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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, Contact Division
ATTN : Support (Crowley)
L/A Branch (McCrea)
FROM : Chief, Miami Office

DATE: 30 January 1961

SUBJECT: Interrogation of Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, Chief
of Segundo Frente del Escambray

1. On 27 January 1961, Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, Comandante, Segundo Frente del Escambray, was interrogated at the Miami offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The purpose of this interrogation was to establish a basis upon which Gutierrez Menoyo could be excluded from the US.

2. During this interrogation, Gutierrez Menoyo stated that he was born in Madrid, Spain, 8 December 1934. That he was taken to Cuba when he was 11 years old by his parents, who still reside in Cuba. He never formally secured Cuban citizenship, although he felt that under the terms of an oral decree by Fidel Castro he was entitled to Cuban citizenship on the same terms as Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

3. Subject further stated that he had first become a revolutionary against the Batista Government of Cuba in 1952. In 1957 he made his first trip to the US, to Tampa, Florida, under an assumed name in order to secure arms for his revolutionary companions. When this mission was successful he returned to Cuba and was named Comandante of his group, which became known as the Segundo Frente del Escambray. He made special mention of the fact that he had never received an official designation as a military officer by Fidel Castro, but that his military rank had been conferred upon him by the officers and men of the Segundo Frente.

4. In 1959 subject visited the US with a group of Cuban Revolutionaries, and said he was "presented with the keys to the city of Miami". This travel was performed under a special passport issued by the Government of Cuba.

5. Subject claims a brother was killed during the Spanish Civil War fighting against Franco, and another brother was killed in the attack on the Cuban Presidential Palace, 13 May 1957. His father is an M.D. who is in charge of the Hot Springs Sanitarium on the Isla de Pinos.

6. Subject further stated that in 1960 he began laying plans to escape from Cuba as he had become disillusioned with Castro. He said Castro no longer represented the ideals and principles for which he had fought in the revolution. However, it was noteworthy that subject at no time said he had a hatred for Castro, and on one occasion specifically said that he still maintained a personal liking for Castro.

7. As a means of facilitating his escape from Cuba, subject said he began a campaign to sell bonds in Cuba for the purpose of raising an army to liberate Spain from the despotic rule of Francisco Franco. The name of this liberating army was to be "Ejercito de la Liberacion de Espana" and the movement became known as the "ELE". Subject stated that in the fall of 1960 he was called in by President Dorticos of Cuba and told that because the Cuban population was making a joke about the initials of this organization by saying it stood for "Ejercito de Liberacion del Escambray" (Escambray Liberation Army) he would have to stop the campaign to sell bonds.

8. Subject said he made a trip in 1960 to Spain to visit his birthplace and to meet relatives of his country. He stated that he made this trip at his own expense and that he travelled alone. Immigration officials had positive information that he made this trip in the company of Armando Fleitas y Diaz, another member of the Segundo Frente Group, but when he was challenged on this point, subject flatly denied that Fleitas accompanied him to Spain.

9. Subject said that he stayed in Spain only three days because the "pressure" from Franco security agents was so great that he feared for his life and his relatives were fearful to have any dealings with him. He then travelled to France and Belgium. In Belgium he was arrested for associating with a group of Spaniards who were plotting against Franco. One of the Spaniards had entered Belgium illegally and was also carrying a firearm. Subject said that he did not know of these facts or he would not have associated with the group. He stated that he was released after five days and was told that he would henceforth be ineligible to return to Belgium. He protested this action as he was travelling on a Special Passport issued by the Government of Cuba.

10. Subject stated that after 1 January 1959, when Fidel Castro assumed power in Cuba, he has exercised no official function. He received salary checks, as a Revolutionary Army Officer, for the months of January and February 1959 but he did not cash them. He was requested to pick up his pay at military headquarters after this, but stated he had never done so. He stated that he had maintained himself in Cuba from the proceeds of a small bar he owns in Havana.

11. Subject stated that he, and other Segundo Frente officers, were not trusted by Fidel Castro. Therefore, he has never been given any official position in Cuba. On several occasions Castro has offered him a position as Military Attache in a Cuban Embassy in a foreign country, but on each such occasion he has refused the offer.

12. Subject stated that about 10 to 15 January 1961, it became possible for him to arrange through Busebio OJEDA-Diaz, a Captain in the Segundo Frente for passage to the US. Accordingly, he passed the word to other Segundo Frente officers with whom he had had previous discussions regarding escape from Cuba. The group departed from a beach area just east of the main harbor of Havana at eight pm of the night of the 25th of January 1961.

13. Although their departure was noticed by guards along the coast, by militia members, and by patrol boats, subject stated that they were not impeded because they were heavily armed with machine guns, pistols, and rifles, and, apparently, because some were in uniforms with insignia of high rank. The 19 members of the group (list attached) made their way in three fishing boats to Key West, Florida, where they arrived during the night of 25-26 January.

14. This interrogation lasted from ten am to one pm at which time Gutierrez Menoyo was returned to a detention cell in the Immigration headquarters. Q. Maurice Hunsaker was present during this interview. During a break for lunch, Mr. Edward Ahrens, District Director, I&NS, stated that the members of the Menoyo group would have to be removed from the I&NS building in Miami because he feared an attempt to remove Gutierrez Menoyo from the building might be made. Arrangements were made with the Commanding Officer, Homestead Airforce Base, to place the Cuban group under custody at the Base until arrangements could be made for them to be flown to the I&NS Detention Camp at McAllen, Texas.

