear that he favored the planned use of the Cuban exile force which was being supported by the US Government. President Eisenhower, however, deferred to the incoming administration rather than authorizing implementation of the paramilitary plan.

By the time that the new President was sworn in, what had been planned in the spring of 1960 as a program to infiltrate the necessary experts, expertise, and supplies to develop the strength of anti-Castro elements inside Cuba had been abandoned as a result of effective security measures developed by Castro. By early fall 1960, CIA's revised plans called for an air supported, amphibious invasion by a force of no less than 600 troops, and more likely by 1,200-1,500 men.



The Agency backed the Frente Revolucionario Democrático (FRD), the most active and vocal of the many Cuban exile organizations, as the group with the best prospects for unifying the anti-Castro elements in the US. Under Agency guidance the FRD was to promote financial support from the business community in the New York City area; and, in the Florida area, the FRD was developed as the focal point for the recruitment of the Cubans who would form the 2506 Brigade. The Cuban community in Miami and Dade County, Florida, was a hotbed of anti-Castro politics of all degrees from improbable intellectualizing to strident calls for direct and immediate US intervention--particularly if US forces would oust Castro and then turn the country over to "them". As polemicists and publicists, the Cubans were developing a talent for directing political pressures at points where they believed there was the most to gain. Both local politicians and congressional representatives were quite aware of these lobbying efforts against the Castro government.

For good or ill, Castro himself was widely known in the US; and the media sought by whatever means to uncover the "secret" war plans which were being developed for his overthrow. By the late fall of 1960 when the concept changed from developing a guerrilla potential to the creation of an amphibious invasion force, the US Government's plan to maintain "plausible deniability" of its anti-Castro involvement had the impenetrability

of the emperor's new clothes. The overt recruitment efforts in Miami by the FRD, the general inability of Cubans-- particularly the leaders of the numerous exile factions--to retain confidentiality, and persistent pursuit of leads by local and national media made a mockery of attempts to deny that training bases had been established in Guatemala and that the Agency was the mechanism being used by the US Government to support the anti-Castro exiles.

Upon assuming office, President Kennedy inherited a paramilitary contingent in training with aircraft (bomber/ground support and transports) and an infantry brigade which probably had the heaviest concentration of firepower in the Caribbean basin, if not in all of Latin America. To insure the success of the planned landing on a hostile shore, US Army Special Forces trainers, USAF and Air National Guard pilot instructors and mechanics, and pilot instructors from CIA were assigned to, or volunteered for, the project. In addition to CIA and the Department of State, Kennedy almost immediately ordered that the Department of Defense, under its new Secretary, Robert McNamara, become a more active participant in CIA's paramilitary planning for the overthrow of Castro and the installation of a government which would be anti-Communist and, preferably, pro-US.

Whether the new Administration believed in the program which was jointly evolved--a moot point after the collapse of the invasion when political reputations were being protected at all cost--it became obvious almost immediately following his inauguration that the President was going to have to make some decisions on Cuban policy. Pressures to use the Brigade came not only from the Agency, which had been conducting training activities since June 1960, but also from the Government of Guatemala which provided the air and ground training sites for the Cubans and from the Government of Nicaragua which had agreed to the use of Puerto Cabezas as the operational base for launching the invasion of Cuba.

Whatever else concerned the Kennedy administration during the period between 22 January 1961 when the principal cabinet members first were briefed by CIA on the details of the anti-Castro plan until the evening of 16 April 1961 when--after consultation with Secretary of State Rusk--the President cancelled the D-Day air strike, the planned anti-Castro operation was a burr under its saddle and could not be wished away. The increasing concern about the problem improved cooperation between the Agency and the Department of Defense, and DOD's support for the operation increased as JCS evaluations indicated that the chances for success were greater than for failure. On the other side, the Department of State

and influential elements in the White House hoped that the confrontation might be avoided completely, but that if it did come it would be with minimum risk--particularly domestic political risk and negative international repercussions.

With the collapse of the invasion, and the almost immediate request by President Kennedy for General Maxwell Taylor to investigate the operation, the remaining linkage between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations would be shattered almost completely. It was this investigation which, even more than the formal transition of administrations on 20 January 1961, ended any remaining doubts about the need for, or desirability of, worrying about the policies of the previous incumbent.

At the time that he was asked to serve President Kennedy in April 1961, Taylor was, perhaps, the most Universal Man of the 20th Century--decorated soldier and military commander in heroic mold, engineer, linguist, teacher, author, diplomat, and business executive. As head of the committee to review the Cuban operation he saw himself as the impartial judge assigned to insure that the record of events was presented in as unskewed a manner as possible in view of the parochial interests of the other committee members: Attorney General Robert Kennedy's concern for the Oval Office; Admiral Arleigh Burke's for the welfare of the JCS and the military; and Allen Dulles's for CIA. Taylor's background should have made it possible for

him--more so than for any other member of the committee--to render objective judgments on controversial issues. It is apparent from the record of testimony of the witnesses before the committee that, although Taylor did redirect or soften some of the more blatantly obvious attempts of Attorney General Kennedy to discredit witnesses from the military or the intelligence service, his strongest tilts were toward deflecting criticism of the White House.

At the conclusion of the testimony of the witnesses, it was clear that Burke and Dulles, the latter a particularly strong figure in the Eisenhower administration, were headed for the elephants' burial ground--thanks to Robert Kennedy's denigration of them and their Agencies and, in no small part in the case of Dulles to his abysmal performance as a witness. Even before the testimony of the Taylor Committee witnesses ended, Dulles and Burke were nattering at each other over the matter of degree to which the Navy's representatives had been taken into the full confidence of the Agency regarding the anti-Castro plan. By the end of 1961, both men had retired from government service.

All witnesses testifying before the Taylor Committee had interests to protect, but it was evident before the close of the hearings that those military officers who had been involved in the anti-Castro project from early on risked career damage if, during their testimony, they suggested that the

modifications to the operational plans made by the White House or its staff might have had any negative effect on the outcome of the invasion. Intimations to this effect made by military or CIA witnesses were immediately cried down or cavalierly dismissed as irrelevant by Robert Kennedy.

With the conclusion of the Taylor investigation, there was a period of mistrust of both CIA and the JCS by the new President; and he turned to his inner circle for guidance which previously would have been sought from the Agency or the Department of Defense. General Taylor performed in such acceptable fashion that he was recalled to active duty and into the elite inner circle to become President Kennedy's military adviser and subsequently Chairman of the JCS.

It was in this atmosphere of doubt and questioning of the old administration's experts and tolerance for witnesses of the new that the Taylor Committee would be pushed to reach its conclusions as quickly as possible. After his mea culpa and acceptance of responsibility for the operation, the President and his less than squeaky clean coterie escaped all blame for the invasion's failure; but CIA has continued to bear the full brunt of responsibility for the "fiasco" at the Bay of Pigs.

This volume presents the first and only detailed examination of the work of, and findings of, the Taylor Committee to be based on the complete record. In the examination of the

procedures followed, identification of the sins of commission and omission by committee witnesses, and in raising questions about the choice of witnesses, it is hoped that there will be a better understanding of where the responsibility for the "fiasco" truly lies.

## Chapter 2

### Organization and Procedures of the Committee

April 22, 1961

Dear General Taylor:

I am delighted that you have consented to serve as my advisor on a series of important problems, and I send this letter to indicate the range of the matters which I hope you will consider.

It is apparent that we need to take a close look at all our practices and programs in the area of military and para-military, guerrilla and anti-guerrilla activity which fall short of outright war. I believe that we need to strengthen our work in this area. In the course of your study, I hope that you will give special attention to the lessons which can be learned from recent events in Cuba.

Since advice of the kind I am seeking relates to many parts of the Executive Branch, I hope that you will associate with yourself, as appropriate, senior officials from different areas. I have asked the following to be available to you in this fashion: Attorney General Robert Kennedy from the Cabinet, Admiral Arleigh Burke from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Director Allen Dulles from the Central Intelligence Agency. I hope that each of them will have an opportunity to review and comment on your conclusions. But in the end what I want is your own report, drawing from past experience, to chart a path toward the future. I hope I may have a preliminary report by May 15th.

I hereby authorize you to obtain from all officials of the Government any information or records which you may find pertinent to your work. While your appointment will be as a Consultant to me, on the White House staff, the Department of Defense will provide travel, funds, and administrative support that you may require. 1

Sincerely,

/s/ John F. Kennedy



On the basis of this charter, and despite its emphasis on the structure for dealing with potential paramilitary operations during the Cold War, the Committee appointed by President Kennedy in April 1961 and headed by General Maxwell Taylor focused principally on the failure of the anti-Castro operation at the Bay of Pigs. Of the more than two dozen distinct issues which were introduced to, or by, the Cuban Study Group (CSG), as it came to be known, all were related directly to the question of the collapse of the anti-Castro brigade in the Bahía de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs) area of Cuba between 17-19 April 1961.

As General Taylor has written, he received a call from President Kennedy on 21 April 1961--two days following the collapse of the Cuban brigade's invasion--requesting that he come to Washington to discuss the Cuban situation. In that meeting on 22 April 1961, President Kennedy asked Taylor to head an investigative group to find out what went wrong at the Bay of Pigs; and despite apparently serious reservations concerning his own future as the recently appointed president of Lincoln Center in New York City, Taylor agreed to undertake the task. <sup>2/</sup>

For all practical purposes the Taylor Committee investigation was completed by 11 May 1961--four days earlier than the 15 May date that President Kennedy had indicated as desirable

12

for "a preliminary" report. The President was briefed on these preliminary findings on 16 May 1961. Completion of the preliminary report by 11 May is significant for the fact that it was prepared prior to the CSG's meeting with four key individuals involved in the Bay of Pigs operation--DCI Allen Dulles and Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, both of whom were CSG members, Jacob Esterline, the Agency's Chief of the anti-Castro task forces, WH/4, and General Lemnitzer, Chairman of the JCS. Considering that the CSG not only had to review the testimony of the numerous witnesses who appeared, but also had requested and received literally hundreds of pages of documentary materials pertaining to specific aspects of the overall operation, one might wonder whether the committee's findings, conclusions, and recommendations were not more hurriedly drawn than need have been, particularly since the final report was not transmitted to President Kennedy until 13 June 1961.

Another aspect of the Taylor Committee Report which gives one pause to wonder--as it gave Taylor himself some qualms--was the makeup of the committee. Taylor has written that the Attorney General "could be counted on to look after the interests of the President"; while Admiral Burke and DCI Dulles "would see that no injustice would be done to the Chiefs of Staff or the CIA." The general reported that his fears concerning differences of opinion among committee members

were groundless and that it "turned out to be a congenial team" which worked harmonisouly "in resolving the many contentious issues." <sup>3/</sup> Despite recognized biases, Taylor probably did as relatively impartial a job of reporting as possible on the basis of what he understood.

Without intent to denigrate General Taylor's many significant contributions to the nation, it is obvious that during the course of the Taylor Committee hearings both CIA and the JCS suffered more direct hits than did the President, Cabinet members, or White House personnel who were involved in decisions relating directly to the modification of the planned operation at the Bay of Pigs. Additionally General Taylor's recall from retirement to become military adviser and then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for President Kennedy related directly to the mutual admiration which developed between the General and the Attorney General in their service on the CSG.\*

\* Taylor would subsequently write about Robert Kennedy that:  
"I was impressed by his ability as a thorough and incisive interrogator of witnesses, always on the lookout for a snow job, impatient at any suggestion of evasion or imprecision, and relentless in his determination to get at the truth, particularly if it bore on a matter affecting John F. Kennedy. His attitude toward the President was unusual, quite the reverse of the usual fraternal relationship in which a big brother looks after a junior. It was Bobby, the younger, who took a protective view of the President, whose burdens he always sought to share or lighten. In watching Bobby at work on the Cuba Study Group, I liked his performance, and our work together was the start of a warm friendship." <sup>4/</sup>

There is no evidence indicating how it was determined who the witnesses would be or in what order the witnesses would testify. On the same day that he met with President Kennedy and received his instructions as to the nature of the investigation he was to conduct, Taylor held his first meeting with the committee. In attendance in addition to the committee members were representatives from both CIA and the Department of Defense. Included among others in the CIA contingent were: Richard M. Bissell, Jr., Deputy Director for Plans; C. Tracy Barnes, Bissell's Deputy for Action; Gen. Charles P. Cabell, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence; Jacob D. Esterline, the overall Chief of the Bay of Pigs project; Col. J.C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division; and Col. Jack Hawkins (USMC), Chief of paramilitary planning for the project. The principal representative for the Department of Defense was Gen. David W. Gray, a member of the Joint Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who had participated most actively in insuring DOD support for the operation. The CIA participants in the first meeting were, of course, the most obvious choices; and consequently, their appearance at the first meeting was no surprise. The appearance of other Agency personnel was in most instances at the direct request of the committee or at the suggestion of one of the witnesses who was testifying.

In addition to its calls for witnesses, the first meeting of the CSG established the practice of requesting copies of documents that had been originated during the course of the Bay of Pigs operation or, alternatively, asking that specific reports be prepared in response to questions raised during the course of the testimony.\* In an historical context, one of the most important decisions of the first meeting concerned the handling of documents and tapes generated by or for the inquiry; and it was determined that all such materials would be retained by General Taylor. With the exception of the first two or three meetings, the official record of all subsequent meetings and interviews became the responsibility of then Lt. Col. Benjamin W. Tarwater (USAF), who was assigned to the Joint Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.\*\*

The official records of the Taylor Committee, although in many instances in considerable detail, are not a verbatim record.

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\* See Appendix A for an example of such a request.

\*\* Col. Tarwater had been responsible for reviewing the progress of the anti-Castro Air Force in February 1961 when the Joint Chiefs were tasked with the responsibility of assessing the readiness of the forces planning to invade Cuba. The records of the first two or three meetings were prepared by Col. J.C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division and Col. Inglelido of the Joint Staff.

According to Colonel Tarwater this was a conscious decision that had been made by General Taylor. In the course of research, however, the present writer found a verbatim transcript of four reels of tape of the first meeting. The significant differences between the verbatim record and the official record of the committee meetings, including the ability to identify most of the speakers--an uncertain process in the official records of the committee meetings--prompted an inquiry as to the existence of additional verbatim transcripts or tapes. Unfortunately, the response was negative. Although each meeting was tape recorded, at the conclusion of each session Col. Tarwater used the tapes to make notes highlighting the testimony of each of the witnesses at a given session. Once having made his notes, Tarwater said that he then erased the tapes, following this procedure throughout the course of the hearings. Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell characterized the record keeping as "just plain amateur."

Once completed, a copy of the notes was made for each of the four members of the committee--with all copies to be returned for Taylor's files. <sup>5/</sup> Ignoring the plan, however, Attorney General Robert Kennedy retained his copies of the memorandums of

the committee meetings and these are on file in the collection of the Robert Kennedy papers at the John F. Kennedy library in Boston.\*

The full flavor of the committee meetings is lost in the official memorandum of the first meeting when compared with the verbatim transcript of the meeting. The latter indicates the constant and continuing interruptions for operational personnel to respond to incoming calls concerning the on-going efforts to locate survivors in the Bahia de Cochinos area, questions concerning the vessels still at sea with troops and supplies, and the need for senior personnel who were involved in the committee meetings to make decisions regarding the handling of personnel and materiel.\*\*

\* At this writer's request, Dr. Henry J. Gwizada at the Kennedy Library examined the collection of memorandum in the Robert Kennedy papers and reported that there were no significant notes, corrections, or questions apparent on the copies that Mr. Kennedy retained. Arthur Schlesinger's book on Robert Kennedy quoted extensively from a lengthy classified memorandum Kennedy wrote during the course of the investigation, and the memorandum clearly identifies many of the points where the Attorney General was asking questions or making comments. At the writer's FOIA request, this Kennedy memorandum was declassified 23 August 1982.<sup>6/</sup>

\*\* The author has been unable to ascertain how the copy of the verbatim transcript of the first meeting came into the Agency's possession--it was found among the many miscellaneous files on the operation. Neither Col. Tarwater nor likely CIA prospects (whether still in the employ or retired from Agency service) could shed any light on the origin of the transcript.

It already has been mentioned that during the course of the Taylor Committee meetings requests were initiated for responses to specific questions, for copies of memorandums, and for the preparation of special summaries. By the end of the third meeting of the CSG (25 April 1961) practically all of the most critical and controversial problems which would be considered during the course of the committee's life had been surfaced-- control of the air, cancellation of the D-Day air strike, internal support from anti-Castro elements, capability of the Brigade to pass to guerrilla status, and interdepartmental planning and cooperation during the course of the operation.

Another decision which was made with reference to the CSG's request for papers from the anti-Castro task force (e.g., WH/4) was that no pseudonyms, cryptonyms, or aliases for either Agency personnel or projects be used. Everything would be reported in true name. In addition to requests for copies of papers or the preparation of memorandums, the Cuban Study Group apparently had some degree of operational authority for a memorandum bearing the heading, "The following actions have been directed by the Green Study Group" gave specific instructions for the airlifts of Cubans from Guatemala to Vieques Island



or Nicaragua to the US.\* Instructions were given for the use of the type of aircraft and the particular air bases in the United States which would receive such personnel. The memorandum also gave instructions for the handling of Cubans who were still aboard naval vessels returning to the United States and gave instructions for their handling by the Miami base, particularly their debriefing by personnel qualified in the Spanish language and plans for any needed hospitalization of those who were returning via ship. These and other matters were to be called to the immediate attention of Commander Shepard of the White House Staff.

The Cuban Study Group also directed that the Agency attempt to get Mr. Carlos Hevia to release a statement on behalf of the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC)--the statement being designed to take the monkey off the back of the US for the

\* "General Taylor suggested that since the President did not consider this study of the Cuban Project to be either an 'inquiry' or an 'investigation,' that some other title for the group be agreed upon. Col. King's suggestion that it be called the 'Green Study Group' was agreed to and General Taylor suggested that the first page of the 22 April minutes be amended to reflect this change of title in the heading of those minutes." (Taylor Committee, 2nd meeting, a.m. session. See Operation Zapata, p. 63.)

action which had taken place at the Bahia de Cochinos. Apparently, "Mr. Hevia...made some editorial corrections and then released it (the statement) to the press. Mr. Hevia's deletion watered down the effect which we hoped to achieve."

A word should be said about the restrictions which were placed on distribution of the final report of the committee. On 15 June 1961, one of DCI Dulles's senior assistants sent a note to Mr. Dulless stating:

This is to remind (you) that you wish to make a special request to the President that CIA be furnished one copy of the Taylor Committee Report. As you will recall, it was Dick Bissell's suggestion at today's Deputies' meeting that our copy of the report could be maintained in a special file at the White House for a period of six months to a year and released to us at the end of that time.

Whether the Agency did or did not have at least one copy of the Taylor report squirreled away from the time of its completion is a moot point; but as late as the fall of 1971 when a representative of the Inspector General's staff was attempting to declassify papers at the request of the White House, including the Taylor Committee Report on the Bay of Pigs, he reported to Colonel L. K. White, then Executive Director-Comptroller, that inasmuch as the Agency did not have a copy of the report it could not be declassified. President Kennedy also planned to limit access to both the final report and the background materials.

One final procedural matter to be mentioned concerns the format of the report. In a one page letter of transmittal to the President dated 13 June 1961, General Taylor referred to President Kennedy's letter of 22 April 1961 which asked him to perform certain tasks with the assistance of Messrs. Dulles, Burke, and the Attorney General; and Taylor also referred to the 16 May meeting when the committee presented an oral report to the President. In his transmittal, Taylor indicated that the committee was ready to make its final report and specified that four memorandums were attached to the transmittal. In addition Taylor went on to say:

In your letter of 22 April, you invited me to submit an individual report subject to the review and comment of my associates. As we have found no difficulty in reaching a unanimous view on all essential points under consideration, we are submitting this view as a jointly agreed study.

Memorandum Number One which Taylor transmitted on 13 June 1961, was titled "Narrative of the Anti-Castro Operation Zapata," consisting of 31 pages of text, 5 maps and charts, and references to 32 annexes that were selected from the many memorandums, reports, and miscellaneous documents that had been supplied to the Committee. Memorandum Number Two, "Immediate Causes of the Failure of the Operation Zapata," was four pages in length. Memorandum Number Three, "Conclusions of the Cuban Study Group," was three pages. Memorandum Number Four, "Recommendations of the Cuban Study Group," consisted of nine pages plus one chart. These four memorandums totaling 54 pages

generally are considered to be "The Taylor Committee Report," and in the records of the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) the four memoranda specifically constitute Part I of The Taylor Committee Report.

For reference purposes NARS also has identified as Part II of the Taylor Committee Report the record of 21 meetings and the three "conversations" which were conducted by the committee as a whole or by various members of the committee; and as Part III, the 33 Annexes which are referred to in Memorandum Number 1 of Part I.\*

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\* It was not until the late 1970's that the writer was able to obtain a complete copy of the Taylor Committee Report. Requests to the National Archives and Records Service for access to the report under the Freedom of Information Act precipitated the move toward review for sanitization and declassification of the report. The bulk of Parts I and II of the Taylor Committee Report have been DECLASSIFIED or SANITIZED and DECLASSIFIED, and published commercially as Operation Zapata (Frederick, MD; University Publications of America, 1981). As of March 1983, Part III was still in the process of declassification review and the writer's last recommendations on this subject were that practically all of Part III be declassified/sanitized as well as all of the remaining testimony of witnesses and the "conversations" of Part II.

## Chapter 3

### Testimony of the Witnesses

Facing the massive volume of testimony and documentation that resulted from the 21 meetings of the committee, various alternatives were considered for presenting the issues under discussion in the most meaningful manner for the reader. This posed problems because the interrogations frequently were confusing to both interviewer and interviewee; misleading questions were asked or answers given on the basis of assumed or presumed knowledgeability of witness or committee members; not infrequently topics were dropped abruptly or left hanging--even though the subject could have been of major importance; and for the most part, the identity of the committee member asking a question was not given.

Even as the investigation opened, certain operational activities--the return of ships at sea, the transport of personnel of the Cuban brigade by air from Guatemala and Nicaragua back to the United States, and the continuing search for possible escapees from the beach--still were underway. There was no single committee member nor any single witness who, at any time during the course of the investigation, had all of the facts

available and was knowledgeable about all of the areas on which questions were being raised.

Having the advantage of more than 20 years of retrospective views of would-be-authorities on the Bay of Pigs (committee witnesses and non-witnesses alike), access to the Agency's records, and the cooperation of many of the key personnel who, for the first time since the collapse of the operation, were willing (even eager) to talk to an "insider" with no axe to grind, it was decided that review on a meeting-by-meeting basis and identification of the most critical and controversial issues as they were surfaced would provide the most meaningful insight to the committee's operations. In some instances, this led to a degree of overkill because of the recurrence of a given issue. In the context of the modification, exaggeration, or ignorance of the individual witnesses, however, nuances of the repetition are important. To the extent possible, documentary evidence which should have been known to given witnesses has been cited to illustrate various of the controversial issues; and in other instances pertinent information subsequent to the event are recognized.

The first meeting of the Cuban Study Group (CSG) was held from 1400 - 1800 hours, 22 April 1961, and it was heavily attended by senior CIA personnel. In addition to Mr. Dulles (as a member of the committee) were: DDCI, Gen. C. P. Cabell;

Deputy Director for Plans, Richard Bissell; Bissell's principal deputy, C. Tracy Barnes; Col. J. C. King, Chief Western Hemisphere Division; Jacob D. Esterline, Chief of WH/4, the anti-Castro task force; Edward A. Stanulis, Deputy Chief, WH/4; and Col. Jack Hawkins (USMC), Chief, WH/4/Pararmilitary Staff. This meeting might best be described as chaotic. There were no designated witnesses, and everyone apparently said his piece as the spirit moved him. This is the only meeting of the Taylor Committee for which there are known to be two separate reports--a verbatim transcript of four reels of the testimony and the "official" Memorandum for the Record--the latter would be used as the format for all subsequent meetings. The verbatim testimony indicates the numerous interruptions--telephone calls for Jack Hawkins, Allen Dulles, and Dick Bissell; incoming reports about ongoing operational problems in the Caribbean; and notes the high level of noise from aircraft which made it impossible for the verbatim transcript to be totally accurate--but it is by far the most valuable of the two records. As in the official memoranda of the CSG meetings, even this verbatim transcript failed to identify each of the individual speakers.

The whole gamut of the operation from the 17 March 1960 authorization for the anti-Castro program by President Eisenhower through the collapse of the invasion effort--including the on-going search in Cuban waters by U.S. destroyers and a submarine for possible survivors and escapees from the beach at Playa Giron--were introduced during the course of the initial meeting. Some of the problems raised at this time were to be of continuing interest throughout the hearings.

Concern for the authority under which CIA's anti-Castro activity had been set in motion was one such issue. Background information on that subject was provided by Col. J. C. King who traced CIA's anti-Castro interests back to 1958, prior to Castro's take over of the Cuban government. Very early differences between the Agency and the Department of State over possible violations of OAS or UN agreements as the Agency sought to use Guatemala and Nicaragua as sites for the training and possible launching of the anti-Castro forces were noted. The question of the Agency's relationships with the Cuban exile leadership--especially questions concerning the choice of leaders and the failure of the Agency to put the Cubans in positions of true leadership--was introduced at this time. As others would state at subsequent meetings, Mr. Bissell pointed out that, although there were certain highly sensitive areas of activity which could have been run only by Agency personnel, the original idea was:



That the Cubans should exercise a large responsibility. I emphasize that because one of the changes that occurred--never really noted in any policy paper but an important change in the concept that occurred progressively in the next four or five months--was that we found it less and less possible to rely on the Cubans for competent and effective action. And to an increasing degree over the next five or six months, this political entity came to be served as a cover and a threat rather than as itself in its own right a vital decision making and an executive organization.

The question of the change in concept for the planned operation also was raised during the course of the first meeting and it, too, would be the subject of ongoing discussions.

The reasons for the reservations which General Taylor had about accepting the job also became apparent during the course of the first meeting of the CSG. Both Jake Esterline of the CIA and Admiral Arleigh Burke made references to the political interference which had a significant impact on the military operation. The almost instantaneous, knee-jerk reaction of Robert Kennedy to any such suggestions showed loud and clear in the verbatim transcript; but, unfortunately, in the official memorandum of the meeting, none of this comes through.

Illustrative of the readiness of the Attorney General to defend his brother was the following exchange between Jake Esterline and Kennedy. Esterline said:

There certainly are some other things that Col. Hawkins and I feel very strongly about and I think it is premature to mention them and yet I think

it has been mentioned...and that is the thing we've learned bitterly ourselves, that we cannot conduct an operation where political decision is going to interfere with military judgment...

To this Robert Kennedy responded--for whatever it meant: "My friend you sound like military men have been shouting down the hall" and then quickly changed the subject. <sup>2/</sup> The official transcript of this meeting omitted Esterline's reference to the impact of political decisions on the failure of the operation.\*

Toward the end of the first meeting, Taylor and Kennedy debated Burke and Bissell on the merits of the planned operation and whether or not the Kennedy administration would have gone along with the proposed invasion plan had there been discussion

\* Having already done his best to prove (A Thousand Days) that President Kennedy was blameless for the failure at the Bay of Pigs, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. also has attempted to picture Robert Kennedy as the White Knight of the Bay of Pigs investigation. Schlesinger noted, for example that the Attorney General "was far more critical...of the military.. than perhaps Maxwell Taylor wanted to be," and that "the transcript [of the Taylor Committee meetings] shows that the Attorney General took the lead in examining witnesses. His unsparing questions disclosed how pathetically ill-considered the adventure was." <sup>3/</sup>

similar to that which was taking place during the course of this first meeting. <sup>4/</sup> Allen Dulles, for example, strongly suggested that the Agency had been wrong to engage in such a large scale activity saying:

We can handle 200 or 300 men, and we can send in small guerrilla landing parties etc., that's within our channel ...Basically I would like to get out of this business. It is going to ruin the Agency, bad enough, as it is, it has been a terrible blow. <sup>5/</sup>

The bogey of Soviet and/or East European participation with the Cuban troops in fighting the anti-Castro invaders was raised; and as a part of this story were charges that Castro's Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria (FAR) was utilizing MIG aircraft. There was a strong thrust by the CIA representatives to emphasize that not only had European voices been picked up on the communications network at the beach, but in addition, that European bodies had been found in one of the tanks which had been destroyed by the invading forces. Even as the committee meeting was in progress, someone, possibly General David Gray or Admiral Burke, was engaged in a telecon concerning an ongoing activity about a communication--probably from a survivor of the Houston--reporting:

Two U.S. Naval aircraft going overhead and then said "No they're Migs" which indicates, incidentally that there are some Migs in Cuba or they wouldn't be saying that...That's all he said. He reports two--seeing two Navy jets then said, "No, they're Migs." <sup>6/</sup>\*

\* See footnote on next page.

As an example of the loss between the verbatim transcript (76 pages) of the first meeting and the official record (8 pages) is the reporting of an exchange between Attorney General Robert Kennedy and Allen Dulles. The official record reads as follows:

The Attorney General then asked what step should we have taken at that time [at the time the anti-Castro policy was being formulated in March of 1960] if we had known what we know now, and did we have any policy then. Mr. Dulles replied we did have a policy, which was 8/ to overthrow Castro in one way or another.

In the verbatim transcript of that exchange, the Attorney General said:

Now could I ask something? What, and maybe it is premature to ask this-- maybe you want to give it some thought --what, in looking back on it, should we have done or steps should we have taken at that time which would have been more effective than taking the steps that we did take? In other words, if you had known or knew then what you know now that all these arms were being sent in by the Soviet Union, [and] that Castro would really in a major way create a police state--which wasn't anticipated-- what steps would you have taken at that time? Did you ever think about that? 9/

\* There is no evidence to support the belief that either European troops or technicians were involved in the fighting nor is there any evidence that Migs were in use. The only jets which were observed were FAR T-33's or USN A4-D's. The closest reference the author has seen to a possible Slav or East European name at the invasion site was a reference to a Commandante Tomashevich y Alemeida who was in action at Playa Giron on D+2 with Castro's forces. 1/

In the verbatim record, Mr. Dulles after first stating that obviously it would have been decided that to undertake the proposed action would have been more than the Agency could handle, then fumbled around with the thought that the issue would have been taken to the 5412 Committee for an answer. He then wandered off about the possibility of internal resistance in the Escambray and, finally, did come out with the comment that "We had the policy then Castro ought to be overthrown." <sup>10/</sup> From this imprecise response, during the first meeting of the Taylor Committee, Dulles's testimony did little to enhance his reputation. In subsequent meetings, as will be noted, he was responsible for errors of fact which were inexcusable.

The second meeting of the Cuba Study Group took place on 24 April and was conducted in two sessions. Col. Jack Hawkins carried the brunt of the testimony with regard to the planned paramilitary operations, and he stressed that a major problem to be overcome if the operation against Castro was to succeed was the acquisition of suitable air bases. To insure plausible deniability, such bases were located outside of the continental United States. Under certain conditions, all three major types of aircraft utilized by the anti-Castro brigade--C-54 and C-46 cargo aircraft and B-26 bombers--could be operated out of Guatemala for selective

missions over Cuba; but as the PM Chief stated, it was not until agreement was reached on operations out of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua that it became feasible to conduct air operations in support of an invasion effort. 11/

The question of Castro's use of MIG aircraft against the invading forces surfaced again at the second CSG meeting. In this instance, Col. J. C. King, Chief, WH Division, not only was most insistent that MIGs had been in operation over the beach on 19 April 1961, but he even suggested that they had been uncrated and made operational between the time of the invasion on 17 April and the early morning hours of 19 April. 12/

Col. Stanley Beerli, the Acting Chief of the Agency's air arm, contributed the first of several errors with his comment that all of the aircraft lost by the Cuban brigade had been a result of shoot downs by T-33's. At least two B-26's were lost to ground fire and two more to Castro's Sea Furies.

During the course of the second meeting of the Cuban Study Group one of the most significant oversights in the story of the Bay of Pigs surfaced, but it was completely ignored by all participants--witnesses and committee members alike. In response to questions by General Taylor about the Agency's preference for the Trinidad rather than the Zapata plan, Col. Hawkins stated:

After the seizure of the objectives we would enlist and arm civilians, we would use the hospital and other buildings for the force --we would coordinate with local civilian leaders and make contact with local guerrillas. We would use the local airport for resupply --but the airport could not take a B-26.<sup>13/</sup>

As the questioning about the Trinidad plan continued, Hawkins subsequently volunteered the following:

We thought of another plan for Trinidad involving landing troops who would go directly into the mountains--but there was no airfield. Finally, through photography, we found what we thought was a usable field--this was in the Zapata area--and this is what led us to this area. The plan was hastily put together. We got started about 15 March --after the 11 March meeting. An error in photographic interpretation had occurred. We believed there were 4,500 usable feet of runway in northern Zapata [presumably at Soplillar]. One of the disadvantages was the 18 mile bay which meant we would have trouble getting people up there in daylight hours. We found a 4,100 foot field at Playa Giron. We would never have adopted the Zapata Plan if we had known that he [Castro] had coordinated forces that would close in and fight as they did. The airfield requirement was what led us into Zapata.<sup>14/</sup>\*

\* Writer's emphasis. The Trinidad Plan was the one which the Agency had worked out and which had been approved by the DOD. It called for an air supported amphibious invasion of the Casilda-Trinidad area on the southern coast of Cuba in Las Villas Province. This was a populated area in which it was expected that the invaders would attract a reasonably high degree of anti-Castro support. The port facilities would require no across beach landing. Although it was planned to use the captured air strip for C-46s, there was no plan to use it for B-26 operations. In case the invaders found that they could not maintain the area, it was planned that they would head into the nearby Escambray area as an organized guerrilla force. Trinidad lay approximately 180 miles southeast of Havana.

The Zapata Plan called for an invasion in the area of the Bahia de Cochinos in Las Villas Province about 100 miles nearer Havana than Trinidad. This alternate plan was dictated by President Kennedy and Secretary Rusk's desire for a quieter, "less like World War II" invasion. The Zapata area was sparsely settled and the plan called for night landings across three separate beaches with air support to be withheld until the air strip at Playa Giron could be captured and two of the Brigade B-26s landed and then flown off the strip. All of this was intended to support the "plausible denial" of U.S. involvement in the operation. The area offered no viable guerrilla option in case the brigade faced defeat. The DOD supported the Agency's contention that none of the alternatives to the Trinidad ("T") plan were as good as Trinidad, but agreed with the Agency that Zapata ("Z") was feasible.

At no point in his testimony was Hawkins questioned as to why the B-26's could not have operated from the Trinidad airfield. In fact, there was a 4,000 foot, hard-surfaced runway at Trinidad from as early as 1957, and in 1960, it was listed as one of the seven major civilian airfields of Cuba. Even more damning is the fact that both Col. Stanley Beerli, and Jake Esterline were present during Hawkins's testimony, but neither remembered that 4,000 landings were practiced by the Cuban pilots during their training at Retalhuleu, Guatemala.\*

The afternoon session of the CSG's second meeting also had some unusual features. The first was the presence of a volunteer witness, [redacted] (referred to in the reports of the meeting as "Pilot" [redacted]); and the second concerned the JCS evaluation of the relative merits

\* In the writer's opinion the failure of either WH/4 or DPD personnel to know the details about the Trinidad airfield was inexcusable. Their belief that the runway at Trinidad could not handle B-26s provides the most valid case in support of the criticisms which were subsequently leveled by the Inspector General and the other Bay of Pigs "experts" who faulted the anti-Castro Task Force (WH/4) for failure to take advantage of the expertise which was available in its own house. A CIA publication giving the correct runway information had been issued by the Deputy Directorate for Intelligence as a part of its regular, on-going series of National Intelligence Surveys. Similarly, the Department of Defense representatives can hardly be held blameless for their failure to pick up this error, since the publication from which some of the information used in the NIS had been derived was Airfields and Seaplane Stations of the World, a joint publication of the USAF and the USN. What is even more ironic is that the airstrip that was to have been used for B-26s at Playa Giron also was only 4,000 feet. During their training in Guatemala the Cuban pilots were drilled on landing their B-26s within 4,000 feet. <sup>15</sup>



of the Trinidad and the Zapata plans for the invasion. The introduction of [redacted] into the Committee room resulted from Jake Esterline's remark that an American pilot who had participated in the air operations on the morning of D+2 (19 April) was available for questioning by the committee.

[redacted] Thomas "Pete" Ray, one of the Americans who had been killed in a B-26 shot down over Cuba on D+2. Unfortunately, the CSG seems to have been more impressed by [redacted] than by either Gar Teegen (pseudo) who was in charge of over-all air operations at the time of the invasion or Col. George Germosen (pseudo) of DPD who was assigned to work directly with the WH/4 task force in Washington.

[redacted] was a briefing and debriefing officer for the air operations flown out of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua--the strike base for the anti-Castro effort. On the morning of 19 April, he volunteered to fly as an observer with the American pilots who headed toward the invasion beach in support of the collapsing brigade but who were recalled when it was learned that two of the aircraft piloted by the Americans had been shot down.

When [redacted] appeared to testify before the CSG, Col. J. C. King apparently initiated the questioning--even though King was not a member of the CSG.\* The first question that King asked

\* Except for members of the CSG and two military officers-- Lt. Col. Tarwater, the official recorder, and Commander Mitchell, Admiral Burke's aide--Col. King attended more sessions of the CSG than anyone else. He was present at nearly two-thirds of the sessions.

after [ ] gave his resume was for [ ] views on training and planning for the air strikes. Just how far J. C. King had been removed from knowledge of and participation in the final operational planning was revealed by King's query:

"Why weren't all of the operational aircraft launched [on D-2]?" <sup>16/\*</sup> (The number of aircraft had been limited to give credence to the story that the attack had originated from Cuban airfields by FAR defectors.)

Col. Hawkins also interjected questions that led [ ] into discussions involving matters which were clearly beyond [ ] responsibilities. [ ] however, unhesitatingly volunteered answers. One such response concerning the possibility of a USN Combat Air Patrol (CAP) during the course of the three-day invasion was precursor to more serious discussions of this subject which would come up in subsequent meetings of the Cuban Study Group. Hawkins's questioning of the pilot also permitted Hawkins to interject a reference to an air strike on the afternoon of D+1 (18 April 1961) in which two American pilots had participated.\*\* One report said that

\* More about J. C. King's responsibilities during the course of the planning of the anti-Castro effort appears later in this volume.

\*\* Each of the American pilots had a Cuban copilot and the other four B-26's on the mission had Cuban crews.

the Americans led a strike on a column of Castro tanks and trucks headed toward Playa Giron and that the Cubans suffered about 1,800 casualties.<sup>17/</sup> That casualty figure--though unsupported by evidence--would be used on subsequent occasions as proof of the fighting quality of the invading Cuban brigade, even though it in no way was related to action by the infantry unit.

[redacted] also was guilty of at least two other errors of fact which went unchallenged during his session with the committee. In one instance, Robert Kennedy asked him to point out to the committee where in the invasion area the fighting was taking place; and [redacted] pointed to Red, Blue, and Green beaches on the chart. The references to the Red and Blue beaches were correct, but at the time that the troops were to have been landed, it was decided that the 200 men scheduled to go ashore at Green beach would be held for landing at Red beach or at Playa Giron. Neither fighting nor a landing took place in the area of Green beach which was 18 miles southeast of Playa Giron.

In response to another question from General Taylor about the method of communication between the aircraft and the ground forces, [redacted] stated that there was no such direct communication; but went on to say:

They [the anti-Castro flyers] did land an aircraft on the [Playa Giron] strip and try to do some controlling with their radio. We then tried to have other aircraft land, but the Cuban pilots' fuel control procedures were bad and they had to turn back.<sup>18/</sup>

The only brigade aircraft that landed on the strip at Playa Giron was a C-46 on the morning of D+2 bringing in some ammunition and taking off one wounded man, Matias Farias, a B-26 pilot who had been shot down on D-Day and survived a severe crash landing on the air strip at Playa Giron.

During the second meeting of the Taylor Committee Col. Jack Hawkins also made an unfortunate and probably unthinking response which he would contradict subsequently. When he was asked to describe the plan of action once the invading troops were on the beach, Hawkins said that at the sign of the slightest weakness on the part of Castro's militia the brigade would attempt to break out and head for Havana; but if the brigade met more resistance than anticipated, Hawkins said they would try to break out and head for the Escambray.<sup>19/</sup> At no point in the Zapata plan was it anticipated that this procedure would be followed. As Hawkins would correctly note in the subsequent discussions about the relative merits of Zapata and Trinidad there would be little, if any, opportunity for a breakout through the Zapata marshes to the Escambray, a distance of more than 50 miles--breakout for the Escambray would have been feasible only if the Trinidad plan had been accepted.

