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19-134-35/3

19 June 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General E. G. Lansdale

SUBJECT : U. S. Army Enlistment Program for Cubans

1. Attached for your information is a summary of reports on recruitment for the U. S. Army by Cuban exile groups in the Miami area.

2. Also of interest in this connection is the following additional information:

a. Col. Wendell U. Johnson, our contact with Dr. Jose MIRO Cardona, has been informed by MIRO's secretary, Ascension Cadavieco PEREZ, that twenty-one members of the Democratic Christian Movement went to the Caribbean Admission Center on 12 June 1962 to enlist in the U. S. Army at the office of 1st Lt. Fernando Ordaz. They were told, according to PEREZ, that Lt. Ordaz was no longer at the Caribbean Admission Center and that the Cuban enlistment activities were "winding up." PEREZ told Col. Johnson on 15 June that the same group had subsequently gone to the main U. S. Army recruiting office in the Miami area to enlist. They reported that they were told that they could not be accepted because they did not meet the English language requirement and that, if they had been accepted for enlistment, they could be stationed outside the United States.

b. In collecting information concerning Cubans who might be eligible for United States military training, Capt. Ernesto DESPAIGNE Perez, Military Coordinator for the Cuban Revolutionary Council, contacted a group of former Cuban pilots in the Miami area. As a result of this contact, a representative of this group telephoned the Office of the Secretary of Defense on or about 11 June 1962 to ask if they were to be given military training soon and received a negative

SENSITIVE

SECRET

SECRET

SENSITIVE

- 2 -

reply. On 15 June Mr. Robert A. Hurwitch of the Department of State telephoned Manuel Antonio de VARONA y Loreda to inquire about this incident. VARONA was not familiar with the matter and referred the query to DESFAIGNE. However, VARONA also informed Col. Johnson, who telephoned Mr. Hurwitch on 15 June and explained the background. Mr. Hurwitch told Col. Johnson that he was concerned that too much talk by Cubans might jeopardize the U. S. Army program now under consideration.

3. In commenting on the reports in the attached summary, Col. Johnson stated that MIRC has been urging the Cuban exile groups to encourage their men to enlist in the U. S. Army but that the arguments reportedly used in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the attachment are completely contrary to the instructions he gave MIRO. In MIRO's absence Col. Johnson discussed this matter with VARONA, who denied that such arguments are being used. VARONA stated that his group (Movimiento de Rescate Constitucional Democratico) had decided six months ago to assist in the enforcement of the registration regulations of the Selective Service System and to encourage its members to join the U. S. Army. VARONA further reported that this program had not gotten started until June but that he has a list of 600 members, 18 to 36 years of age, who are potential military material. According to VARONA, his group now plans to determine how many of these have actually registered and/or enlisted.

4. Col. Johnson also commented that he had been informed by the U. S. Army recruiting office in Miami that all aliens must register six months after arrival in the United States and that the Selective Service System then assigns such registrants to local boards for classification and further action. From the information now available it is not clear whether the reported activities of the Movimiento de Rescate Constitucional Democratico are in support of registration or actual enlistment.

5. As reflected by the information contained in Paragraph 2. a. above, and in some of the reports summarized in the attachment, there is obviously misunderstanding within the Cuban community concerning the existing policy on Cuban enlistments in the U. S.

SENSITIVE

SECRET

SECRET  
SENSITIVE

- 3 -

Army. Although it is understood that the program now being considered for the future will not assure Cuban enlistees that they will not be sent outside the United States, both MIRO and Col. Johnson have understood that the existing agreement is that Cubans who have already enlisted or who enlist before 30 June 1962 will not be sent outside the United States. There is also some confusion about the language requirements for Cuban enlistees under the present program. In order to deal with these questions, our representatives in Miami urgently need clarification of the existing official policy on Cuban enlistments, both for those who have already enlisted and for those who may enlist before the new program is undertaken. It would also be of great assistance if you could provide information on the new proposed program. I will appreciate it if you will furnish this office with the above information and with an indication of what portions of it we may pass on to MIRO for his guidance.

SIGNED

WILLIAM K. HARVEY

Attachment - Summary

DDjP/TFW/Asst. Exec/ [ ] bh (19 June 1962)

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