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04-10296-10219

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MRP

14 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, WH/4

SUBJECT : Comments on MRP Plan for Anti-Castro Operations

1. The Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP) has submitted a plan for the conduct of anti-Castro operations. The original was received from the MRP Chief, Manuel Antonio Ray y Rivero, in Miami on 17 June 1961 and a copy of it handcarried to Headquarters on 19 June 1961. It is our understanding that certain (to us unspecified) elements in the United States Government view the Ray plan with favor, feeling that the "take" in the way of information and the maintenance of a resistance organization in Cuba would be worth the price.

2. We have been asked to comment on the MRP plan. Attached are the comments of Mr. [redacted] formerly of this Section, and several members of the WH/4/PM staff. Paragraph 6 was submitted by Mr. Dave Phillips, Chief, WH/4/Propaganda. I might add that no one is in agreement with the entire paper. We all agree, however, with the conclusion that the plan, as submitted, is not one meriting support from this or any other U. S. Government agency. We see little chance for a reasonable return for cost unless real control by the provider of the funds is built into the plan.

Robert S. Moore
Chief, WH/4/PM

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COMMENTS ON THE MRP GENERAL PROGRAM

1. The MRP plan presented by Manolo Ray proposes, in brief, that the MRP be provided with funds in the amount of $2,343,000 for a six-month period, with which to mount anti-Castro operations. It is assumed that additional financing would be provided, at a rate exceeding $2,000,000 per year, until the objectives were achieved.

2. Nowhere in the plan is there any statement as to what return, if any, the providers of the funds would receive for their support, other than the knowledge that the money had been provided for furtherance of the desirable goal of bringing about the demise of the Castro regime.

3. It is noteworthy that the plan insists that the MRP retain complete and sole control of all the operations contemplated. Thus, it states, on page 6, that:

"Contributions will be received without compromising the responsibility for decisions and organization of the plans. This does not rule out our search for counselling and coordination with other factors present, but without ever surrendering the responsibility and absolute control of the operations." (Underlining added)

It also appears to be the MRP view that its position should be analogous to that of a government-in-exile which has been recognized as the rightful regime of its country. Thus the plan states that:

".....with the governments willing to support us we should establish high-level contact which will make it possible to discuss questions of basic policy of events and plans opportunely, on a mutual footing." (Underlining added)

4. The operations contemplated by the MRP are not too dissimilar from those proposed by the WH/4/PM Section for FY 1962. They include the operation of maritime assets capable of reaching all Cuban coasts, the operation of aerial supply craft (from two bases), the training and infiltration of W/T operators and intelligence agents, support of internal guerrillas, and the training of eight or ten 150-man groups for introduction into Cuba at the right time. (There is also considerable stress given to the mounting of extensive psychological warfare). The MRP plan would pose many of the problems that any PM program does -- the when, where, how, and how much questions involved in procuring and operating air and maritime bases and the policy questions relating to actions which include sabotage and active resistance.

5. It is our view that the MRP plan should not be supported in its present form for these reasons:

a. The MRP seeks exclusive control of the anti-Castro resistance. The plan itself states that the best hope for the Cuban people is "offered by the set of ideas and aims of the democratic left". Aside from the truth or falsity of that statement, the MRP is in no position to claim effective leadership of the anti-Castro resistance. There have been, and are many groups in that field. The MRP has no record of action of which we have reliable evidence which would argue for giving them preferential status. In specific instances their claim to certain capabilities have been tested and found wanting. It is our view that reliance upon groups as such, with no control, is detrimental to operational achievement.

b. The MRP seeks "blank-check" financial support while retaining complete control of operations. So far as we are aware there is no provision in either Agency or U. S. Government policies and regulations which would permit the handing over of the substantial sums envisaged by the MRP plan without retention by the donor of the same measure of control over the use of the funds. The MRP plan, e.g., almost certainly would involve operations mounted from bases within U. S. territorial jurisdiction, yet those operations would remain under MRP "absolute control". We doubt that the F.B.I., Customs and Immigration Service, Coast Guard and other concerned agencies would ever agree to any such arrangement where U. S. territory is concerned, and we would certainly be in no position to vouch for the MRP operations. Anti-Castro operations mounted from anywhere outside of Cuba are going to be attributed to the United States. Since that is the case, the U. S. Government must control those operations as effectively as it can.

c. The MRP seeks to operate on an equal footing with the providers of funds. While governments, including in some instances governments-in-exile, can be treated as equals by the U. S. Government, there is no precedent for extending such treatment to a private organization. To do so in this case would result in the arousing of the bitter enmity of the anti-Bay resistance groups, of which there are many, without any corresponding benefit.

d. The "take" from MRP operations would not justify the cost envisaged. The MRP "take", to date, whether in intelligence or in resistance activity, has been negligible. There are many news stories which refer to the MRP as the largest and best organized of the resistance groups. The MRP plan claims organization down to the township level and states that:

"The MRP has an extensive communication net and is competent in obtaining indispensible elements of intelligence.

This may be so, but we are not aware of any extensive valid information from the MRP of any important resistance activity conducted by them. The entire history of Agency operations involving groups suggest the inadvisability of handing over substantial sums in the hope of a future

"take". Aside from certain tested liaison arrangements, our "take" is taken by agents serving under our direction, regardless of the groups to which they do or do not belong.

6. It should be pointed out that from a political standpoint the MRP organization and plan have elements worthy of consideration. The most important is that the MRP program is one that is attractive to the Cuban masses because, of all the exile programs, that of the MRP is the nearest to the originally stated but betrayed platform of the Castro revolution. For the same reason the MRP is acceptable to many liberal Latin American governments which do not consider supporting other exile groups. The MRP offers the people of Cuba a positive program of social and economic reform. (Whether such a program would be compatible with U. S. interests is, of course, a matter of controversy.) However, in the political sphere the MRP program appears to break away strongly from the 1940 constitution. In other words it may be "Fidelismo sin Fidel". There are other Cuban exile groups who propose social and economic reforms similar to the MRP in which they attempt to base these reforms on some legal continuity of government; that is, a return to the 1940 constitution as a basis for a democratic government in Cuba.

7. In short, we believe that the MRP plan is unrealistic and unworthy of further consideration in its present form. Developments within internal resistance in Cuba indicate that the MRP is becoming part of a unified resistance and the MRP personnel inside Cuba have denied Manolo Ray as an external leader. Our review of the MRP position inside Cuba does not indicate that the MRP has the resources for as extensive a plan as presented nor can the internal MRP hope to direct such a plan in conjunction with other resistance elements. Even if such a plan were feasible, we do not see any possibility of securing a reasonable return for the tremendous amount of money required for this plan unless some real control is agreed to by all and made a part of the plan. Taking into account the consolidation of resistance elements presently taking place in Cuba, it is the Agency's conception that we can best accomplish action operations against the Castro regime by dealing directly with this unified group or its representatives in other groups. Material and financial support would be furnished these groups as they reveal they have the assets to accomplish specific operations and Agency-trained agents and communication equipment would be introduced to the various groups in an effort to have some control and direction of all efforts undertaken. It is presently planned that the MRP, as one of these groups, would receive assistance and direction in the future as specified above. However, it is felt that the present situation among the resistance elements within Cuba make any support of this grandiose plan submitted by the MRP impractical at this time.