In the course of the same discussion of plans when the troops hit the beach, Hawkins mentioned that in addition to 650 men who were to be landed in the Blue beach area, paratroopers also would be dropped in the vicinity; and then he suggested that 400 men were to be installed at Green beach. At this point Bissell was quick to note that "the initial landing at Green beach was about 200 men;" but as just mentioned, no troops ever got near the Green beach area.<sup>20/</sup> Such errors would seem to reflect the tension of the moment.

The second meeting of the Cuban Study Group also introduced discussion about the evaluation of CIA's paramilitary plan of action by the JCS and about the hectic period between 11 and 15 March 1961 when President Kennedy and his advisers demanded alternative plans to the Agency-proposed Trinidad operation. Many of the basic questions raised during this early meeting of the CSG would continue to surface through subsequent sessions of the Cuban Study Group. Among the most important issues introduced at this time were the following:

The JCS's evaluation of the anti-Castro forces that the Agency had assembled.

The JCS's estimate of the chances of success of the planned paramilitary activity.

The understanding of objectives to be achieved vis-a-vis the population of Cuban by the planned invasion.

The question of whether or not the JCS actually recommended in favor of the operation.

In the course of these discussions, it was made quite clear to the Cuban Study Group that, with minor but correctable reservations, representatives of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had investigated the ground, air, and logistics capabilities which had been developed by the Agency, and that the JCS representatives had concluded that effective elements for the planned invasion were in being. The most serious problem specified by the JCS concerned logistics planning for the beachhead, but this problem was given a direct assist by a representative of the Joint Staff who volunteered to work on the project.

In a meeting of 11 March 1961, the Agency presented its plan for the invasion of Cuba to the President, the Secretary of State, senior DOD personnel, and others, but as a result of objections from the Department of State and at the direction of the President, the Agency was ordered to seek alternative sites and plans for the operation initially developed for the invasion at Trinidad. The result was the submission and approval in the period of 16-17 March 1961 of the Zapata plan which moved the site of the invasion from Trinidad to the Bahia de Cochinos. In response to General Taylor's questions during the second meeting of the Cuban Study Group, Gen. David Gray, Director of the Joint Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, cited various portions of JCSM-166-61 of 15 March 1961 which was used as the basis for the Joint Chiefs' acceptance of the Zapata plan.\* Of the five conclusions of the Joint Chiefs

\* JCSM-166-61 was entitled "Evaluation of the Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts, CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba."

of Staff Memorandum, the last three are pertinent to the discussion which began during the second meeting of the CSG.

These paragraphs read as follows:

Paragraph C. Alternative III [the Zapata Plan] has all the prerequisites necessary to successfully establish the Cuban Voluntary Task Force, including air elements, in the objective area and sustain itself with outside logistic support for several weeks; however, inaccessability of the area may limit the support anticipated from the Cuban populace.

Paragraph D. Of the alternative concepts, Alternative III is considered the most feasible and the most likely to accomplish the objective.

Paragraph E. None of the alternative concepts are considered as feasible and likely to accomplish the objective as the basic para-military plan [the Trinidad plan]. <sup>21/</sup>\*

After hearing these conclusions the official record notes that General Taylor remarked, "You say that the Joint Chiefs felt that this plan was not as feasible as the original plan?" But he was immediately jumped on by Kennedy who asked, "Is that question accurate? Wouldn't it be right to say that the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved this concept?" At this point, Admiral Burke joined in the conversation stating, "There is no paper which says that. However, inasmuch as the JCS did not disapprove this concept, it does imply approval, even though there were many factors and reservations that were taken into account."<sup>22/</sup> Taylor was then handed a copy of

\* Emphasis by the writer.

JCSM-166-61 and, after reviewing the JCS findings, he stated that the "Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation still seems to be a choice between these three alternatives but they still state that the Trinidad plan was preferred."<sup>23/</sup>

Despite the discussion, the most important aspect of JCSM-166-61 failed to emerge. The memorandum was addressed to the Secretary of Defense, President Kennedy's appointee, Robert McNamara, and recommended that:

a. The Secretary of Defense support the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as expressed in the conclusions.

b. The views expressed in the above conclusions be transmitted to the Director of Central Intelligence, together with three copies of the appendices hereto, for his information and consideration.<sup>24/</sup>

To the observer long after the event, it is inconceivable that neither the JCS representatives nor the Agency representatives in attendance at the second meeting, or at subsequent meetings of the Cuban Study Group brought these recommendations forcefully to Taylor's attention. The JCS's views would be completely ignored when McNamara testified before the Cuban Study Group that: "It was my understanding that both the CIA and Chiefs preferred Zapata to Trinidad."<sup>25/</sup> Even in his final memorandum of review of the findings of the Cuban Study Group, General Taylor would disregard McNamara's apparent lack of concern about the Joint Chiefs' memorandum.<sup>26/</sup> Inasmuch as



the Secretary of Defense became very much involved in the operation--after the invasion was launched--some explanation of the mishandling of the Joint Chiefs memorandum would seem to have been in order.

Perhaps more understandable considering that all of the loose ends had not yet been tied up at the time of the second meeting was Mr. Bissell's failure to have pursued the matter of the destruction of Castro's microwave facilities. Bissell noted that if the beachhead could have been held for a period of several weeks, Castro's microwave links could have been destroyed and the Cubans forced into open voice communications--thus giving considerable advantage to the invading troops. The point that Bissell failed to make was that the original plan for the D-Day air strike had included Castro's microwave facilities as primary targets, but with the cancellation of the D-Day strike, it was reported that the first word of the invasion at Playa Giron had come to Castro's headquarters through microwave channels.<sup>27/</sup>

On 25 April 1961, the CSG held its third meeting. Unlike the first two meetings--and presumable by direction--the official record from this point forward identifies the specific witness appearing before the committee, but usually does not identify the member of the Cuban Study Group asking a question.

Use of the words "question," "answer," and "statement" make a positive I.D. of witness, CSG member, or other attendees at a given session difficult to impossible. As an example, there is a page and a half of questions, requests, answers, suggestions, and responses by unidentified individuals which precedes the testimony of Col. Jack Hawkins, the first witness specifically identified--and the principal witness--at the third meeting of the Cuban Study Group.\*

Among the principal concerns of the third meeting were the planned air operations in support of the anti-Castro Cubans. This discussion evoked some questionable responses from both Col. Hawkins and Col. Stanley Beerli, Acting Chief of DPD, the Agency's air arm. In response to a query about the failure to put Castro's T-33 jet trainers out of action and the failure to use napalm in the attack on the three Cuban airfields on D-2, Hawkins said that the prohibition against napalm was an internal CIA decision. In fact, the prohibition against the use of napalm was the derivative of protecting the theory of plausible deniability--Castro had no napalm in his inventory. Additionally, Hawkins was out of bounds with his comment about being surprised

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\* Beginning with the third meeting the official record omitted the distribution list for copies of the record. In addition to the four CSG members, copies of the record of the first and second meetings had been sent to General Gray, Mr. Bissell, Colonel King and Jake Esterline.

at the efficiency and effectiveness of the T-33s. This seems a rather strange response from an individual who was so thoroughly convinced of the importance of having full control of the air before any troops should be landed on Cuban soil.

Even less forgivable than Hawkins's comments were the remarks about the T-33s made by Colonel Beerli. In his testimony during the third meeting, the record indicates that Beerli "pointed out that B-26s had been the primary concern and the capability of the T-33s hadn't been appreciated as it wasn't believed that these aircraft were armed."<sup>28/</sup> While Beerli himself may have lacked knowledge about the T-33s in the inventory of Castro's FAR, it was no secret to the Cuban pilot-trainees nor to their US instructors. The Department of Defense was able to supply the Agency's air ops planners with complete information on the T-33s in the Cuban inventory because the US Government had sold them to Cuba, and it was specified that the T-Birds were equipped with two .50 caliber machine guns. As the Agency's senior air operations officer, Beerli certainly should have known this.

Discussion of the effectiveness of the T-33s, however, was after the fact. The more important discussion which occurred during the course of Hawkins's appearance as a witness concerned the cancellation of the planned air strike on D-Day. In early January 1961, Hawkins had written Esterline:

The question has been raised in some quarters as to whether the amphibious/airborne operation could not be mounted without tactical air preparation or support or with minimum air support. It is axiomatic in amphibious operations that control of air and sea in the objective area is absolutely required. The Cuban Air Force and naval vessels capable of opposing our landing must be knocked out or neutralized before our amphibious shipping makes its final run into the beach. If this is not done, we will be courting disaster. Also, since our invasion force is very small in comparison with forces which may be thrown against it, we must compensate for numerical inferiority by effective tactical air support not only during the landing but thereafter as long as the force remains in combat. It is essential that opposing military targets such as artillery parks, tank parks, supply dumps, military convoys, and troops in the field be brought under effective and continuing attack. Psychological considerations also make such attacks essential. The spectacular aspects of air operations will go far toward producing uprising in Cuba that we seek. 29/\*

When asked if the Agency had taken "a strong position" with Secretary of State Rusk during the meeting at which the D-Day strike was called off by President Kennedy during the telephone conversation with Mr. Rusk, Hawkins's opinion was reported to have been:

Probably not strong enough. It was indicated that the worst would be that the invaders would not have their B-26 support and if the ships were on their way out, the force would be denied its resupply capability. 30/\*\*

\* Writer's emphasis.

\*\* As will be noted, the responses by General Cabell and Mr. Bissell during the meeting with Secretary of State Rusk were major points of discussion at subsequent meetings of the Cuban Study Group.

The Colonel was far more positive about the disastrous results of cancellation of the pre-D-Day and D-Day air strikes as he closed the third meeting of the Taylor Committee by reading his memorandum on "Factors which Hampered Preparations for and Conduct of Effective Paramilitary Operations, Cuba."

The memorandum emphasized that:

The paramilitary staff, on the other hand, consistently informed all authorities concerned that the operation could not be conducted unless the opposing air force was knocked out before the landing, and unless the landing force was continually supported by effective tactical air operations as long as it was in a combat situation. 31/

Hawkins's memorandum also made two additional positive assertions which--unfortunately from the CIA point of view--were largely disregarded in the subsequent meetings and in the findings of the Taylor Committee. Hawkins was the only witness to suggest that:

If this decision [to cancel the D-Day strikes] had been communicated to the paramilitary staff a few hours earlier, the operation would have been halted and the ships withdrawn with troops on board. 32/\*

In similarly blunt fashion the Chief, WH/4/PM wrote that: "The curtailment of tactical air must be regarded as the one factor which insured failure of the operation." 33/\*\*

\* Emphasis in original

\*\* Writer's emphasis.

The subsequent "Conversation" which Hawkins had with the Committee would focus on the above and other of the criticisms--direct and indirect--of the White House and the Department of State.\* In all probability his frank approach helps to explain his failure to achieve the general's stars for which he appeared to be headed.

The official record of the fourth meeting of the Cuban Study Group (26 April 1961) identified General Cabell and Mr. Bissell as witnesses along with General Gray of the Joint Staff.\*\* It was noted that positive in-telligence available to the planners and the tactical commander of the invasion force made possible the identification and location of all of Castro's combat aircraft. Once again, however, serious misstatements concerning air operations were made by one of the CIA members at the session. It was stated that:

\* Discussion of the "Conversation" with Hawkins follows on pp. \_\_\_\_\_.

\*\* This was one of the few meetings where Mr. Dulles was not listed among the committee members in attendance. However, specific remarks attributed to him toward the end of the meeting indicate that he was present for at least part of the session. 34/

They [presumably the Headquarters planners and air operations personnel in the field] were surprised, however, by the capabilities of the pilots which Castro committed against the invasion force. In retrospect it was believed that these aircraft were probably flown by 50 Cuban pilots that had been trained in Czechoslovakia and returned to Cuba a few days before the invasion. 35/\*

Castro had only 13 pilots available for combat, none of whom had been trained in Czechoslovakia; and three of the FAR pilots who played principal roles in the attacks against the invading forces were purely and simply lucky beyond belief. For example, Alvaro Prendes Quintana had been detailed to the infantry for the three months prior to the invasion, and he had done no recent flying until he took off in a T-33 on the morning of the invasion and shot down a B-26. Gustavo Bourzac had never fired the machine guns on an aircraft until he helped sink the Houston. Douglas Rudd Mole had done no flying for five months prior to being recalled to the air service after the air strike on 15 April 1961, and he helped destroy a B-26. 36/

A more important tactical consideration concerning the employment of FAR by Castro was his order that the first target which should be taken under attack was the shipping that was bringing the forces into Cuba--this was exactly what had been predicted in the 22 January 1961 briefing for Secretary Rusk and repeated during the Bissell and Cabell meeting with Rusk on the night of 16 April. 37/

\* As with Mr. Dulles, there is no record that J.C. King was present at this meeting, but the writer suspects that this comment probably was made by King. Certainly he was most insistent that there were MIG aircraft in Cuba and that East European personnel were engaged in the fighting.

In the continuing discussion of the intelligence available to the anti-Castro forces, it also was stated that the estimate of the weaknesses of Castro's navy had been borne out by the failure of that unit to play any significant role during the period of the invasion. The committee was told, however, that the tactical intelligence on Castro's ground forces had been poor, a principal reason being that Castro's militia had no standard organization which could be used as a measure to determine strengths, equipment, and so on. Again with reference to the infantry units, excuses were made for the apparent willingness of Castro's forces to stand up to what had been claimed would be far superior fire power. The caveat being that if foreigners, possibly Czechs, were directing the Cubans that might have accounted for their combat effectiveness. As in the first meeting of the Committee, the question was raised about commands being issued in European tongues. There was no truth in this rumor of East European leadership. <sup>38/</sup>

The discussion of the success of Castro's forces in turning aside the invasion led to another of the topics which would be of continuing interest to the Cuban Study Group--the plan, or lack of planning, for internal support from the Cuban populace for the invasion. Discussion of this subject by the Agency's representatives at the fourth CSG meeting suggests a far higher degree of naivete than one should have expected.\* With reference

\* Cabell and Bissell were listed as present and, as noted above, King and Dulles probably were present for at least part of the session.



to the question of the validity of intelligence concerning dissident groups and potential supporters for the invaders, the Agency's respondents seemed to place more faith in the clandestine reports being received from Cuba than ever was warranted by the information available from common sense review of the National Intelligence Estimates which had been available both prior to and subsequent to the departure of Batista and the takeover by Castro--reports which the senior planners of the project claimed to have used and obviously did use at least when they changed the plan from infiltration of GW cadres to invasion in the fall of 1960.

There was also an attempt to avoid giving any firm answer to the question of how many Cubans were expected to join with the invasion forces. On the one hand, the statement was made that the number likely to support the invasion had been reduced from somewhere between 20,000 - 30,000 down to 2,500 - 3,000; but in the next breath it was stated:

One of the factors that made us think that the resistance potential within Cuba was substantial was the fact that we had a backlog of 19 requests from our agents for supplies, arms, and ammunition for 8,000 people. These people were crying for supplies. Had we been able to provide this equipment, these people would have had something to rise with. 39/

As would be pointed out in subsequent meetings of the committee, this euphoric point of view was hardly in keeping with the lack

of success that had attended the attempts to supply--particularly by air drop--dissident elements in Cuba.\*

The committee had further reason to be confused when on the one hand a response was given which indicated that not only would it have been necessary to achieve a successful lodgement for the invading brigade but, as Hawkins had suggested in the previous meeting, it would be necessary for the brigade to move out of the lodgement in order to acquire support from the Cuban population. In response to another question, however, it was stated simply that if the lodgement could have lasted for a week with the planned air operation, that in itself would have

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\* In a memorandum probably written immediately following the fourth meeting of the CSG, Colonel King addressed a memorandum to the DCI via the DDP to explain the reasons for the failure of the anti-Castro dissidents to rally to the invaders' support. He placed the blame principally on President Kennedy's 12 April 1961 press conference which ruled out direct US intervention in Cuba, but also noted the repressive measures introduced by Castro, the isolation of the invasion site from any known area of active dissidence, and interestingly in the concept of the isolated area invaded, the lack of any "initial indication of military success--no town was taken, no radio station was captured. Fence sitters had no concrete reason to believe they should switch loyalties." 40/ Preparation of this memo gives further reason to believe that King, like Dulles, was in attendance at the fourth session of the CSG.

been a significant factor in gaining support of the anti-Castro elements inside Cuba. <sup>41/</sup> Once again one might wonder whether the most senior Agency personnel were in fact the best qualified witnesses to present, to explain, or to defend the Agency before the Taylor Committee.

In addition to the possible support from anti-Castro elements within Cuba, another of the questions which had surfaced in the earlier meetings was raised during the course of the fourth meeting. This was the question concerning the relative merits of the Trinidad and the Zapata plans, particularly the planned air operations--both as scheduled for Trinidad and as evolved for the Zapata plan. General David Gray may have been the witness who responded to a question probably asked by Robert Kennedy: "At the 16 March meeting was the JCS preference for the original Trinidad plan over the Zapata presented?"; and Gray responded, "Idon't think so." <sup>42/</sup> If this was Gray's answer, it was as ambivalent as some of the answers made by CIA representatives who were either in ignorance of the facts, or hesitant to risk their reputations by being forthright. Whether Gray, Bissell, or Cabell answered, all three should have known and recalled that the JCS preference for Trinidad over Zapata had been enunciated clearly in JCSM-166-61 of 15 March 1961 which had been sent to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara; and it would have been logical for the Secretary of Defense to bring this to the attention of the President.

Another critical question regarding Trinidad versus Zapata was raised by someone on the committee asking if Secretary Rusk had been briefed on the Cuba plan prior to 10 March 1961. Whether the respondent to this question was General Cabell or Mr. Bissell is not known; but the answer indicated a belief that Rusk had been briefed "on some elements of the plan, but not on the military details." <sup>43/</sup> In fact, on 22 January 1961, Rusk had been thoroughly briefed on all aspects of the planned Cuban operation, including the paramilitary operation with emphasis on the criticality of air attacks to eliminate Castro's air and naval opposition and to provide continuing support for the Cuban Brigade throughout the course of the action. Among others, Mr. Bissell, General Lemnitzer, Secretary McNamara, and Attorney General Kennedy had been present during the course of that meeting. Inasmuch as that was the first comprehensive briefing that had been given to the Kennedy administration's senior personnel--the President would receive a less detailed briefing on 28 January 1961--it was unfortunate, particularly in view of Rusk's subsequent testimony, that neither Bissell nor Cabell (nor Dulles if he was present during this testimony) recalled that Rusk had been briefed in depth. <sup>44/</sup>

With reference to Rusk's role in the cancellation of the D-Day strike, one of the CIA witnesses specified that when they had gone to the Department of State to discuss the importance of retaining the D-Day strike but failed to

get that strike restored: "I did not say we would cancel the operation because at this time we did not have the ability to call it off." <sup>45/</sup> If this was intended to imply that Cabell and/or Bissell did not have the authority to cancel this operation at that late stage, that was an error in fact. If on the other hand it was intended to indicate that the operation was committed beyond recall, it was at best a protective statement. At the time that the meeting with Rusk had been concluded, the vessels carrying the brigade were still lying off shore of the invasion beaches--debarkation probably had not started, or, if started, could not have been so far along that reloading could not have been completed before daylight. Had Cabell or Bissell so decided, the operation could have been scrubbed at that time. Suggestions that had an attempt been made to cancel the operation at that late stage of the game the Cubans would have commandeered the vessels and run the invasion themselves are difficult to accept. The brigade leaders, who were well aware of the need for air support if the invasion were to have a chance of success, probably would not have attempted any such take-over. Certainly in an attempt to cancel at the eleventh hour, the two highly regarded Americans aboard the invasion vessels--Gray Lynch

and Rip Robertson--would have reinforced the point that without air cover all hope for success was gone.\*

Before the fourth meeting closed Mr. Bissell offered his opinions on some of the "wrong judgments" that had been made. Included in this category were the underestimations of Castro's organizational ability, particularly the ability to move his forces into operation within the minimum estimated time period; an underestimation of Castro's air capability, with the reiteration that "contrary to our opinion the T-33s were armed;" the failure to give proper emphasis to success as opposed to deniability; and, with reference to air operations, an insufficient number of B-26s and B-26 pilots, the failure to acquire US air bases, and the failure to use US pilots. In his apologia, Bissell overlooked the basic fact that even with the best of pilots and more aircraft, there was no way B-26s could compete in the air with T-33s or Sea Furies. Bissell also noted that another "major mistake was the restriction on the employment of our air capability between D-2 and D-Day."

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\* Based on testimony of Bissell and Cabell, the discussions with Secretary of State Rusk were concluded by approximately 10:30 p.m. (Washington and Cuba time). Departure of Gray Lynch and the UDT team of Cubans to mark Blue Beach did not begin until approximately 1:00 a.m. (Cuban and Washington Time) on 17 April 1961. Within that two to two and a half hour time frame, a cancellation message could have been sent from Washington to the vessels standing off Cuba.

A final feature of the fourth meeting was the obvious effort to establish that President Kennedy was blameless in any way for the defeat. Illustrative of this are the following quotations:

Question: Do you think it was in the President's mind that these men [the Cuban Brigade] could disappear as a guerrilla force if necessary?

Answer: Yes

Statement: I can't believe that if the President had understood how important the air strikes were that he would have called them off.

Response: All members of the Group concurred.

Mr. Dulles: Another factor [with reference to changes in the plan from Trinidad to Zapata] was that the President was faced with hurried and difficult decisions. We [CIA] had made it very clear to him that to call off the operation would have resulted in a very unpleasant situation.

Statement: In the future we must carry out any operations of this type in such a manner that the President, who has shown the highest courage, will not have to assume the responsibility.\* 46/

The fifth and sixth meetings of the Cuban Study Group on the 27 and 28 of April 1961 were highlighted by the discussion of the need for revisions in the handling of cold war activities

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\* Once again, the reviewer would benefit by knowing whether the last statement was made by the President's brother, General Taylor, or one of the other participants at this particular meeting of the Cuban Study Group.

by the United States Government, particularly by the elements of the Department of Defense which would be more directly involved than the Agency in such projects; by the testimony of some individuals who played active roles in the course of such operations; and by the resolution of some of the problems that had surfaced during the four prior meetings. During the course of the fifth meeting both Generals Erskine and Gray, and in the sixth meeting Admiral Dennison, addressed themselves to the question of difficulties faced by the military in attempting to provide necessary support for the CIA directed operation, noting particularly the absence of planning papers throughout the course of their association with the activity. <sup>47/</sup>

By implication the testimony of [redacted] who had been one of the participants in the JCS evaluation of the CIA's paramilitary plan, also supported the position that operations of this nature should be directed by the military rather than by the CIA. [redacted] had been responsible for the JCS's evaluation of the logistics planning for the operation. As a result of various weaknesses which he set forth in the JCS paper (JCSM-146-61, 10 March 61)\*--and at his request--he was assigned to the project to assist with the logistics effort.

Although [redacted] was given high marks for his contributions to improvements in the logistics system, his testimony presented

\* JCSM-146-61, 10 Mar 61, "Evaluation of the CIA Cuban Volunteer Task Force with Attachments."



some contradictions when for example, he told the committee that his report had showed that the logistics "capability was marginal without resistance, but impossible with it." This was more positive than his contribution to the JCS memorandum which stated that there was "a marginal capability of operating for a period of thirty days with the present logistical organization." <sup>48/</sup>

[redacted] testimony was most questionable with reference to the impact that the change from Trinidad to Zapata had on logistics operations. [redacted] response to the CSG--that it made no difference--is difficult to understand in view of the fact that the Trinidad operation was to be conducted in daylight with materiel and equipment to be unloaded directly from the ships onto trucks at the dock. Zapata called for an across-the-beach movement as the LCVPs and LCUs unloaded the supply ships at these separate landing sites in a night conducted operation. As in other instances during the course of the committee's investigations, no one present challenged the witness. <sup>49/</sup>

The sixth meeting began with the reading of a report of a session between a CIA representative and some 60 Cuban returnees who had belonged to the brigade's air force contingent. These witnesses put an end to the stories that had circulated through the previous meetings that Castro's FAR had employed MIG aircraft. The airmen reported that no such planes were in evidence, nor did they believe that any of the aircraft

used against them had been piloted by non-Cuban personnel. Noting that three jet aircraft had been principally responsible for bringing the invasion to a halt, the returnees expressed some bitterness about the failure to follow up on the D-2 air strikes, particularly in that it not only left elements of FAR intact, but it also provided Castro with time to mobilize his forces. <sup>50/</sup>

It was during the sixth meeting of the Taylor Committee that Grayston Lynch, one of the two Americans who led the Cuban beach marking teams during the Bay of Pig landings testified. Lynch was high in his praise of the brigade's performance and his remarks made a strong impression on the committee because Lynch had been in a fire fight at the time of the landing. As the LCIs moved out of the Bahia de Cochinos, Lynch's LCI provided the communication link between the brigade on the beach and Washington.

The seventh meeting of the Cuban Study Group on 1 May 1961, was one of the most important sessions conducted by the committee. The three principal witnesses on this day were Rear Admiral John A. Clark who commanded the US Navy task force operating in the area of the invasion site, [redacted] who was in charge of training the Cuban infantry for the planned invasion, and McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's National Security Adviser. The record shows that Admiral Clark began his testimony by noting "that all the orders he

had received were good dispatches and clear and that they were all carried out fully." Consequently, Admiral Clark's discussion of the combat air patrol (CAP) which A4D jet fighters from the Admiral's carrier, the Essex, was to have provided for the brigade B-26s on the morning of D+2 (19 April 1961) followed that line.

Clark told that he not only had ordered his CAP to be on station a half hour earlier than scheduled (i.e., from 0630 - 0730 local time), but also that the brigade aircraft had overflowed the carrier one hour earlier than had been scheduled--consequently, the A4Ds were still on the deck. Even though the A4Ds were then launched they were unable to reach the invasion area in time to protect the B-26s--one of which was shot down by a FAR T-33 and another one was downed by ground fire. According to the Admiral;

We arrived over the beach area 40 minutes before 0630 Romeo. However, by that time the CEF aircraft had already made their strikes and left. 51/

The failure of the combat air patrol to carry out its mission, therefore, was obviously the fault of the CIA not the USN.

No one in attendance at the seventh meeting saw fit to question Admiral Clark's testimony. In fact, Col. J.C. King--the almost ever-present CIA representative during the committee meetings--was asked to check with CIA's air operations people to see what explanation they could offer for "the time discrepancy."

The evidence necessary to demonstrate that Clark's version of the CAP was self-convicting became available before the Taylor Committee closed its investigation, and it was unfortunate that the Agency's USAF representatives--particularly Colonels Beerli and Germosen or Gar Teegen--had no opportunity to challenge Admiral Clark's testimony. As detailed in Appendix F to this volume, it is unimaginable that the B-26s could have come "over our ship one hour early" without having been picked up well in advance by the Essex's radar or by reconnaissance aircraft off the Essex which, considering the Navy's concern regarding a possible attack by Castro's B-26s, should have been aloft. The facts regarding the USN air CAP illustrates how CIA became the whipping boy for the failure of others at the Bay of Pigs.\*

Inasmuch as Gar Teegen, the commander for the air operations at the Nicaragua air base, had sent an emergency message to the commanding officer of the Essex pointing out that without assistance from the Navy jets on D+2, "[we] will be sitting ducks without your help--these are American boys," it was particularly disheartening to have to report the loss of two B-26s each carrying an American pilot and copilot.\*\*

\* For Appendix F see page 274.

\*\* The reason for concern over this incident stems not from the possibility that the USN CAP would have prevented the collapse of the invasion but that it might have provided an opportunity for the anti-Castro brigade to have organized an orderly evacuation from the beachhead. In addition, it might have prevented the loss of American lives.

As stated in Appexdix E:

Perhaps indicative of the Navy's sensitivity about its performance during the Bay of Pigs operation is the fact that the operational records of its participation were ordered destroyed presumably at the direction of Admiral Burke.

Admiral Clark was not reluctant to jump into other areas where his competence was even more suspect. In response to a question about the failure of the invasion, Clark popped out the answer that Castro's forces had not been taken by surprise. When he was pulled up short by a question from one of the committee members indicating that the evidence previously presented to the committee indicated that there had been complete tactical surprise, Clark volunteered that because Castro's opposition had formed up so quickly "I think Castro's people saw the CEF forces from a lighthouse and they could have seen them from the air." Mr. Dulles pointed out to the Admiral that again there had been no evidence that the brigade had been observed from the lighthouse in question. The landings at Playa Giron and Playa Larga, in fact, met no organized resistance. Extending his expertise even further, Clark also suggested that another reason for the failure was that the beach turned out to be coral rather than sand, but this was offered without any further explanation. 52/\*

[redacted] was the next witness to appear before the Cuban Study Group during the course of the seventh meeting. [redacted] took over the infantry

\* Admiral Clark probably referred to the fact that some of the landing craft had been hung up on a coral reef at Blue Beach and tore their bottoms out. Although this did delay the movement of the troops to the beach somewhat, it had no serious effect on the landing.

training of the Cuban Expeditionary Force (CEF) from the fall of 1960 until the time of the invasion. He was the principal training officer for the men who were to go ashore at Playa Giron and for the troops who were to be parachuted into the various drop zones on D-Day. [redacted] highly praised the caliber of his trainees, particularly the leadership of Pepe San Roman. He down played such political differences as tended to cause disruptions at various times during the course of the training and emphasized the fact that about 20 percent of the troops were former soldiers and, consequently, they could assist in many ways with training of raw recruits.

In a series of questions concerning promises that he or other American trainers might have made to the Cubans about active support from US forces, [redacted] asserted that no such promises had ever been made:

We carefully pointed out that diplomatic and logistical support would be given, and that lines of communication would be kept open. Beyond this however, no support could be expected from the United States. 53/

[redacted] also was queried about the possibilities and the plans that had been laid on the infantrymen for going guerrilla should the situation at the beach become untenable. He made quite clear that while many of the men were capable of conducting themselves in guerrilla status, the alternative of the group going into guerrilla status was a last option--the last resort--that was to be employed. Should the situation

call for it, it was planned that the troops would be evacuated by boat--according to the colonel using some of the aluminum boats which had been acquired for assistance in off-loading men and supplies.

One important caveat offered by [redacted] (subsequently supported by Grayston Lynch) was that an individual--but not a unit--could support himself in the swampy area of Zapata. He said that a man could find enough small game, fish, and fresh water to insure survival. [redacted] also informed the CSG that there was no evidence to indicate that as the beachhead was collapsing that Pepe San Roman had given orders to his troops to go to guerrilla status. <sup>54/</sup>

[redacted] also was of the opinion that if the planned invasion had been called off as the ships were en route to Cuba, the members of the Cuban brigade probably would have taken over and attempted to run the operation themselves. In his words:

I was informed that if the operation was called off they would take over. They said that as a friend we want you to direct all your people not to resist if this comes about, because we don't want anybody to get hurt. Consequently I had all our people turn in their side arms. I would say after the first of April it was a "go" operation. <sup>55/\*</sup>

The testimony given by McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, was unique among the witnesses appearing before the Taylor Committee. With

\* In the course of interviews with the author of this history, some of the Agency personnel who had participated in the operation indicated that [redacted] had tried to promote such a take-over even if the cancellation took place before the troops departed the Guatemalan training base. This author believes that such statements reflect personal animosity toward [redacted]

the possible exception of CSG members Admiral Burke and DCI Dulles, who themselves appeared as witnesses, Bundy is the only other individual who is known to have had an opportunity to review his own testimony. The memorandum for record for the seventh meeting of the paramilitary study group shows that the meeting was convened in Bundy's office at the White House and is prefaced with the following comment, "The notes of Mr. Bundy's interview have been replaced by the Memorandum dated 4 May 1961." This memorandum on White House stationary and dated 4 May 1961 begins as follows:

Dear General Taylor:

I regret to say that I am not satisfied with the account of our interview which appears in the Memorandum for Record submitted to me today by Col. Walmsley. It seems to me that I can do a better job of presenting my views on this matter by sending you a memorandum covering my position on the points which are discussed in the Memorandum of Record. 56/\*

This memorandum from Bundy is a classic example of a rear guard action to protect a President's rear. Bundy wasted no time in making positive assertions about the position of President Kennedy on various of the questionable issues which already were surfacing with reference to the Bay of Pigs Operation. Recognizing that the change from Trinidad to Zapata came as a result of objections by the President to the Trinidad plan, Bundy

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\* According to Benjamin W. Tarwater, who became the official recorder for the meetings of the Cuban Study Group, Colonel Walmsley served as an administrative officer for General Taylor and sat outside the meeting area during the course of the hearings.



wrote that "as work on this plan progressed, the gradual impression developed that on balance the CIA preferred this plan to the original Trinidad Plan." <sup>57/</sup> With the possible exception of a memorandum, probably written by Richard Bissell, which gave a "Balance strongly favors 'Z'" estimate that the chances of success at Zapata were probably better than at Trinidad, CIA records for the period between 11 and 16 March 1961 make clear that the Zapata plan was regarded as achievable but far less desirable than Trinidad.

The planners of Trinidad were aware of the geography and natural features of the area and had no doubt that if worse came to worse there were good prospects that a cohesive, organized guerrilla effort could move into the Escambray. In like fashion, the planners also were aware that the marsh lands of the Zapata swamp provided little, if any, possibilities for conducting formidable guerrilla type activities. They were conscious, too, of the fact that Trinidad lay a hundred miles further away from Havana than did Playa Giron, a matter of distance which might have a direct bearing on success or failure of the invasion. In an operation which already had been found wanting in certain aspects of its logistical planning, the requirement that initial use of B-26 aircraft would be contingent upon capture of the airstrip at Playa Giron concurrent with the invasion required a major effort to reorganize the basic loading of several of

the invasion vessels in order to accommodate the necessary materiel, equipment, and personnel for running the air operation from the beachhead.

Following his misconception regarding the Agency's position vis-a-vis the Zapata plan, Mr. Bundy then advanced some additional speculations. In stating that, "it was clearly understood that the air battle should be won," Mr. Bundy simply was repeating a position which he had advanced at the time that the Trinidad and Zapata plans were being discussed (11 - 16 March 1976). In a memorandum to President Kennedy, Mr. Bundy had written:

Even the revised landing plan [Zapata] 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 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 58/

That Mr. Bundy on the one hand could make such positive statements regarding the need to control the air and then on the other hand state, as he did in his memorandum to General Taylor, that:

One startling omission, in retrospect, is the failure of any of the President's advisers to warn of the danger of the T-33s. I suspect that one reason for the later decision [by the President] 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. 59/

The escape clause in Mr. Bundy's statement, of course, was the reference to "the President's advisers" because it is true that if this referred to the White House Staff none of the group, except Bundy himself, was likely to have been aware of the T-33 problem. There certainly was no question, however, that both Bundy's and the JCS's concern about removing Castro's Air Force automatically included the T-33s.

Once again the reader is referred to the earlier comments concerning the appearance of General Cabell and Mr. Bissell with Secretary of State Rusk on the evening of 16 April 1961 when it was made quite clear that failure to take out the remaining aircraft in Castro's inventory on D-Day as planned would lead to the destruction of the Cuban Expeditionary Force's shipping and that this, in turn, equated to defeat of the brigade. Certainly every attempt had been made to emphasize to various of the President's advisers--beginning with the briefing of Secretary Rusk and other cabinet members on 22 January 1961--that dominance of the air over Cuba was an absolute necessity for the success of the planned anti-Castro operation.

Mr. Bundy also addressed himself to another of the most controversial issues that was raised during the Taylor investigation--the position of the DOD on the Zapata plan. According to Mr. Bundy:

While there was no clear discussion of the opinion of the Joint Chiefs as to the relative merits of the two plans, I think these two statements are correct: 1) that there was no impression left that the Joint Chiefs as such preferred the Zapata [Trinidad?] plan; 2) it was clearly understood that they had approved the [Zapata] plan and favored the operation on this revised basis. I base this statement upon the fact that the President repeatedly asked for the opinion of representatives of the Defense Department, including members of the Joint Chiefs, and was invariably informed that the Defense Department favored the operation. I do not think that this was merely a matter of "concurrence by attendance." The military certainly wanted the operation to proceed; I do not think that this was because of a deep conviction that this was the best possible plan--it was rather that in view of the absence of desirable alternatives and the press of time, the military believed that the prospects were sufficiently favorable so that it would be best to go ahead. I would not wish to go further into detailed analysis of the motives or positions taken by the Joint Chiefs. 60/\*

\* By the time that Bundy appeared before the CSG as a witness, he already was on record with a memorandum specifying "that the causes of failure of this operation are essentially military, and only secondarily political, though the consequences are almost all political and only slightly military." 60a/ Bundy made quite clear his view that the military were responsible for pushing the senior political advisers into supporting the invasion effort.

Arthur Schlesinger also was on record with his views on the military vs political views of the anti-Castro effort. Immediately following the President's rejection of the Trinidad plan, Schlesinger wrote:

The trouble with the operation is that the less the military risk, the greater the political risk, and vice versa. It seems to me that the utilization of the men under conditions of minimum political risk is clearly the thing to aim at. I had the impression [re the presentation of the Trinidad plan] that the military aspects of the problem had received more thoughtful attention than the political aspects. 60b/

Considering that the operation called for an amphibious landing one would hope that the principal concern of the planners would have been for success in the field, without reference to domestic politics.

What Bundy completely failed to bring into his account was that in JCSM-166-61 (15 March 1961) the Joint Chiefs were on record to the Secretary of Defense specifying that Zapata was acceptable, but that Trinidad was best of the plans that had been proposed. As in the earlier meetings of the Taylor Committee where this issue had been raised, the albatross was once again hung around the necks of the Joint Chiefs; and no comment was made about the position, or lack thereof, of the Secretary of Defense.

Inasmuch as there is no evidence that the Secretary of Defense ever responded to JCSM-166-61, it is unfortunate that neither the Chairman of the JCS nor any other member of the Joint Chiefs had pushed the Secretary of Defense for a response to that memorandum. It is particularly important because the memorandum specifically requested that the Secretary of Defense support the conclusions that were presented in the memorandum, including the conclusion that "none of the alternative concepts [to Trinidad] are considered as feasible and likely to accomplish the objective as the basic [Trinidad] paramilitary plan." Conceivably, of course, at this relatively early stage of the new administration, the members of the JCS may have been overly intimidated by McNamara's "whiz kid" reputation.

Mr. Bundy also was quite positive in his statements that the President had been assured "repeatedly" that should the Castro opposition become too much, the invading forces would have the option of going guerrilla. In reinforcement of this opinion, Mr. Bundy stated:

As one listening in the same way that he listened to most of the discussion before him, I was left with the clear impression that unless there was a quite unexpected catastrophe in the beaching process itself, a substantial portion of the force would almost certainly be able to survive for a prolonged period in guerrilla operations...As I recall it, the report of the Joint Staff on the Zapata plan explicitly included assurances on the guerrilla option. 61/

Mr. Bundy's recollection that the Joint Chief's evaluation of the Zapata plan included assurances on the guerrilla option was completely in error. Nothing in the evaluation of Zapata in JCSM-166-61 touched on the possibility that the invaders could go into the swamps in guerrilla capacity; but the JCSM did note, however, in their evaluation of the proposed but rejected modification of the Trinidad plan that the guerrilla option was available--into the Escambray. Similarly in their evaluation of the alternative of an invasion in the Preston area of northeastern Cuba, the JCS pointed out that the mountainous area was within ten miles of the proposed invasion site.

Once again it appears that two members of the Taylor Committee should have been able to respond to the comments of one of the witnesses. In this instance, presumably the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) had received a copy of the JCSM-166-61--at least one of the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs was that the Secretary of Defense forward a copy of the memorandum to the DCI. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arleigh Burke, too, should have reviewed the memorandum if, in fact, he did not receive his own copy. 62/

In another of the protective stances that he adopted in support of administration policy, Mr. Bundy stated:

I do not concur in any judgment that this operation was "run from the White House." What happened was rather that as trouble began to develop after D-Day, there was steady pressure on the President for a relaxation of rules which had previously been made, and in the light of changing circumstances some such relaxations were authorized. Only in the case of the decision on Sunday with respect to the D-Day strike was there an operational modification that restricted, instead of enlarging, the authorizations to the CIA. 63/

In the context presented, Mr. Bundy's remarks made it appear as if the cancellation of the D-Day strike was a relatively insignificant matter--in fact it unhinged the whole operation. Moreover, Mr. Bundy ignored the significant actions between D-2 and D-Day when re-attack on Castro's air fields was rejected and significant modifications of the D-Day target

list were made as a result of pressures from the administration-- including among other deletions the planned strikes against Castro's microwave facilities and a napalm attack on the tank/truck park at Managua.