15. Therefore, it was agreed between various CIA representatives in the area that Hunsaker aided by Luis Rodriguez, ACSI representative, would continue interrogating Gutierrez Menoyo during the afternoon. The group would then be taken to Homestead AFB after dark. It was agreed that Hunsaker and Rodriguez would question subject in a friendly and pleasant manner in order to acquire as much information as possible from him so that discrepancies in his story could be ascertained. It was the consensus of all concerned that subject was telling complete untruths, but that he was extremely skilled in doing so.

16. Consequently, Hunsaker and Rodriguez continued questioning subject from two pm until five pm. During this time, subject maintained the general continuity of the story he had expressed during the morning hours. Many attempts were made to secure Order of Battle information, names of military officials, sympathies of named officials, plans of the Segundo Frente or of the Government of Cuba. Subject pretended ignorance of all these subjects. He maintained that because he was not trusted by Castro he had not been allowed access to any military bases for the last two years. Because of the numerous personnel changes he did not know the names of officials in important posts, etc. By this time it became evident that firmer measures of interrogation would be required, and it was planned that continuous interrogation and a polygraph would be employed on subject after arrival at Homestead Airforce Base.

17. However, a sudden change of plans occurred and shortly after five pm the entire group of Cubans was whisked to the airport and put aboard a chartered plane for New Orleans. At New Orleans they were to be transferred to another plane for passage to McAllen Detention Camp. No further interrogation of subject was possible.

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18. Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo is an intelligent and capable man. He did not give up a shred of useful information in six hours of interrogation. He never once gave any indication of nervousness and was cool, calm, and collected at every moment. He pursued his story carefully and correctly, never got mixed in his details, and although his explanations of many things, in particular his lack of occupation the last two years, were completely unbelievable, he did such an excellent job of discussing the situation that he sounded plausible.

19. It is the opinion of Hunsaker that this man will not divulge information under normal interrogating techniques. It appears evident that he has a great admiration for himself, he feels he is a great man doing a great job--regardless of what he considers that job to be at the moment--and could not be shaken by ordinary means of persuasion. Subject is an extremely handsome young man, and it is obvious that he is proud of his good looks. It is the opinion of some of the men who have interrogated him that the weakest spot in his armor would be a threat to mar his good looks. The threat of a good solid poke in the nose might have considerable effect upon subject's willingness to talk.

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JUSTIN F. GLEICHAUF

QHunsaker/amb

Attachment: List

Attachment

List of Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo Group:

Name
Alien Number
Date & Place of Birth
Rank

✓ GUTIERREZ-Menoyo, Eloy
A10 190 153
12-8-34, Madrid, Spain
Comandante, Segundo Frente del Escambray

✓ ASECIO-Suarez, Lazaro
A12 542 409
10-4-25, Santa Clara, Las Villas, Cuba
Comandante, Segundo Frente del Escambray

✓ FLEITES y Diaz, Armando
A11 240 493
4-4-30, Santa Clara, Las Villas, Cuba
Comandante, Segundo Frente del Escambray

CONZALEZ-Guanche, Augusto
A12 542 413
11-2-37, Bacuranao, Havana, Cuba
Comandante, Segundo Frente del Escambray

✓ LA ROSA-Sabina, Jesus
A12 542 415
9-3-34, Camansyagua, Las Villas, Cuba
Captain, Segundo Frente del Escambray

✓ OJEDA-Diaz, Busebio
A12 542 420
10-29-30, San Juan de Los Lleras, Las Villas, Cuba
Captain, Segundo Frente del Escambray
Interventor of Omnibus Line.

✓ ORTEGA-Acosta, Domingo
A12 542 421
- - - ; Central de Amazonas, Las Villas, Cuba
Captain, Segundo Frente del Escambray

✓ PERNAS-Lorenzo, Florencio
A8 557 929
10-17-27, Havana, Cuba
Commercial Employee
Captain, Segundo Frente del Escambray

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✓- REDONDO-Gonzalez, Roger
A12 542 423
2-3-35, Sancti Spiritus, Cuba
Captain, Segundo Frente del Escambray

✓ RUIZ de ZARATE-Castello, Angel Ramon
A12 542 424
10-2-23, Cienfuegos
CPA
National Treasurer, Segundo Frente del Escambray, Feb 58-Jan 59.

✓- LESNIK-MENENDEZ, Max
A--
9-8-30, Vueltas, Las Villas, Cuba
Newsmen

[DIAZ-Morales, Pedro Manuel
A12 542 411
6-29-19, Guanabacoa, Havana, Cuba
Bus Conductor

LICO-Diaz, Paulino
A12 542 417
6-22-11, Guanabacoa, Cuba
Cook

✓- PORTA-Bolanos, Gustavo
A12 542 422
10-10-32, Havana, Cuba
Laborer Contractor

✓ NAZARIO SARGEN, Andres
A--
3-11-16, Laza de Medio, Las Villas, Cuba
--

✓ BANOS, Angel Gilberto
A--
8-12-34, Miami, Florida
--

GONZALEZ-Fraga, Jesus
A12-542 414
8-28-28, Jerez, Havana, Cuba
Fisherman

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LOPEZ-Conde, Enrique
A12 542 418
7-15-38, Guanabacoa, Cuba
Fisherman

SUAREZ-Padron, Mario
A12 542 425
3-5-30, Cojimar, Cuba
Fisherman