

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

IDENTIFICATION FORM

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MINUTES OF SPECIAL GROUP MEETING, 11 AUGUST 1960

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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

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15 Aug 60

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EYES ONLY~~

12 August 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Special Group Meeting - 11 August 1960

PRESENT: Messrs. Merchant, Gray, Dulles, and Bissell

~~SECRET - EYES ONLY~~

2. Budget for Cuban Operations: Mr. Bissell summarized the budget which had been prepared as a basis for seeking a release from the Reserve to finance Cuban operations for the balance of the fiscal year. The budget for the year totals approximately ~~thirteen and a quarter~~ million dollars, not including provision for the replacement of material with an estimated value of ~~1.6 million~~ dollars to be withdrawn from Agency inventory. Since ~~2.5 million~~ dollars of budgeted and Reserve funds have been made available for this program by an earlier action, the balance required is about ~~ten and three-quarters~~ million dollars. Mr. Dulles stated that a release of ~~ten million~~ would be requested at this time since there is inevitably a wide margin of uncertainty as to what the actual costs will turn out to be. Mr. Bissell stated the amounts required by major sub-headings as follows:

Political Action	960,000.00
Propaganda	2,152,120.00
Paramilitary	8,055,753.00
Intelligence Collection	833,200.00
Counter Intelligence	325,400.00
Communications Support	229,420.00
Support	731,718.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 13,287,613.00</b>

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Gambling Syndicate

The first seriously-pursued CIA plan to assassinate Castro had its inception in August 1960. It involved the use of members of the criminal underworld with contacts inside Cuba. The operation had two phases: the first ran from August 1960 until late April or early May 1961, when it was called off following the Bay of Pigs; the second ran from April 1962 until February 1963 and was merely a revival of the first phase which had been inactive since about May 1961.

Gambling Syndicate - Phase 1

August 1960

Richard Bissell, Deputy Director for Plans, asked Sheffield Edwards, Director of Security, if Edwards could establish contact with the U.S. gambling syndicate that was active in Cuba. The objective clearly was the assassination of Castro although Edwards claims that there was a studied avoidance of the term in his conversation with Bissell. Bissell recalls that the idea originated with J. C. King, then Chief of WH Division, although King now recalls having had only limited knowledge of such a plan and at a much later date--about mid-1962.

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Mr. Douglas said that in any case he would be prepared to have the Department of Defense investigate the availability of specific locations that would be suitable.

Finally, Mr. Merchant asked whether any real planning has been done for taking direct positive action against Fidel, Raul and Che Guevara. He said that without these three the Cuban Government would be leaderless and probably brainless. He conceded that it would be necessary to act against all three simultaneously. Gen. Cabell pointed out that action of this kind is uncertain of results and highly dangerous in conception and execution, because the instruments must be Cubans. He felt that, particularly because of the necessity of simultaneous action, it would have to be concluded that Mr. Merchant's suggestion is beyond our capabilities.

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