Another of the hard to swallow propositions advanced by Mr. Bundy--and this was straight party line from the White House--was his comment "I specifically endorse the comment attributed to me [in the official record of the seventh meeting of the CSG] that if the military had said at any time that calling off or modifying the air strike would cause the operation to fail--or even damage it severely--the President would have reversed any such decision as that on Sunday." <sup>64/\*</sup> Once again the reader is reminded of the comments which General Cabell made to Secretary of State Dean Rusk during the course of the 16 April discussion on cancellation of the D-Day strikes. When Secretary Rusk had the President on the other end of the telephone line, Rusk accurately transmitted to the President Cabell's fears that if the strike were cancelled the success of the operation was in serious jeopardy--but to no avail.\*\*

\* McGeorge Bundy was unquestionably one of the most loyal of the White House staff. Following the collapse of the invasion at the Bay of Pigs, he offered an undated letter of resignation to President Kennedy to be "accepted at your pleasure at any time." See Appendix B for a copy.

\*\*Perhaps Mr. Bundy did not consider General Cabell, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, sufficiently "military." General Cabell, of course, had an outstanding record as an Air Force officer including extensive combat experience during World War II and planning and intelligence experience, even prior to becoming DDCI in 1953. One of the principal activities under General Cabell's jurisdiction when he was Director of USAF intelligence was air target analysis, and General Cabell had been closely associated with such analysis.



One of the few points on which Mr. Bundy was challenged was with reference to his statement that he did not believe that the operation had been run from the White House. One of the members of the committee, otherwise unidentified, stated "the messages make it appear that it was very close to this [control of the operation from the White House]. Was this desirable?" <sup>65/</sup> Mr. Bundy did agree that the planning should have been more explicitly laid out and that the responsibilities more clearly defined. In his summary statement he indicated that among the numerous lessons which were learned as a result of this operation were the following: political risks would have been minimized by quick, positive success; the excessive concerns for secrecy, covertness, and plausible deniability were so extreme that they made for inefficiency in the operation; and both Agency and military personnel became advocates of the operation and found themselves unable to render objective judgments--the less so the longer the invasion was postponed. Perhaps the most serious weakness according to Mr. Bundy was the failure of senior personnel to step forward and speak about their reservations. <sup>66/\*</sup>

As to the last item, General Taylor strongly supported Mr. Bundy's position noting, "I don't believe the military view,

\* Bundy's statement on deniability was: "As I reflect on the covertness of this operation, I'm amazed that we thought there was a chance of deniability." <sup>67/</sup> This was quite a switch because on 18 April 1961, he was urging the President to authorize USN air support for the B-26s because "the immediate request I would grant (because it cannot easily be proven against us and because the men are in need)..." <sup>68/</sup>

such as held by Colonel Hawkins, was strongly presented to the President"; and the Attorney General added, "People that actually have to carry the operation through don't have access to the President." <sup>69/\*</sup>

The eighth meeting of the Taylor Committee took place on 2 May 1961, and among the witnesses called for this session were Grayston Lynch and William "Rip" Robertson. Mr. Lynch had previously testified (at the 6th meeting of the Cuban Study Group) where he spelled out his role in marking the route for the landing craft coming in at Blue beach. He was called back as a witness at the eighth meeting in order to clarify some aspects of the chronology as given in his initial session, but according to the memorandum for the meeting "he did relatively little to clarify the chronology." Based on the records of the Taylor Committee, Mr. Lynch was probably the one who came closest to encouraging the Cubans in their belief that they would get direct US support during the course of the invasion. The comment on Mr. Lynch's appearance was:

\* The comment made by the Attorney General probably was one of the few made by Mr. Kennedy with which Jake Esterline, the Chief of WH/4 (the anti-Castro project) agreed. In the course of an interview with this writer, Mr. Esterline was quite explicit about the failure, particularly of the Agency, to let either Hawkins or himself do the major share of the briefings to the most senior audiences. As already noted with reference to the previous meetings of the Taylor Committee, Messrs. Dulles, Cabell, Bissell, and Barnes were all guilty of sins of omission and commission that contributed significantly to confusing the picture of both the planning and operational stages of the Agency's anti-Castro effort.

He stated that he may have given Pepe [San Roman] the impression that the Navy Air CAP would come in and stay for the duration of the operation rather than advising him that the Navy Air CAP would only be provided for one hour [on 19 April]. He stated that this had been his honest impression, and that he had not purposely misled Pepe. However, in fact, he had given Pepe the wrong impression. 70/

Like Mr. Lynch, who landed on the beach at Playa Giron, Rip Robertson not only led the team marking the landing path at Red beach (Playa Larga) but went ashore to assist with the unloading and engaged directly in a firefight with Castro's troops. In addition, Robertson's small boat came under direct attack by Castro's aircraft before he got back aboard the LCI Barbara J.\* 71/

Testimony at the eighth session of the CSG was taken from a CIA communications officer

\* Both Robertson and Lynch submitted detailed reports of their efforts at the landing sites during the course of the invasion operation. Both were technically in violation of the Presidential restriction about the direct participation of Americans in the operation. Both men subsequently received the Agency's second highest award for valor, the Intelligence Star. In the late 1970's Lynch appeared on a TV program and recounted most of his experiences. Robertson was an emergency medical evacuee from Southeast Asia in the 1970's and died shortly following his return to the US.

[REDACTED]

In response to the question of the handling of the messages that came into the Washington area, he replied, "They were immediately seen by Colonel Hawkins who made any tactical decisions that may have been necessary. If they involved higher level decision, Mr. Esterline, Mr. Bissell, or Mr. Cabell would take the message to the State Department or the White House." When asked if there was a routine sending of messages to the State Department or the White House he reiterated "No, only on special issues as determined by the higher-ups." <sup>72/</sup>

Following the commo testimony and that of Robertson and Lynch, [REDACTED] the skipper of the LCI Blagar and a United States civilian, appeared as a witness before the Cuban Study Group.\* [REDACTED] testimony covered much the

\* The spelling of the name of the captain of the Blagar appears as both [REDACTED] The writer has been unable to confirm either spelling.

same ground that had been gone over by Lynch and Robertson. In response to a direct question, [ ] indicated the possibility that Castro Cuban observers might have spotted the invasion fleet from the light house which had figured in Admiral Clark's testimony. [ ] also specified that he encountered problems with the Cuban members of the crew of the Rio Escondido which had been sunk off of Blue beach, the Blagar having picked up most of the crew members--all of whom, incidentally, escaped as the ship sank.

According to [ ] story, these Cubans absolutely refused to be transported to the beach to join the fight against Castro; and in addition, as the invasion fleet was moving out of range of Castro's aircraft and into international waters, five members of [ ] crew joined with some of the crew from the Rio Escondido in an attempt to take over the engine room of the Blagar. [ ] told the CSG that he succeeded in talking the men out of this, but Gray Lynch, on the other hand, indicated that there was some degree of force that he and some of the other crew members of the Blagar applied to regain control of the vessel. <sup>73/</sup>

[ ] also explained to the committee that the plan to resupply the beachhead with ammunition had been cancelled on D+2 because air cover would not have been available and he

was ordered to remain at sea.\* In response to a request for his opinion of how things might have been better, [redacted] pointed out that the ships which they had been forced to use were really inadequate for the task; and he noted that in his own case he would have preferred to have a vessel similar to a Coast Guard cutter. [redacted] closed his testimony with the following remark which, if not made with tongue in cheek should have been--"We had a lot of explosives and ammunition aboard. I don't know if that was advisable." <sup>75/</sup>

\* Although the official record indicates no problems with reference to [redacted] testimony on this subject, Gray Lynch told the writer:

That ammunition...they [the CSG] made a lot of this. In fact, Bobby Kennedy got very indignant talking to [redacted] You know--why he didn't continue on in there that night [the night of D+1/D+2]--as though this was a very critical thing. Well, when you are talking about a 1,000-man pack that sounds like a great deal tonnage-wise. But this was kits--so many M-1 rifles, so many machine guns, and so forth--and a very small amount of that was ammunition. What they really needed in there was the ammunition from the ships--not in hundreds of pounds like we had, but in tons. 74/

Because Lynch testified very briefly at the 8th meeting just before [redacted] session, it appears that Lynch was still present when [redacted] was being questioned. There was no indication in the official record of [redacted] meeting of any criticism from Robert Kennedy. Possibly Lynch was present when Rip Robertson was the witness earlier in this same session. There was a note of criticism in the questions and comments regarding the possible resupply of ammunition on D+1/D+2, and Lynch may have confused the witnesses.

The ninth meeting of the Cuban Study Group on 3 May 1961 opened with testimony from the chiefs of counterintelligence (CI) and foreign intelligence (FI) activities during the course of the anti-Castro project. Testimony from both men apparently satisfied the committee, but considering the charges which would be made about the failure of WH/4 to make use of the Intelligence Directorate of the Central Intelligence Agency, it was unfortunate that no one on the committee seriously questioned the FI Chief on the subject. At least Mr. Dulles should have mentioned that the Agency's planners utilized both National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's) and Special National Intelligence Estimates (SNIE's) in assessments of the internal situation in Cuba. <sup>76/</sup>

In addition to the WH/4 FI and CI Chiefs, a number of military officers also testified at the ninth session of the

Cuban Study Group; and responded to questions concerning the broad picture of the capability of the US to respond to Cold War situations and to engage in paramilitary activities. The principal witnesses at the ninth meeting, however, were Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and General Earl Wheeler, then Director of the Joint Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Almost immediately upon beginning his testimony, Secretary McNamara was queried about the influence that Thomas Mann-- Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs until about a month before the invasion--had on the formulation of the anti-Castro effort, particularly on the policy of non-attribution. Mr. McNamara was quite firm in his defense of the Department of State representative and said:

Tom Mann enforced the [anti-Castro] plan before the point of no return...The desirability of non-attribution was a general view, almost to be met prior to approval. However, this can't be charged to Tom Mann. 77/

Unlike the CIA planners who were convinced that their operation to oust Castro could succeed without the direct intervention of U.S. armed forces, Mann pragmatically insisted that as a fundamental condition for acceptance of the Agency plan there should be a commitment to victory even if this meant the use of U.S. forces. Mann's arguments were based on a number of



alternatives designed to involve the OAS, the UN, or individual Latin American nations in making clear to Castro that they found the growing Soviet presence in Cuba a threat to political and economic stability of the area. With the 20/20 vision of hindsight, it is unfortunate that Mann's proposals were dismissed in lieu of an additional six to eight weeks' delay to seek either Latin American support, a U.S. commitment to winning, or cancellation of the project.

Mr. McNamara then got involved in the question of whether there was a guerrilla option that was open to the invading brigade. After some confusing testimony on this subject, the following exchange occurred:

Question: What was expected to happen if the landing force effected a successful lodgment but there was no uprising?

Secretary McNamara: They would be split up into a guerrilla force and moved into the Escambrays. 78/

Once again none of the committee members questioned whether the brigade actually had been trained to conduct such a sophisticated military maneuver in the face of a hostile force or whether a breakout from Playa Giron for the Escambray through at least 50 miles of opposition was realistic.

Next Mr. McNamara was requested to give his opinions about the JCS evaluation of the Zapata plan and also about the importance of controlling the air over Cuba. Recalling that JCSM-166-61 of

15 March 1961 had been prepared for the Secretary and clearly stated the JCS preference for the Trinidad plan over any of the alternative plans that had been presented, McNamara none-theless testified as follows:

The JCS had reviewed the plan in early January; and while they considered it marginal, they still believed it had sufficient chance of success to warrant its implementation. After all the modifications to the original plan were made they still believed the chances of success were marginal, but they still wanted to give it a try. There was one important modification that the Chiefs never knew about and one about which they all felt strongly. This was a decision to cancel some of the D-Day air strikes. This decision was made at the only meeting at which neither I nor the Chiefs participated. It was my understanding that both the CIA and Chiefs preferred Zapata to Trinidad. For while Trinidad offered the advantage of close proximity to Escambray or guerrilla territory, Zapata offered an air strip and was likely to be less well protected by Castro, thereby raising the chances of success for the initial landing. 79/\*

This response by Secretary McNamara raises a number of questions. Did he even read JCSM-166-61? If so, he completely ignored the Chiefs' strong preference for Trinidad. If the Chiefs felt very strongly about the cancellation of the D-Day targets,

\*. There was no question of cancelling some of the D-Day air strikes-- the D-Day air strike was cancelled. McNamara appears to have used the word "strikes" when he meant "targets," and there were numerous revisions in the list of targets for the D-Day strike prior to the time that the President cancelled the strike. The question of defense of either the Trinidad or the Zapata air strip was never an issue. One source has indicated that in response to Chester Bowles's question, "Will this [invasion plan] work without American troops?" that McNamara's response was, "It would be very doubtful." 80/

why on D-Day did not he or the Chiefs go immediately to President Kennedy with a recommendation that the target system be reinstated? Certainly this would have been in keeping with the cables that were coming in from the Chief of Air Operations in Puerto Cabezas regarding the need for strikes against Castro's airfields.

When asked by the committee if control of the air was essential to the success of the invasion, Secretary McNamara responded:

It was understood that without control of the air the chances of success would be considerably decreased. The understanding of Castro's Air Force was not adequate, particularly in terms of the numbers and types of aircraft. Furthermore, it was assumed that a larger number of aircraft would be incapacitated. This appears to have been a major error. However, to get back to the question of control of the air, it was certainly understood that it was very important. It doesn't appear that we would have achieved complete control of the air even if we had made the dawn air attack. 81/

This response contained so many errors that one might even speculate that perhaps the Secretary of Defense had an ulterior motive in mind. Control of the air had been emphasized, re-emphasized, stated, and restated, as the essential to success of the operation. It was not a question of whether the chances for success would be decreased, it was a question of success or failure--there was no middle ground. Even Mr. Bundy, as noted earlier, had made control of the air the sine qua non for victory. Moreover, the Agency fully and

completely understood Castro's air capability. Based on overhead photography of the clearest possible nature, every single combat aircraft that Castro possessed--up to, and including, a number of decoy aircraft--was positively identified. Post-invasion photography fully supported the pre-strike estimates--photography which, in fact, was available even before Secretary McNamara appeared before the committee.

In further refutation of McNamara, to suggest that the limited number of aircraft that Castro was able to put up would not have been further reduced (even to 100 percent down) by the D-Day strike ignores the marginal condition that actually existed with Castro's Air Force at the time. Also illustrative of the essentiality of complete domination of the air over Cuba was a statement which appeared in another JCS memorandum that had been prepared for Mr. McNamara--which again he apparently ignored.

JCSM-146-61 of 10 March 1961 forwarded the report of the JCS team which had conducted "an independent evaluation of the combat effectiveness of the invasion force and detailed analysis of logistics plans by a team of Army, Navy, and Air Force officers. This report indicated that a successful lodgment as planned for Trinidad--the discussion of Zapata had not yet taken place but would follow very soon after--could be anticipated; but "ultimate success will depend on the extent to which the initial assault serves as a catalyst for further action on the part of the anti-Castro elements throughout Cuba." <sup>82/</sup> In reaching that conclusion,

JCSM-146-61 specified that "if only one Cuban combat plane escapes destruction and interdicts the field [in this case the airfield at Trinidad], the operation would be seriously handicapped." If the existence of a single aircraft posed a threat to the overall operation at Trinidad, where the airstrip was to be used initially for bringing in supplies, such an aircraft would have posed an even more serious threat to the operation at Playa Giron where the airstrip was to be used immediately for the support of combat B-26s.

The implication in McNamara's statement that Castro had a large inventory of aircraft from which to draw also is without foundation. Castro's inventory of both available aircraft and, equally important, available pilots was at best marginal. Castro himself stated that if the fight had continued for another five days, FAR would have been out of pilots. <sup>83/</sup>

Secretary McNamara also introduced an idea that had not come up in any of the previous testimony, and again it would be an issue which went unchallenged by the members of the Taylor Committee. In discussing the feasibility of having the CIA run an operation of the sort which had been brought to an end on the beach at Playa Giron, Secretary McNamara was quite positive that the Department of Defense was in a better position to handle sizable paramilitary operations than

CIA was. The Secretary of Defense said, "CIA should not run such large operations. They simply don't have the facilities. We could have used our facilities on a non-attributable basis." <sup>84/</sup> Because the CSG sessions had been concerned with question of deniability--particularly as this had become increasingly difficult in the expanding operation--it seems somewhat strange that none of the committee members asked Secretary McNamara why he never had suggested to the President that US facilities be employed for the continued training of the brigade and that the facilities in Guatemala and Nicaragua be closed down. As had been made clear from the initiation of the anti-Castro program, the Agency would have welcomed the opportunity to use US military bases as training sites in preference to the foreign bases they were forced to use in the futile attempt to insure deniability of US involvement.

Secretary McNamara's testimony concluded with a rather interesting speculation about the nature of planning for future Cuban type operations--in fact, it seems to have represented a rather novel departure in terms of the Agency's responsibility to support policy, rather than to make policy, Secretary McNamara said:

Another alternative that might be desirable in the case of future Cubas is that the CIA, for example, would conceive the need for certain actions. CIA should then lay out their basic plan and when they reach

the point where they feel they should train and equip troops, the JCS should be brought in to make an evaluation. This should be done even before the President makes his decision. Then at the point when the operation is approved the military commander should take over so he can shape the whole operation. 85/

One implication--intended or not--was that with strong leadership the Department of Defense and the CIA might become de facto policy makers. This was not one of the suggestions which would appear in the final report from General Taylor to the President. This proposal was significantly different from the proposals in JCSM-44-61 "US Plan of Action in Cuba" (27 January 1961) in which the JCS proposed that an Interdepartmental Planning Group undertake to develop a plan to overthrow the Castro government. In an escalating scale of action, the Department of Defense would become overtly involved in the operation. No reference was made to this plan in McNamara's testimony and apparently the JCS never had a response from McNamara to the report. The Taylor Committee noted, uncritically, that JCSM-44-61 "reached the Secretary of Defense but appears to have been lost in the activities ensuing out of the change in administration." 86/ The question of why such an oversight went unchallenged has never been asked.

The final witness at the ninth session of the Taylor Committee was General Earl G. Wheeler, Director of the Joint Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In sharp contrast to

the testimony of Secretary McNamara, General Wheeler was very positive about the importance of control of the air.

He stated:

At every [JCS] meeting there were pros and cons on how important the first air strikes would be and how important it would be to the success of the operation. I feel that the sense of Chiefs throughout the meetings was that air support was critical to the success of the operation. 87/

In terms of detail, however, General Wheeler appears to have been as confused as various of the earlier witnesses had been about specifics of the anti-Castro invasion. As with Secretary McNamara, General Wheeler opined that the only real difference between Trinidad and Zapata was that it changed the place of the landing and changed the pattern of the landing of the invasion force. What the General ignored was that from a single landing site the invading forces were to be scattered over a distance of 36 miles or more at three separate landing sites, that Zapata required air operations not begin until two B-26s had touched down on the airstrip at Playa Giron, and that all tactical targets (i.e., airfields) were off limits. In comparing Trinidad and Zapata, General Wheeler was another one of the witnesses who volunteered a comment about the inability of B-26s to operate off of the air field at Trinidad. Again the reader is reminded that before the B-26 pilots had finished their training at Retalhuleu in



Guatemala, they had perfected landing their B-26s, including down field roll, within the 4,000 foot markers which their instructor had marked off on the runway.\*

General Wheeler also got bogged down in questions about the suitability of Zapata for the anti-Castro forces to go to guerrilla status; and he was queried very specifically as to whether the JCS had actually made a study of the Zapata area. As with previous witnesses, about all that the General could say was that the Zapata had a reputation for being the base for guerrilla operations of one sort or another. General Wheeler finally did concede that no such study had been made, but he noted that CIA had informed JCS that a group of possibly 100 guerrillas were operating in the region. Following this statement by General Wheeler, someone, probably one of the committee members and most likely the Attorney General, made the following remark:

Of course, a second point was that while it might have been usable as a guerrilla area at one time, this was before the time of helicopters. It would seem that some of these military experts should have been able to figure this out. 88/

The alternative of sea evacuation for the invaders also came up during the course of Wheeler's interview, and he reported that both he and [ ] had recognized the extreme difficulty of such an operation. This led one of the committee members to comment: "It would seem that the concept of falling back to the beaches should have been ruled

\* The asphalt surface runway at Trinidad measured 4,000 feet in 1960.

out because it almost ruled out the possibility of guerrilla action as a practical thing." <sup>89/</sup> Guerrilla action, of course, never was "practical" for Zapata, not only for the problems which would have been presented by the immediate terrain and the long distance from the Escambray, but because Castro's government was strongly supported by the population of the area, sparse though it was. Social improvements, particularly in education, transportation, and housing were well underway; and the likelihood of a successful guerrilla option was extremely remote.

The tenth meeting of the Cuban Study Group was convened on 4 May 1961, and the three witnesses who appeared were General David Gray of the Joint Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Charles Bonesteel, assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State. The generals testified before the committee in the offices which had been assigned to General Taylor in the Pentagon, and Secretary Rusk's testimony was given in his own offices at the Department of State.\* General Gray was DOD's closest associate with the CIA planners during the BOP operation

\* As with various other of the flag and general officers who appeared before the Taylor Committee, General Bonesteel's remarks were addressed to suggested improvements in the US capability to respond to crises in the Cold War and had no bearing on the Cuban Operation.

He made it quite clear during his testimony that he believed that the Joint Chiefs had been fully informed about the planned operations at both Trinidad and Zapata, and he noted that even though the Joint Chiefs agreed to the Zapata plan they had clearly indicated their preference for the Trinidad operation.

General Gray told the CSG that in addition to having an opportunity to review the Trinidad plan, the Joint Chiefs had conducted their own independent survey of the best areas for launching an operation directed at the overthrow of Castro and, like the Agency, they, too, came up with Trinidad as the most feasible of the possible sites in Cuba. The general also indicated by way of illustration that the Joint Chiefs had been read into the Agency's planning, that the initial Zapata plan had been modified from a single invasion point at the head of the Bahia de Cochinos down to the Playa Giron area when it was discovered that the air strip which was to have been utilized at the north end of the bay was unsuitable for B-26 use; but the strip at Playa Giron, with its harder surface, would support the aircraft.

When pressed by the committee about the short length of time that the JCS had in which to evaluate the Zapata plan, General Gray pointed out that the changes from Trinidad to Zapata were easily understood by the Joint Chiefs, particularly as the revised plan also included the heavy D-Day air strikes.

General Gray's testimony seemed to relieve General Taylor of some of the doubts that he had about the knowledgeability of the Joint Chiefs regarding the Zapata plan for Taylor stated: "After listen<sup>ing</sup> to General Gray's testimony, I now feel that the Joint Chiefs had a more complete appraisal of the plan and consequently gave a more complete approval." 90/

The testimony of Secretary of State Rusk, however, was another matter. Secretary Rusk's testimony indicated the mind-set traditionally associated with senior members of the State Department--generally cautious, con-servative, and self-protective. Of all the witnesses before the Taylor Committee, Secretary Rusk probably did more harm to the Central Intelligence Agency than anyone else. His sins of commission went unchallenged and his sins of omission were unnoticed.

From the beginning to the end of his testimony before the Taylor Committee, the most generous thing that can be said about Secretary Rusk is that his testimony was contradictory. Among his first remarks about the operation, was the following:

The risks of the operation were accepted, however, because the importance of success was fully appreciated. Time was running out. It was the last chance in some time to have this job done by Cubans. Otherwise we might have to do this with American personnel and this would be less desirable. Castro's police power was increasing,

and he was also receiving a large inflow of Soviet arms. Further, it should be pointed out that when we talked about the possibility of failure we talked about far more disastrous results than actually occurred. For example, we had discussed the possibility of such things as being ousted from the OAS or censure by the UN, and lively and adverse reaction by our allies in Europe. The results that developed were not as serious as those that we had considered. 91/\*

The implication of the above statement that Secretary Rusk had positive views about the planned operation is in sharp contradiction to the opinion of Thomas Mann, who had recently requested reassignment from his position as Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs. Mr. Mann, despite contrary views held by some CIA participants that he was against the operation (an opinion not held by either DDP Bissell or project chief Esterline), was an unequivocal supporter of the plan to oust Castro. He emphasized the "last chance" aspect of the effort in light of Castro's increasingly success-ful repression of dissidents, and he stressed the danger of the export of revolutionary government to other Caribbean countries. Mr. Mann has stated that he asked to be relieved from ARA earlier than planned because:

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\* Emphasis by writer.

1. I could not get a decision from either the President or the Secretary on the policy question of whether the plan should be carried through; I did not want to be responsible for the area if I could not have a clear decision on the policy issues at stake. 92/
2. I don't know what his [Rusk's] feelings were. Now, that sounds strange because we attended maybe a dozen meetings, most often with the President, but if he [Rusk] ever expressed himself as seeing it through or scrubbing it very clearly, I wasn't aware of it. 93/

The Secretary of State also addressed the question of the anticipated reaction of the Cuban populace to the news that invaders had landed. Like other witnesses, he expressed the opinion that there was considerable likelihood of a popular uprising. It is interesting that no one on the committee asked Secretary Rusk whether this was a problem which his department had examined in any detail, for it was a topic which his own Director of Intelligence and Research, Roger Hilsman, had proposed for careful study because of reservations which he had when he heard about the program. Mr. Hilsman's proposal was rejected out of hand by the Secretary of State. 94/

When CSG members asked Secretary Rusk if it was understood that the Joint Chiefs of Staff favored the Trinidad plan over the Zapata plan, Secretary Rusk commented on the more spectacular nature of Trinidad and noted that Zapata had greater political advantages and that the JCS had approved

Zapata. When challenged on the matter of JCS support for Zapata as opposed to Trinidad, the following exchange took place:

Statement: The JCS commented that Zapata was the best of the three alternatives they had considered, but that they still favored the original Trinidad Plan.

Secretary Rusk: They didn't put their views in writing and that didn't come through. There was a strong impression that they favored the [Zapata] plan. At one meeting the President went around the room and asked everyone personally their opinion and I believe I was the only one that didn't approve. 95/\*

No one on the committee challenged Secretary Rusk's comment that the JCS failed to put their views in writing. It would have been useful to know whether any meeting in which Secretary Rusk had participated during the first part of April, prior to D-2, had discussed JCSM-166-61 where the JCS position in favor of Trinidad had been so clearly stated; and it would have been interesting to learn whether or not the Secretary of Defense had ever discussed this particular paper during a Cabinet session where Secretary Rusk was present. In any event, Mr. Dulles undoubtedly received a copy of JCSM-166-61 (at least the JCS specified to Secretary of Defense that the DCI should

\* Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who was at the meeting where Rusk claimed to have been the only one who indicated disapproval of the Zapata Plan, stated in his book, One Thousand Days (pp. 251-252), that the only dissident was Senator Fullbright.

get a copy); and if he had been alert, he should have queried Secretary Rusk on this issue.\*

It was on the question of the air operations, however, that Secretary of State Rusk's testimony was at its protective best. Because of the criticality of this issue in the controversy over the responsibilities for failure of the invasion effort, it is believed that Rusk's testimony on this subject is worth quoting in full. It went as follows:

Question: Was it understood that control of the air was considered essential to the success of the landing?

Secretary Rusk: Yes, it was understood that it was essential to the success of the landing, but there was an inadequate appreciation of the enemy's capability in the air. Furthermore, neither the President nor I was clear that there was a D-2 air strike. We did have it on our minds that there would be a D-Day air strike. Following the D-2 air strike there was considerable confusion. It wasn't realized that there was to be more than one air strike in the Havana area. The President was called on this matter and he didn't think there should be second strikes in the area [Havana? or Cuba?] unless there were overriding considerations. We talked about the relative importance of the air strikes with Mr. Bissell and General Cabell at the time. However, they indicated that the air strikes would be important but not critical. I offered to let them call the President but they indicated that they didn't think the matter was that important. They said that they preferred not to call the President.

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\* Admiral Burke also would have received a copy of JCSM-166-61 as a member of the JCS. Although the record shows Burke in attendance at the morning meeting of the Committee in the Pentagon, he was not recorded as an attendee at the afternoon session in Rusk's office. If Burke had been alert and reviewed his copy of the Rusk testimony, he could have clarified the JCS position to the committee.



Question: Did you attempt to advise the President as to the importance of the air strikes?

Secretary Rusk: I had talked to him and he had stated that if there weren't overriding considerations the second strikes shouldn't be made. Since Mr. Bissell and General Cabell didn't want to talk to the President on the matter, I felt there were no overriding considerations to advise him of. I didn't think they believed the dawn air strikes were too important. I believe that Castro turned out to have more operational air strength than we figured.

Mr. Dulles: I don't believe they had any more. However, they turned out to be more efficient.

Question: Do you recall why the question of air strikes was withheld until Sunday evening?

Secretary Rusk: As far as I was concerned, I was caught by surprise with the first air strikes. I was trying to advise Adlai Stevenson at the UN on what was happening and suddenly found out there were additional air strikes coming up. We didn't want him to have to lie to the UN. 96/

Rusk's contention that there were underestimates both of the number of Castro's aircraft and the capability of Castro's air force have already been discussed with reference to other witnesses before the Taylor Committee. Suffice to say here, the air operations people, particularly the Cuban and American pilots who were working to develop the B-26 capability, fully appreciated the danger that the T-33s and the Sea Furies presented; and the full strength of Castro's air arm was positively identified and located. If Secretary Rusk was not clear about

the planned D-2 air strike, he apparently was either a slow learner or a selective listener. At the 22 January 1961 briefing which the Agency gave for Secretary Rusk and other Kennedy cabinet members, specific mention was made of plans for extensive air strikes from the beginning through the end of the operation.

At Secretary Rusk's 16 April meeting with Mr. Bissell and General Cabell, both had spelled out the threat to the invasion shipping which would result should Castro's air arm not be destroyed. Moreover, the summary of White House meetings which General Gray had prepared for submission to the Taylor Committee noted with reference to a meeting of 5 April 1961;

There was a very small meeting with the President where only Secretary McNamara, General Lemnitzer, and representatives of State and CIA were present. At this meeting the general idea of fake defections and preliminary [air] strikes were discussed. The President indicated approval of the general idea but indicated that everyone should consider further measures overnight and there would be another meeting the following morning. 97/

General Gray's record of the meeting on 6 April--"the following morning"--specifically noted Secretary Rusk's presence. It also stated that: "The President questions whether or not a preliminary [air] strike wasn't an alarm bell." 98/

Secretary Rusk's reference to the meeting with General Cabell and Mr. Bissell on the evening of 16 April, also raises the question of the Secretary of State's understanding of what he had been told would happen to the brigade's ships if Castro's Air Force was not destroyed. To suggest that the CIA representatives did not believe that there were "over-riding considerations" for conducting the D-Day air strike would appear to have been a deliberate misinterpretation of their very reason for making their protests about the cancellation of the D-Day strike. If nothing else, General Cabell's subsequent visit to Secretary Rusk at 4:30 on the morning of 17 April to request Presidential authorization for USN air cover should have alerted the Secretary of State to the fact that the Agency was extremely concerned about the fate of the operation.

Mr. Rusk's explanation for the late time at which the cancellation of the D-Day strike was ordered should not have gone unchallenged by the committee. Secretary Rusk should have been pressed for details concerning Stevenson's role and asked why, even if Secretary Rusk had been unaware of the planned D-2 strike, he didn't contact both the UN Ambassador and CIA immediately upon learning of the strike on 15 April in order to coordinate the US position. After the fact of Ambassador Stevenson's unintentional lie to the UN on Saturday afternoon (including the farce of the B-26 photos), it seems apparent that Secretary Rusk was more concerned about the

image problem than he was about the success at Bahia de Cochinos. Had the Taylor Committee acted at this time, many harsh words and bitter recriminations concerning Mr. Stevenson's role might have been avoided. Mr. C. Tracy Barnes, Mr. Bissell's principal deputy, failed to make any mention of the planned D-2 air strike when briefing Ambassador Stevenson on 8 April 1961.\*

When Secretary Rusk was asked if he understood the importance of air cover for the planned attempt by brigade ships to resupply ammunition to the beach, Secretary Rusk provided a "yes" and "no" answer saying, "It was apparent that it [air cover] was critical. The requirement for air cover wasn't as apparent as for air drops and getting the ships back in there, particularly in regard to getting them some tank ammunition." <sup>100/</sup> At this time, on 4 May 1961, Rusk still did not understand what General Cabell and Mr. Bissell had told him on the evening of 16 April 1961--that the exposure of the brigade's ships to Castro's aircraft would result in disaster.

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\* It was not until Sunday, 16 April 1961, probably late in the morning or early in the afternoon, that Stevenson learned from Richard F. Pedersen, then Chief of the Political Section of the US-UN operation, that the statements that <sup>99/</sup> he, Stevenson, had made to the UN on Saturday were false. For details of the Stevenson story re the second strike, the reader is referred to Studies in Intelligence, Fall 1983, pp. 37-47.

With reference to the question on non-attribution Secretary Rusk seemed to be confused. He noted that the hope was for non-attribution in the fullest degree, but he realized after the fact that this was a somewhat naive conception. One of the members of the Committee suggested that the push for non-attribution was one of the costliest mistakes that the Government had made, particularly as it imposed a requirement "not to have the air strikes even by Cubans." Secretary Rusk went into his thesis of the necessity to capture an airstrip in order to have one or two of the B-26 touch down so that the US could claim that the B-26s were operating from within Cuba. Inasmuch as it had already been publicized by the Cubans that the B-26s involved in the D-2 activity were not flown out of Cuba and since Stevenson had been burned at the UN on Saturday (D-2), the insistence by Secretary Rusk and President Kennedy that this fiction be continued even on D-Day is beyond comprehension--the more so inasmuch as the cancellation of the D-Day strike insured, as the air operations people knew it would, the presence of Castro's T-33s and Sea Furies. <sup>101/</sup>

During the course of his testimony Secretary Rusk also stated that the operation had been blown. <sup>102/</sup> This charge would be made in later years by others who even claimed that the invasion date had been passed on to the Cubans by the Soviets who had picked up the information in Mexico. Even if the Soviets were aware that 17 April 1961 was the planned date for the invasion, there is no indication that they transmitted this information

to Castro, for such preparations as he made with his forces were obviously in response to the D-2 strike rather than to other information which he might have had. <sup>103/</sup> It is clear that the landings at Playa Giron and Playa Larga caught the Cubans by surprise--this despite the contrary suggestions made by earlier witnesses who claimed that the invasion forces probably had been spotted by Castro people in the light house of Cayo Guano.\*

Secretary Rusk had objections to what he identified as the operational aspects of the anti-Castro effort. Included among the points he made in this connection were the fact that "these covert matters are handled on such a restricted basis that the resources of the departments are not brought to bear." (As mentioned earlier no one on the committee raised any questions with Secretary Rusk about his own failure to check with State's intelligence people on such matters, for example, as the prospects for support of the anti-Castro effort from dissident elements within Cuba.) Secretary Rusk also supported the view expressed by earlier witnesses from the Department of Defense that having planning and action papers written out would have been helpful, but he did caution that this might have resulted in the distribution of so many pieces of paper as to jeopardize a given activity.

Further, Secretary Rusk found difficulty with the piecemeal nature of the briefings on the anti-Castro operation and

\* Admiral Clark in particular.

suggested that the Agency and the Department of Defense should have made an effort to get everything together for one single briefing of President Kennedy who, with all the factors then available, would have been in a better position to make decisions. This, of course, overlooked the point that when the Agency briefed the President on the Trinidad Plan on 11 March 1961, they hoped that would have been the single briefing needed for an O.K.

Another of Secretary Rusk's opinions concerned the handling of the 1,200 man brigade, suggesting that there had been undue concern about aborting the plan and returning the 1,200 Cubans to civilian life. This probably was the most valid point in the Secretary of State's testimony, but this was a political problem which was of primary concern to the Kennedy administration and not to the Agency per se. Also with reference to the brigade, Secretary Rusk said that "if you are not prepared to go all the way, you shouldn't put 1,200 men ashore." This piece of testimony raises the question of why, since the brigade was going to be committed, did Secretary Rusk support the one action which was most certain to eliminate all possibilities of victory for the brigade--the cancellation of the D-Day air strike? If he believed in what he was saying, Secretary Rusk, who said that his had been the only dissent concerning the invasion plan, should have tried harder to obtain a cancellation of the invasion or, to insure success, given up on deniability, supported the D-Day strike, and

urged USN air support. The conclusion of these sorts of inconsistencies came in the following remark:

There was no one involved that didn't recognize that this was a risky business and that failure would be costly. However, we overestimated the international effects of failure and underestimated the effects of failure on this town. 104/

Presumably the view that the country suffered more from self-flagellation than it did through loss of respect in the international arena should have been dispelled by US action during the missile crisis in Cuba in 1962; but among other actions, the pervasive presence of Cuban surrogates in Third World countries in the more than 20 years since the collapse at the Bay of Pigs gives one cause to question the judgment of the Secretary of State who insured Castro's victory. Certainly his testimony before the Taylor Committee raises questions about his integrity.\*

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\* Less than two years after this self-protective testimony, Rusk took another hard shot at CIA when the BOP operation came up during a session with the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. On 16 January 1963, Rusk testified:

" 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 from sources on the island as well as other sources turned out to be inaccurate. There were some planes in hangars and so forth that were not hit with the strike that did take place, and more planes, in fact, turned out from the Cuban side than had been anticipated."

Rusk's comments were completely unsupported by any evidence that had surfaced since the collapse of the invasion (or to the time of the writing of this volume).



The only witness at the eleventh meeting of the Cuban Study Group on 5 May 1961 was Adolf A. Berle who had been serving President Kennedy as a special adviser on Latin American affairs. The most important point of Berle's testimony was his view on the question of non-attributability. To a question concerning the need for non-attribution, Mr. Berle's response was as follows:

Non-attribution was not altogether necessary. The conventions protecting against intervention did not apply because the Communists had intruded in this hemisphere, and second because Castro's government was an openly constituted totalitarian government which is clearly outside the provisions of the treaty of Rio de Janeiro. They attacked the Organization of American States, announced they would not be bound by the rules of the treaty of Rio de Janeiro, and announced they were going to export the revolution. They had actually invaded two or three other states, and were in no position to claim the protection of the international system. This is still true. As far as non-attribution is concerned, we had assisted Cubans that wished to fight for freedom in their own country. As a matter of fact, it seemed that it was the last clear chance that the Cubans would have to fight for freedom in their own country. The danger, then, was not of non-attribution but of failure. Clearly it must not be an American invasion. The attribution of assistance to the Cubans by the United States under all circumstances did not seem too serious. 105/

This statement of Mr. Berle's was followed by a subsequent comment that:

Success in this kind of an operation would have been the greatest single thing we could have done to avoid any Cold War threat of major proportions from the countries to the south. Some sort of a clash was bound to come, and it was probably better if it came sooner with one country, rather than later with two or three countries. 106/\*

The committee, however, failed to follow up on these comments by Mr. Berle to see if, in fact, similar sentiments had been expressed by, or were supported by, others most closely involved with planning the Bay of Pigs Operations. As noted in this chapter, Mr. Thomas Mann, the Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs until a few weeks before the time of

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\* In this diary two days prior to his appearance before the Taylor committee, Berle indicated his particular displeasure about the failure of the Latin American nations to recognize the danger posed by the growing Soviet presence in Cuba. The diary stated: "The other American republics in general were not facing up to the situation. Some sectors of their public opinion did not know that Cuba was now in effect a Sino-Soviet tool. Some sectors suspected but did not wish to know. Some knew but wished to play that the problem was not there. A great many sectors including the politicians and intellectuals wished to hide behind cloudy un-realities. The doctrine of "non-intervention" was used as an excuse for not facing the savage fact that high intentions, good words and even good deeds would not stop Cold War activities carried on with agitation, money, bought demonstrations, and surreptitious organization of guerrillas with arms. To leave this situation without clarification merely meant that the process would go on. Then circumstances would probably be created which might require much larger military action. 107/"

the invasion, probably had the best track record in support of this position of any of those in either the Eisenhower Administration or the Kennedy Administration who were involved in the planning or the Bay of Pigs Operation. Mr. Mann had consistently advocated that if the United States was going to support a major anti-Castro activity, it should be done overtly, and probably with American Forces. Strangely enough, Mr. Mann was not called as a witness--that he would have to be called back from his recently assumed post as Ambassador to Mexico being the rationalization for not requesting his testimony.

The meeting on 6 May 1961, was a "conversation" between General Taylor and Garfield Teegen (pseudonym), Chief of Air Operations for the anti-Castro project. As usual, Colonel Tarwater was present to keep the record of the meeting; and the introduction of the Memorandum for Record of this session stated this was not a verbatim transcript. Aside from the first CSG meeting, however, this may be the only other session where what was reported was verbatim.\*

Because it is relatively short, and because Mr. Teegen was obviously the most knowledgeable individual about the air operations this conversation is repeated in full as follows:

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\* The writer says this advisedly, but it is based on a lengthy interview with Mr. Teegen and several subsequent conversations with him, including a discussion following Teegen's review of the first volume of this history (Air Operations). The author's impression is that Mr. Teegen probably was just as terse with General Taylor as indicated.

Question: Would you explain how the air operation was organized. As I understand it, there were two organizations--one for planning and one for execution.

Answer: That's right.

Question: Were you the actual air commander?

Answer: Yes.

Question: When did the pre-Day strikes come into the picture?

Answer: I'm not sure.

Statement: Will you ask Col. Beerli to come over on Monday and set forth the facts relating to pre-D-Day air strikes?

Answer: Yes.

Question: What was the turn-around time for your aircraft?

Answer: The longest time was three hours. A normal combat loading took approximately an hour.

Question: How long could you remain over the target?

Answer: Thirty minutes to an hour.

Question: What was your capability for providing air cover to the beach?

Answer: We could keep someone over there all the time. On D-Day we had a capability for launching 20 sorties. If we hadn't lost some of our air crews to enemy action, we'd have been able to maintain this indefinitely.

Question: That would have been a major effort?

Answer: Yes.

Question: How many strikes were conducted against the airfields?

Answer: The D-2 air strikes of eight B-26s against three airfields. On the nights of 17 and 18 April, three B-26s were scheduled against San Antonio de los Banos. Two of these aborted, one arrived over the target, but due to haze and a blackout he was unable to identify his target. In the early morning hours of 18 April, three more aircraft were dispatched against San Antonio de los Banos. One aborted on take off, two aircraft arrived over target, but due to scud and haze in the area, they couldn't locate the target.

Statement: After the D-2 air strikes, we knew that we hadn't destroyed all the aircraft. Consequently, we requested permission to launch air strikes against the remaining targets on D-1.

Question: How was the request for the D-1 air strike handled?

Answer: It was not approved by Washington.

Question: When were you denied permission to use napalm?

Answer: We only had standing authority to use napalm against a tank farm. We had to request authority on all other targets.

Question: When did the pilot fatigue show up?

Answer: 171030Z.

Question: Was this really fatigue?

Answer: Yes. In 14 out of 17 cases; the other three pilots just didn't have it.

Question: How many B-26 pilots did you have?

Answer: Seventeen Cuban and eight American. Twenty-five all together.

Question: What do you think about the adequacy of the number of pilots?

Answer: It was enough.

Question: Did you have enough pilots to fly over the beach with two aircraft at all times?

Answer: Yes. There was a 4,000 foot strip in the beachhead area and we had crews qualified to operate from this strip.

Question: If the invasion had been successful enough [for the aircraft] to keep the artillery off, you would have been successful?

Answer: Yes.

Question: What was your understanding on the use of contract pilots?

Answer: We didn't have blanket authority to use them, but we did have the authority to hire and train them and put them on a standby status. Later the use of contract pilots, in the beachhead area only, was approved by Washington.

Question: Who handled your messages in Washington?

Answer: Colonel Geomosen (pseudonym) and Colonel Beerli.

Question: Were you surprised at the effectiveness of the T-33s?

Answer: I've flown T-33s--they're a good airplane. We weren't surprised at their capabilities once they were airborne.

Question: How would you summarize your feelings with regard to the operation and the lessons to be learned?

Answer: Policy decisions above the Agency denied us the right to go ahead as scheduled and planned.

Question: Was there some confusion as to the time the Navy air CAP was to be provided?

Answer: There was no confusion of the time. I received a message that Navy air (CAP) would be provided.

Question: Would you provide us with a copy of the message?

Answer: Yes. 108/\*

The twelfth meeting of the Cuban Study Group was held on 8 May 1961, and featured two distinct sets of witnesses. One set addressed themselves basically to the broader problems of how the US should plan to handle covert and Cold War operations and the second group was formed by the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff--General White of the Air Force, General Decker of the Army, and General Shoup of the Marine Corps.

\* Excluding Colonels Hawkins, [redacted] [redacted] who refused the author's request for interviews, Mr. Teegen, of all of those interviewed, clearly remains the one with the deepest feelings about the loss at the Bay of Pigs. He was frank and outspoken in his criticism of the cancellation of the D-Day strike and he was equally outspoken concerning the failure of the Kennedy Administration to permit the subsequently requested support from USN jets off the Essex. With the possible exception of one or two of the other pilots, there probably was no American who was so closely involved with the personnel, both Cuban and American, who gave their lives in the course of the air operations over Playa Giron. The writer was told that as the invasion was collapsing Headquarters received a suggestion from Puerto Cabezas that a disguised B-26 be used to bomb an isolated part of the US naval base at Guantanamo in order to create an "incident" to justify US intervention in Cuba. Although not confirmed, this is the sort of action that those in charge of air operations probably would have supported.

The testimony of the members of the JCS was the most acrimonious and disputatious of all the sessions held by the Taylor Committee. It is quite apparent that there was a positive effort on the part of at least one CSG member--Robert Kennedy--to hang the albatross of failure at Playa Giron about the necks of the Joint Chiefs as well as the CIA. It is equally obvious, however, that the generals were going to make an all-out effort to protect themselves. It speaks highly for the caliber of the military personnel who were under the gun, that they spoke their minds--apparently without regard to the consequences that such openness might have on their military careers. As with other sessions of the Cuban Study Group, it is unfortunate that the members of the committee who posed questions or who made statements are not identified in the record of this meeting; and it is unfortunate, too, that the record is not verbatim text. The first of the military Chiefs to testify was the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. David M. Shoup. Very early in his testimony, Gen. Shoup made it clear that there were aspects of the planned operation against Castro about which he had no knowledge. In such instances where he thought it appropriate, he suggested that perhaps the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs would have such information. Gen. Shoup's point, of course, was that the Chairman of the JCS, rather than the other members, was most likely to have been party to planning sessions for the Bay of Pigs Operation. His general statement



to the committee made it clear that he was in full agreement with other members of the Joint Chiefs who favored the Trinidad plan over any of the alternatives--including Zapata--that had been proposed following the President's objections to Trinidad during the course of the 11 March 1961 meeting. The interrogation of Gen. Shoup developed in the following manner:

Question: The JCS commenting on Trinidad said that it had a fair chance of success. Then I think that the record shows that they viewed the next alternatives and said that Zapata was the best of these three plans, but that they still preferred Trinidad.

General Shoup: Yes, sir, any corporal would have said that...

Question: Did you have any misgivings [about the planned amphibious operation]?

General Shoup: I very frankly made this statement, if this kind of an operation can be done with this kind of a force with this much training and knowledge about it, then we are wasting our time in our divisions, we ought to go on leave for three months out of four. 109/

This response obviously rubbed Allen Dulles the wrong way for he sharply criticized General Shoup pointing out that representatives of the Department of Defense rather than CIA personnel had been called on to render military judgments. General Shoup then noted that if he had known more about the operation, he might have been more optimistic about its chances for success. He reported that he couldn't find out all that he would have liked to have known about the plan, but recognized 110/ that he wasn't supposed to know all such details.

At this point the following acidulous exchange between General Shoup and a member of the Cuban Study Group was reported:

Statement: Let's go back to this question of military responsibility. Certainly you, as Commandant of the Marine Corps, had no responsibility for it, but as a member of the Joint Chiefs you did have responsibility for this operation.

General Shoup: That's not my understanding.

Statement: At least the JCS as a corporate body had responsibility for this operation.

General Shoup: That's not my understanding, only insofar as the Commander-in-Chief might want to know something about the adequacy of the plan, or the probability of success. Otherwise I don't feel that I, or any of the other Joint Chiefs, had any responsibility for the success of this plan.

Question: The Joint Chiefs are by law the advisors to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council, and the President. Consequently, would you say that you should volunteer any advice on this subject?

General Shoup: As a member of the Joint Chiefs I don't know what the Chairman did. I don't know what happened at a lot of the meetings at the White House or the State Department, but I do know this, that within the corporate body I for one emphasized time after time that we had to have air superiority and we had to help this outfit fend off the force they were going to have opposing them down there. 111/

Admiral Burke and Allen Dulles then became involved in the General Shoup testimony.

Admiral Burke: There are three or four things that are the basis of this thing that ought to be cleared. One is the responsibility of the Chiefs to comment on the plan. Another is the actual conduct of the operation, which was all in one place and that was in CIA.

Mr. Dulles: But that was done by military personnel.

Admiral Burke: But not under our command structure.

Statement: But as advisors to the President the JCS had a responsibility. The President had the right to look to the Joint Chiefs for advice during the planning or execution phase if they thought they had something important to offer.

General Shoup: That's true, as limited by their knowledge of all aspects of the plan.

Statement: And in the absence of hearing from the Chiefs he had a right to assume that everything was going satisfactorily.

General Shoup: Yes, to the limit of our knowledge. I want to tell you this right now. Had I as an individual heard that they were going to call off the air strikes I'd have asked that the Commander-in-Chief be informed. I'd have called him myself because it was absolutely essential to success. The D-2 affair was only a half effort.

Mr. Dulles: General, may I add this. The D-2 Day was essentially a plot, not a plan. The Plan was the D-Day Strike.

Question: Do you feel that you had absolute and complete knowledge about this operation?

General Shoup: Absolutely not.

Question: Did you understand that the President and his advisors were looking to you for your military evaluation of this plan?

General Shoup: The thing that we were asked to do was determine which of the three alternatives was the best.

Question: But then after that, did you understand that during that period of time that the President was looking to you, the JCS for the military evaluation of the operation?

General Shoup: I would have to presume that in accordance with his title of Commander-in-Chief he would be thinking about the military part.

Question: But you understand that he wanted to get your advice and ideas also?

General Shoup: That was never stated.

Question: What I am getting at is that if you feel that you didn't have full knowledge and information on the plan and at the same time the President was looking to you for advice, it seems to me that it would be almost impossible for you to give him the military evaluation.

General Shoup: Well, you had to look at it in the context of what the Agency said about the uprisings. I had no possible way to know or evaluate them. That in itself was a particularly important factor.

Statement: There was a general impression that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved this operation. I don't think that there is any doubt but what they went ahead thinking that you and the other Joint Chiefs had approved the plan, but you now say you didn't have full knowledge and information in order to evaluate the plan. That in itself is of some significance for the future.

General Shoup: One of the main features relating to the ultimate success of this was not whether you could put the ships in here and unload this military equipment, [but] whether the people were properly trained to fend off a reasonable enemy effort.

Statement: Your idea of the plan is entirely different than some other peoples' idea of the plan.

General Shoup: I'm telling the truth as I know it.

Statement: I don't think there is any doubt about that.

Statement: The idea that the people would land on the beach and then take off into the swamp is a new one to us.

Admiral Burke: There was great emphasis on the uprising and we spent hours and hours determining how to get additional equipment. We ended up with equipment for 30,000 people. The only slight difference I have with General Shoup is that it was my understanding that this group had to be able to hold the beachhead for some time, for several days.

Statement: It's very significant that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, whom the President of the United States and the Secretary of State thought had approved this plan had an entirely different idea of what the plan was. It seems that something has gone wrong somewhere along the line.

General Shoup: This whole thing was a function of time.

Statement: But when I asked you, you said that they were going to get out of there the same day. They were only going to hold the beachhead long enough to unload the equipment. There wasn't any possibility of anybody coming down there. There wasn't anybody around there. Their idea

was to hold that beachhead. I think it is important that when the President and the Secretary of State think that they have your view, that they do have your view. 112/\*

This hassle went on through the rest of General Shoup's testimony with attempts by committee members (or a member?) to get General Shoup to admit that he might have been derelict in his duty by not telling the President of any doubts which he had about the planned operation. The Marine Commandant, however, resisted all such pressures, and his testimony concluded with the following questions and answers:

Question: If you were going to do this again and there was still the requirement that it be a covert operation, what changes would you make? Anything that would be materially different?

General Shoup: I don't think that at this time in 1961 or hereafter you are going to do it covertly.

\* The difference of opinion reflected here refers to the question which had been asked Shoup earlier. The question had been "How long did you think they'd be in the bay?" and Shoup had answered:

One day. I thought they'd load those ships and get out of there. If they didn't get unloaded, they'd come back after dark, depending upon whether they were actually rushed by the enemy or if they weren't, and depending upon where the people were that could use the arms. 113/

In context, it is apparent that Shoup was thinking solely about the vessels which brought the invasion forces and materiel into the beaches. According to the plan the vessels were to retire before daylight on D-Day and then return after dark, if necessary, to finish unloading.

Question: Did you really think that this would be covert in the sense that it would not be attributed to the United States?

General Shoup: I did not. 114/

If, as the record seems to indicate, Robert Kennedy was the CSG interrogator who appeared determined to prove that General Shoup had failed to meet his responsibilities to the President, then the Attorney General failed to make his case.\*

The next member of the JCS to appear as a witness at the twelfth meeting of the CSG was Gen. Thomas D. White, USAF. General White was as positive as General Shoup had been about the preference that the Joint Chiefs had for the Trinidad Plan as compared to the Zapata Plan. As with the Marine Commandant, General White also noted that the JCS had agreed that of the alternative plans that had been presented, Zapata was the best of the lot. General White was even more adamant about the necessity for gaining control of the air than General Shoup had been. In his discussion with the committee, General White, too, noted instances where he was unable to respond to questions because he had not been involved in the particular discussions that led to decisions such as the D-2 strike or the cancellation of the D-Day strike. Inasmuch as Mr. Bundy of the White House Staff was one of the principals involved in the D-2 strike and

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\* One might wonder whether Col. Jack Hawkins's failure to make General in the Marine Corps was in any way related to Shoup's set-to with Robert Kennedy and, to a lesser extent, with Maxwell Taylor during Shoup's meeting with the CSG. Colonel Hawkins had been the personal choice of General Shoup to work with CIA on the anti-Castro project.

because the cancellation of the D-Day strike had come directly on the orders of the President, General White's intimations that the JCS had been bypassed on these affairs led to another period of sharp exchanges, presumably with the Attorney General. The record of the meeting shows the following exchange:

Question: He [President Kennedy] heard nothing from the Joint Chiefs with regard to any infeasibility of this [Zapata] plan. Is it fair to say that the Chiefs would have volunteered their comment if they really thought this thing was going badly?

General White: Without any question. The problem was that there were last minute changes of which we did not know.

Question: You refer to the last minute cancellation of the air strikes?

General White: Yes.

Statement: But that was just one factor.

General White: I think that was a very key factor, sir.

Statement: Well, in this operation, I think we would be convinced that the plan wouldn't have been any more successful if we had had the [D-Day] air strikes.

General White: Well, I really believe that the Cuban Air Force had a whale of an effect on the bad outcome. It is difficult to say what an air strike on D-Day at dawn would have done, but it might very well have made the difference in my opinion. 115/

White then got himself entangled in a discussion concerning Castro's T-33s. Following his statement that he was "surprised" to find that the T-33s were armed, General White was jumped on



by a member of the CSG whose purpose seemed to be to demonstrate that there was a lack of concern on the part of the JCS and the CIA about the T-33s--going back to a point or points which had been made during the first and second meetings of the CSG that if President Kennedy had only known that the T-33s posed a threat he undoubtedly would not have cancelled the D-Day air strike. General White, however, avoided argument on this point and stated that if he had known that the T-33s were armed he would have made certain that the airfields where the T-33s were based were brought under attack. In fact, the three airfields that were brought under attack in the course of the D-2 air strikes were the only ones where T-33s were based. In response to the question, "Based on the information you had, then you would never have recommended that they [T-33s] be knocked out?" To which General White responded, "They would have been included in the overall plan to knock out Castro's air force." <sup>116/</sup>

With reference to the question of defining the responsibility of the JCS during the course of the Bay of Pigs operation, General White's response was that whenever called on, the JCS gave their views to the best of their ability; and he emphasized that although they disagreed with the decision on going to Zapata rather than Trinidad, the JCS did support to the fullest the Zapata plan. With

reference to the specific question of "Would you say you [the JCS] had the responsibility to volunteer advice to the President and since he received no contrary advice he had the right to assume that all was well?" General White's response was, "Yes, except that a number of things took place that I did not know about. I knew nothing about the cancellation of the [D-Day] air strikes." 117/

General White noted the impossibility of maintaining the deniability of the US role in an operation such as that which had taken place; and he stressed the point that any operation involving sizable numbers of aircraft stood no chance of maintaining its covert nature. General White said that even though the JCS spent far less time studying the Zapata plan than it had spent studying the Trinidad plan, the basic question was a change of location rather than any significant change in the plan. Once again, the four members of the committee let this statement pass unchallenged, raising no questions concerning the change to a night landing, the movement of materiel across the beach, or multiple landing sites several miles apart at Zapata as compared to Trinidad.

Prior to the appearance of General Decker, Chief of Staff of the US Army, the Cuban Study Group had a brief session with Colonel Germosen,\* USAF, who was assigned to the Development

\* Pseudonum

Projects Division of CIA and who became the air operations officer for the WH/4 task force at Headquarters. The primary concern of the committee with reference to Colonel Germosen was whether the T-33s were considered to be a threat, and if they were a threat, whether they had been selected specifically as air targets during the D-2 or planned D-Day air strikes. Colonel Germosen's testimony was quite direct; he apparently was quite self-composed in stating that there were no instructions for the pilots to go after T-33s in particular. The instructions for D-2 were to knock out all offensive aircraft photographed in the parking areas of the three selected airfields. Colonel Germosen also refuted the testimony of [redacted] who had told the committee that the B-26s in Castro's inventory were of far more concern than the T-33s. Colonel Germosen pointed out that Castro's T-33 inventory was located at the three airfields selected for attack on D-2; and he told the committee that of Castro's five T-33s, three were knocked out by the D-2 strikes, but one of these was back in the action by D+1 (18 April 1961). When queried about the origin of the D-2 strike, the officer had to plead ignorance. After he indicated some reservations about the wisdom of the D-2 strike, one committee member took a cheap shot at Colonel Germosen by saying "I have real doubt in my mind as to whether you did well by accepting those other D-2 strikes." <sup>118/\*</sup>

\* The record does read "...other D-2 strikes," but there was only one D-2 strike at three airfields. It was not Germosen's responsibility "to accept" or not accept the D-2 strike plan.

The testimony of General George H. Decker, Chief of Staff of the US Army, added nothing new to what had already been put to the Taylor Committee during the course of the twelfth meeting by Generals Shoup and White. The Session with General Decker also appears to have been conducted at a less emotional level than were the meetings with either the Air Force or the Marine Corps senior officers. General Decker was in agreement with his colleagues in that the JCS favored Trinidad over Zapata, but could live with the Zapata plan and thought that it had a reasonable chance of success. He did not believe that there was any possibility that the support from the US could have remained deniable, and he thought that the JCS had acted properly in giving its best evaluations on the basis of the information that they had available. The only point on which General Decker differed from Generals White and Shoup was with reference to the D-2 air strike.

General Decker was very much in favor of the D-2 strike, but he also suggested that strikes even earlier than D-2 would have effectively insured destruction of Castro's air arm. General Decker agreed with his JCS colleagues that the operation was of such scale that it should have been run by the military rather than by the Central Intelligence Agency. As with other witnesses who had appeared before the committee, General Decker's explanation of the brief time that the JCS spent in review of the shift from Trinidad to Zapata was based on the similarity

of the two plans. with no one challenging the serious differences that in fact did exist between the two proposals. 119/\*

The thirteenth meeting of the Cuban Study Group on the 10th of May 1961 took brief testimony from General Walter Bedell Smith, former Director of Central Intelligence. General Smith's testimony was devoted exclusively to the larger picture of the position of the United States in the world situation and he took a very hard line about the need for the US to understand that covert operations were a tough, dirty business, and concerns about morality were going to have to be put aside in order to meet the communist challenge in this arena. 121/

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\* According to Arthur Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy was extremely upset by the testimony of the Joint Chiefs, having written: "What really bad work the Joint Chiefs of Staff did on this whole matter [the Bay of Pigs Operation]. The plan as they approved it [the Trinidad plan] would have been even more catastrophic than the one that finally went into effect." Schlesinger cites as the source for this and other derogatory comments about failures by the JCS as "RFK handwritten notes after Cuban Study Group meetings of May 1 and 11, 1961, RFK papers." 120/ The meeting of 1 May 1961 was the 7th meeting and that of 11 May was the 14th meeting, but there was no testimony by any representatives of the JCS at either of the meetings specified by Schlesinger. The members of the JCS were witnesses at the 12th meeting on 8 May 1961 and the 17th meeting on 18 May.

Robert A. Lovett, former Secretary of Defense, was the sole witness at the fourteenth meeting of the CSG on 11 May 1961. Mr. Lovett's testimony was broad ranging on the issues of organizing US efforts to effectively fight the Cold War, and he was particularly concerned about the impact which CIA's covert action operations in overseas areas were having on internal politics of foreign nations,

Additionally, he questioned the authority of CIA to support an invasion effort "on a hostile shore."

Mr. Lovett stressed that in terms of manpower and money, the Department of State could not compete with CIA activities in foreign areas, and he noted the various recommendations which the 5412 Group and the President's Board of Consultants had recommended to control the situation. In this context Mr. Lovett specified with reference to the Bay of Pigs operation that there was an obvious failure on the part of the US Government, not CIA, to "make up its mind what in the hell it wanted to do."

Mr. Lovett also expressed concern about the security problem with reference to the Cuban operation because of the generally wide knowledge of the operation which he had found

during a visit to Miami prior to the invasion. He also doubted US capability to run covert operations because we were an "openmouthed society."

When Mr. Lovett made a strong pitch for the separation of paramilitary operations from intelligence collection and production, he apparently was challenged by Allen Dulles who noted that the estimates on the possibilities of support from dissident elements in Cuba and of the strength of the Castro forces had been quite accurate and had been prepared by the operations, not the intelligence, component of the Agency. Again Dulles was in error. The estimates by the operations people of potential support by anti-Castro elements were highly optimistic--as were their estimates of the numbers actually involved in guerrilla operations. Far more realistic estimates appeared in the NIEs which were basically produced by intelligence, not operations, officers.

As was the case with General Smith, Mr. Lovett was especially concerned about the US will to meet the Communist challenge in the Cold War. Among other things he pointed out that the US needed to stop worrying about whether the world loved us and recognize that the Soviets were really an enemy to be beaten by any methods necessary.

The single witness at the fifteenth meeting of the Taylor Committee on 16 May 1961, was Captain Jacob Scapa, US Navy, who was the naval adviser for the project. Capt. Scapa had been responsible for reviewing the naval plan, but his actual contact with the naval contingent had been limited to four days at Puerto Cabezas prior to the departure of the invasion vessels for Cuba. Capt. Scapa took a fair amount of flak from members of the committee, again unidentified, during the course of the discussion of the unloading plan for the vessels in the Bahia de Cochinos.

There was some particularly severe criticism about the decisions not to attempt to run the arms packs which were carried by the LCI's Blagar and Barbara J in to Blue Beach during the night of D-Day and the early morning of D+1--the fear being that it would have been impossible to get the vessels in and out before daylight at which time they would have been subject to air attack from Castro's Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria. The committee made a point in asking why the ships hadn't been put at risk since it was known that there was an ammunition shortage at the beach. The committee further pointed out that the two LCIs had survived serious air attacks on D-Day and with the other vessels had fled safely into international waters. The best that Capt. Scapa could present by way of argument was that it was feared that the vessels would be sunk and, in addition, no ammunition would be landed.



But, as he pointed out, this was a difficult decision; and it was the subject of extensive debate at Headquarters.\* 122/

In response to a question which had been raised about the problems that had been encountered in the use of aluminum boats for off-loading troops, Capt. Scapa stated that the acquisition of the small boats had to be accomplished within a period of roughly ten days to two weeks prior to the departure of the vessels from Puerto Cabezas. His statement was: "We had to procure them, get them assembled, send them down to Puerto Cabezas, load them aboard ship, and train some crews to run them." 123/ This was over-simplification of the problem of trying to acquire the three dozen 18' aluminum boats with 75 h.p. out-board motors which had been laid on WH/4's logistic component when the plan was changed from Trinidad to Zapata. This was a complication that was passed over too lightly during the Taylor Committee hearings; and, unfortunately, Capt. Scapa missed an opportunity to present some of the details which would have helped to explain the difficulties in handling the boats at the time of the invasion.\*\*

\* See footnote page 80 for comments on the limited value of arms packs to the troops' needs.

\*\*In the course of an interview with the author of this history, Grayston Lynch placed most of the blame for the failure of the aluminum boats on a Marine colonel who had volunteered to assist the Brigade with its logistical problems. Lynch accused this officer of being completely ignorant of small boat operations and specified that the small boat engines failed to start in the Bahia de Cochinos because the marine had insisted that the new engines be filled with heavy oil rather than the very light oil required when breaking in a new motor. 124/

The sixteenth meeting of the Taylor Committee was held on 17 May 1961 and was devoted exclusively to the testimony of five Cubans who had escaped from the invasion beach following the collapse of organized resistance by the Brigade on 19 April 1961. The common thread of the testimony of all five witnesses who had been engaged in the action from Red beach down to Blue beach was that they had lost because they did not receive the air support which they had been promised. They were particularly critical of the failure of the United States Government to respond to their calls for air support when it became apparent that the invasion was not going to succeed as long as Castro's jets controlled the air.

Contrary to the testimony of some earlier witnesses who had suggested that an attempt to call off the invasion when it was learned that the D-Day air strike had been cancelled would have been forcibly resisted by the Cuban trainees, the opinion of the escapees who expressed themselves on this subject was that it was unlikely that the Cubans would have attempted to take over the vessels and continue the invasion themselves. The escapees also were particularly critical of the aluminum boats-- a subject which had been discussed with Captain Scapa at the previous day's meeting. With the exception of one of the witnesses who indicated considerable reluctance about being able to depend on the United States, the others agreed that

they would be willing to support another invasion effort. But all made it clear that they expected the United States to play a more direct role in any future activity--their point being that the fight was not just Cuban against Cuban, but that it was a fight against world communism. <sup>125/</sup>

The seventeenth meeting of the Cuban Study Group was convened on 18 May 1961 and the principal witness was General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In addition to General Lemnitzer, two of the political leaders of the Cubans, Antonio Varona and Manuel Ray, also testified; but their remarks can be summed up very simply: Both Ray and Varona agreed that Cubans should have been in charge of the operation rather than the North Americans, and both agreed that there were severe inequalities in the funding of the various Cuban Groups--each, of course, emphasizing that it was his group which should have had a larger share of the money as well as a greater voice in a leadership of the Cubans.

General Lemnitzer's testimony followed the pattern that had been set by the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when they appeared as witnesses before the Taylor Committee. He spoke quite freely, he disagreed with the committee members on various points, his facts were not always correct, and at several points in his testimony on critical issues, the committee failed to ask for or seek elaboration on questions which were of major importance to the operation.\*

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\* As will be discussed in the next chapter, by the time General Lemnitzer testified the Committee had already briefed President Kennedy on its conclusions.

In his opening statement, General Lemnitzer indicated that the role of the Department of Defense in the course of the Cuban operation had been to provide support for the Central Intelligence Agency which was in charge of the operation. In General Lemnitzer's words: "The thing I would like to say at the very beginning is that I consider the JCS role as one of appraisal, evaluation, offering of constructive criticism, and assisting CIA in looking at the training and detailed plans. Defense participated in the role of support." <sup>126/</sup>

General Lemnitzer was questioned extensively about plans for the Cuban operation, and he noted that in late January 1961, following the first briefing that the Agency had given for President Kennedy's major cabinet appointees--including Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense MacNamara, and the Attorney General, among others--that the JCS independently prepared a plan of action for Cuba and forwarded it to the Secretary of Defense. The paper to which General Lemnitzer referred was JCSM-44-61 which recommended that an inter-departmental planning group be established and charged with defining the overall plan of action for the overthrow of the Castro Government.\*

Although the Chairman of the JCS apparently never got to discuss this memorandum with the Secretary of Defense, he

\* MEMORANDUM for the Secretary of Defense from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 27 Jan 1961, sub: "US Plan of Action in Cuba."

did report that he had discussed it with both the Secretary of State and the DCI. The Secretary of State "was pretty receptive," but CIA apparently took a rather dim view of the JCS proposals since they already were involved in their own operational plan. No questions were raised by the Committee concerning the failure of General Lemnitzer to discuss this JCSM with the Secretary of Defense or, indeed, if the Secretary of Defense ever read the memo.

There was a similar--and far more significant--communication gap between General Lemnitzer and Secretary MacNamara concerning the JCS's evaluation of the Trinidad and Zapara invasion plans. After clearly indicating that the Joint Chiefs favored the Trinidad over the Zapata plan, but nonetheless supported the Zapata plan, the following conversation took place between General Lemnitzer and one of the members of the CSG:

Statement: You mention the preference for Trinidad--I'm not sure whether you're aware of it, but the Secretary of Defense apparently never appreciated that point. In fact, he had the impression that the Chiefs, thought that Zapata was the better of the two plans.

General Lemnitzer: I just don't understand how he got that impression. I can show you in my notes on two accounts where I called it to his attention. We also put it in writing that "of the alternate plans, alternative three [Zapata] is considered the most feasible and most likely to accomplish the objective. None of the alternates involved are as feasible and likely to accomplish the objectives as the present [Trinidad] paramilitary plan." I don't see how you can say it any clearer than that.

Statement: I think it's just a question of too many papers being confused. 127/

With that single statement the committee then passed on to other subjects--once again emphasizing their failure to pursue a matter which could have and should have been of critical importance to the Secretary of Defense regardless of how many papers were under study. Surely such a JCS position should have warranted the attention of the President's National Security Advisor and probably the President himself.

With reference to the Zapata plan, General Lemnitzer and the committee clashed over the issue of whether the invading brigade was prepared to go to guerrilla status. For whatever reason, General Lemnitzer had it in his head that the brigade had been trained in guerrilla warfare tactics, and consequently he stated:

It was our understanding of the plan without any doubt that moving into the guerrilla phase was one of the important elements of the plan, and any idea that the Chiefs considered that they were making an indefinite lodgment on the beachhead is not right. Every bit of information that we were able to gather from the CIA was that the guerrilla aspects were always considered as a main element of the plan.

The response by one of the committee members was:

General, if you look at that area and talk with anybody who has been there, you couldn't possibly become guerrillas in that damn place.

General Lemnitzer, however, chose to make an analogy with the situation in Vietnam.

Admiral Burke then joined in the conversation saying:

Guerrillas couldn't sustain themselves in any of these areas [the Escambray or the Zapata swamps] until they got support from the populace. Supplies would have to be carried in to them until they received support from the populace.

At this point the Attorney General apparently joined the discussion saying: "The President had the same impression that you did--that if worse came to worse, this group could become guerrillas, but as we've gotten into it, it's become obvious that this possibility never really existed."

To this General Lemnitzer is reported to have said, "Then we were badly misinformed."\* Allen Dulles finally interjected himself into the discussion in response to a comment that another committee member had made suggesting that unless the whole brigade had had training and instruction, they never could have gone guerrilla. Mr. Dulles said:

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\* On the day following his testimony before the Taylor Committee, Lemnitzer testified (19 May 1961) before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on American Republic Affairs which was investigating the Bay of Pigs operation. Once again Lemnitzer confused the guerrilla option of the Trinidad Plan with the Zapata Plan. 128/

I wouldn't wholly buy that. These people had a cadre of leaders--20 percent to 30 percent would be the leaders. They knew about guerrilla warfare. The guerrillas in World War II never had any training until they got into a guerrilla operation.

General Lemnitzer however, refused to concede, and after an exchange of remarks about the fact that the only plan for withdrawal was by sea, General Lemnitzer remarked, "but that was not the kind of withdrawal that was anticipated, as far as I was concerned." 129/

General Lemnitzer also had some interesting exchanges with the committee concerning the air strikes that were planned for D-2 and D-Day. In one exchange between the Chairman of the JCS and an unidentified member of the committee, Lemnitzer stressed clearly that he was opposed to the D-2 air strike--his point being that as far as he was concerned the motivation was other than military. When General Lemnitzer was challenged about the potentially disastrous effects that the D-2 air strike could have had--particularly the possibility that Castro subsequently might have dispersed his aircraft--General Lemnitzer avoided answering the question and noted that, in fact, Castro hadn't dispersed his aircraft.

General Lemnitzer's contention was that the only air strike that really counted or, which was intended to count, was the D-Day air strike. In the course of his remarks about the significance of D-Day, General Lemnitzer noted that it



didn't make any difference whether the Zapata plan or the Trinidad plan was in effect because it did not change the air plan--an error which also had been made in the testimony of other members of the JCS. This time, however, one of the members of the CSG specified that the air plan was significantly different as the invasion site was shifted from Trinidad to Zapata, stating:

The objection to one of the plans [Trinidad] was the fact that the airstrip wasn't adequate. That same objection wasn't made in connection with the Zapata plan. The second thing is that the Zapata plan, as it was originally considered, anticipated capturing this airport [actually the airstrip] and then have the planes take off from the airport. 130/

This was a point of fact to which General Lemnitzer only moments earlier had agreed, but in response to the above remark the following curious exchange took place:

General Lemnitzer: No, sir. That's wrong.

Statement: I'm just going by what the paper says.

General Lemnitzer: Are you saying that these aircraft were supposed to fly from Nicaragua and then land and load up and take off and bomb and so on?

Statement: I don't know. I wasn't there.

General Gray: I think its wrong to base that whole Zapata plan on one paper because this was just the first cut of the Zapata plan. After that the Zapata plan was considered again and again over a period of time and all this became very clear as it went on.

Statement: Yes, I understand, but we're just talking about the beginning. The important thing is that you didn't turn one plan down because of the air strike situation, and yet you did turn another plan down because the air strike situation wasn't adequate. You didn't turn Zapata down because the air strikes weren't considered adequate, and yet the air strikes consisted of taking off after dawn.

General Lemnitzer: I didn't think there was any material change in the air plan. The targets were the same regardless of where you'd land. On D-Day the air plan involved going after the Cuban Air Force; thereafter they would take under attack any movement of troops to the area and they would attempt to knock out microwave communication stations on which the Cuban national communications were largely dependent.

Question: What did you think would happen if you weren't 100 percent successful and didn't get a couple of T-33s?

General Lemnitzer: In war, you never expect 100 percent success. However, a couple of T-33s are not going to be decisive elements in an operation of this kind.

Question: Were there any comments or discussion about the T-33s in particular?

General Lemnitzer: I think I had information that they were armed, because we had been trying to get some kind of equipment against the Pathet Lao, and we were considering what the distribution of T-33s was around the world. We saw that some of them had been armed as reconnaissance planes, and it was suspected that the Cuban air force had armed theirs--but they weren't bombers.

Statement: Yes, but they hit targets.

General Lemnitzer: Yes, but the T-33s didn't sink any ships.

Statement: Yes, they did.

Statement: No, not the T-33s. I think they were Sea Furies. A Sea Fury was the one that hit the Rio.

General Lemnitzer: I have a long list of the reasons why we preferred Trinidad to Zapata: It was more distant from Havana, the closeness to the Escambray mountains, there was only one access road into the area, the nearest Cuban army unit of any size was 100 miles away, and considerable support from dissidents was expected in that area.

Question: What was the understanding of the importance of control of the air?

General Lemnitzer: Absolutely vital to success.

Question: Were the Chiefs satisfied with the plan of pre-D-Day strikes?

General Lemnitzer: We first talked about some strikes on the day before D-Day, but the D-Day strikes were regarded as critical...Of course, elimination of the D-Day strike greatly eliminated the insurance against attack from the Cuban air force. 131/\*

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\* In the course of the discussion of the D-Day and D-2 air strikes, Lemnitzer specified that napalm, as well as bombs and machine guns, was to have been used in the attacks on the Cuban airfields on D-Day. He also repeated this in his 19 May 1961 testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on American Republic Affairs. In fact, napalm had been authorized only for the two B-26s scheduled to hit the tank/truck park at the Managua Military Base on D-Day. 132/ Lemnitzer obviously was confusing the very early planning for the D-Day strike which had called for all of the B-26s which were scheduled to strike the Cuban airfields to carry both napalm and bombs.

To say the least, exchanges of this nature were confusion worst confounded. The greatest part of the confusion lay among the committee members, particularly as General Lemnitzer was quite correct in that the switch from Trinidad to Zapata had nothing to do with the selection of air targets. The change had been made in large part because of the insistence of President Kennedy, supported by Secretary of State Rusk and Thomas Mann, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, that a site be selected to support the story that the air attacks were originating from Cuban bases by Cuban defectors. Additionally, the President had insisted on a less "spectacular" and "quiet" night landing. <sup>133/</sup>

Suggestions by the CSG that General Lemnitzer and the JCS had favored the switch from Trinidad to Zapata were in no way related to the actual situation. On this point the service Chiefs refused to become the whipping boys for the member of the CSG most interested in protecting President Kennedy's reputation--his brother, the Attorney General.

General Lemnitzer also was better informed about the T-33 situation than were previous witnesses who had suggested that the T-33s were not known to be armed. Even here, General Lemnitzer's knowledge was not as precise as it should have been--particularly in view of the available information on the T-33s that the United States had sold to Cuba. General Lemnitzer correctly pointed out that the Hawker Sea

Furies in the Castro inventory had been principally responsible for sinking both the Rio Escondido and the Houston.

As with the other witnesses, General Lemnitzer accepted the story that the Brigade B-26s could not have operated off the Trinidad airfield--although as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs it is easier to excuse his lack of knowledge on this particular point than it is to excuse either General Gray of the Joint Staff or General White of the Air Force for not knowing better. General Lemnitzer's comment that the T-33s could not be a decisive element, like his remark that a couple of MIGs "would have pretty well complicated the operation," indicated a cavalier attitude about the importance of opposing jet-powered aircraft with piston-engined B-26s. <sup>134/</sup>

General Lemnitzer's testimony supported that of previous military witnesses who had testified that the D-2 strike had originated outside of the Department of Defense and that the Department of Defense representatives learned of the cancellation of the D-Day strike only after the fact. As with previous witnesses whose opposition--after General Cabell and Mr. Bissell had received word that the President had cancelled the D-Day air strike--might have caused the President to reconsider his decision, Lemnitzer, too, was unchallenged on this point.\* As with the

\* General Lemnitzer said the Generals Gray and Wheeler informed him about the D-Day cancellation at approximately 2:00 A.M. (Washington and Cuban time) on 17 April 1961, and General Gray noted that he had received the word of the cancellation at approximately 1:00 A.M. (Washington and Cuban time) on the 17th.

other members of the Joint Chiefs, General Lemnitzer was of the opinion that they had done all that could have been expected from them in the way of advising the President.

Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, was the sole witness at the eighteenth meeting of the Cuban Study Group on 19 May 1961. Once again a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was asked to comment on the Secretary of Defense's reaction to JCSM-44-61 (27 January 1961) on proposed US action in Cuba. Again a member of the Joint Chiefs told the CSG that the memorandum had gone forward to Mr. McNamara, but that nothing further was heard from it. Yet another time, the committee chose not to pursue the matter further.

As with the other Chiefs, Admiral Burke stated that the only difference between Trinidad and Zapata insofar as the air strikes were concerned was that by using the Zapata strip the claim could be made that the air attacks were originating from within Cuba. In response to the question of whether or not the Joint Chiefs approved of the Zapata plan, Admiral Burke volunteered that technically they did not approve of the plan, but morally they did. This response proved a bit too much for one of the members of the committee who then asked, "Would you say it was given de facto approval?" To which Admiral Burke replied, "Yes." In further interrogation, Admiral Burke was asked, "If it had looked as though they had had an unfeasible plan,

you would have volunteered your doubts, isn't that right?"  
To which Admiral Burke again replied, "Yes." 135/

When Admiral Burke was asked, "What about the air plan which turned out to be critically weak? Did you make any special judgment of the adequacy of the air plan?" Admiral Burke responded that: "In the early days of this plan I didn't think the [anti-Castro] Cuban Air Force was any good. However, after considerable argument with the other Chiefs I was led to the conclusion that this force had a better capability than I had originally believed." 136/  
This non-responsive answer prompted another inquiry regarding the extent to which the Joint Chiefs of Staff had studied the overall plan of the operation, particularly the merits of the D-2 and D-Day air strikes.

Admiral Burke, like the other members of the Joint Chiefs, said he was more impressed by the political importance of the D-2 strike than by what it might achieve in the way of destruction of Castro's air force. He, too, emphasized that the D-Day strike was intended to keep Castro's Air Force on the ground. 137/  
Again, however, there was a sharp difference between the intent of those who planned the D-2 air strike and what the Joint Chiefs envisioned as the rationale for the strike. Certainly Messers. Bundy, Hawkins, Esterline, and Bissell intended the D-2 air strike as insurance to guarantee the destruction of

Castro's combat air capability. That it would have to appear to have originated from within Cuba followed automatically in order to support the Zapata plan. In their testimony before the CSG, there is no evidence that any of the Joint Chiefs of Staff understood the validity of D-2 as a tactical operation--or if they did, they decided to ignore it. As with other subjects, Mr. Dulles, who certainly should have known better, failed to correct the testimony of the DOD Chiefs who focused on D-2 as a purely political, rather than as a military, concept.

Of the JCS witnesses who were queried about the possibility that the D-Day air strike might have gotten all of Castro's remaining aircraft, Admiral Burke provided the most accurate description of the situation which would have followed in the wake of such an attack. He pointed out that if some of Castro's combat aircraft remained in flyable condition it was unlikely that a strike against the invading forces could have been launched on D-Day. He emphasized that there would have been great confusion following the heavy strikes which had been planned--casualties would require attention, aircraft would have to be inspected, the runways inspected and repaired, and the dispatch of troops probably would have been delayed. In response to questions concerning the delay authorizing more T-33s from the USAF inventory for the brigade, Admiral Burke reported that T-33s did not have the range to operate out of



Nicaragua; and if they were going to be used, they would have had to be operated out of Key West--obviously in contradiction to the Presidential policy of deniability. 138/\*

In contrast to the other members of the Joint Chiefs who were firm in assurances to the committee that the JCS had properly discharged its responsibilities to the President during the course of the Bay of Pigs operation, Admiral Burke's response to this question was refreshingly frank:

This is a most difficult question. My answer can be misinterpreted badly. According to what had happened before and under the way the Chiefs operated before and in view of the procedures which had been set up, yes, they did discharge their responsibility; but morally, they did not. In looking back on it now, I regret several things very much, personally. I regret personally that I did not insist upon things that I felt uneasy about. I felt uneasy about being briefed instead of having something in writing so that I could wrestle with it. I regret I didn't do that. I should have insisted. 140/

Both Admiral Burke and General Lemnitzer were more forthcoming concerning the JCS relationship with the Kennedy Administration during oral interviews they gave in the mid-to-late 1970s. A JCS history states:

\* Admiral Burke's response re the turn over of T-33s was more accurate than the response J.C. King had made when the same question came up during General Lemnitzer's testimony--at that time King speculated that there probably was a shortage of pilots. 139/

Years later, Admiral Burke readily acknowledged that the JCS could be faulted (1) for displaying a certain naivete about the new administration and (2) for failing to voice their reservations about Zapata more forcefully. He added, however, that there were important extenuating circumstances. First, they did not realize that President Kennedy conducted business somewhat in the manner of a college seminar; decisions could be reviewed and changed up to the moment of execution. Thus the JCS thought matters were settled when, actually, they were still open to discussion and revision. Second, the Administration had installed in OSD a group of civilians who were determined to confine the military's influence upon foreign policy. Consequently, he recalled, the JCS became reluctant to volunteer opinions on any matters that lay beyond their own professional cognizance.

General Lemnitzer's afterthoughts were less charitable. The new civilian hierarchy, he concluded, was crippled not only by inexperience but also by arrogance, arising from failure to recognize their own limitations. Thus, without consulting the JCS, they switched the landing site from Trinidad to Zapata, canceled the D-Day air strike--and then blamed the Chiefs when matters went badly. 141/\*

\* Appendix C provides a specific example of how Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and Richard N. Goodwin continued to poison the well against both the JCS and the Agency even after the Taylor Committee had completed its work.

The nineteenth meeting of the Taylor Committee took place on the 22 and 23 of May 1961. The only witness at that session was Jake Esterline, Chief, WH/4, and the overall project director. Addressing his opening remarks to the formation of WH/4's anti-Castro task force in January 1960, Mr. Esterline proceeded to spell out the chain of command for the members of the Taylor Committee. He testified that the line of authority went from him to Col. J.C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division and then to Richard Bissell, Deputy Director of Plans. This meant that about half of the time he was dealing with Bissell's alter-ego, C. Tracy Barnes, Assistant DDP for Action. When Esterline finished that brief presentation, a member of the committee made the following comment "Mr. King, this is interesting. I never knew whether you were in the chain of command or not." Inasmuch as this was the twelfth meeting of the committee where Col. King had been present, one wonders why this question had not been raised before. The justification for Col. King's continuing presence never was officially explained.\*

Esterline proceeded with the story of the planning and initial paramilitary training of some 300 men in Panama.

\* Esterline, [redacted]

[redacted] had direct access to Mr. Bissell, the DDP. E. Howard Hunt's explanation for King's presence is that "Colonel J.C. King emerged as its [Taylor Committee's] general factotum." 142/ Dick Drain, C/OP/WH/4 stated that there were "numberless irritations that arose from the fact that J.C. King was neither 'in' it nor 'out' of it. He was just sort of 'in-and-out' and almost never had enough of the picture, understandably, to know what the hell he was talking about." 143/

Then he turned to the change in concept toward the end of September 1960 when he, Col. Jack Hawkins, and Mr. Bissell, decided that it would take an air supported amphibious operation of more than 1,000 men, rather than a guerrilla type operation, to dislodge Castro. After discussing this invasion plan with Mr. Bissell, the expanded operational plan subsequently was presented to the Special Group 5412. There was no objection to the plan; and according to Esterline, the basic Trinidad plan was set before the end of December 1960. In response to a question, Esterline said it was his opinion--based on the fact that so many of the brigade's senior officers had been trained [redacted]-that if necessary the brigade could have moved into guerrilla status either in the Zapata area or from Trinidad; moreover, if the guerrilla option was not feasible, the brigade's leaders should have been able to conduct a successful evacuation out of the beachhead by sea. In either case, however, Esterline's premise was based on control of the air.

The committee and Esterline also discussed the relative merits of having the command center nearer the scene of the action. Esterline and others who testified before him had argued that having the command post closer to the center of the operation would have given the project leaders a better

feel for the action taking place.\* Apparently the Attorney General jumped on this point stating, as he had on previous occasions, that the President of the United States "wasn't really aware of what was going on down south and had there been some command post close to the operation, I think he would have." Esterline countered this criticism noting that from 16 April 1961 General Cabell or other senior CIA personnel had been in constant contact with the White House during the operation and there was no excuse for the White House being unaware of the criticality of the situation. Esterline stressed that on 16 April after learning of the cancellation of the D-Day strike he told Col. King he couldn't continue because there was now no possibility of success.

Esterline and the committee then rehashed the business of the cancellation of the D-Day strike, including the meeting of General Cabell and Mr. Bissell with the Secretary of State. Esterline also reported on what he called "a heavy discussion," involving himself, Colonel Hawkins, Captain Scapa, and General Cabell--with Cabell in effect telling them they would have to bite the bullet and do it the way that the President wanted it done. Someone on the

committee apparently raised the question of why there were no anti-aircraft weapons taken in with the invading forces, and Esterline pointed out that the expectation was that Castro's Air Force would be destroyed on the ground. Esterline further stated that it was doubtful that there were any anti-aircraft weapons which could have been taken in by the Brigade which would have been effective against jet aircraft.

There was a lengthy discussion between Esterline and various members of the committee about the question of ammunition resupply to the beachhead, particularly the failure of anyone to order the LCIs into the beach on the night of D-Day and the early morning of D+1 or on the night of D+1 and the early morning of D+2. Esterline himself took full responsibility for this, pointing out that in his opinion the vessels would have been lost to air attack by the remaining Castro aircraft.\* To the question of how it happened that the LCIs and the other vessels had survived the attacks on D-Day, Esterline's contention was that it was sheer luck. He also was critical of the late approval which had been given for some USAF C-130s to be used for ammunition resupply, and he suggested that if approval for this air re-supply had been given 6 - 8 hours earlier it might have been feasible to get the aircraft in and out under the cover of darkness. By the time the approval was given, it was too late.

\* Esterline, like Gray Lynch, was aware that there was a limited amount of ammunition in the 1,000-man packs on the LCIs.

During the discussions of the ammunition shortage and the failure to resupply the beach from the LCUs and LCIs that were standing by or from USAF C-130s, one of the CSG members commented that if the President had known how bad the ammunition situation on the beach was, he would have authorized air cover for the ships. Esterline's rejoinder to this remark was that he couldn't imagine how the President could have been ignorant of the critical situation from 16 April until the collapse of the beachhead--particularly considering that Richard Bissell and General Cabell had been in constant contact with the White House.\* Along this same line, Esterline also told the committee: "As long as decisions by professionals can be set aside by people who know not whereof they speak, you won't succeed [in operations such as the one under study]." 146/\*\*

\* About a week after Esterline's testimony Robert Kennedy wrote that: "Jack on the first day [17 April 1961] realized there was going to be difficulty." Assuming the Attorney General had made the comment to the Committee about the President's lack of knowledge of the situation at the beach this sentence indicates the possibility that the record was being skewed to protect the President. 145/

\*\* This comment by Esterline made a strong negative impression on Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. In his 1978 book on Robert Kennedy, Schlesinger commented about the CIA-FBI as self-appointed guardians of the Republic saying:

Let others interfere at their peril. J.D. Esterline, the CIA's supervisor of planning for the Bay of Pigs, bitterly told the board of inquiry [e.g., the Taylor Committee], "as long as decisions by professionals can be set aside by people who know not whereof they speak, you won't succeed." 147/

Mr. Schlesinger apparently was so upset that his source citation for Esterline's quotation is incorrectly given as "Cuba Study Group, May 19, 1961, RFK papers." The correct citation should be Cuba Study Group, 19th Meeting, 22 - 23 May 1961, p. 22. On the subject of Schlesinger's error in his volume on Robert Kennedy, he also identified E. Howard Hunt as "the original chief of political action for the [BOP] project." 148/ In fact, Hunt's role was limited principally to hand holding with the Cuban political leaders; and he had no command responsibilities.

The final question put to Esterline concerned the rules and regulations for the utilization of US personnel. Esterline went through the drill, noting that the use of American pilot instructors had been approved early in the game; and finally on D+1 and D+2, American pilots had been authorized to participate in combat air operations. With reference to the use of Americans in the maritime activities, Esterline reported that initially there had been an absolute prohibition against the use of American crewmen on infiltration-exfiltration exercises; but later that had been modified to permit their use aboard the ships--but not to go ashore. Esterline agreed that the prohibition against Americans who were serving aboard the vessels held at the time of the invasion, and he conceded that when Lynch and Robertson went ashore it was without authorization.\*

\* The chances were that had Lynch and Robertson not been with the underwater demolition teams that were marking the beaches, the invasion might have stopped off-shore of Playa Giron. Considering the failure of the Kennedy administration to support the Brigade's effort, this would have been far less embarrassing to the US than defeat.

That a third US citizen was on Cuban soil during the invasion escaped notice of the CSG and everyone else who has written on the Bay of Pigs except Eddy Ferrer, one of the Brigade's C-46 pilots. In his book, Operacion Puma Ferrer wrote "un navegante norte-americano que se hacia llamar 'Bob'" was on the C-46 that landed at Playa Giron on D-2 (19 April 1961) with ammunition and picked up Matias Farias, the B-26 pilot who had been shot down by Castro's planes on D-Day and survived a crash landing. The navigator in question was an Alabama National Guard volunteer Robert Hofbruck (pseudo).



Lynch, on the other hand, had a different opinion:

We were never told that the President has said that no Americans will be involved in this. That was something that we never heard of until we got back to Washington...I had no specific instructions to land on the beach and I had no specific instructions not to land on the beach. I was given a job to do here. I told the people when they said that we would have to have this recon...if I have to land in there to determine it [the situation] I will do so. And they did not object. 150/

The twentieth meeting of the Taylor Committee, 25 May 1961, was confined to the testimony of Miro Cardona, head of the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC) which had been promoted by the Kennedy Administration to succeed the Frente Revolucionario Democrático (FRD) and give a broader base to the voice of the exiled Cubans. Miro Cardona went through the standard drill about all of the high level people that he had talked to in the Kennedy Administration and the assurances that had been made for the future of Cuba. He specified that prior to the invasion he had been promised 15-30,000 American troops by Adolf Berle and  Miro made the standard protest about how the Cuban leadership should have been in charge of the whole invasion effort and that if the US would supply the money, he could insure the ouster of Castro. 151/

The twenty-first meeting of the Cuban Study Group, 20 May 1961, had as its single witness Allen Dulles, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and a member of the Taylor Committee. This is the last officially recorded

meeting of the Taylor Committee and the session was initiated by questions which allowed the DCI to express his opinions about the need for the anti-Castro project and about the probability of success of the planned operation. Particular emphasis was placed on the chances of the Brigade to hold the beachhead, including the airstrip, for sufficient time to encourage resistance groups to seek contact with the invading forces and to acquire arms and materiel to expand the fight against Castro.

Dulles very carefully pointed out that the objective of the invasion was not to precipitate an immediate uprising by the Cubans--here he emphasized his own experiences with the French underground during World War II where precipitate action by dissident groups had led to their sudden and quick demise. The DCI stressed that until a populace could be well armed, prospects for success against even poorly armed militia were exceedingly remote. Dulles was challenged on this point, apparently by Robert Kennedy, who suggested that his brother the President had understood that there was to be a call for an uprising coincident with the invasion. Kennedy said:

It might have been the pressure of the time but I know the President kept after Dick Bissell about the uprising and Dick Bissell stated on the first day [D-Day] that it was going to happen that night.

Dulles remarked that the happenings to which Bissell referred were probably to an increase in acts of sabotage the underground had been asked to initiate (and some of which had already taken place) immediately preceding the invasion. The Attorney General, however, could not quite accept this at face value and asked why, if an immediate uprising had not been anticipated, arms for 30,000 men had been acquired: "The figure of 30,000 indicates to me that someone was planning on a massive uprising someplace; on getting people to use these weapons. Would that be a fair comment, Admiral [Burke]?" Admiral Burke, however, supported Dulles. He noted that the CIA plan had called for a stock of weapons sufficient to arm 5,000 men, but the Secretary of Defense was the one who has insisted that the number of weapons be pushed to the 30,000 figure.

When the DCI was asked for his opinion regarding the attitude of the JCS on the Zapata plan, he proceeded to straddle the issue. He first indicated that it was his opinion that the Joint Chiefs--as had been emphasized by the JCS witnesses--clearly preferred the Trinidad plan, but were willing to support the Zapata plan. Dulles then added a fillip to his statement and suggested that some of the military personnel working on the project thought that Zapata was in some respects better than Trinidad. Admiral Burke's pointed

rejoinder to Dulles was that while that may have been the opinion of some of the assignees to CIA, the Joint Chiefs never accepted that estimate.

In the course of his discussion, Dulles indicated that he was "surprised" about the effectiveness of the Castro aircraft, a comment which indicated an unfortunate lack of preparation on his part, particularly inasmuch as the success of the anti-Castro plan was keyed to air operations. As Jake Esterline or the Air Force assignees in charge of the air operations could have told him, once airborne, there was no way that the Brigade B-26s could stay in a sky protected by both the fastest propeller driven airplane of the time, the Sea Fury, and the T-33s--even, as proved to be the case, if the FAR pilots were inexperienced and rusty.

Considering that he had been closely queried about air operations in his 2 May 1961 session with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the DCI appears to have failed to have profited from that less than assured performance. He did know that Castro had no MIGs but he went on to say that the Cubans did have:

...T-33 jet trainers which they beefed up, and which were extremely effective.... We did not know their being with the new armament that they had and they were handled with great skill. We are a little suspicious of this.

We cannot prove who were in these T-33s, but I have talked to some of the airmen who fought against them. Their techniques were so different from the techniques of the B-26s that had Cuban crews that we have suspicions, but we cannot prove them, because we never fished anybody out of one of these planes. 152/

In fact, air operations personnel and the Brigade's pilots were well aware of the fact that the T-33s were armed with two .50 caliber machine guns; and the comparison of "techniques" between B-26s and T-33s is meaningless. By the time of his testimony to the Taylor Committee there was no question that Castro's planes were not being flown by East European or Soviet pilots.

The relative merits of Trinidad and Zapata also included a discussion of the feasibility of the invading forces going guerrilla. Dulles indicated that a number of the invaders might escape from the Zapata area, but the prospects for the guerrilla option would have been far better from Trinidad. This was contrary to the response which probably was hoped for by one of the committee members (Robert Kennedy most likely) who had asked if Dulles, like the President, believed that the disaster potential for the operation was low because if worse came to worst, the group could go into the hills and become guerrillas?\* With respect to the possibility of the

\* In this instance Dulles apparently had done his homework following his session with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 2 May 1961. At that time he had suggested that escape through the Zapata swamps was not an unreasonable prospect in any weather. 153/

sea evacuation should things go to hell on the beach, Dulles took a position which was identical to that which had been taken by Jake Esterline during the course of his testimony-- that it was only if you had complete control of the air that the evacuation of the brigade off the beach would have been feasible.

To the request that he address himself to the question of maintaining plausible deniability, Dulles was quite forthright in saying that in November of 1960 when the change in concept from the use of guerrilla tactics to standard military maneuver became the objective of the training program he should have informed President Eisenhower and the Special Group that the theory of plausible deniability was no longer realistic. This should have been reiterated, if necessary to President Kennedy. With the wisdom of hindsight, there is no question but had this been done the anti-Castro effort in the form which terminated at the Bay of Pigs never could have taken place.

Rather surprisingly Dulles made no apologies for the charges that CIA was "selling" the operation--a charge which had been made by the committee in several of the previous meetings. The DCI agreed that:

The proponents of an operation always try to sell it. It's part of human nature. They spend a lot time developing a plan, and they're enthusiastic about its possibilities. Yes, I think I was aware of their trying to sell the operation because

we've always had it. It's inherent in this type of operation. At the same time, I realize that the Agency had the final responsibility for the operation...I should have exercised more of my own judgment in pointing out clearly to the President certain of the features which have been brought out in these discussions. The President once did ask me directly whether he should go ahead on this. I said I'd give it further study. I wasn't ready to approve it then because of the difficulty we were having in obtaining naval cover. Later, this was worked out and I recommended that we go ahead; so I take full responsibility there.\*

For whatever reason, the DCI's performance as a witness before the CSG left much to be desired. He failed to support senior Agency personnel (including military assignees) who had

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\* In retrospect both Richard Bissell and Dick Drain placed much stronger emphasis on this aspect of the operation than Dulles did. Bissell said that in March 1961 when it reached the point where the force had to be committed or the project cancelled.

"Why didn't we of our own initiative at that point say, 'Look given the present strategic concept, the forces are not sufficient.' Why didn't we cancel?... The answer probably...essentially... certainly an important element of the answer is the obvious one--that we were psychologically and every other way committed to this question." 154/

Dick Drain in commenting on the Bay of Pigs operation wrote:

"The operation began to have a life of its own and that the intensity of the momentum itself became a major factor in our working positively to achieve the goal to the exclusion of objective examination of the likelihood [sic] of success. We were all finally so swept up in it all that we let the op run us rather than the other way around." 155/

done their best to conduct an operation in support of national policy despite a continuing series of restrictions which were such as to guarantee failure of the operation before it was launched.

The DCI also weasled in his testimony with regard to the question of whether General Cabell and Mr. Bissell had to go to the Secretary of State for decisions on operational matters and did not have direct access to President Kennedy. Dulles's response to a statement of this nature was:

Yes, that was our general view, that Mr. Rusk spoke for the President with regard to policy considerations which permitted or inhibited certain types of actions. Let me go back to the fact that on the 5412 Committee we looked to the State representatives to tell us whether this could or couldn't be done.

Question: Do you think that after D-Day CIA did not have direct access to the President?

Response: General Cabell and Mr. Bissell would say, yes, but their understanding of procedure was that the Secretary of State was acting on these things in the name of the President.

Mr. Kennedy: I just note that I was there during those few days and they were in continuous presence. Mr. Bissell was talking with the President practically continuously. All the decisions that were made, were made by the President. They weren't made by Dean Rusk.

Statement: Yes, but I gather that when D-Day started, there were a number of requests for relaxation of the ground rules, and that the senior CIA representatives felt they should go to State



and if they didn't get through there,  
they didn't go directly to the President.

Mr. Dulles: They went directly to the  
President at 4:30 in the morning [of  
D-Day], you remember?

Response: Yes, that one time.

Mr. Dulles: But after that, they  
certainly had very good access to the  
President. The President never cut off  
access at any time.

Question: Would you say then that the  
CIA leadership encountered no buffer in  
presenting operational requirements to  
the President?

Mr. Dulles: No never.

Dulles ended his testimony with another mea culpa for  
not having taken a more direct role in the project, although  
he indicated that he had no reluctance about imposing  
questions and requesting information from project personnel  
as these occurred to him. In the course of his excuses, the  
DCI suggested that the Agency had not had the best of advice  
from the Department of Defense; but Admiral Burke immediately  
challenged this by suggesting that the Defense people didn't  
have all the information that they should have had. Dulles  
bristled at this, and asked: "Why didn't they know, Arleigh?  
We didn't hold out anything. It may have been by ignorance  
we didn't tell them everything." Dulles suggested that if

the DOD representatives, General Gray and Captain Scapa, had questions it was his assumption that they would have asked.\*

One final note with reference to the DCI's testimony is that when he was questioned about his absence from the continental United States at the time the invasion was taking place, he admitted that this was "probably unwise." He went on to explain how he had planned for over a year to be in Puerto Rico to address the Young Executives group. He was the main attraction for the group and, "If I had dropped out at the last moment, unless I had gone to bed or a hospital, or feigned some illness, it would have been noted very clearly and would have been related to what was about to happen." Dulles said that he had told various and sundry people at the White House and the Agency that he

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\* The visits by the Joint Staff officers to training sites to evaluate the anti-Castro infantry and air force and the numbers of DOD personnel who might be permitted to attend certain CIA briefings were closely controlled. There is no question that it seemed that senior project officers involved in the anti-Castro effort did tend at times to hold DOD personnel at arms length. It should be kept in mind, however, that many of these restrictions also applied to other CIA personnel, even some affiliated with the project. For the most part restrictions on access to information were for the purpose of protecting the security of the operation rather than for any ulterior motives.

Mr. Dulles's sniping at the DOD was somewhat similar to the criticisms he had made during his briefing of the CIA Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on 27 April 1961. At that time the DCI indicated that the JCS representatives had reservations about the anti-Castro plan and he implied that any flaws in the military aspects of the operation should be blamed on the "military specialists" who were assigned to CIA as advisors.

was going to take off, and nobody told him to stay home and mind the store. Belaboring the obvious, he said that he didn't think there were going to be any changes made in the planned D-Day activity.

The point was, however, that Dulles "left Washington around Saturday afternoon" on 15 April 1961, well after the time that the D-2 air strike had taken place and Adlai Stevenson was in the United Nations telling the world--truthfully he thought--that the attack on the three air fields had been the work of internal defectors from the Cuban Air Force. It was predictable even before Dulles left this country that CIA was going to be charged with the responsibility of the air raid.\* Certainly if any one needed to be on hand during the course of the invasion, it was the DCI--the person in CIA who had the easiest access to, and highest credibility with, the President of the United States.

The Agency has long been remiss for its failure in this case to call a spade. Allen Dulles's absence during the launching of the Bay of Pigs operation was inexcusable. Moreover, that Dulles reportedly told Sherman Kent that he

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\* That Dulles was in Puerto Rico obviously was going to make no difference about the charges which would be made against him. At 1337 hours (Cuban time) on 17 April 1961, Havana radio was broadcasting that Dulles was directing the invasion from Puerto Rico. 156/

wished that he had known before the operation was launched how strong Kennedy's reservations about the plan were suggests that the DCI missed some obvious signals from the President in the delays, questions, and, most importantly, the decision that led to the switch from Trinidad to the Bahia de Cochinos well prior to the cancellation of the D-Day strike. 157/\*

In addition to the record of 21 meetings and one dated "Conversation," the package of material identified by NARS as Part II of the Taylor Committee Report also includes memorandums of two additional "Conversations," both undated. One of these conversations was with David A. Phillips, Chief, Propaganda Section for the anti-Castro project; and the other conversation was with Colonel Jack Hawkins who was in charge of planning the paramilitary effort. Why these two conversations were undated cannot be determined.

The undated record of the conversations held with David A. Phillips was made in response to a request, apparently from General Taylor, that Phillips's comment on two paragraphs which "we intended to include in our report on propaganda." There is no indication that any members of the CSG except General Taylor were in attendance during the meeting and, as usual Col. Tarwater kept the record.

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\* See footnote on following page.

\* In light of his comment to Kent, his greater concern about  
[redacted] than  
about the state of the invasion immediately upon his return  
from Puerto Rico, and his woeful performance both as a member  
and witness before the Taylor Committee suggest the onset  
of the mental deterioration reported in Leonard Mosley's  
volume on the Dulleses. 158/ Mosley makes reference  
to Dulles's plan to respond to the versions of the Bay  
of Pigs operation which had appeared, or were about to  
appear, in articles and books about the Kennedy Administration  
by Theodore Sorensen and Arthur M. Schlesinger. According  
to Mosley, Eleanor Dulles, Allen's sister, and Dulles's  
daughter, Joan, persuaded Mr. Dulles to withhold the article  
because

"Allen had already [June 1965] begun to lose  
command over his memory and ideas. If it were ever  
to be printed, it would not be a credit to him, be-  
cause it was from a man who had lost about thirty  
percent of his faculties."

The Allen Dulles Papers held by the Princeton University  
contain copies of three draft manuscripts of the proposed  
article written in 1965 and entitled "My Answer on the Bay  
of Pigs." The copies bear the following caveat:

NOTE REGARDING THIS FILE AND TO BE KEPT WITH IT  
(re article by Allen Welsh Dulles on the Bay of  
Pigs, and background material):

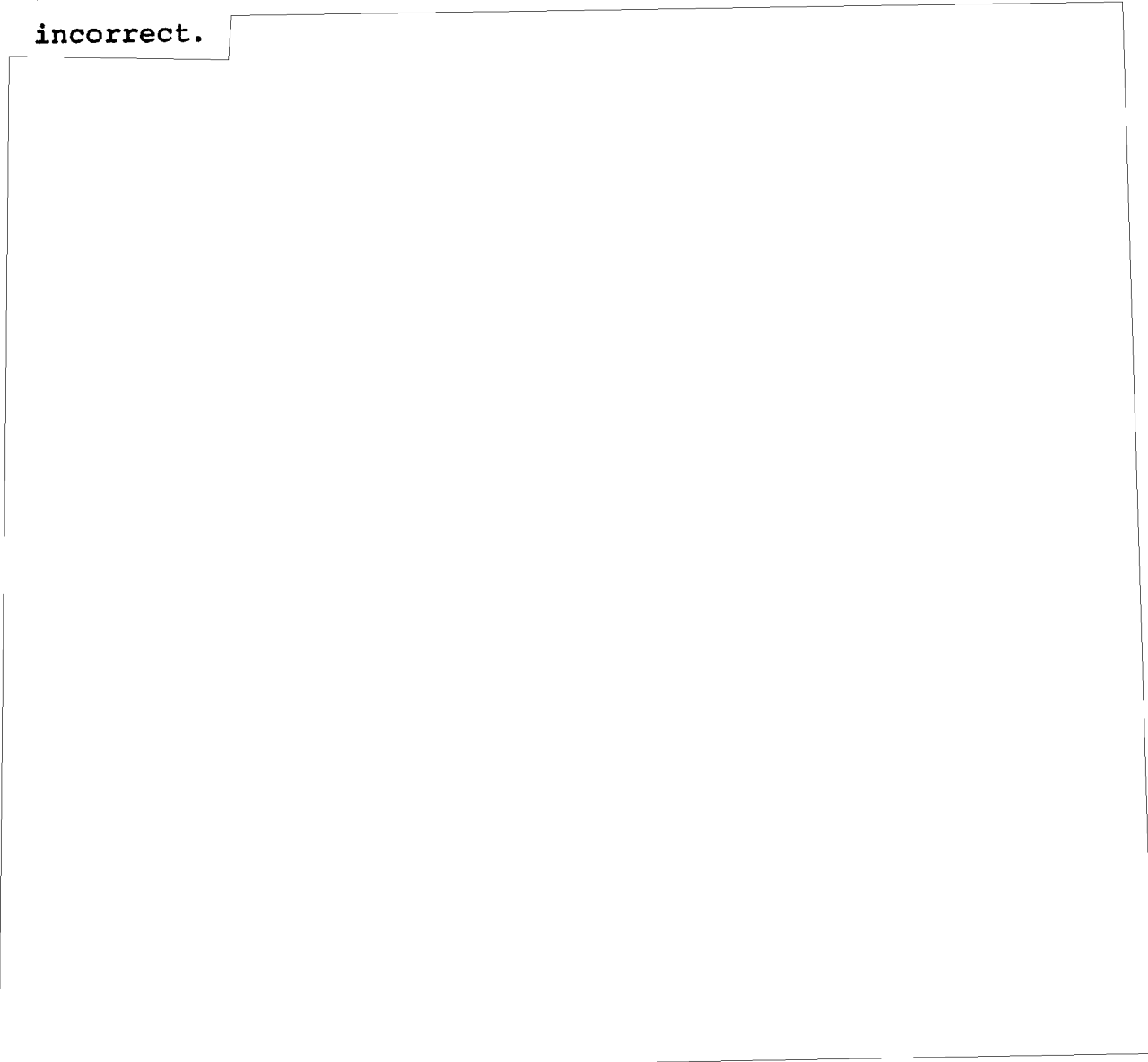
Mrs. Allen W. Dulles wishes to state that  
her husband decided not to publish this article,  
because there was so much more in his favor he  
could have said, if he had been at liberty to do  
so, that the material was inadequate.

Signed for Mrs. Dulles

F. Garner Ranney  
Archivist to Mr. Dulles

Review of the manuscripts confirms the wisdom of withholding  
publication. There is no question, however, that many of  
Mr. Dulles's criticism of both Sorensen and Schlesinger were  
well taken and much deserved, if for no other reason than as  
pointed out by Mr. Dulles, neither man was involved in the  
operational planning or was in on many of the confidential  
sessions with the President and others to which Dulles was a  
party. Sorensen, by his own admission, played no part in the  
Bay of Pigs activity, but this did not deter him from  
becoming an "authority." Schlesinger, however, came to be  
regarded as "the authority" on the Bay of Pigs with the  
publication of A Thousand Days. He subsequently would criticize  
both Dulles and Bissell for their failure to say anything to  
the Taylor Committee about the assassination plots against  
Castro. 159/ As noted in Volume 3 of this history, however,  
the assassination activity was separate and apart from the  
Bay of Pigs action; and Jake Esterline, Chief, WH/4, had  
no knowledge of the plot.

Phillips objected to the segments of the Taylor report in question claiming that the reports suggested that the propaganda effort was smaller and far more restrictive than what it truly was, and he also said that the intimation that the propaganda activities carried on by WH/4 were uncoordinated with other agencies of the US Government was incorrect.





While the conversation with Mr. Phillips appears to have been a one-on-one meeting between Phillips and General Taylor, the questions asked of Colonel Hawkins make clear that General Taylor, Robert Kennedy, and possibly Admiral Burke participated in the conversation. In addition, Colonel King, Chief of WH Division, also was present because he is identified as making at least one specific comment in the course of the conversation. No date is given for the session with Colonel Hawkins, but it is believed likely that it followed the third meeting of the Taylor Committee on 25 April.\*

Beginning with the first question, more than half of Hawkins's testimony focused on the question of whether the guerrilla option was a realistic possibility for the Brigade,

\* Col. Hawkins was a participant in the first three meetings of the CSG, but this "conversation" refers to a comment that Hawkins made "before lunch," thus eliminating this specific conversation as a part of the first meeting of the Taylor Committee because that meeting did not convene until the afternoon of 22 April 1961. The second session of the Taylor Committee ran from 1020 - 1700 hours on 24 April and had both a morning and an afternoon session. Considering the length of the meeting it seems unlikely that the "conversation" with Hawkins took place then. The third meeting of the Committee on 25 April is recorded only as a morning session, but it was at this meeting that Col. Hawkins read his Memorandum for the Record of 24 April 1961 on "Factors Which Hampered Preparations for and Conduct of Effective Paramilitary Operations, Cuba." The questions and discussions noted in the conversation appear to relate directly to Hawkins's memorandum, and for this reason it is assumed that the conversation took place on the afternoon of 25 April 1961.



particularly after the plan shifted from Trinidad to Zapata. Col. Hawkins went through the drill beginning with the  exercise when all recruits were to be trained for small team guerrilla type operations and ending with the training for conventional infantry type tactics necessitated by changing conditions inside Cuba. Hawkins also pointed out that recruiting had slowed down seriously in mid-November of 1960 as a result of the political games which the FRD leaders were playing. He noted that each one of the leaders of the FRD was trying to insure that his own particular supporters would be the ones recruited and sent into the training camps.

Another factor militating against guerrilla training for all of the recruits was related to the long drawn out negotiations with the Department of Defense over the acquisition of 38 Special Forces trainers who would be responsible for teaching infantry tactics to the enlarged brigade. These trainers did not arrive on the scene until January 1961, and they had to devote their full time and effort to teaching basic infantry tactics and the use and employment of the weapons which now were to be used by the brigade.

After setting the stage regarding the training program and the difficulties attendant thereto, Hawkins commented that in terms of the opportunities for going guerrilla: "We of the military staff realized that the Zapata swamp was isolated from the rest of Cuba, and if the force was unable to break out, they would not be able to take really effective guerrilla action." There then ensued an acrimonious discussion similar to what has already been reported with reference to the testimony of other witnesses who suggested that the Agency planners never had any expectation that an organized movement into guerrilla status could be effected out of the Zapata area.

Apparently Robert Kennedy was the one who jumped Hawkins immediately on this particular point stating: "The President and the Secretary of State would say they were amazed that these men were captured because they [the President and Mr. Rusk] felt they could get away by going guerrilla." Hawkins refused to back down, however, saying that he was sure "that on more than one occasion" Mr. Bissell had specified to both the President and to the Cabinet members that the Trinidad plan offered the opportunity for effecting a guerrilla movement whereas

Zapata did not. "This was made absolutely clear on a number of occasions," according to Hawkins; but the response to that, again probably from Robert Kennedy, was "I am sure of that, but he never said that they couldn't go guerrilla in Zapata, or even suggested that there was a minimal possibility as we are now inclined to believe."

When Hawkins stuck to his guns saying that the only thing that he ever heard Bissell say was that Trinidad offered the guerrilla option, his antagonist insisted that Bissell had made the same claims for Zapata; but again Hawkins denied that he had ever heard Bissell make such a statement. At this point Mr. Kennedy stated: "Mr. Bissell came to my office and that was the statement that he made to me, and he made it quite clear to the President. I think he recognizes this now." Hawkins again refused to budge, saying that even though he recognized the President's great concern about the possibility of getting the troops out of the Zapata area if necessary, the only point that the Agency planners had made was that, if necessary, a great many of the troops could be evacuated from Zapata by the shipping which had brought them in--presupposing control of the air.

But Hawkins was again badgered with the question, "I believe you confirmed what  told us, that the troops were indeed briefed that if the beachhead was penetrated

they would fall back on the beach for sea evacuation and if that didn't work, then they should go guerrilla?" Hawkins disagreed with that statement saying that he knew what he had told [ ] to brief the troops on, but, not being present for the briefing, did not know what exactly was said. Hawkins said his instructions to [ ] were that if Blue Beach was collapsing the troops should retreat north towards Red Beach which did provide the best access for escape and evasion and for guerrilla action. If the Red Beach area collapsed first, the troops were to move to join up with the forces at Blue Beach. Hawkins refused to make any comment about having instructed [ ] to tell the troops to go into guerrilla status.

The questioning of Col. Hawkins then focused on air operations, particularly on the question of whether the T-33s per se were planned as targets for the air strikes. Once again, however, there were sins of commission on the part of both witness and interrogators. Hawkins pointed out that the T-33s as such were not singled out as targets, but were included in the inventory of all Castro aircraft which were scheduled for destruction by air strikes. Unfortunately, however, he suggested that "the T-birds were more effective than we anticipated. I don't believe we thought they would be as dangerous to us as the B-26s." This opinion was contrary to the estimates the Agency's air operations personnel.

Similarly the comment made by one of the members of the committee that: "You [Hawkins] mentioned before lunch that you knew the T-33s were armed with .50 caliber machine guns; however, in the Air Annex of the field order they were listed as trainers. Would you say that the importance of getting these T-33s was appreciated?" The inference that because the T-33 had been listed as a trainer meant that it was unarmed was naive beyond belief. Air operations personnel had verified from Department of Defense records that the T-33 trainers the US sold to Cuba carried two .50 caliber guns, and there was no question in the pilots' minds that B-26s would be at the mercy of both T-33s and Sea Furies.

In response to the question of why no US fighters had been acquired by the brigade in order to combat the T-33s, Hawkins pointed out that the restriction on the use of US bases precluded the use of T-33s from the USAF inventory. Because of their limited range, the planes would have had to operate from US bases--thus blowing the plausible deniability facade. Despite contrary opinion from at least one unidentified member of the Taylor Committee, Hawkins insisted that considering Castro's limited inventory of combat aircraft, it would have been possible to eliminate 100 percent of that capability. Strangely, however, Hawkins made no specific reference to the fact that cancellation of the D-Day strike eliminated this possibility.

During both his "conversation" and in his other testimony Hawkins did not hesitate to let it be known when he disagreed with the committee, particularly with Robert Kennedy. When examined in the complete context of the exchanges that took place between Colonel Hawkins and the various members of the Taylor Committee it would appear reasonable speculation that his testimony had a negative impact on his career progress in the military--and it seems unlikely that Hawkins would have been unaware of this.

The review of Hawkins's conversation concludes the discussion of what has been identified as Part II of the Taylor Committee Report. The treatment of the evidence presented by the witnesses on such critical items as the switch from Trinidad to Zapata, the role of the JCS, the evaluation of the anti-Castro forces, the D-2 strike, cancellation of the D-Day strike, and ultimate responsibility for the failure at Playa Giron will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Taylor Committee Report

#### A. The Preliminary Report

As requested in his 22 April 1961 letter to General Taylor, the President was given a briefing by the General on the preliminary findings of the Committee on 16 May 1961. This meeting is important to an appreciation of the final report of the Taylor Committee for a number of reasons:

1. The close correspondence between the findings of this meeting and the final report of the CSG indicates that for all practical purposes the conclusions regarding the operation were firmly established by the CSG within a period of roughly three weeks from the time of their first meeting, despite the fact that it would be another month before a final report was forwarded to President Kennedy.

2. Although the findings specified in the 16 May 1961 meeting with the President were reached prior to the appearances of Admiral Burke, General Lemnitzer, Mr. Dulles, or Jake Esterline as witnesses before the Taylor Committee, there

is no evidence that their subsequent testimony had any detectable impact on the final report of the CSG--particularly regarding the strong views of Burke, Dulles, and Esterline that the political restrictions on the Brigade's air operations made the difference between victory and defeat.

3. For all practical purposes the preliminary findings on the causes for the failure of the operation and the preliminary conclusions reached by the CSG would be incorporated almost en toto in the final report. These portions of the final report were based on an 11 May 1961 "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion (Zapata)," presumably prepared by, or at the direction of, the Committee.\*

4. A draft memorandum on the 16 May 1961 meeting of the Taylor Committee with the President provides one of the few records of President Kennedy's personal thoughts about the Bay of Pigs operation. Because it was one of the two principal sessions between the President and the Committee it is cited in full:

\* See Appendix D for a copy of the 11 May 1961 "Study."



The Cuba [n] Study Group met at luncheon with the President to give orally an interim report on their conclusions to date. In the course of the conversation, the following points were developed:

There was no formal governmental review after March, 1960 of the necessity for a paramilitary operation to replace the Castro government. Although the President had many doubts with regard to such an operation, the pressure for an affirmative decision arising from the need to use the Cuban Brigade quickly or disband it was a strong factor in causing an affirmative decision. In the President's mind there was reasonable hope for a popular uprising following a successful landing as well as the possibility of setting up a free Cuban government in the beachhead after it had been firmly secured.

The President was always reassured by the assumption that the Cuban Brigade in an emergency could pass to a guerrilla status. There was a breakdown in communication someplace between the training base in Guatemala and the senior officials in Washington which occasioned the misunderstanding of the feasibility of exercising the guerrilla option.

It was clear to the President that the Trinidad Plan had military advantages over Zapata. However, the choice of the latter overcame many of the political objections raised against Trinidad.

With regard to the cancellation of the D-Day strikes, the President is inclined to think that a special NSC meeting should have been called to deal with this important matter. However, the CIA officials in charge of the operation did not speak to him directly with regard to the critical nature of the cancellation.

The President was aware of the serious shortage of ammunition in the beachhead at the end of D+1. However, he was never approached for authority to extend the Navy air cover over the ammunition convoy in its movement to Blue Beach.

In connection with Paragraph 14 of the Committee's paper "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion Zapata" dated 11 May 1961, the chart and paper entitled "A Mechanism for the Planning and Coordination of Cold War Strategy" were discussed. The President encouraged the group to develop this organizational concept in greater detail for inclusion in their final report. The latter is to be oral, supported by written memorandum. It was agreed that this final report and the supporting memorandum would not get beyond the President, but the possibility was left open of some sanitized document to set right the past misstatement of the press.

There was some discussion of the desirability of changing the name of CIA in order to reduce its visibility. Mr. Dulles undertook to study the matter and see if he could make a recommendation. 1/\*

## B. The Final Report

### 1. Letter of Transmittal

On 13 June 1961, General Taylor forwarded the final report of the Cuban Study Group to President Kennedy. Taylor's letter of transmittal referred to the oral briefing given to the President on 16 May 1961, identified the four memoranda which made up the final report, and indicated that the committee was prepared to give the President the oral briefing he had requested on the final report.

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\* Even though he was not listed as one of those in attendance at the 16 May 1961 meeting with the President--the memorandum listed only the four members of the CSG--the writer presumes it may have been written by J.C. King, Chief, WH/D and frequently a fifth presence at the meetings of the CSG.

The letter also stated:

In your letter of April 22 [1961], you invited me to submit an individual report subject to the review and comment of my associates. As we have found no difficulty in reaching a unanimous view on all essential points under consideration, we are submitting this view as a jointly agreed study. 2/\*

As will be noted, the above statement ignored that the most controversial question about the Bay of Pigs operation--how close the landing came to success--drew the only formal dissent recorded by the Committee. Both Admiral Burke and DCI Dulles objected to the position taken by General Taylor and Attorney General Kennedy that the project never could have succeeded.

2. The Four Memoranda

a. Memorandum No. 1

"Narrative of the Anti-Castro Cuban Operation Zapata" is a 36 page summary based on the testimony taken from more than 60 witnesses in a little over five weeks. There also were 32 Annexes which were specifically cited in support of Memorandum No. 1. These annexes represented a selection from among the many hundreds of pages of background information and documents which had been requested from CIA, DOD, and State by the committee during the course of the individual meetings and conversations with witnesses.

In the introduction to "Narrative of the Anti-Castro Operation Zapata," the committee outlined President Eisenhower's

\* For a complete copy of Taylor's 13 June 1961 memorandum see Appendix E.

17 March 1960 anti-Castro plan and indicated that its focus would be on the paramilitary portion of the plan to overthrow Castro's government. To that end, it pointed out how, during the Eisenhower administration, the 5412 Committee--commonly referred to as the Special Group--assumed the basic responsibility for details concerning the anti-Castro planning activity.\* It also noted the establishment within CIA's Western Hemisphere Division of the WH/4 Task Force headed by Jacob D. Esterline and the line of command that ran from Esterline directly to Richard Bissell, the Deputy Director for Plans, to General Charles P. Cabell, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, and finally to Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence. With reference to Mr. Dulles, the committee report stated "while accepting full responsibility for the operation, [Dulles] generally did not inject himself into military operational matters."<sup>3/</sup>

Although the reference to Dulles is borne out by the record, one important factor which was ignored by the committee, not only at this point, but also during the course of Dulles's appearance as a witness before the committee, was that Dulles did play a principal role in many of the high level briefings on

\* The Special Group consisted of the Deputy Under Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. It was referred to as the 5412 Committee because it was authorized under NSC 5412/2.

the paramilitary plan. Both Jake Esterline and Jack Hawkins emphasized that it was unfortunate that Dulles and other senior Agency officials did not defer more frequently to those who were closer and more knowledgeable about military plans when such briefings and meetings were called. Insofar as Esterline was concerned, rank in these instances had too many privileges. <sup>4/</sup>

Memorandum No. 1 noted that between March and early November 1960, the original concept of the paramilitary plan was to prepare a number of guerrilla units to infiltrate and promote dissidence among the Cubans; but by the fall of 1960, improvements in Castro's security forces indicated that it would require an amphibious operation with air support to oust Castro. It also was reported that President Kennedy had been first informed about plans for an anti-Castro effort following his election in November, 1960, but that it was only after he was sworn in that details of the plan were revealed to the Kennedy administration. On 22 January 1961, a briefing including Secretaries Rusk, McNamara, Robert Kennedy and Chairman of the JCS, General Lemnitzer, among others, spelled out in detail plans for pre-D-Day, D-Day, and post-D-Day air strikes which were to be an integral part of the CIA plan for the invasion of Cuba. A brigade of 750-800 men would lead

the invasion and establish a beachhead from which a provisional government might be established.\*

Memorandum No. 1 also noted the developing interest on the part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the anti-Castro plan:

JCSM-44-61...in which they [the JCS] recommended the institution of an interdepartmental group to consider various courses of action in ascending degree of US involvement, which, after approval by the President, would become an over-all plan [to oust Fidel Castro] to be supported by subordinate plans prepared by the agencies concerned. This recommendation reached the Secretary of Defense, but appears to have been lost in the activities arising out of the change in the administration. 5/

What the JCS had in mind had been carefully explained by General David Gray of the Joint Staff to C. Tracy Barnes, Mr. Bissell's principal deputy, shortly before the publication of JCSM-44-61. Rather than the Agency going it alone, Gray pointed out that the operation should be regarded as a series of increasingly strong actions and a commitment on the part of the US to insure Castro's removal. Included in such actions

\* There is some indication that as plans for briefing President-elect Kennedy were being made consideration had been given to establishing a joint CIA/DOD force of 1,500-3,000 Cubans to undertake the invasion. Unfortunately the three Agency principals thought most likely to be knowledgeable of this plan--DDP Bissell, project chief Esterline, and project operations officer Drain--were unable to recall the plan.

would have been support for an internal uprising; possibly a small invasion force to help promulgate such an uprising; and then the use of trained guerrilla forces and/or a voluntary army in conjunction with the US effort. At the time of the discussion with Tracy Barnes, General Gray indicated that having begun the training of the volunteer army:

The planning now needed should carry us from our [CIA] plans ends [sic] through the various phases in the scale, including the final step of overt US military action. He [Gray] stated that a paper [JCSM-44-61, 27 January 1961] is being prepared by Defense to explain this planning cycle...As of the present, he believes that probably the most likely action would be the use of our [CIA] element followed by substantially overt US support, presumably after the recognition of some provisional government. He said that his worry is that a decision might be made to land the FRD force without having first decided upon and prepared the supporting US effort. His position was that it would be too late to try to do this after the FRD force was on its way. I told him that all of us agreed thoroughly with him and we were all equally anxious to obtain firm plans and decisions that would permit the use of such force as the situation may require. 6/

On 28 January 1961, DCI Dulles gave a briefing on the Agency's anti-Castro plan to President Kennedy and various senior members of his administration including, among others, the Vice President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, the Chairman of the JCS, McGeorge Bundy, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America (Thomas Mann), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

(Paul Nitze), and Tracy Barnes. The President approved the continuation of CIA's "current activities" despite warnings from the State re-presentatives regarding the "grave political dangers" to US relations with other members of the Organization of American States. The DOD was authorized to review the paramilitary plan with CIA and "the results of this analysis will be promptly reported to the President." <sup>7/\*</sup> This reference to CIA-DOD cooperation probably was the result of the meeting between General Gray and Tracy Barnes on 18 January with reference to DOD's work on JCSM-44-61. It is most difficult to understand why the Taylor Committee cavalierly ignored Secretary McNamara's failure to have responded to JCSM-44-61. In retrospect it appears that the presidential interest in DOD-CIA cooperation provided a most opportune time for DOD to have pushed hard for a joint operation on the order of the proposals in JCSM-44-61; but this never happened. Moreover, the State Department's reluctance to risk the harsh words and bitter recriminations that might originate from Latin America could have been brought into better focus.

Memorandum No. 1 noted that in response to the President's request during the meeting of 28 January, the Joint Chiefs

\* Writer's emphasis. The Taylor Committee's reference to this briefing states that the results of the DOD review of the CIA plan "were to be promptly reported to the CIA." <sup>8/</sup> Inasmuch as it was to be a joint DOD-CIA review, the version in the text above would appear to be correct.



of Staff evaluation of the Agency's paramilitary plan (JCSM-57-61, "Military Evaluation of the CIA Paramilitary Plan-Cuba," 3 February 1961) had been submitted to the Secretary of Defense. The Taylor Committee indicated that the conclusions of this JCSM generally supported CIA's Trinidad plan; and even though noting some shortcomings the JCSM stated: "This plan has a fair chance of ultimate success and, even if it does not achieve immediately the full results desired, could contribute to the eventual overthrow of the Castro regime." <sup>9/</sup> The CSG's comments on JCSM-57-61 made no reference to any of the points which had been covered previously in JCSM-44-61, nor had any of the witnesses from DOD been questioned on the proposals of the earlier JCSM which had outlined both the need for the military to play a major role in the Agency's anti-Castro effort and the probability that overt military action by the US might be required to support the invasion.

Considering the importance which the CSG hearings had attached to both the choice of Zapata over Trinidad and to air operations, Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee largely ignored JCSM-57-61's treatment of both subjects.\* It also

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\* Of the invasion sites, the Joint Chiefs evaluation of the CIA paramilitary plan reported that: "Based on an independent analysis by the Joint Staff, the beachhead area [Trinidad] is considered to be the best area in Cuba for accomplishment of the Task Force Mission. 10/

would seem to have been appropriate--considering the committee's responsibility to inform the President about the reasons for the failure of the operation--to have indicated the dramatic revision between the CIA air plan which was evaluated in JCSM-57-61 and the air operations which were authorized from D-2 until the end of the action.

As evaluated by the JCS in February 1961, the air plan called for a D-1 air strike by 14 B-26s against the six airfields containing all of Castro's potential combat aircraft, against three microwave communication centers, naval units, and interdiction targets. Reattack by the same number of aircraft was planned for the afternoon of D-1, the morning of D-Day, and the afternoon of D-Day. Each aircraft headed for the airfield targets was to carry 2-750 lb. napalm bombs, 16-220 lb. fragmentation bombs, and 2,400 rounds of .50 caliber machine gun ammunition for the 8-gun nose. This was the maximum air effort of the original plan and, in addition, one of the aircraft intended for the strike against each of the six airfields would have an American pilot. <sup>11/</sup>

Neither the Taylor Committee members nor Agency personnel who testified before the committee contrasted the impact of the cutback in the air plan on the outcome of the operation--particularly the restrictions on the number of planes, the use of napalm, and the targets that were imposed from D-2 through D-Day. If the operation was judged to have only a

"fair" chance with full-scale air operations, it should have been obvious that anything less would lead (as it did) to defeat.

Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee also stated that the representative of the Joint Staff who visited the infantry and air training facilities in Guatemala reported that both the ground and air units were well trained and that the expectation of initial success was good. The CSG memorandum did emphasize, as had the report of the JCS evaluators, that failure to gain control of the air over Cuba would seriously jeopardize the whole operation and that survival of a single Castro combat aircraft armed with .50 caliber machine guns could sink all or most of the invasion vessels. As discussed earlier the probability of such sinkings was regarded as inconsequential by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and the President when they cancelled the D-Day air strike. <sup>12/</sup>

Memorandum No. 1 then reviewed the discussions which took place following CIA's 11 March 1961 presentation of the Trinidad plan and the President's request for a quieter, more deniable type of operation which resulted in the evolution of the Zapata plan. During the Taylor Committee hearings, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reported that they had informed the Secretary of Defense that none of the alternative plans, including Zapata, was "as feasible and likely to have accomplished the objective as the basic [Trinidad] paramilitary plan." Memorandum No. 1 reported that:

This preference for the Trinidad operation seems to have been overlooked in the subsequent consideration of the plan by some of the senior civilian officials including the Secretary of Defense to whom the views of the Chiefs were addressed. 13

As had been the case during the committee hearings nothing more was said about the breakdown of communications between the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In stating that the JCS preference for Trinidad "seems" to have been overlooked, the committee ignored, an act of carelessness, if not irresponsibility, which had a significant impact on the plan to overthrow Castro. With regard to the "extent" of the JCS approval of the Zapata plan, the implication of the CSG's memorandum was that because they subsequently participated actively in the discussions of the Zapata plan the Joint Chiefs were satisfied with it. That JCS approval was based on the assumption that there would be a major air strike on D-Day was ignored.

In its record of the evolution of the Bay of Pigs operation, the Taylor Committee also stated that because of the extended discussions of planned air operations-- particularly the Department of State's resistance to the "noisy" tactical air strikes that had been specified for the Trinidad plan, and which it was expected, at least by the Agency, also would be incorporated into the Zapata

plan--"a compromise was reached with regard to the air plan. Early in April, it was decided to stage limited air strikes on D-2 at the time of the diversionary landing of 160 men to be made in eastern Cuba." <sup>14/</sup> The suggestion that the D-2 air strike was evolved as a compromise in response to State's objection is a novel thesis, unsupported by the record. The question of softening, pre-D-Day air strikes had been under consideration as early as 8 December 1960, and was the subject of continuing interest from that date. Moreover, there was never any implication that the D-2 effort was intended to reduce the level of the D-Day attack.

Taylor Committee Memorandum No. 1, however, emphasised that the political advantages were the basic reason for the D-2 deception/defection operation; and reported: "Mr. Bissell of CIA also later stated at a meeting on April 6 that CIA would prefer to conduct an all-out air strike on the morning of D-Day rather than perform the D-2 defection strikes followed by limited strikes on D-Day." <sup>15/</sup> Bissell, of course, was never given the D-Day choice; and, in fact, Bissell--with Colonel Hawkins and Tracy Barnes--was one of the originators of the D-2 air strike for added insurance to guarantee the grounding of Castro's combat aircraft.\*

\* If Bissell were presented with this choice, his response was most logical. This is the only reference the writer has seen which suggests that the D-2 strike was intended to reduce the level of the planned D-Day strikes.

The committee's narrative of the operation then ran through the various planning meetings, including the several delays prior to the 12 April meeting with the President which outlined the latest version of the invasion plan. Among other items discussed at that meeting were: the D-2 air strike, the diversionary landing plan for Oriente Province on the night of D-2, the D-Day landing, and the subsequent air strikes on D-Day once the landing strip had been secured at Playa Giron so that the B-26s could touch down on Cuban soil.

President Kennedy continued to withhold final approval of the plan until the White House received a copy of the cable that Col. Jack Hawkins sent to Headquarters from Puerto Cabezas on 13 April 1961 expressing his full confidence in the readiness of both the anti-Castro infantry and Air Force. The President then gave the go-ahead for the D-2 diversionary operation by Nino Diaz's guerrilla group and for the D-2 air strike. It was not until about noon on 16 April (D-1) that Kennedy finally authorized the landing by the Brigade. In reporting on this progression, the Taylor Committee accepted that the senior officials responsible for approving the operation assumed that the guerrilla option was, at worst, available. None of the contrary opinions

which had been expressed during the course of the hearings, particularly by military witnesses, were indicated.

The memorandum then related the story of the conversations involving Secretary of State Rusk, Mr. Bundy, Mr. Bissell, General Cabell, and the President of the United States on the evening of D-1 (16 April 1961) when the President cancelled the D-Day air strikes. As with the records of the testimony of witness when the subject was discussed, the final report of the committee failed to indicate any concern about the rationale for this Presidential decision. The premise of deniability of US involvement if the B-26s could be said to be taking off from Cuban soil already had been blown with the D-2 attacks on Castro's airfields. The knowledge that the attacking B-26s were not part of Castro's Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria was not limited to the Cubans, but it had already been picked up by the media. <sup>16/</sup> The real issue was that without the planned D-Day air strike, the defeat of the invasion was inevitable.

In describing the action over the beach on D-Day-- where Castro's Sea Furies and T-33s had clearly established a no-win position for the brigade unless superior US aircraft were introduced for their support--the Taylor Committee report made the following interesting comment: "Impressed by the ease with which the T-33 aircraft could destroy the obsolete B-26 type aircraft, the CIA leaders decided to attempt, by a bombing

attack, to destroy the remaining Castro aircraft at night [on D-Day and D+1] on the ground." <sup>17/</sup> The suggestion that it took the shooting gallery over Playa Giron on D-Day to impress the CIA leadership with the necessity of eliminating the T-33s was absurd. Gar Teegen, Chief, Air Operations at Puerto Cabezas had requested authorization for a restrike on the airfields during the late afternoon of D-1; but Teegen request already had been received and rejected by Washington prior to the time that Kennedy made his arbitrary decision to cancel the D-Day strikes.\*

Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee Report then related the story of the action at Red and Blue beaches during the course of D-Day, D+1, and D+2. The thrust of the story was that the heaviest casualties inflicted on the Castro forces resulted from B-26 attacks on D-Day and D+1, and specific reference was made to the air action on the afternoon of D+1 which was led by American contract pilots. In reporting on the extent of the casualties caused by the B-26 attacks, the committee accepted the grossly exaggerated figures that had been presented during the initial CSG meeting.\*\*

\* The reader might recall that the original air plan called for all out air strike on both the morning and afternoon of D-2 and D-Day and subsequently as required.

\*\* Although President Kennedy initially cancelled all D-Day air strikes, he and Rusk finally agreed to permit the B-26s to fly ground support actions in the immediate area of Red and Blue Beaches on D-Day. Attack against any of the targets originally scheduled for D-Day was specifically prohibited.



The committee's memorandum also discussed the question of the ammunition supply and the requests which started on D-Day for resupply of ammunition for the beachhead, noting that the decision to cancel the plan to run supplies to the beach using the LCIs and LCUs was CIA's unilateral decision. Although no specific criticism was made of the Agency for failure to push the resupply effort by the ships, the implied criticism was apparent.

With reference to the air action on D+2 the Taylor Committee accepted the US Navy's version of the combat air patrol which had been authorized from 0630 - 0730R on the morning of D+2, putting the full blame for the loss of the American pilots on the Agency because of the early arrival of the B-26s. As mentioned earlier in this chapter and as spelled out in detail in the first volume of this history, this judgment left unanswered many critical questions regarding the performance of the US Navy. Even in the more detailed section which the committee devoted to the role of the US Navy during the course of the Bay of Pigs Operation, the failure of the combat air patrol was again passed over.

The portion of Memorandum No. 1 devoted to "The Exercise of Control in Washington" provides a glaring example of the attempt to protect President Kennedy's reputation. The report explained the establishment of the CIA command post in Quarters Eye, the around the clock presence of senior project personnel--

Jake Esterline, Colonel Hawkins, Colonel Germosen, and Captain Scapa--and the easy access that these operational personnel had to Mr. Bissell and DDCI Cabell should they need policy guidance. It then was noted that there was formal, continuous, and effective liaison maintained between CIA and DOD--including contact with CINCLANT--and that within the Department of Defense the Joint Staff effectively provided information to both the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff maintained liaison officers with General Gray of the Joint Staff and so they too were informed. The memorandum then stated:

The technical performance of the CIA communications net was reported to have been excellent. There was an impressive volume of traffic transmitted over it. Nevertheless, the President, the Secretary of State, and others had insufficient knowledge of the situation to react in time and to make the needed decisions. This inadequacy resulted from many factors: the loss of important signal equipment in the sinking of the Rio Escondido, the wetting of the portable radios carried ashore and the resulting failure of radio communications within the Brigade net ashore, the lack of information on the part of the Brigade commander himself, and, most importantly, the absence of an experienced American officer or Headquarters in the combat area with the responsibility to summarize and present the changing situation to the authorities in Washington.

As a result of these factors, the President and his advisors were generally in the dark about important matters as to the situation ashore and were uninformed of the flight of the cargo ships. To clarify the

situation, the US Navy was directed to fly a reconnaissance mission over the beach on the afternoon of D+1, reporting about 1900 that there was no evidence of fighting at Blue beach where the beachhead apparently had a depth of about 10 miles. This was the last indication of the situation ashore which the President received until the following morning when he received the message that the beachhead had collapsed and that men were fighting in the water." 18/

This portion of the Taylor Committee report raises more interesting questions. It is stated that the President, the Secretary of State, and "others" had insufficient knowledge of the situation to react; and at another point it says the President and his advisers were generally in the dark about important matters concerning the situation ashore. There would seem to be a contradiction between these statements and the previous comments in Memorandum No. 1 which indicated that there was extremely close liaison between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense. Inasmuch as one of the President's principal advisers was Secretary of Defense McNamara, it is difficult to understand how the President could have been uninforme. Similarly, on at least one occasion during the course of the Taylor Committee hearings, Robert Kennedy specified that during the invasion Mr. Bissell was in constant contact with the President. That either the

President or the Secretary of State could have been in ignorance of the course of events at Playa Giron is difficult to believe, let alone explain. Perhaps the Taylor Committee itself failed to raise the proper question with reference to the Navy recon over the beach on D+1 when there was no evidence of fighting in the Playa Giron area or, perhaps, the President upon being informed that there was no evidence of fighting should have asked what the hell was going on.

Finally with reference to Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee, mention must be made of the response to the speculation of how near the landing ever came to success.

The comment was:

Had the ammunition shortage been surmounted, which is to say, had the Castro air been neutralized, would the landing force have accomplished its mission? Considering their lack of experience, the Cubans ashore fought well and inflicted considerable losses on the Castro militia while they had ammunition. Contrary to the view held prior to the landing that with control of the air the CEF could have maintained themselves for sometime, with the rapid appearance of the vastly superior Castro forces on the scene, the ultimate success of such a small landing force became very unlikely. The limited number of B-26 crews, if forced to continue to operate from Nicaragua, would have been strained to provide continuous daylight air support to the beachhead. An attempt by the landing force to exercise the guerrilla option and take to the hills would have been virtually impossible because of the presence of the encircling Castro forces and of the instructions which the invasion units had received to fall back on the beaches in case of a penetration of the beachhead.

Under the conditions which developed we are inclined to believe that the beachhead could not have survived for long without substantial help from the Cuban population or without overt US assistance. Although under these conditions the guerrilla alternative did not exist, with control of the air the CEF might have been able to withdraw wholly or in part by the sea. 19/

It was this portion of Memorandum No. 1 which moved committee members Burke and Dulles to take the only exception recorded in the CSG report:

Admiral Burke and Mr. Dulles consider that there is insufficient evidence to support the conjectures in this paragraph. The well motivated, aggressive CEF fought extremely well without air cover and with a shortage of ammunition. They inflicted very severe losses on the less well trained Cuban militia. Consequently, it is reasonable to believe that if the CEF had ammunition and air cover, they could have held the beachhead for a much longer time, destroyed much of the enemy artillery and tanks on the roads before they reached the beachhead, prevented observation of the fire of artillery that might have been placed in position, and destroyed many more of the local militia en route to the area. A local success by the landing party, coupled with CEF aircraft overflying Cuba with visible control of the air, could well have caused a chain reaction of success throughout Cuba with resultant defection of some of the militia, increasing support from the populace, and eventual success of the operation. 20/

Even here, however, not enough stress was placed on the fact that restrictions on the use of Brigade aircraft guaranteed the operation's failure. Each of the above responses indicated acceptance of the testimony from the first and second meetings

of the committee regarding the effectiveness of the performance of the Brigade in opposition to the Castro militia. The tales told by the escapees from the beachhead who appeared before the Taylor Committee hinted, however, that perhaps there were more lovers than fighters among those who went ashore. In roughly 72 hours of contact with the enemy, the Brigade suffered fewer than 100 killed in action; and Castro's forces suffered fewer than 150 killed in action. If the ammunition expenditure was as great as estimated and if there were more heroes than cowards in the Brigade, it strains credibility to accept that the losses would have been so limited in view of the numerous reports of close contact--practically hand-to-hand combat in many instances--that ranged from Playa Larga down to Playa Giron.

The presumptions by Taylor and Kennedy that if the B-26s were forced to continue to operate from Nicaragua they would have been unable to provide continuous air support to the beachhead and that even if the Brigade air arm had controlled the air it would not have affected the outcome ignored completely that the plan supported by the President and Rusk required that the Brigade aircraft would operate off the strip at Playa Giron as well as from Nicaragua. Consequently the B-26s could have provided not only continuous daylight support, but might possibly have supported some night operations, thus limiting the effective forces that Castro could move into action.

b. Memorandum No. 2

"Immediate Causes of Failure of the Operation Zapata" is a four page, eleven paragraph segment which repeats almost in toto the causes of failure which were given in the 11 May 1961 "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion (Zapata)" and which was the basis for the 16 May "preliminary" briefing of President Kennedy on the findings of the Taylor Committee. The memorandum began by listing the "proximate" cause for the failure of the invasion as the shortage of ammunition which developed from D-Day forward. The reasons the CSG presented to explain this shortage were the lack of ammunition discipline, the loss of the Rio Escondido and the Houston which carried reserve supplies of ammunition and other materiel, and the flight of the Brigade vessels to the open sea in order to escape the attacks of Castro's aircraft.

Although excusable because relatively few Cubans from the invading force were available for interrogation and debriefing at the time that the Taylor Committee report was written, none of the "popular" volumes which have been written on the Bay of Pigs subsequent to the release of the prisoners in 1962 have challenged the "proximate" cause of the failure as anything other than the ammunition shortage. As suggested in a

preceding paragraph, cowardice on the part of the invading Brigade--especially as it became apparent that Castro retained control of the air--may have been more directly responsible for the surrender than any lack of ammunition.\*

Examination of the testimony presented during the course of the trial of the Brigade prisoners consistently indicated that their performance was less than admirable. Consider the following examples:

1. We entered playa Giron practically without firing a shot and found loaded artillery, artillery that had been loaded some time before, tanks in position, machine guns, rocket launchers, and huge amounts of rockets and munitions . . .

This means that they did not fight bravely and resolutely to the end as they could have done.

2. That cowardice was demonstrated later by the number of prisoners who are present today--a brigade of 1,400 men, where there are 1,200 prisoners. . . A brigade in which not one battalion leader has died in combat; a brigade whose battalion and company leaders are all here as prisoners . . .

3. President [i.e., the presiding judge] - Do you remember the state you found them in when they were captured?

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\*It is doubtful that there was a shortage of ammunition. Within a few months of the invasion, a Cuban publication, Playa Giron: Derrota del Imperialismo (Havana: Burgay y Cia, August 1961) ran photos of arms and ammunition which were reputedly captured from the invaders. Other Cuban publications of unidentified or later date also contain photos and comments which indicate a lack of spirited resistance: "Huge amounts of American army weapons and ammunition left behind by the cowardly mercenaries as they fled from the advance of the Revolutionary Forces. Had the invaders fought more courageously, they could have held that territory for a longer length of time." And, "When the Revolutionary forces advanced, the invaders abandoned 57mm. and 75mm. recoilless guns, rocket launchers, .50 caliber machine guns, 60mm., 81mm. and 4.2 inch mortars, Garand and Browning rifles, many of which were still unpacked. 21/



Witness - In a completely deplorable state.

President - Deplorable? In what way?

Witness - Deplorable for a combatant, deplorable behavior for men who came here with weapons in their hands.

President - Who are you referring to?

Witness - I am referring to all those who were captured here. We dedicated the 19th [of April 1961] to picking them up, not capturing them.

President - Did they turn themselves in?

Witness - They simply turned themselves in. You saw them and you picked them up, that's all there was to it.

4. There were some who confined themselves more or less to their defense, but there were others who, even at the time when only 70 or 100 members of the brigade were prisoners, spoke on television and gave data that the revolutionary [Castro] forces were able to use in effecting a speedier capture of their other buddies, whom they should have supposed were still fighting.

I was not dealing only with the prisoners who admitted defeat and recognized their guilt, but those--like Mr. Artime--who did not at that time hesitate to accuse others, including individuals in the counterrevolutionary underground here in Cuba. That is not the behavior of leaders. 22/\*

By the time nearly 1,200 Brigade members who had been imprisoned were returned to the United States in December 1962, all were heroes and none were cowards. Getting reliable information about the performance of the Brigade during the three days of the invasion proved almost impossible. Both the commercial publications on the Bay of Pigs that began even before the release of the prisoners from Cuba and the most

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\*Both Manuel Artime and Jose Perez San Roman, two of the leading figures in the anti-Castro brigade, signed confessions of treason and blamed the U.S. for having conned them into joining the attempt to overthrow Castro. 23/

recent volume of the operation have perpetuated the myth that all of the invaders fought furiously and heroically until overwhelmed by Castro's militia.\*

Possibly the most realistic evaluation of the performance of the Brigade was that made by Fidel Castro about the time that the Taylor Committee forwarded its final report to President Kennedy. Castro is reported to have said:

The invading forces fought very well as long as they thought they had air cover. After it failed, it was an easy matter to get them to surrender. 24/

In the same context regarding the Brigade's performance, the Cuban leader said that if the paratroops had been dropped further inland, if they had succeeded in controlling the roadways into Playa Giron and Playa Larga as planned, and if the battalion from the Houston had immediately joined their comrades in the fight at Playa Larga a provisional government probably could have been established. Castro conceded that "from a tactical point of view, in studying the terrain and choosing the appropriate place, the Pentagon strategists did very well." 25/

This is not to deny that there were truly brave men among the members of the invading force, but the percentage of heroes among the infantry brigade was far less than among

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\*For example, see Peter Wyden, Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979). Wyden presented much of his material as verbatim conversations that were taking place during the course of the action.

the anti-Castro flyers. By and large the bulk of the latter group had, as Gar Teegen so bluntly put it, "their asses on the line" any time they got into a B-26, C-46, or a C-54 headed for Cuba after D-2. There was a strong possibility that they would be met by a FAR T-33 or Sea Fury, yet Thorsrud said that only three fliers quit. Included among the group of heroes of the air operation were those US pilots, including the four who, with ten Cubans, gave their lives in the attempt to oust the Castro government.\*

By the way of explanation of the shortage of ammunition on the beach, Memorandum No. 2 noted the loss of the Rio Escondido and Houston to the FAR aircraft, stating: "The effectiveness of the Castro Air Force over the beach resulted from the failure to destroy the airplanes on the ground (particularly the T-33s whose importance was not fully appreciated in advance) before or concurrently with the landing." Again the committee ignored the fact that those most directly involved in planning the CIA air operation were aware of the T-33 threat and, that both senior CIA personnel and the JCS representatives involved in the operation fully understood the need for controlling the air over Cuba if the invasion plans were to succeed. There were no exceptions to

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\*The Americans were Riley Shamburger, Leo Baker, Thomas "Pete" Ray, and Wade Gray of the Alabama National Guard.  
Air/

this, and contrary to the wording of the committee report just cited, there was no opportunity provided for destroying Castro's aircraft on the ground "concurrently with the landing." A few sentences later the committee seems to have revised its opinion when it reported that the cancellation of the D-Day strike "was probably the most serious [of the restraints imposed to insure deniability] as it eliminated the last favorable opportunity to destroy the Castro Air Force on the ground." 26/ The committee's second memorandum offered as an explanation for the cancellation of the D-Day strike the on-going debate in the UN over Cuba and the Agency's failure to push Kennedy on the military consequences of the cancellation. It ignored the fact that ex-naval officer Kennedy was unconcerned about the loss of Brigade shipping and couldn't understand that denial of the D-Day strike posed a critical threat to the operation--though General Cabell called him at 0430 hours to request air cover from the Navy.

Memorandum No. 2 also suggested that the ammunition shortage at the beach was not fully understood because Headquarters could not keep up with what was happening in the combat area. The remedy for this, of course, would have been to have had "a command ship in the sea area with

an advance CIA command post on board." What this suggestion ignored was the presence of the US carrier task force in the immediate area with a CIA liaison officer aboard the flagship, and there were never any questions raised during the course of the committee hearings on the failure by either CIA or DOD to suggest that the flagship of the USN task force should have been made the C.I.C. either before, or immediately after, D-2. causes of failure, was one with which no one involved in the Bay of Pigs operation would disagree--the United States Government was not organizationally prepared to handle a paramilitary operation on this scale. It is correctly pointed out that there was no single authority short of the President who could have coordinated the actions of CIA, Defense, State, and the USIA.\*

\*For whatever reason, the committee did not follow up on the possibility that the failure of the D-2 diversionary landing planned for Oriente Province east of Guantanamo by Nino Diaz had contributed to the failure at Zapata. This speculation had been made in Memorandum No. 1, but was ignored as a contributing factor here. 27/ Considering that the committee suggested that the diversionary landing failed "because of weak leadership on the part of the Cuban officer," it was unfortunate that no investigation was made regarding the selection of Diaz.

In late January 1961, a report from the infantry training base in Guatemala indicated that Diaz was well known to all trainees as a blowhard agitator and troublemaker and he was not desired as brigade trainee. A former COB claimed that his protests to WH/4 that Diaz was a loser and incapable of leading the diversionary landing were ignored. Howard Hunt, whose perception of the caliber of the anti-Castro Cubans was quite good, had nothing favorable to say about Diaz; and his remarks implied his concern about the choice of Diaz. 28/

c. Memorandum No. 3

Of the eleven "Conclusions of the Cuban Study Group" reported in the three page memorandum prepared by the CSG, roughly half warranted general acceptance--especially after the fact. As with Memorandum No. 2, most of the conclusions were direct repeats of portions of the 11 May 1961 "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion (Zapata)." These conclusions, therefore, were reached by the committee within 19 days from its first meeting and were basically unchanged in the following five weeks prior to submission of their report to the President. Included among the conclusions were: 29/

1. By about November 1960, the impossibility of running Zapata as a covert operation under CIA should have been recognized and the situation reviewed. The subsequent decision might then have been made to limit the efforts to attain covertness to the degree and nature of US participation, and to assign responsibility for the amphibious operation to the Department of Defense. In this case, the CIA would have assisted in concealing the participation of Defense. Failing such a reorientation, the project should have been abandoned.

One other element which was introduced during the course of the committee hearings which might have been added as an alternative to cancellation, of course, was for the U.S. to mount an overt military effort against Castro.

2. Once the need for the operation was established, its success should have been the primary consideration of all agencies in the government. Operational restrictions designed to protect its covert character should have been

accepted only if they did not impair the chance of success. As it was, the leaders of the operation were obliged to fit their plan inside changing ground rules laid down for non-military considerations, which often had serious operational disadvantages.

On the few occasions when this subject was broached during the hearings, it was dismissed without discussion or disputed by the Attorney General. DCI Dulles declined to become involved in the dispute.

3. The leaders of the operation did not always present their case with sufficient force and clarity to the senior officials of the government to allow the latter to appreciate the consequences of some of their decisions. This remark applies in particular to the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the D-Day strike.

The "leaders of the operation" against whom this particular charge was directed were General Cabell and Mr. Bissell. Based on review of both the testimony at the hearings and of Memorandum No. 1, this conclusion appears to have had the purely political motive of protecting President Kennedy--and automatically Secretary Rusk--from any direct responsibility for the failure of the operation. In a memorandum he wrote prior to completion of the Taylor Committee Report (but after he had seen "a preliminary draft of the conclusions"), Bissell may have had the above conclusion in mind. He wrote that decisions on the military operation had been made by qualified military professionals who

"suffered relatively few frustrations through either inability to obtain decisions or through receiving unwelcome decisions on matters that were within my authority and that of the DCI to determine [and]...and they suffered relatively little interference from within the Agency." 30/ Certainly the last minute cancellation of the D-Day strike was clearly a case where professional military judgment was negated by political expediency. As noted in their testimony, the JCS were completely ignored when this decision was made.

4. The planning and conduct of the operation would have been improved if there had been an initial statement of governmental policy, assigning the mission and setting the guidelines within which it was to develop. Thereafter, there was a need for formalized procedure for interdepartmental coordination and follow-up with adequate record keeping of decisions.

This was made quite apparent during the course of the hearings held by the Cuban Study Group, and had such decision been made early in the game, some of the difficulties which were apparent in the relationship between the Agency and the Department of Defense, particularly in the period shortly prior to the change of administration on 20 January 1961, might have been avoided--much to the benefit of the overall operation.

5. We are of the opinion that the preparations and execution of paramilitary operations such as the Zapata are a form of Cold War action in which the country must be prepared to engage...Such operations should be planned and executed by governmental mechanisms capable of bringing into play, in addition to



military and covert techniques, all other forces, political, economic, ideological, and intelligence, which can contribute to its success. No such mechanism presently exists but should be created to plan, coordinate, and further a national Cold War strategy capable of including paramilitary operations.

Although Cold War issues fell within the general charter President Kennedy gave to General Taylor, they were treated only marginally. Suggestions such as this were supported without objection by the Director of Central Intelligence at various points during the course of the hearings.

6. Among the other stated conclusions of the Taylor Committee Report, each of the following raised some specific questions as to their validity or completeness: 31/

a. "There was a marginal character to the operation which increased with each additional limitation and cast a serious doubt over its ultimate success." One of the points used in support of this conclusion was that the 36 mile beachhead at Zapata stretched the Brigade forces too thin. It might be recalled that this point had been made by the JCS in its evaluation of the Zapata plan, but in the hearing, the committee passed over it in cavalier fashion; and little protest was heard about the

loss of the shock value which would have attended the initial operation as planned for Trinidad. The shock value being intended, of course, to encourage dissident Cubans to rally round the invading forces.\*

b. The discussion with reference to the marginal character of the operation also emphasized that there was a shortage of B-26 pilots "if the beach was to require cover for a long period." The committee again ignored the fact that before the cancellation of the D-Day strike the Zapata plan specifically called for operational use of the Playa Giron airstrip by some of the anti-Castro B-26s. Moreover, it was not expected that there would be any opposition from FAR.

c. It also was the committee's opinion that the effect of demobilizing (rather than using) the Cuban Brigade would have posed a political problem which had both national and international ramifications--internationally in terms of loss of face among the anti-Castro Latin American nations and nationally because of its impact on the Democratic party. The latter concern probably had more to do with the President's "go" decision than the former--

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\*The actual beachhead was about 20 miles long from Blue beach to Red beach. No landing was made at Green beach which was 18 miles SE of Blue beach.

Dean Rusk notwithstanding. Arthur Schlesinger noted that when Kennedy believed that the cost of failure was reduced to an acceptable level, he said: "If we have to get rid of the 800 men, it is much better to dump them in Cuba than in the United States, especially if that is where they want to go." 32/

d. On the point that the Cuban Expeditionary Force had achieved tactical surprise in its landing, the CSG was correct, but it reiterated the doubtful proposition discussed earlier in this paper that the Brigade "fought well and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy." Another part of this same conclusion was that because of the short life of the invasion "Castro's repressive measures following the landing made coordinated uprising of the populace impossible," and there could be little argument about this. Actually, however, Castro's repressive measures were instituted almost immediately following the D-2 air strike which he properly assessed as a precursor to larger scale military activities.

e. The CSG also concluded that the President and his senior advisers had been confused about the guerrilla option being available to the Brigade if the situation at the beachhead should become too difficult. Robert Kennedy, of course, had been

the most vociferous in his assertions that the President had been led down the primrose path on this matter. Where the committee failed in this instance was in not suggesting that all parties-- the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense--were remiss for not having made specific studies of developments which had taken place in the Zapata area since Castro's take over. This point had been ignored during the course of the hearings, but had such studies been undertaken they would have revealed the great interest which Castro had taken in developing the area--and consequently winning strong support from the area's inhabitants.\* Moreover they also chose to ignore testimony which stressed that the guerrilla option was realistic only in terms of the Trinidad plan where refuge in the Escambrays was possible.

If the CSG had done its homework it also could have pointed out that even cursory examination of a map of Cuba should have made it clear to the poorest military planner--and White House "experts"-- that to exercise the guerrilla option to get from Zapata to the Escambray through a hostile countryside was unrealistic. To

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\*Castro made a point of this in his 23 April 1961 TV special on the Bay of Pigs.

accomplish such a feat from the beachhead implied a breakthrough and a journey of 50 - 70 miles through hostile country to reach the foothills of the Escambray area. The final sentence of this conclusion stated: "As we have indicated before, the guerrilla alternative as it had been described was not in fact available to this force in the situation which developed."

A more accurate statement would have been: "The guerrilla alternative from the Zapata area was not in fact available to this force." According to Jake Esterline, this reality was clearly recognized by the Cuban Brigade leaders;

It must be stated that little interest or enthusiasm was displayed by the Brigade personnel concerned for any aspect of the plan that involved retreat and defeat, to include this contingency for guerrilla operations plan. It was generally recognized and openly stated by the key officers that any military force involved in an airborne/amphibious landing and subsequent field operations against an enemy defending his homeland would have an extremely difficult time assuming a guerrilla role in any substantive [sic] force subsequent to defeat in the field. The defeat itself implied that the enemy in close combat had surrounded or ruptured and destroyed the Brigade as a military force, thus allowing only a fraction of its combat effectives to escape to assume role as escapees and evaders with a limited potential for later guerrilla operations. 33/\*

f. The opening statement of a conclusion beginning: "The operation suffered from being run

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\*The question is, of course, why the committee did not recognize this. Perhaps in their hurry to meet the President's deadline, they didn't take time to read a memorandum dated 31 May 1961.

from the distance of Washington..." was undisputable. The questionable portion of the conclusion was whether there was a clear understanding in the Washington headquarters of the Agency and in the operations center in the Pentagon of the state of affairs at the beachhead. Memorandum No. 3 of the Taylor committee stated "This [lack of understanding about the state of affairs at the beachhead] was particularly the case on the night of D+1 when an appreciation of the ammunition situation would have resulted in an appeal for US air cover in an all-out effort to supply the beach by all available means." This suggests greater responsiveness and willingness to risk loss of deniability by the Kennedy administration than had been evidenced at any time earlier. In fact, the President's reluctance to grant more than one hour for the Navy CAP on the morning of D+2 would not seem to warrant a judgment that the President would have loosened the reins in favor of overt US support for the Brigade.

7. Another conclusion took up the issue of the JCS's support of the Zapata plan, and mentioned that the JCS position in favor of Trinidad over Zapata--even though

they supported Zapata as the best alternative plan, "apparently never reached the senior civilian officials." But here again the committee blatantly ignored the real issue in not faulting the single "senior civilian official"-- Secretary McNamara--who ignored, lost, or misplaced two critically important JCS papers. Nor did they criticize either the JCS for failing to follow through with the Secretary of Defense concerning the official DOD position re Trinidad and Zapata or senior CIA officials--particularly Allen Dulles--for not pursuing the matter of JCS support for Trinidad with Mr. McNamara or with President Kennedy. In short, the Taylor Committee failed to place blame where it really belonged--on a principal member of the President's cabinet.

8. One of the most positive conclusions recorded by the Taylor Committee stated: "Although the intelligence was not perfect, particularly as to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the T-33s, we do not feel that any failure of intelligence contributed significantly to the defeat." This conclusion poses serious semantic problems. It would have been impossible for intelligence to evaluate the "effectiveness" of the T-33s prior to the invasion. What could be evaluated was the "capability" of the T-33s.

Both the US and Cuban pilots who were preparing for the anti-Castro effort were thoroughly familiar with the capabilities of the T-33s; and, in addition, the Cuban pilots were also familiar with their compatriots who had remained loyal to Castro. More precisely put, there was no failure of intelligence which contributed to the defeat. The failure was on the part of the President and Secretary of State who refused to permit the fullest exploitation of the anti-Castro Air Force in order to eliminate the capability of Castro's Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria to get off the ground.

d. Memorandum No. 4

The final eleven page memorandum of the Taylor Committee, "Recommendations of the Cuban Study Group," contained six recommendations, four of which dealt with the broad aspect of preparations that the United States should make for meeting Cold War threats and included:

1. A mechanism for the planning and coordination of Cold War strategy; to be known as the Strategic Resources Group (SRG);
2. Establishing responsibility for paramilitary operations;
3. Improving effectiveness in the paramilitary field; and



4. Defining relations of the JCS to the President in Cold War operations.

As Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Dulles noted that Recommendations 1-4 were "not within my range of competence." Dulles did suggest, however, that if General Taylor and others were to undertake revision of NSC 5412--which the DCI strongly recommended--that he would willingly participate in that review. 34/\*

The fifth recommendation was without title and stated:

It is our feeling that every effort should be made to draw all lessons from the Cuban operation, particularly those which point up the errors made and the reasons therefor. For this purpose all the principal participants in the decision making process should be informed of what took place so that the operation can be viewed objectively in its totality. Because of the tight security which surrounded the operation in governmental circles, probably no one official now knows all the important facts concerning it. We believe that the Cuban Study Group should give an oral presentation to the participants of the highlights of their study. 36/

The next paragraph suggested the need for the President to emphasize to his principal advisers the need for a change in attitude on the part of the government and in the people of the United States toward the "life and death struggle which we may be losing, and will lose unless we change our ways and marshal our resources with an intensity associated in the

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\*The Agency had made detailed proposals for the CSG's consideration in formulating recommendations on paramilitary activities. 35/

past only with times of war." Among the suggested changes were the declaration of a limited national emergency, review of treaties and agreements which would restrain the full use of US resources in Cold War, and the allocation of foreign aid based on the attitude foreign nations showed toward the United States. Two other sections of recommendation Number 5 related to the establishment of governmental machinery to handle cold war problems and to the need for "a critique of the Cuban operation accompanied by a statement of the views of the President, [to] be held with at least the following present: The Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and General Taylor." 37/

The sixth recommendation of the CSG emphasized that as a result of its work, the members of the committee had become convinced that Fidel Castro's leadership of Cuba "constitutes a real menace capable of eventually overthrowing the elected governments in any one or more of weak Latin American republics." It said that hoping that Castro would just go away was unlikely, and that his ouster would require direct, overt US action with any support it could get from Latin America. The committee did caution that any action against Castro would have to be

weighed against events in other parts of the world where US interests were involved. It concluded by stating: "It is recommended that the Cuban situation be reappraised in the light of all presently known factors and new guidance be provided for political, military, economic, and propaganda action against Castro." 38/

In effect, what the CSG recommendations on Cuba amounted to was approval and restatement of the anti-Castro program which had been authorized by President Eisenhower in March 1960. Except for two political decisions by the Kennedy Administration--the switch from Trinidad to Zapata and cancellation of the D-Day strike--the Castro "problem" might have been fully resolved in April 1961 instead of being left on square one.

## CHAPTER 5

### General Taylor's Retrospective Views

I am afraid that I could not be of real assistance to you in providing qualified answers. While I worked very intensively on the broad aspects of this affair in 1961, I have forgotten many of the details which were available to our committee. I would only say that I felt at the time that the committee had access to all the facts necessary to allow us to form a qualified judgement [sic] as to the major causes of the failure of this undertaking.

Albert C. Persons, Bay of Pigs (Birmingham, AL: Kingston Press, 1968), p. 77.

However poor his memory may have been in response to questions posed by Mr. Persons, one of the US pilots who had been directly involved in air transport operations related to the Bay of Pigs, General Taylor's recall had improved greatly by 1972. In his book, Swords and Plowshares, the general repeated practically all of the findings of the four Taylor Committee memoranda; and he showed little or no evidence of any second thoughts in the interval since the committee had done its work. If anything, his views on the correctness of the findings seem to have hardened. This was particularly true of the emphasis which he placed on the inadequacy of the planning for air operations and on the evaluation of the chances for success of the operation.

Because of the relationship of air operations to the success of the project, it is disturbing to note the manner in which Taylor viewed the issue:

The evidence left no doubt about the inadequacy of the air support of the beachhead and the disastrous consequences to the ammunition supply. Failure to control the air was a result of the inadequacy in numbers and quality of the B-26s and the lack of sufficient Cuban pilots to keep the planes over the beachhead. Furthermore, this tiny air force was not allowed to use its full strength against the Castro airfields in the surprise attack on April 15, and had no fighters capable of dealing with Castro's planes, particularly the three T-33 jet trainers. Finally, as mentioned previously, on the evening of April 16, President Kennedy canceled the dawn strike scheduled to precede the landing of the Brigade. 1/

As specified in an earlier volume of this history there was an adequate number of pilots and an excellent fleet of B-26s available to the Brigade. The inability of this force to support the beachhead traced directly to the failure of the President and his White House advisers to: 1) sanction a major air strike on D-2--only eight aircraft were employed; 2) permit a requested restrike on D-1 following the strike on D-2 when it was known that not all of the T-33s and Sea Furies had been hit; and 3) permit the all-out air strike which had been planned for D-Day. Once Castro got his T-33s and Sea Furies into the air, there was no way that the Brigade B-26s--even with more B-26s and more Cuban pilots--could control the air. As both Admiral Burke and Mr. Dulles pointed out

during the Taylor Committee meetings, continued operations by the Brigade B-26s throughout Cuban air space, including operations off of the Zapata airstrip, might well have stimulated internal dissidence and permitted the establishment as planned of a provisional, anti-Castro government. In his book Taylor was putting the cart before the horse.

Taylor also discussed the reaction to the report which he forwarded to President Kennedy on 13 June 1961. He wrote:

After discussing our recommendations with his senior advisers, the President eventually approved all except the one relating to the establishment of the Strategic Resources Group. Dean Rusk was less than enthusiastic about an interdepartmental committee reporting to the President with a potentially important role in foreign affairs which might impinge on the traditional responsibilities of the Department of State. As a result, the concept of the SRG was progressively modified in discussion and finally in January [1962] took the form of the Special Group Counterinsurgency...

The after-action critique which we had urged took place in the President's sitting room in the White House with an attendance which included the President, Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, McGeorge Bundy, Senior CIA officials, and the members of the Cuba Study Group. I made the presentation for the Group, outlining the entire Bay of Pigs operation as we had reconstructed it, the mistakes as we saw them, our conclusions and recommendations. Since up to that moment no one present, except the President, had had the entire operation laid out before him, the audience followed the presentation with intense interest. At the end, there was animated discussion but with no indication of resentment or ill feeling among the officials whose conduct was under review. When it was over and the visitors had filed out, the President turned to me with a wry grin and said, "Well, at least nobody got mad"...

Our critique...set some kind of record as a conscious effort on the part of an administration to derive the lessons from an important episode in time to apply them to the problems of the future. To be complete, however, we might profitably have reviewed the alternatives open to the President in the spring of 1961 and tried to decide what would have been the best course of action to have undertaken then. 2/

The alternatives that Taylor suggested were available at the time were: 1) cancellation of the operation and disbanding the Brigade; 2) infiltrating groups of the Brigade for sabotage and intelligence gathering; 3) using the Brigade as an invading force without direct US participation, but avoiding the errors that had occurred at the Bay of Pigs; and 4) landing the Brigade with the clear intention of supporting it with whatever US military power was necessary to its objective--the ouster of Fidel Castro. After reviewing the pros and cons of those four alternatives, Taylor concluded: "Such an analysis appears to me to tilt the scales in favor of alternative one, cancellation." 3/

In a newspaper article which he prepared following the failure of the 1980 attempt to rescue the US hostages held by Iran, General Taylor made further references to the CSG review of the Bay of Pigs operation.\* Some of the remarks which he made in May 1980 did not necessarily jibe with what he had written in 1972. The newspaper article suggested, for example,

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\* Washington Post, 12 May 80, Analogies (II): "Was Desert I another Bay of Pigs?"

that CIA as the Agency responsible for the conduct of the Bay of Pigs operation had used "an improvised command and communication system that invited the trouble that promptly arose in exercising control." 4/ At no point during the course of the operation was the Agency or its representatives unable to exercise control over the Cubans who were in training or in combat; and this issue was not subject to serious discussion by the Taylor Committee.

At another point in the newspaper article, Taylor said:

In discussions after the fact with President Kennedy's principal advisers, I was struck by the fuzziness of their concept of what the Cuban expedition was supposed to accomplish. All agreed that the initial purpose was to establish a beachhead in the Bay of Pigs, but then what?...There was never a clear plan as to how to proceed. 5/

Taylor may have gotten this impression from Kennedy's advisers--as distinct from the CIA principals--but if so this did not come through loud and clear in the course of the Taylor Committee investigation; nor did Taylor suggest any such fuzziness regarding the over-all objective of the Bay of Pigs operation in his book, Swords and Ploughshares. He was clear that the intent of the Bay of Pigs operation was the ouster of Fidel Castro and the installation of a provisional government--preferably one which was anti-communist and pro-US.

Taylor's article then reiterated the points made in the conclusions to the Taylor Committee report: That Kennedy and some of his advisers understood: "The Brigade would exercise



the so-called 'guerrilla options,' i.e., a break-out to the nearby swamps and hills in guerrilla bands to join the anti-Castro dissidents believed to be in the region." 6/ As suggested earlier, at best this seems to have been wishful thinking on the part of Kennedy and his advisers. Certainly the hills in which the guerrillas were operating were anything but "nearby" Zapata.

General Taylor appears to have exercised selective recall when he made the following statement about the role of the JCS: "The role of the JCS was that of advisers on the sidelines, offering comments from time to time on selected aspects of the operation but never formulating an integrated evaluation of the overall merit of the plan and its probability of success." 7/ As the Taylor Committee reported, there was no integrated evaluation of the operational plan prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff; but it also was pointed out by the individual Chiefs of Staff during the course of their appearances as witnesses before the Taylor Committee that each of them believed that the planned operation was capable of achieving its objectives. What was completely overlooked was that the JCS's own anti-Castro plan supported CIA's and that DOD representatives who evaluated the Zapata plan, found it feasible but less desirable than the Trinidad plan.

In response to the specific question that was asked of the JCS members during the course of the hearings regarding the probabilities of success of the BOP operation, each of the Chiefs answered that if he had not believed that the objectives were attainable, he would have said so. What the Chiefs did point out during the course of the hearing was that this belief was based on the assumption that there would be a heavy D-Day air strike as had been outlined in the last operational plan that each of them had seen or been briefed on. The President's cancellation of the D-Day strike late on D-1 was specifically noted during the course of the testimony of the Joint Chiefs as a factor which would have changed their minds. This point was not stressed in either Taylor's book or his newspaper article.

In attempting to draw analogies between the Desert I plan for the rescue of the US hostages in Iran and the Bay of Pigs operation, Taylor's newspaper article stated that although there was a fail-safe plan to reduce the risks of the Iranian operation, there was no fail-safe plan for the Bay of Pigs. In fact:

Although President Kennedy had always been uneasy about the whole business and had set back the date of the landing twice, he never sought to turn back the Brigade once it was headed toward Cuban soil. As a matter of fact, because of the precarious state of communications, I am not sure that a cancellation would have been possible. 8/

Communications between the Headquarters area and the vessels carrying the anti-Castro Brigade toward Playa Giron were never in doubt at the time when the question of possible recall came up--on the evening of D-1 following the President's cancellation of the D-Day strike. There was no question but that the recall message could have been received. The only question was whether the Cubans might refuse to obey such an order and attempt to go it alone--infeasible as that would have been. As noted earlier, there were rumors that the Brigade had been encouraged to take such steps, perhaps even by one of their principal American advisers. Such communications problems as did develop occurred only on D-Day following the sinking of the Rio Escondido by Castro's aircraft. At no point, however, was communication completely cut off from those on the beach.

Finally in his retrospective newspaper article, General Taylor suggested: "One would hope that at a proper time President Carter would conduct a post-mortem review of the rescue mission as President Kennedy did of the Bay of Pigs." The value of doing post-mortems of operations is an established fact, but one might question the wisdom of undertaking such an analysis on a crash basis before the final results are really known. That the Taylor Committee began its hearings even as rescue operations were still underway in the Bahia de Cochinos and for practical purposes had reached its conclusions-- faulting the Agency principally and JCS secondarily--

even prior to the testimony of such principals as Mr. Dulles, Admiral Burke, General Lemnitzer, and Jake Esterline illustrates that the investigation had political as well as fact finding objectives. An impartial observer might question which took precedence with Taylor.

## CHAPTER 6

### Assessment of the Taylor Committee Investigation

In his 22 April 1961 request asking General Maxwell Taylor to undertake an unbiased examination of US "military and paramilitary, guerrilla and anti-guerrilla activity which fall short of outright war," President John F. Kennedy also asked that Taylor "give special attention to the lessons which can be learned from recent events in Cuba." Although the "Recommendations" of the committee did present a broad spectrum of strategies for the Cold War--with only minor reference to the Bay of Pigs--the principal focus of the Taylor Committee investigation was that operation.

Despite General Taylor's opinion that the group selected by the President--himself, DCI Allen Dulles, CNO Arleigh Burke, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy--would protect the interests of the CIA, the military, and the White House, it was apparent from the first meeting of the committee that Robert Kennedy and Taylor would set the tone for the investigation and that, whatever else, President Kennedy's image would remain untarnished. The President's quick acknowledgment of responsibility for the operation would be regarded as a chivalrous gesture to protect his subordinates, but neither the Agency nor the JCS were

effectively defended by Dulles or Burke--even though they jointly registered the only official dissent in the course of the committee's investigation.\* Had the President been more concerned with a thorough investigation than with his image, he would have waited at least until all the troops had been returned from the invasion area or otherwise been accounted for; he would have eliminated Dulles, Burke, and his brother from consideration as members of the committee; and he would have selected a group of "statesmen" with reputations similar to Taylor's for the committee.

There is no question that the report of the Cuban Study Group suffered from the haste with which it was prepared. For all practical purposes, the Committee had completed its report by 11 May 1961--less than three weeks from the initiation of the project, four days in advance of the date on which the President had requested a preliminary report, and prior to the appearance of Admiral Burke, General Lemnitzer, DCI Dulles, and Jake Esterline as witnesses. Moreover, the CSG failed to call a number of witnesses whose testimony could have contributed significantly to improving the assessment of the operation. Among CIA personnel in this category were the following:

C. Tracy Barnes who, as Bissell's principal deputy, had the closest and most continuous contact with--and input to--the project of anyone outside of WH/4. Barnes had been responsible for the controversial 8 April 1961 briefing of Adlai Stevenson about the operation.

\* See page 205.

Richard D. Drain who served in various senior capacities during the project and was Chief of Operations for the project prior to and during the attack on Cuba.\*

J. C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, who attended a majority of the sessions of the CSG and, though not technically assigned to the project, was thoroughly involved in the operation.

[redacted] King frequently added unsolicited--and often erroneous--comments during the sessions but he warranted an in-depth debriefing.

Gerard Droller and E. Howard Hunt who were directly responsible for trying to bring order out of the chaos among the anti-Castro political leaders.

Lawrence K. White, Deputy Director of Support (DDS), Sherman Kent, Chairman of the Board of National Estimates (BNE), and Robert Amory, Deputy Director of Intelligence (DDI).

It was particularly unfortunate that the last three individuals, as senior members of the Director's staff, were not pressed to explain why they failed to play more active roles as the operation was developing. Ever since the collapse of the operation, Amory, in particular, escaped all criticism because he supposedly was ignorant of the planned operation. Arthur Schlesinger claimed that Amory "was not informed at any point about any aspect of the operation," and Roger Hilsman, State's intelligence chief, stated that Amory was "kept in the dark," 2\*\* Considering the very

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\*Drain commented that: "I was standing by all the time...[but] I was never called before Bobby Boy's little proctological group." 1/

\*\*As late as 1975, one newspaper report stated that "When the 'covert operations' people were organizing the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, they did not tell the Agency's own Deputy Director of Intelligence, Robert Amory, who might have figured the whole trip would be a bummer." 3/

nature of CIA's business and the length of time that the project was under way, to believe that any Deputy Director-- particularly one charged with responsibility for producing finished economic, current, geographic, military, and photo intelligence on Latin America (including Cuba)--could have been as "in the dark" as claimed for Amory defies belief.

The evidence shows that as early as 22 June 1960 one of Amory's staff, [redacted] attended a special NSC briefing on the Cuban situation when General Cabell outlined the Agency's anti-Castro program, including a discussion of the on-going training of a cadre of nearly [redacted] PM instructors and radio operators. At the latest, Amory learned the details about the planned operation on 10 March 1961. He was present when DCI Dulles briefed the CIA subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on all phases of the Trinidad plan, including the paramilitary invasion. Amory also was present at the DCI's morning meeting on 30 March 1961 when DDS White discussed indemnification for the owners of the vessels to be used in the invasion "against the loss of their ships and whatever casualties may be suffered among the crews." Perhaps the most accurate statement regarding Amory's knowledgeability about the operation was made by Stewart Alsop who said: "The DDI was never given an opportunity to evaluate its [the Bay of Pigs] chance of success." 4/\*

\* Recent declassification of the Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee revealed that Amory certainly knew about the invasion plan by 11 January 1961 when he accompanied DCI Dulles to Dulles's off the record briefing of the Committee. The DCI prefaced his comments by noting: "The Cuban and Guatemalan problems are so closely tied together, sir, that with your approval I would like to present the two together." 5/



Sherman Kent, Director of the BNE, told one interviewer that neither he nor anyone on the BNE had been "officially" consulted about the Bay of Pigs operation; however, a Memorandum for the Record of 30 January 1961 highlights details of the briefing Colonel Jack Hawkins gave to DDCI General Cabell and BNE members Admiral Jeruald Wright and Generals Earl Barnes and Harold Bull on the planned operation. It was reported that these "senior Agency officials critiqued the plan at some length." 6/ Also in late January 1961 at the request of Director Dulles, Kent's Office of National Estimates prepared an internal memorandum on "Probable International Reactions to Certain Possible US Courses of Action against the Castro Regime." One of those courses of US action was to "provide active support, of varying degrees of magnitude and overtness, to an attempt by Cuban opposition elements, internal and in exile, to overthrow Castro." As with both DDS White and DDI Amory, Kent was a participant in the DCI's morning meetings; and he did indicate that "in general" attendees at these sessions were aware of the anti-Castro project.

One of the strangest oversights, however, was the Taylor Committee's failure to question Colonel "Red" White, the Deputy Director for Support. Even before the establishment of WH/4, (18 January 1960), White's Directorate had been involved in supporting the Agency's activities  including Cuba. Unlike the Clandestine Services which ignored its own Contingency Task Force Plan, Colonel White insisted that

the best qualified personnel from his Directorate--logistics, security, communications, and other support activities--be assigned to the project. His observations concerning problems in these areas should have been explored by the committee. It would have been valuable, for example, to have heard White's comments on the impact that the change from Trinidad to Zapata had on logistics operations.\*

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\*Richard M. Helms who was Chief of Operations for the Deputy Directorate of Plans at the time of the Bay of Pigs operation has deliberately been omitted from the list of Agency personnel who might profitably have been called as witnesses by the Taylor Committee. There were rumors--subsequent to the operation--that Helms purposely had isolated himself from the operation because he foresaw it as a failure. In his book on Helms, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, Thomas Powers has repeated all the innuendoes and rumors about the Machiavellian tactics that were being employed by Bissell and Helms to discredit each other during the course of the operation--Helms reportedly wanting to force cancellation of the operation and Bissell wanting to arrange Helm's transfer. 7/

In direct response to my question about his relationship to Helms at the time of the Bay of Pigs activity, the following conversation with Mr. Bissell is believed to reflect a more accurate view of the situation:

"Bissell: I think he saw most all the cable traffic and I think he was pretty well informed as to what was going on--very well informed; but he was really out of the line of command on this operation. There was something of a tacit agreement between us that he would be devoting himself to a lot of the other ongoing business of the DDP office because this [anti-Castro project] was taking a great deal of my time.

"JBP: This was a tacit agreement? This wasn't a session with you and Helms?

"Bissell: Let me say that this probably was not that explicit. I would make an observation here, (Footnote continued on next page)

From the Department of State there also were at least three individuals who should have been asked to appear as witnesses: Thomas Mann, Roger Hilsman, and Adlai Stevenson. Thomas Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs until a few weeks before the invasion, had expressed strong reservations about the capability of the anti-Castro brigade to achieve success without the intervention of US forces and about the need for the US to be more overt in its support of the anti-Castro movement. Mann's objections drew heavy fire from WH/4. Roger Hilsman, Director of Intelligence and Research, had his proposal to make a study of the feasibility of a covert attempt to oust Castro rejected by Dean Rusk; and Adlai Stevenson became the scapegoat for a bungled briefing by CIA's Tracy Barnes and the disastrous policy decisions of Secretary Rusk and President Kennedy. Each of the three would seem to have warranted a hearing before the committee.

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and I don't want you to infer anything really beyond what it says. It was not particularly easy--I did not find it particularly easy--to discuss things clearly and derive a clear understanding with Dick about the division of labor between us when he was my Deputy. I don't imply by this any sense of conflict or rivalry, but he would go ahead and handle certain kinds of matters. We saw one another, of course, all the time. Quite often I would consult him about something that I was handling. I think rather less often he would consult me. I don't mean to imply, however, in any kind of concealment from me--I never had that feeling at all. But it really was our habit during the whole time that we were in those positions that the division of labor between us was more tacit than explicit." 8/

The failure of the Taylor Committee to call on the above, and others, to testify cannot be justified for lack of time-- even within the time frame set by the President. In the period between 22 April 1961 when the committee held its first meeting and 16 May when General Taylor gave the President the preliminary briefing he had requested, more than forty witnesses had completed testimony. In the period between 17 May and the final meeting to take testimony (30 May 1960) only a dozen witnesses would appear; and most of those were Cubans whose testimony was quite brief. Between 31 May and 13 June, the four memoranda which make up the Taylor Committee Report were prepared, but considering that significant portions of two of these memoranda were taken from the preliminary briefing paper, it should have been possible to have interviewed many, if not most, of those identified above.

In its haste to complete the report by the President's deadline, it appears that the committee put its priorities in reverse order. The narrative portion of the final report (Memorandum No. 1) traces the history of the operation from its inception under President Eisenhower's 17 March 1960 authorization of an anti-Castro program through the collapse of the invasion at Playa Giron on 19 April 1961. This story is told on the basis of the testimony of the witnesses and the more than thirty "Annexes" which the committee requested as a result of the

testimony of various individuals. Unfortunately this procedure made it impossible--or apparently impossible since no witnesses were recalled--to resolve differences among the testimony of witnesses or discrepancies between testimony and documents, including the Annexes. Inasmuch as most of the documents that the CSG requested were available prior to the committee's first session--only a few documents of a statistical nature were prepared specifically in response to the DSG's requests--it was unfortunate that the committee did not first attempt to collect and review pertinent materials before examining witnesses.

As a result of the committee's failure to resolve these kinds of discrepancies, such critical issues as the following were ignored:

1. Claims by Secretary Rusk and others with reference to the cancellation of the D-Day air strike that President Kennedy was unaware that the Zapata plan called for both a D minus 2 and a D-Day strike. Not only was there ample evidence that McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Adviser, was an early advocate of a pre-D-Day strike, but the "Summary of White House Meetings" that General David Gray prepared for the committee noted that during a 6 April 1961 meeting--after Mr. Bissell had specified that there would be a D minus 2 strike: "The President questions whether or not a preliminary strike wasn't an alarm bell."\*

2. The Committee's complete lack of concern about the handling of JCSM-44-61 and JCSM-166-61. Both reports were lost, forgotten, or ignored by Secretary McNamara. The papers represented the thinking of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and could have had a direct impact on the operational plan had they been properly evaluated. JCSM-44-61 proposed that an interdepartmental group plan Castro's ouster with the US military playing a leading role, and JCSM-166-61 specified that CIA's Trinidad plan was better than any proposed alternatives, including Zapata.

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\*General Gray's memorandum was dated 9 May 1961.

3. The confusion about the possibility of the Brigade going to guerrilla status from the Zapata area into the Escambray. Reference to even the most simplistic topographic map would have quickly ended all such speculation. The only realistic chance to move as guerrillas into the Escambrays would have been from the Trinidad site and it was only with reference to Trinidad that this option had been specified by CIA.

4. The failure to resolve the confusion over matters related to air operations such as the appreciation of the capabilities of Castro's T-33s, whether Castro's B-26s were of more concern to the Brigade than the T-33s, whether the T-33s were armed, and whether Castro's FAR had MiG aircraft. The individuals directly responsible for WH/4's air training and air operations--Billy Carpenter, George Germosen, Gar Teegen, and all of the pilots (Cuban and American)--knew exactly what they were up against. That Beerli, Bissell, Hawkins, and even General White confused the situation without contradiction or questions from the committee was inexcusable considering the criticality of air operations to the success or failure of the operation.

5. The committee failed to raise any questions concerning the capability of the Trinidad airfield to handle B-26 traffic. Perhaps this became a point of no consequence once the President and Secretary of State decided that a "quieter" invasion was required. Since it was offered as one of the reasons for changing the invasion site, it should have been examined more carefully, particularly since use of the Playa Giron air strip not only required drastic revisions in the loading plans for the ships, it also impinged directly on planned air operations by requiring the landing of two B-26s on D-Day prior to the planned air strikes.

6. In this same context was the committee's failure to question the validity of statements by witnesses that the switch from Trinidad to Zapata presented no particular problems. Unfortunately, even some of the CIA air operations personnel, as well as members of the JCS, tended to regard this as a minor matter. In fact, the shift caused a massive readjustment of the logistics plan, including the reloading of the Rio Escondido to provide support for air operations off of the Playa Giron airstrip. The reloading including the avgas which exploded when Castro's aircraft attacked the Rio on D-Day. Additionally, the need to plan for three--rather than one--landing sites

compelled readjustments of cargoes on the Houston and other vessels. It was the shift from Trinidad to Zapata that led to the mad scramble at the last minute to acquire the aluminum small boats to off-load the troops at the Playa Larga site at the north end of the Bahia de Cochinos.

7. No serious questions were raised by the committee concerning the performance of the Brigade despite the sharp differences immediately apparent between the 24 April 1961 memorandum that Col. Hawkins presented to the committee at its third meeting and his 13 April 1961 cable from Nicaragua extolling the virtues of both the Brigade's infantry and its Air Force. The committee apparently took for granted the comments made at its first meeting concerning the heroic fight waged by the invaders, despite the fact that well before completing their work they learned that the bulk of the Brigade had been taken prisoner and that fewer than a hundred men had been killed.

8. The failure of the USN's CAP to meet the Brigade's B-26s for the one hour of protection on 19 April 1961 was never challenged. How the B-26s could overfly the Essex one hour early without being detected was ignored, even though the USN's most senior officer, Admiral Burke, was a committee member. The destruction of the operational records of the Essex which probably could have clarified the situation regarding the missed CAP strongly suggests that senior naval officers were interested in protecting their careers and/or the reputation of the USN than in admitting to error. This episode would not have changed the outcome at the Bay of Pigs, but it might have permitted the orderly withdrawal of some of the Brigade from the beach. Moreover, no question was raised as to why, at this stage of the operation, President Kennedy limited the air support by the USN to one hour.

In addition to its failure to focus on any of the above issues, the committee deserved sharp criticism for failing to provide a verbatim transcript of its meetings. The loss of information from this decision is clearly evident in the comparison between the verbatim record and the "official" record of the first meeting--the only session for which there is known to be a verbatim transcript. In this same category was the committee's failure to insure that the record of all meetings with witnesses clearly identified questioners,

respondents, and commentators. Considering the confusion and problems noted above, it was unfortunate that all US personnel who appeared as witnesses were not provided an opportunity to review the record of their testimony. Had this been done, even under the deadline set by the President for completion of the report, useful corrections and clarification of the record might have been accomplished before the final report was forwarded. (The only witness to whom this privilege is known to have been extended was McGeorge Bundy.)

The Taylor Committee neglected to make any assessment of leadership at the White House and cabinet level, despite the fact that policy decisions which had a major impact on the operational plan originated with Secretary Rusk's caution, Secretary McNamara's ignorance (for whatever reason) of two important JCS papers, and President's Kennedy's insistence on attempting to maintain plausible deniability beyond the point of reason. The challenges to leadership by the committee were aimed--often rudely and crudely--only at CIA and DOD personnel. The only exception to this generalization which has been surfaced appeared in a report about the committee's meeting on 12 June 1961 which stated:

During the meeting General Cabell and Mr. Bissell were being questioned about the events leading up to the cancellation of the D-Day strike. General Taylor commented, "This was the time to take the issue to the President. The situation did not penetrate the Secretarial brain (he is referring to Secretary Rusk). By training, Secretary Rusk is not prepared to deal with this kind of problem." 9/



The sting was taken out of this comment, however, as the memorandum pointed out that General Taylor also criticized General Cabell for his failure to get on the phone with President Kennedy when Rusk offered him the opportunity to present his case against the cancellation of the D-Day strike. Taylor's remark ignored the fact that Cabell stated that Rusk was repeating to the President exactly what he (Cabell) had told Rusk and that Cabell saw no point in personally repeating the information to the President.\*

The reputation of President Kennedy suffered no diminution as a result of the Taylor Committee's investigation thanks in large part to the vigilant efforts of Attorney General Robert Kennedy to deflect or block the slightest hints that the failure at the Bahia de Cochinos in any way resulted from actions taken by the resident in the White House or his principal advisers. Of the latter, one writer has stated: "Associates of President Kennedy have reported their memories so as to insulate the President from responsibility for the fiasco." 11/ Taylor, too, displayed no inclination to question the actions or inaction of the Chief Executive; and his criticisms were of the Agency's principals and the Joint Chiefs.

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\*The information on Taylor's comments is found in a J.C. King memo for record of 12 June 1961 which incorrectly gives the date of the meeting as 25 June 1961. There was no committee meeting on 25 June which the DCI was scheduled to attend. 10/ Presumably Secretary Rusk was not in attendance.

The President's understanding of the guerrilla option and his cancellation of the D-Day air strike were issues that engendered some of the bitterest exchanges between the Attorney General and various witnesses during the committee hearings. That the President believed that there was a guerrilla option once the invasion site had been shifted from Trinidad to Zapata and that cancellation of the D-Day strike had little or no relation to the failure of the invasion suggests both inattention to--or disregard for--the advice he had been given by the individuals most qualified to make the operational judgments for successful implementation of the agreed plan. The most dramatic evidence of the President's contempt of the experts was provided during a meeting between Kennedy and John McCone a few weeks after McCone had replaced Allen Dulles as DCI. One knowledgeable source has written:

In a private meeting with President Kennedy on 7 January 1962, the President told McCone that he, the President, had been persuaded to approve the operation on the basis that if the invasion failed to inspire large-scale defections, then the force which had been put ashore, could retreat into the Escambray mountains and would represent a substantial guerrilla force which would be rather easily reinforced and resupplied from the United States or elsewhere. He said that he learned much to his surprise the operation was so planned and the landing so located that there was no possibility of such an escape. The President made a second point. He had concluded that modest air power, even if successful, would have only postponed defeat for a few days. He said that indeed he doubted if even substantial

amounts of U.S. air power over a considerable period of time would have given the necessary cover to permit a retreat into the Escambray. It was the President's opinion that the operation was doomed to defeat and the fact that an air strike was not forthcoming at a particular hour or day probably hastened the defeat but would not have made the difference between success and failure. 12/\*

Secretary Rusk, with the President, was the other individual most responsible for the political alterations that ruled out implementation of the Agency's Trinidad Plan--which was favored at all times by the Joint Chiefs of Staff--and for cancellation of the D-Day air strike. As indicated in the discussion of his testimony before the Taylor Committee, Rusk found no fault with his own performance, but his dissimulative remarks about the judgments and performance of others not only shaded the truth but were demonstrably in error. As with Robert Kennedy, Secretary Rusk would subsequently continue to provide dis-information about the Agency's estimates and the importance of the air operations.

Secretary of Defense McNamara's opinions could have had a significant impact on the planning of the anti-Castro operation, particularly if he had studied the two JCSM's which seem to have disappeared from sight after having been sent to his office.\*\*

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\*Questions regarding the importance of the cancelled air strike on D-Day were ones about which the Attorney General would continue to be most protective of the President--even to the point of disingenuousness. This topic is discussed in detail in Volume I of this history (pp. 295-305).

\*\*The papers were JCSM-44-61, 27 Jan 61, "US Plan of Action in Cuba," and JCSM-166-61, 15 Mar 61, "Evaluation of the Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts, CIA paramilitary Plan, Cuba."

For whatever reason, the Taylor Committee did not pursue the breakdown in the system which resulted in this loss. After the fact, there is no question that McNamara was concerned about the operation; but he never intervened with the President at the critical time on D-Day when it was apparent that control of the air was at issue.

The absence of Allen Dulles at the time that the crucial decision on cancellation of the D-Day strike was being made by Kennedy and Rusk was inexcusable, the more so considering that Dulles had not departed the US for Puerto Rico prior to the D-2 air strike. There was no question that once the attack on Cuba began that both Dulles and the CIA were going to be targets for attack by Castro and the pro-Communist nations. For all practical purposes, the committee ignored this matter when, had he been present, Dulles was the one man who might have persuaded the President to permit the D-Day strike.\*

Inexplicably, the focus of CIA's bitterness came to be Adlai Stevenson rather than either the President or Secretary Rusk. With regard to the Bay of Pigs, Stevenson was more sinned against than sinning. A cable from Stevenson to Rusk as the invasion was in its final stages clearly indicated how isolated Stevenson was from the anti-Castro project. Although not recommending such action, Stevenson did express hope that if

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\*The severest critic of Dulles was Dick Drain, C/OP/WH/4 who said the DCI upon his return was more concerned about [redacted] than the fate of the on-going invasion. 13/

necessary to insure the success of the operation the US would use "covert means" to achieve that end. In view of Stevenson's comments about the alternative of US support for a provisional government, it is unfortunate that Mr. Rusk did not take him into confidence as the operation was being developed.

In contrast to the findings of the Taylor Committee concerning the Bay of Pigs operation, the following retrospective remarks written by Colonel Jack Hawkins in 1976 are believed appropriate:

I would like you to know my view that failure of the operation in question was not due to any lack of dedication, determination, and skillful effort of [sic] the part of the Agency. Stupendous efforts were made by all concerned in the Agency to accomplish a very worthwhile objective--against ever-growing and truly insurmountable restrictions and handicaps which were imposed from sources of the US Government outside the CIA and finally crippled the operation beyond redemption.

Imagine the benefits that would have accrued if the operation had been allowed enough latitude to insure success. For one, the dangerous missile confrontation which ensued would have been avoided.

The real failure of the CIA in this operation, I believe, was in not cancelling it, or recommending its cancellation, as the self-imposed restrictions of the US Government made the possibility of success too remote, But the CIA itself and all members of it with whom I was associated were not of a mind to give up. So determined were they all that they could not turn back but had to go ahead against any obstacle no matter how formidable. And in the minds of many, if not all, was the thought that the great power of the United States would never, in the final count, allow the operation to fail...

I recommended in writing that the operation be abandoned if sufficient air support was not to be provided and predicted military disaster if opposing air forces were not completely neutralized before the beach assault. This still could have been accomplished, even with the reduced air sorties allowed to be planned, had it not been for cancellation at the last moment of the air strikes scheduled against any remaining enemy aircraft at dawn on D-Day. This was the final disaster, preventing as it did the orderly landing of all troops and their supplies.

In conclusion, let me say that the operation came closer to succeeding than the American people have ever been allowed to know. The objective was to ignite the spark of counter-revolution throughout Cuba, not to send a small body of armed patriots marching from the Bahia de Cochinos into the streets of Havana. If that small body of patriots had been protected sufficiently to allow them to bring in their ships safely and land their ammunition and supplies, they could possibly have held on long enough to ignite the spark.

Was it not significant that the Cuban Navy made no effort to interfere and that captured militiamen and civilians in the objective area offered to join the invading force? This sort of response possibly would have been magnified many times if the landing had been made at Trinidad as recommended by the CIA but disapproved for reasons hard to understand. Trinidad was in better guerrilla country (Escambray Mountains), had better landing facilities, more civilians to recruit, and guerrilla forces already active in the area, plus a suitable airfield.

No, the failure of the Cuban patriots was not the fault of the CIA. Too bad that it has had to bear the brunt of the criticism. 14/

There can be no doubt that the Agency will continue "to bear the brunt of the criticism" for the failure at the Bay of Pigs until a decision is made to release details such as presented in this volume. CIA's leadership was not without fault, but the documentary evidence included in this examination of the Taylor Committee's investigation shows that the major causes for the failure--contrary to the image which has been and continues to be popularized--were directly attributable to actions, or inactions, of the Kennedy Administration, specifically including the President, Secretary Rusk, and Secretary McNamara.

Before the end of February 1962, however, Director Allen W. Dulles, Deputy Director General Charles P. Cabell, and Deputy Director for Plans Richard M. Bissell, Jr.--had either resigned or retired\* In addition to these three senior officers, progress

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\*Mr. Dulles retired on 29 November 1961, General Cabell resigned on 31 January 1962, and Mr. Bissell resigned on 17 February 1962. Bissell's forced resignation was particularly ironic in view of the fact that very serious consideration had been given to his appointment as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs as late as 25 February 1961 but:

"The first choice of all concerned for this job, you [President Kennedy] know, was Dick Bissell, but in the light of your own feelings about the future of CIA, you urged him to stay where he is, and he, of course, followed your advice. What I now wonder is whether you might find it wise to reconsider that decision...One final argument in favor of this shift is that Bissell and the State Department would be very good for each other. If Dick has a fault it is that he does not look at all sides of the question, and, of course, the State Department's trouble is that it is usually doing exactly that and not much else." 15/

in the careers of the three principal military assignees to the Agency--USMC Colonels Jack Hawkins, Chief, Paramilitary Section/WH/4 and [redacted] liaison officer with JCS, and [redacted] ground training officer--was stymied as a result of their participation in the Bay of Pigs operation. In the instance of Colonel Hawkins--the personal choice of Marine Corps Commandant, General Shoup, for the CIA assignment--it prevented his promotion to General, a rank for which he had been considered a sure bet.

By contrast, cabinet members Rusk and McNamara remained untainted despite their roles in the failure of the effort. McGeorge Bundy, a principal advocate of the essentiality of control of the air over Cuba--until the critical day (16 April 1961) following the D-2 air strike--remained unscathed despite the blatant contradictions between his record before the invasion and his testimony before the Taylor Committee after the invasion. General Taylor, with a powerful boost from Robert Kennedy, acquired new laurels as presidential adviser and then as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Kennedy. With the protective screen provided by his brother, by Taylor, and by members of the Camelot entourage--Schlesinger, Sorensen, and Goodwin among others--the conception that President Kennedy was a white knight misled by overconfident, if not mischievous, CIA activists has remained.



The significance of the failure at the Bay of Pigs-- particularly in light of the current disarray in Central American, is perhaps best illustrated in the contrast between Richard Rovere's optimistic piece in 1961 and an historian writing in 1981. Rovere wrote:

There is widespread recognition of the fact that the paramilitary operations of the Communists have confronted the West with a new kind of danger, and that some means of dealing with them must be found. And there is some recognition of the possibility that the President may, in his moment of failure and error [at the Bay of Pigs], have done something to give pause to the Khrushchevs and Castros of this world. The Russians have been put on notice that the United States cannot be counted on to abide by all the rules of late-nineteenth-century diplomacy...We may not try anything of this sort again, but Khrushchev cannot be sure of this, and there is always a certain gain, in dealing with men of his kind, in increasing the element of risk involved in his maneuvers. 16/

Unfortunately for the nation, neither the Soviets nor their Cuban surrogates were intimidated, despite their set-back at the time of the 1962 missile crisis. As the historian has noted:

The rise and decline of American imperialism can be traced through Cuban events. The era, which began in 1898 with the Rough Riders' charge on San Juan Hill, ended in 1961 in the swamps of the Bay of Pigs. There is more than a grain of truth in Castro propaganda that his victory at "Playa Giron," which shattered the myth of American invincibility, was a turning point for America's international image. In this sense, the Bay of Pigs is a minor prelude to Vietnam. 17/

## EPILOGUE

Kennedy began as President of the U.S. with the aggression that was underway, that he inherited, that he approved, and that he lost. The most difficult day for the revolution was the 19th of April 1961 when in sight of our troops was part of the North American fleet with marines, destroyers, aircraft carriers, etc.

Kennedy vacillated. If at that moment he had decided to invade us, he could have suffocated the island in a sea of blood, but he would have destroyed the revolution.

Luckily for us, he vacillated. If instead of Kennedy we had had any of the later presidents, they would have intervened and destroyed the revolution.

(Translation of a comment by Raul Castro during an interview with Teresa Gurza of El Dia, Mexico, 19 September 1975)

APPENDIX A  
Topics for Discussion by the  
Taylor Committee  
25 April 1961

## Appendix A

### Topics for Tuesday [25 April 1961?]

1. Was there any doubt about the necessity of some such military action against Castro?
2. What was the estimate of the probability of success of ZAPATA before D-Day?
3. What was the feeling of likelihood of a popular uprising following the landing? How essential was such an uprising regarded for the success of the operation? How rapid a reaction was expected by Castro?
4. What was expected to happen if the landing force effected a successful lodgment but there was no uprising?
5. What was the understanding of the position of the JCS as to ZAPATA? Was it appreciated that they favored TRINIDAD over ZAPATA? What did the President expect from the Chiefs?
6. Was it understood that control of the air was considered essential to the success of the landing?
7. What were the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the D-Day air strikes? How serious was the decision viewed? What was the understanding about prelanding strikes?
8. What was the understanding as to the ability of the landing force to pass to a guerrilla status in an emergency? To what extent did this factor influence approval of the operation?
9. What was the understanding of the ammunition situation by the end of April 18?
10. What degree of non-attribution was sought and why? Were the operational disadvantages arising from some of the restrictions imposed by the efforts to achieve non-attribution clearly presented and understood?
11. To what extent did the CIA operations representatives have to "sell" the operation to the other agencies of government? Was any consideration given to transferring the operation to Defense?

12. How could interdepartmental planning and coordination be better effected in a similar operation?

13. What were the principal lessons learned?

14. At what [point] did we realize op was going to fail?

**APPENDIX B**

**Letter for the President from**

**McGeorge Bundy, undated**

COPY

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington

Dear Mr. President:

I think you should always have the easiest freedom in the choice and use of close associates, and so I think you ought to have on hand their resignations. Here is mine, to be accepted at your pleasure at any time. You know that I wish I had served you better in the Cuban episode, and I hope you know how I admire your own gallantry under fire in that case. If my departure can assist you in any way, I hope you will send me off - and if you choose differently, you will still have this letter for use when you may need it. Your assistants are yours to use - and one use is in charging the air when that is needed.

Yours,

McBundy

257

APPENDIX C  
Protecting the Kennedy Image



## APPENDIX C

1. "On April 17 Praeger published The Cuban Invasion, in which New York Times correspondent Tad Szulc and Washington Post correspondent Karl E. Meyer indict CIA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as responsible for the disaster at the Bay of Pigs (NR. review, May 22). Although the Times' Sunday Book Review is normally prompt and generous in allotting space to products of its own stable, five Sundays have gone by and nary a peep about The Cuban Invasion. In explanation therefor a north-ering bird brought us the following information. Both authors are close to Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Richard Goodwin of the White House staff. They have told various friends that their book was undertaken on White House inspiration and that Messrs. Schlesinger and Goodwin helped them get the Real Dope. The Times sent an advance copy on for review to Hal Hendrix, Latin American editor of the Miami Daily News. Mr. Hendrix offered first one draft, then another, but both were rejected by the Times as too unsympathetic. The Times then went shopping for a more friendly critic. Now here is the curiosity in this drab little story: that one faction within the White House promotes a book which (with multiple error and distortion, moreover) slashes into two other (and not the least important) arms of the government (CIA and Joint Chiefs); and that singular institution, the Times Sunday Book Review, takes care that the book shall be warmly received."

The National Review,  
5 June 1962

2. The Meyer and Szulc book, incidentally, included the following remarks about Schlesinger and Goodwin:

"Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., the Harvard historian who had joined the White House staff as a kind of troubleshooter. A shrewd veteran of intelligence service during World War II, Schlesinger brought a discreet skepticism to bear on discussions of the invasion proposal." (p. 101)

"Richard N. Goodwin, a bright, articulate, 29-year-old Harvard Law School product who had clerked for Justice Felix Frankfurter and had worked on the House Oversight Subcommittee's expose of Charles Van Doren . . . became the President's chief adjutant on Latin American matters."  
(pp. 100-101)

APPENDIX D

Study of the Anti-Castro  
Invasion (Zapata)

11 May 1961

11 May 1961.

STUDY OF THE ANTI-CASTRO INVASION (ZAPATA)

1. The operation to seek the replacement of the Castro regime by covert means had its origins in a governmental decision taken on March 17, 1960. At that time, the exact character or timing of the operation was not determined. In its final form, the operation referred to herein as ZAPATA, had the approval of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director, Central Intelligence. This study undertakes to determine the reasons for its subsequent failure and to suggest possible ways of avoiding any similar reverse in the future.

2. The proximate cause of the failure of the operation was a shortage of ammunition which developed from the first day of the landing, April 17, and became increasingly critical until it resulted in the surrender of the landing force about 1400 on April 19.

3. There were three primary reasons for this shortage of ammunition. The logistical plan for the landing made ample provision for ammunition with the men and in floating reserve. However, upon landing there is evidence that the Cubans wasted their ammunition in excessive firing, displaying the poor ammunition discipline which is common to troops in their first combat.

4. Far more serious was the loss of the freighters RIO ESCONDIDO and HOUSTON through air attack at about 0930 on the morning of April 17. The RIO was a particular loss as it had ten days of reserve ammunition on board, as well as other important supplies.

5. The air attack which sunk these ships caused all others in the landing area to put out to sea with the order to rendezvous 50 miles off the coast. The freighters ATLANTICO and CARIBE headed south and never stopped until intercepted by the U.S. Navy at points 110 and 218 miles respectively south of Cuba.

6. The CARIBE was so far away that its cargo, principally aviation supplies, was never available for movement to Blue Beach while the fight lasted. The ATLANTICO, which had considerable ammunition on board, did rejoin the other ships of the expedition at 1816, April 18 at a point about 50 miles south of the beach and transferred her supplies to the waiting two LCIs and 3 LCUs for a night run to the beach.

7. By the time the supplies were transferred and the convoy had started north it was too late to hope to resupply the beach under cover of darkness. The convoy commander asked CIA operational headquarters, Washington, for destroyer escort and U.S. Navy jet cover without which he believed that he would lose his ships to air attack the next morning. He added that without U.S. Navy support the Cuban crew would mutiny if sent back to the beach.

8. As the result of these messages, CIA Headquarters, apparently not aware of the critical importance of this resupply mission, called it off and the attempt to get ammunition to the beach ended. The President was never asked permission to extend the air cover to protect the ammunition convoy.

9. These causes for the ammunition shortage rested in turn on others which lay deeper in the plans and organization of this operation and the attitude toward it on the part of Government officials. The effectiveness of the Castro air force over the beach resulted from a failure to destroy the airplanes on the ground before or concurrently with the landing. This failure was a consequence of the restraints put on the anti-Castro air force in planning and executing its strikes, primarily for the purpose of protecting the covert character of the operation. These restraints included: The requirement to use only the B-26 as a combat aircraft because it had been distributed widely to foreign countries; the limitation of pre-landing strikes to those which could be considered plausibly to come from Cuban air fields; the inability to use any non-Cuban base within short turn-around distance from the target area, (about nine hours were required to turn around a B-26 for a second mission over the target from Nicaragua); prohibition of use of American contract pilots for tactical air operations; restriction on munitions, notably napalm; and the cancellation of the strikes planned at dawn on D-Day. The last mentioned

was probably the most serious as it eliminated the last favorable opportunity to destroy the Castro air force on the ground. The cancellation seems to have resulted partly from the failure to make the air strike plan entirely clear in advance to the President and the Secretary of State, but, more importantly, from the failure to carry the issue to the President when the opportunity was presented and explain to him with proper force the probable military consequences of a last-minute cancellation.

10. The flight of the CARIBE and ATLANTICO might have been prevented had more attention been paid in advance to the control of the ships to include the placing of some Americans aboard. The CIA officer responsible for all the ships involved was a [redacted] who was aboard the LCI BLAGAR with no means to control the freighters, or indeed to locate them after they disappeared. Only the initiative of the U.S. Navy in the vicinity brought them back to the scene of action. The absence of Americans on board these vessels was an application of the general order to keep Americans out of the combat area. This order had been violated in a few cases but it was apparently not considered important to do so in the case of the freighters.

11. The lack of full appreciation of the ammunition situation at the end of D-plus-1 in the CIA Operational Headquarters was largely the result of the difficulty of keeping

abreast of the situation on the beach and at sea from the distance of Washington. Also, there was a confidence in the improvised supply of the beach by air which turned out to be unjustified. Had there been a command ship in the sea with an advance CIA command post on board, a more effective control would have been possible.

12. It may be asked how near the landing ever came to success. Had the ammunition shortage been surmounted, which is to say, had the Castro air been neutralized, would the landing force have accomplished its mission? The Cubans ashore fought well and inflicted heavy losses on the Castro militia while they had ammunition. It seems reasonable to believe that with control of the air they could have maintained themselves for some days, although the vastly superior Castro forces which appeared quickly on the scene made a break-out unlikely by such a small landing force. The limited number of B-26 crews, if forced to continue to operate from Nicaragua, would have been strained to provide continuous daylight air support to the beachhead. An attempt by the landing force to exercise the guerrilla option and take to the hills would have been virtually impossible because of the presence of the encircling Castro forces and of the instructions which the Cuban invasion units had received to fall back on the beaches in case of a penetration of the beachhead. We are inclined to



believe that under the conditions which developed the beachhead could not have survived long without substantial help from the Cuban population or without overt U.S. assistance. As noted above, the guerrilla alternative did not really exist..

13. Our conclusions are still tentative as we have not yet discussed the operation with the President or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. At the moment we would advance the following:

a. A paramilitary operation of the magnitude of ZAPATA fell outside the limited scope of NSC 5412/2 and exceeded the organizational capacity of the CIA. Responsibility for the planning, training, and execution of the operation should have been transferred to the Department of Defense about November, 1960, and the covert classification of the operation re-examined. If the transfer of the operation in the form contemplated was not approved, it should have been abandoned.

b. Once the need for the operation was established, its success should have had the primary consideration of all agencies in the Government. Operational restrictions designed to protect its covert character should have been accepted only if they did not impair the chance of success. As it was, the leaders of the operation were obliged to fit their plan inside changing ground rules laid down for non-military considerations, which often had serious operational disadvantages.

c. The leaders of the operation did not always present their case with sufficient force and clarity to the senior officials of the Government to allow the latter to appreciate the consequences of some of their decisions. This remark applies in particular to the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the D-Day strikes.

d. There was a marginal character to the operation which always cast a serious doubt over its ultimate success. The landing force was small in relation to its 36-mile beachhead and to the probable enemy reaction. The air support was short of pilots if the beach was to require cover for a long period. There were few seconds-in-command to provide relief for the key leaders of the invasion who soon became casualties to excessive fatigue. There were few Cuban replacements for the battle losses which were certain to occur. It is felt that the approval of so marginal an operation by many officials was really an expression of the feeling that the Cuban brigade was a waning asset which had to be used quickly, and that this operation was the best way to realize the most from it. Also, the consequences of demobilizing the Brigade and the return of the trainees to the U.S.A., with its implication that the United States had lost interest in the fight against Castro, played a part in the final decision.

e. The Cuban Expeditionary Force achieved tactical surprise in its landing and, as we have said, fought well and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. Although there had been considerable evidence of strong pockets of resistance against Castro throughout Cuba, the short life of the beachhead was not sufficient to trigger an immediate popular reaction, and Castro's repressive measures following the landing made coordinated uprisings of the populace impossible. The effectiveness of the Castro military forces, as well as that of his police measures, was not entirely anticipated or foreseen.

f. In approving the operation the President and senior officials had been greatly influenced by the understanding that the landing force could pass to guerrilla status, if unable to hold the beachhead. These officials were informed on many occasions that the ZAPATA area was guerrilla territory, and that the entire force, in an emergency, could operate as guerrillas. With this alternative to fall back on, the view was held that a sudden or disastrous defeat was most improbable. As we have indicated before, the guerrilla alternative as it had been described was not in fact available to this force.

g. The operation suffered from being run from the distance of Washington. At that range and with the limited reporting which was inevitable on the part of field commanders absorbed in combat, it was not possible to have a clear understanding in Washington of events taking place in the field. This was particularly the case of the night of D-plus-1 when an appreciation of the ammunition situation would have resulted in an all-out effort to supply the beach by all available means.

h. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had the important responsibility of examining into the military feasibility of this operation. They approved the ZAPATA Plan, although initially they would have preferred TRINIDAD, a point which apparently never reached the senior civilian officials. As a body they reviewed the successive changes of the Plan piece-meal and only within a limited context, a procedure which was inadequate for a proper examination of all the military ramifications. Individually, they had differing understandings of important features of the operation.

i. Although the intelligence was not perfect, particularly the evaluation of the effectiveness of the T-33s, we do not feel that any failure of intelligence contributed significantly to the defeat.

27011

j. The planning and conduct of the operation would have been improved if there had been an initial statement of governmental policy, assigning the mission and setting the guidelines within which it was to develop. Thereafter, there was a need for a formalized procedure for inter-departmental coordination and follow-up with adequate record-keeping of decisions.

14. In the light of the foregoing considerations, we are of the opinion that the preparations and execution of paramilitary operations such as ZAPATA are a form of Cold War action in which the country must be prepared to engage. If it does so, it must engage in it with a maximum chance of success. Such operations should be planned and executed by a governmental mechanism capable of bringing into play, in addition to military and covert techniques, all other forces, political, economic, ideological, and intelligence, which can contribute to its success. No such mechanism presently exists but should be created to plan, coordinate and further a national Cold War strategy capable of including paramilitary operations.

APPENDIX E

Letter to President Kennedy  
from General Maxwell D. Taylor

13 June 1961

COPY

Room 2E980, The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D.C.  
13 June 1961

Dear Mr. President:

By your letter of April 22, 1961, you charged me in association with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Admiral Arleigh Burke, and Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles to study our governmental practices and programs in the areas of military and paramilitary, guerrilla and anti-guerrilla activity which fell short of outright war with a view to strengthening our work in this area. You directed special attention to the lessons which can be learned from the recent events in Cuba.

On May 16, our Cuban Study Group submitted to you an interim oral report of our conclusions as of that date. We are now prepared to make our final report to you orally, supported by the following memoranda:

Memorandum No. 1 "Narrative of the Anti-Castro Operation  
ZAPATA"

Memorandum No. 2 "Immediate Causes of Failure of the  
Operation ZAPATA"

Memorandum No. 3 "Conclusions of the Cuban Study Group"

Memorandum No. 4 "Recommendations of the Cuban Study Group"

In your letter of April 22, you invited me to submit an individual report subject to the review and comment of my associates. As we have found no difficulty in reaching a unanimous view on all essential points under consideration, we are submitting this view as a jointly agreed study.

In closing, may I express our view of the great importance of a prompt implementation of our first recommendation to establish a Strategic Resources Group supported by a Cold War Indications Center which will allow our government readily to focus its resources on the objectives which you set in the so-called Cold War? We feel that we are losing today on many fronts and that the trend can be reversed only by a whole-hearted union of effort by all Executive departments and agencies of the Government under your guidance.

Sincerely yours,

Maxwell D. Taylor

The President

The White House

273 #

APPENDIX F

Bitter Recriminations:

The Navy CAP at the Bay of Pigs

19 April 1961



## APPENDIX F

### BITTER RECRIMINATIONS: THE NAVY CAP AT THE BAY OF PIGS 19 APRIL 1961\*

On 19 April 1961, the anti-Castro Air Force operating out of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua was authorized to fly its B-26s on a combat mission over Cuba in an attempt to relieve the pressure on the anti-Castro Brigade and, possibly, to support the orderly evacuation of these troops from the beachhead at Playa Giron on the Bay of Pigs. In the course of this action, two B-26s--each carrying a two-man American crew under contract to CIA--were shot down and the four fliers were killed. The loss of the American crews precipitated a controversy between the US Navy and CIA which heretofore has never been the subject of serious study. The basis for the disagreement focuses on the combat air patrol (CAP) which had been authorized by President Kennedy to fly off of the USS Essex--the flagship of a carrier task group standing off Cuba--to protect the B-26s from Castro's T-33s and Sea Furies.

The undisputed facts about this episode are that:

1. To support the planned air strike, President Kennedy authorized the USN to fly a CAP for one hour on 19 April.
2. The time frame for the CAP set by the President was agreed to by the USN and CIA as 0630-0730 Cuba (and Washington) time.
3. For whatever reason, the USN CAP and the B-26s missed their rendezvous; and two B-26s and four Americans were lost.

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\* Unpublished manuscript by Jack B. Pfeiffer, August 1983

Explanations for the failure of the rendezvous have focused on the time frame--the Navy claiming that the CIA B-26s arrived too early and the Agency claiming that the CAP arrived too late. Degeneration of this dispute to firm assertions and positive denials ignored the available evidence which makes clear that the failure of the CAP was the result of an inexplicably sloppy performance on the part of the Navy even if the B-26s arrived as early as the Navy has claimed. The Navy deliberately destroyed records which reflected on their poor performance. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how this conclusion was reached on the basis of evidence that was available before the Maxwell Taylor Committee completed its investigations of the BOP operation in mid-June 1960.

Review of the messages, memorandums, and other pertinent information shows that USN planning for operation BUMPY ROAD (the Navy's identification of CIA's anti-Castro program) began on 25 March 1961 with authorization from the JCS. On 1 April, Rules of Engagement were issued for surface shipping and air patrols; and on 17 April, the USN Task Group got its first orders to provide Early Warning (EW) of Castro aircraft for the Brigade ships. 1/ Also on 17 April 1961 a memorandum from the USN officer serving as the Agency's liaison officer with the JCS set forth the Rules of Engagement for the carrier task group which set limits on the distance from Cuban territory for both carrier and aircraft

and conditions under which carrier aircraft could engage unfriendly aircraft.

Beginning on D-Day (17 April 1961) Navy aircraft were in evidence in the invasion areas. In strict conformity with the rules, the USN jets made no effort to deter Castro's aircraft, even as Brigade aircraft were being shot down and its ships sunk at the Bay of Pigs. With the heavy losses of Brigade aircraft on 17 April, CIA's air commander at Puerto Cabezas began to appeal for immediate support from the jet aircraft aboard the Essex. Before noon on 18 April, both Gar Teegen, the CIA air chief in Nicaragua, and McGeorge Bundy, the President's national security adviser, were urging their respective chiefs to authorize direct action against Castro's FAR by planes from the carrier-- Teegen's contention being that there was no longer any way of denying US involvement with the invasion. At the White House level, Bundy prepared a memorandum for the President stating:

I think you will find at noon [on 18 April] that the situation in Cuba is not a bit good. The Cuban armed forces are stronger, the popular response is weaker, and our tactical position is feebler than we had hoped. Tanks have done in one beachhead, and the position is precarious at the others.

The CIA will press hard for further air help--this time by Navy cover to B-26s attacking the tanks. But I think we can expect other pleas in rapid crescendo, because we are up against a formidable enemy, who is reacting with military know-how and vigor.

The immediate request I would grant (because it cannot easily be proven against us and because men are in need).... In my own judgment, the right course now is to eliminate the Castro air force, by neutrally-painted US planes if necessary, and then let the battle go its way. 2/

Neither of these requests for air support from the Navy was acted on immediately; and when authorization for assistance from the carrier task force was granted, it was minimal. In the early hours of 19 April (Schlesinger says shortly after 1:00 a.m.), the President, during a meeting with his high level advisers, authorized one hour of air cover for the Brigade B-26s by six unmarked jets from the Essex.\* Among the other caveats, the Navy jets were not to seek air combat nor attack ground targets. 3/ Once this decision was made, Headquarters sent a message to Puerto Cabezas stating among other things that there would be: "positive aggressive Navy air support and cover" from 1130Z to 1230Z, on 19 April and that all "enemy forces on approaches leading into Playa Giron airfield should be attacked."

But even as this authorization for one hour of a CAP was being flashed to Nicaragua, the air base was sending a message through Headquarters at 0815Z (0215 Nicaragua/0315 Washington) to the commanding officer of the Essex specifying that the USN air CAP be provided at the area of "Blue Beach not at the 12 mile limit."

\* In addition to himself and the President, Schlesinger wrote that other attendees at the meeting were the Vice-President, McGeorge Bundy, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, Walt Rostow, General Lemnitzer, Admiral Burke, and Mr. Bissell. One might wonder whether the presence of DCI Allen Dulles would have led to a more realistic use of the USN CAP than emerged from this meeting. Dulles's absence from the US from around noon on D-2 until nearly midnight on D-Day--he was in Puerto Rico keeping a scheduled date to address the Young Presidents organization--was one of the worse--of not the worst--decisions he made as DCI.

Less than an hour after the message was sent to Gar Teegan confirming the one hour CAP for 19 April, JCS sent a message to both Admiral Dennison, CINCLANT, and to Rear Admiral Clark, Commanding Officer of the Task Group. This message ordered TG-81.8 to furnish six unmarked aircraft to protect the anti-Castro Cuban Air Force during the period from 0630-0730 local time, 19 April 1961. The USN pilots were not to seek air combat, but were to play a purely defensive role guarding both B-26s and C-46s. 4/

The Task Group also was alerted to the possibility that the invading forces might need to be evacuated from Blue Beach, and Admiral Dennison had an amphibious squadron in the area alerted to assist if such an effort were authorized. Again, however, there were restrictions on the extent to which the rescue operations could be performed. At all costs, the US presence was to remain deniable! 5/

At 1128Z (0628R) on 19 April, a FLASH message to Puerto Cabezas from the Task Force (via CIA Headquarters) reported that the aircraft from the Essex had taken off, but if the testimony of Admiral Clark to the Taylor Committee is to be believed, this message from the Task Force failed to make any reference to the fact that the anti-Castro B-26s already had passed over the Essex at 0530!

Shortly after 0900 Cuban time, Puerto Cabezas sent an EMERGENCY message to the Task Group reporting the shoot down of a B-26 with an American crew into the ocean and requesting that a rescue attempt be made. This message was soon followed by a series of messages from Puerto Cabezas reporting that two B-26s with American crews had been lost and that the promised USN air CAP had never materialized. The cables from Nicaragua culminated with Teegen's message to Headquarters shortly before noon saying:

Today's American crews dispatched as last resort, confident of Navy cover, per Headquarter's guidance. Will not send any more B-26s from this base under present conditions.

Before 3:00 p.m., Washington time, on 19 April, a message went from Headquarters to Puerto Cabezas telling them to stand down all air activity pending further advice.\*

In the messages from the field to Headquarters between 17-19 April, there were repeated complaints about the failure of Navy aircraft--even within the limits specified prior to 19 April--to fly low enough so that their mere presence might serve to protect the B-26s from attack. The crucial failure, however,

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\* There had been a meeting in DCI Dulles's office about 8:30 a.m. on 19 April attended by McGeorge Bundy and the key personnel involved in the project--DDCI Cabell, Mr. Bissell, Jake Esterline, Dick Drain, Colonels Hawkins, Beerli, and Germosen, and Captain Scapa. Bundy called President to request that Navy air be authorized to attack both ground and air targets. The President refused to authorize any extension beyond the hour granted for the morning.

concerned the absence of the Navy CAP when the Brigade B-26s were nearing their CIP (Coast in Point) on the morning of 19 April-- even if the planes from Puerto Cabezas arrived earlier than scheduled as claimed by the Navy.

In his testimony about the Bay of Pigs before the Taylor Committee, Admiral Clark stated that his orders were for a CAP from 0630R-0730R on 19 April, but:

I decided to play this one safe and ordered by people to be on station one-half hour early [0600R] in the event that the CEF [Cuban Expeditionary Force] aircraft made the trip quicker than they had anticipated. However, they came over our ship one hour early [0530R], and consequently we launched our aircraft immediately. We arrived over the beach area forty minutes before 0630 Romeo [0550R]. However, by that time, the CEF aircraft had already made their strikes and left. 6/

If the Navy CAP was launched and over the beach at the time specified by Admiral Clark in the above testimony, why did the message transmitted from the Task Force to Puerto Cabezas via Headquarters 1128Z [0628R] on 19 April fail to mention that the Brigade's B-26s had already overflowed the Essex? If the message at 1128Z represented the approximate time of launch of the CAP from the Essex, then the time sequence specified to the Taylor Committee by Clark was grossly in error.\*

Gar Teegen, the air commander at Puerto Cabezas, had relatively little to say about the time problem. In his testimony to General Taylor, in response to the question of whether

\* The introductory note to Admiral Clark's testimony before the Taylor Committee stated that Clark: "Made the point that all the orders he had received were good dispatches and clear and that they were carried out fully." 7/

there was some confusion as to the time the Navy CAP was to be provided, Teegen's terse answer was: "There was no confusion of the time. I received a message that Navy air CAP would be provided." 8/

Teegen's Mission Summary Report of 26 April 1961 for the Taylor Committee noted that either four or five B-26s were launched from Puerto Cabezas between 0845Z and 0900Z. Estimating the minimum time of arrival over the target for these aircraft to be two-and-one-half hours, one of the planes could have been over the target area as early as 0430R, two at 0615R, and two at 0630R. The first arrival clearly was outside of the time assigned for the USN CAP. The other four would have been well within the time (0550R) that Admiral Clark testified his CAP was "over the beach area." The two B-26s which were lost on 19 April were within the specified period (0630-0730R) for CAP protection.

The question of the number of aircraft focuses on the approximate time of departure for Joe Shannon. In the Mission Summary for the Taylor Committee prepared in 1961, Shannon's launch time was shown as 1030Z; but when Teegen reviewed Albert Person's publication, The Bay of Pigs, Shannon's launch was given as 0900Z. Based on the messages that Puerto Cabezas sent to Headquarters on 19 April reporting the shoot down of Riley Shamburger and Wade Gray by a T-33, Shannon must have launched



at 0900 inasmuch as Shamburger was his wing man when he was killed. The time of departure from Puerto Cabezas and the approximate time of arrival over Cuba as given to the Taylor Committee and as shown in Teegen's review of Person's book are given in Table 1.\*

Col. Stanley Berrli, the Acting Chief of Air Division, retained bitter recollections of the miss between the Navy CAP and the brigade B-26s. In discussing this episode, Beerli was most positive about who was at fault:

You're damn right I was involved...I was there--down at the Task Force Headquarters. Bissell was there. Arleigh Burke was there...Bissell had obtained the clearance for that [air] support, and there was some discussion as to what the Navy would do and what they would provide--jets, etc. It was decided that we could launch our strike. The Navy would give us air cover for one hour. O.K. and then the question is what time do you want it? Bissell turned to me and said, "Stan, what time do you want it?"

I blame him [Admiral Arleigh Burke] for this because it was a time mixup... He was there, and he said, "Well, what time do you want it?" I said, "Six," and then I...thought...you know there are a lot of six o'clocks around in different places in the world, and I said, "Six o'clock Zebra time."

Anyway, I converted it to Zebra time...and I gave it to him in Zebra time...I remember that specifically, so that it would work out locally for that time--0630-0730.... I remember him going out--and I said, "Remember, Zebra time." But he was kind of in a -- might have been in a kind of preoccupied mood. It wasn't typewritten down on a piece of paper and given to him. Maybe that's it. He went back and said, "Be there at 0630-0730;" and they just weren't there.... But I blame him for that tieup, because our people were there at the time it was specified. I just think that there was the foul up--not getting that "Z" time back to the Navy. 9/

\* Table 1 follows p. 9. The two-and-one-half hour flight time from Puerto Cabezas to Cuba probably errs on the side of a higher average airspeed (230 mph) than was operationally feasible (190-200 mph). Albert C. Persons was a C-46/C-54 pilot/instructor during the BOP operation.

TABLE 1

B-26 TAKE-OFF AND ARRIVAL TIMES,  
19 APRIL 1961\*

Pilots/Crew	Mission Summary, 26 April 1961		1968 Revision of Mission Summary of 26 April 1961	
	Take-off time	Estimated minimum arrival time over target (575 s.m./230 mph)	Take-off time	Estimated minimum arrival time over target (575 s.m./230 mph)
Herrera	0700	0930 (0430)	0700	0930 (0430)
[redacted] (pseudo)	0845	1115 (0615)	0845	1115 (0615)
Goodwin	0845	1115 (0615)	0845	1115 (0615)
Ray/Baker	0900	1130 (0630)	0855	1125 (0625)
Shamburger/ Gray	0900	1130 (0630)	0900	1130 (0630)
Shannon	1030 (0900?) <sup>†</sup>	1300 (1130?) (0800) (0730?)	0900	1130 (0630)
Simpson (pseudo)	1030 (recalled)	1300 (0800)	1030	1300 (0800)
"Doug"	0700 (?)	0930 (0430)	1030	1300 (0800)

\* ZEBRA (Z) time except times in parenthesis are Eastern Standard Time (e.g., Havana and Washington, D. C.)

Col. Beerli's strong feelings about the failure of the Navy to get the time period for the CAP correct are subjective, but there is less speculative evidence which adds credence to the Agency's contention that the Navy clearly was at fault on 19 April 1961--regardless of whether the B-26s arrived an hour earlier than scheduled. Admiral Clark told the Taylor Committee that the Essex was unaware of the approaching B-26s until "they came over our ship one hour early." Also according to Clark, by the time he launched his CAP and got them over the beach, the B-26s "had already made their strikes and left." 10/

At no time did any of the USN personnel testifying before the Taylor Committee (including Admiral Burke of the Committee) indicate that the incoming B-26s had been picked up by radar on the Essex or on the radar of the escorting destroyers. Estimates based on the intercept ranges for the radars installed on the Essex (as of November 1960-June 1961) indicate that B-26s flying at a speed of 230 mph, between altitudes of 500' and 10,000', could have been picked up between 45 and 154 statute miles from the carrier. This would have provided the carrier with an advance warning of roughly 12-40 minutes. 11/\*

Although it cannot be determined accurately at what height any of the brigade's B-26s were flying, Gar Teegen was of the opinion that they probably would have been cruising at 8,000-10,000' for the early part of the trip, dropping down to

\* See Table 2 following p. 11.

TABLE 2

ESTIMATED RADAR INTERCEPT RANGES,  
USS ESSEX AND BRIGADE B-26's, 19 APRIL 1961

Height of Aircraft (Feet)	Intercept Range (Statute miles)*	Time Required B-26's to reach ESSEX** (Minutes)
100	28	7
200	32	8
500	45	12
1,500	68	18
2,000	76	20
3,000	90	23
5,000	113	30
10,000	154	40

\* Source: Department of the Navy, Sea Systems Command, 24 April 1979 (SEA 62X/EFW, Ser 81). U.

\*\* Estimated average speed 230 mph.

2,000' when approximately 15 miles off the target--by which time they would have been well past the Essex. It would appear reasonable to assume that the carrier's intercept should have been made at approximately 100 miles, or 25 minutes' warning time of the incoming aircraft. 12/

Equally difficult to understand is Admiral Clark's statement that by the time his jets were launched and to the target area the B-26s had made their strikes and departed. As already noted, based on the take-off times out of Puerto Cabezas as many as five B-26s--those flown by Ray, Shamburger, Shannon, Goodwin, and --could have been in the air at the time that the jets from the Essex arrived. Herrera and, possibly "Doug" in the first two B-26s over the target area might have been in and out prior to the arrival of the CAP; but according to Buck Persons, Doug was intercepted by one of the USN jets as he was en route back to Puerto Cabezas. Even though he had no radio contact with the Navy pilot, Doug was able to direct the aircraft back toward the beach where Joe Shannon still faced possible attack by the T-33s which had downed his wing man. 13/ This would seem to justify some questions about the credibility of Clark's testimony before the Taylor Committee.

Stanley Beerli also criticized the failure of the Navy radar to pick up the B-26s, and, in addition, he thought that if the Navy had been serious about its obligation to support

the project, they would have had reconnaissance aircraft up well before the B-26s appeared. Even if the recce aircraft had failed to catch the incoming B-26s, Beerli's contention was that the carrier's radar surely should have spotted them. 14/\*

Captain Lionel Krisel (USNR, Ret.)--who for a number of years was working on a history of naval operations, including the Bay of Pigs, at the instigation of Admiral Arleigh Burke--has claimed that the carrier did have a reconnaissance aircraft up and that the Essex CAP got off within a few minutes of a radar pickup. In context, Krisel's comments implied that the carrier's radar and not the recce aircraft spotted the B-26s. 15/ If Krisel's version were accepted as correct and if the Essex, even with a radar warning alert, could not get its jet aircraft launched in time to catch any of the B-26s before they completed their strikes, the efficiency of US carrier operations would

\* The April 1979 estimate by the Navy of the capability of the radar gear carried by the Essex between November 1960-June 1961 confirms Beerli's belief that the radar capability was there. This makes even more incredible Admiral Clark's contention that the Essex was unaware of the B-26s until they passed the carrier.

appear to have been another of the numerous, significant questions which went unasked by the Taylor Committee.\*

There also were other problems with reference to the CAP from the Essex that were indicative of considerably less than top performance by the USN. Teegen, as reportedly previously, had urged the Navy aircraft to operate at lower altitudes if they were to be of any use for protecting the brigade aircraft. 19/ Based on Captain Krisel's claims that in his discussions with some of the Essex's pilots who flew the CAP he was told that they had no orders to fire, it would have made no difference at what height the A4Ds operated. 20/\*\*

\* In his discussions with Col. Beerli, Capt. Krisel apparently did not indicate that there was any radar pickup of the B-26s. 16/ In one of his conversations with me, Krisel stated that the A4D Skyhawks from the Essex did not carry radar and had to be vectored by the carrier to any aircraft which they could not sight visually. 17/

Yet another version of the time frame problem was told to Peter Wyden in a conversation with Admiral Clark's second in command, "Deacon" Fickenscher. According to Wyden:

On Wednesday [19 April 1961] at 6:30 a.m., Deacon [Fickenscher] received a message...from Washington... to launch four Skyhawks which were supposed to protect B-26s headed for the beach.... The launch was scheduled for six-thirty, clearly no longer possible. The planes were airborne shortly before seven-thirty. Deacon knew they would almost certainly miss their rendezvous.... Nobody could execute orders before they were received. Obviously, communications with Washington were not working right. 18/

\*\*The writer told Krisel that this was an unbelievable story because the purpose of the CAP was to "defend CEF against air attacks from Castro forces. Do not seek air combat, but defend CEF forces from air attack." Krisel reported that the pilots claimed that the Rules of Engagement must have been changed and the pilots were unaware of the change.

Perhaps indicative of the Navy's sensitivity about its performance during the Bay of Pigs operation is the fact that the operational records of its participation were ordered destroyed, presumably at the direction of Admiral Burke. 21/ One source has indicated that the destruction of the records-- including "the operation order, the deck log, the navigation log, the combat information center log, the engineering log, everything"--was done in the incinerator of the Essex following the collapse of the invasion. 22/\*

If the performance by Navy air was less than admirable, it should be remembered that by D-Day military considerations had gone by the board in favor of political expediency as determined by the White House. That President Kennedy could have been unaware that the effort against Castro was in trouble from the time the first B-26 went down and two of the supply ships were sunk, then he either was listening to the wrong advisers or was engaging in wishful thinking. Certainly McGeorge Bundy was well aware of the air problem and he was in close contact with key CIA personnel who were actively seeking air support from the Navy. That the President failed to authorize US intervention by USN air when there was still time to salvage some, if not most, of the Brigade did nothing to deflect criticism of the US as an "interventionist"; and it did irreparable damage to US relations with the nations of Central America.

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\* Destruction of these records was another item that never came to the attention of the Taylor Committee.



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292 a

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17. " , p. 24.

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24. New York Times, 17 Jun 61.

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3. Ibid., pp. 192-194.
4. Washington Post, 12 May 80.
5. Ibid.
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## Chapter 6

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