

MEMORANDUM

April 29, 1997

To: Jeremy Gunn
cc: Christopher Barger, Michelle Combs, Irene Marr, Bob Skwirot, Kevin Tiernan

From: Manuel E. Legaspi

Subject: ARRB Initial Survey of Cuban Exile group records in the CIA Sequestered Collection Microfilm

Over the past several weeks I have been conducting a survey of the holdings of the Cuban Exile Group folders in the CIA's Segregated Collection microfilm reels. The primary purposes for conducting this survey were 1) to gain an understanding of what currently resides in the microfilm folders, and 2) to make recommendations on additional files to be obtained. Note: I did not include an examination of records for the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC) in this survey. Since the collection of documents related to the CRC are organized separately from the main group of Cuban exile group records, they will be surveyed and reported on as part of another review effort.

JUSTIFICATION FOR SURVEY AND REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FILES

All of these Cuban exile groups were subjects of interest to the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), and as a result, their CIA files were made a permanent part of the Agency's JFK Collection. As such, it is the Review Board's responsibility to see that as complete a record as possible, as they relate to these groups' activities, are made a part of the Collection.

FINDINGS

I conducted a document-by-document review of the files with the intention of identifying any "missing" files and to develop leads on additional files to request from the Agency.

It appears that the files on the Cuban exile groups were collected as a result of HSCA requests for each Cuban exile group. The CIA apparently searched its archives for records on each group, and in doing so, pulled dozens of folders containing raw Directorate of Operations/Plans communications (such as cables and dispatches) and other miscellaneous documents relating to the groups' activities. These files were later retrieved per HSCA requests.

The folders usually cover operational traffic and other miscellaneous documents from a time frame that can roughly be described as 1960 to 1964. There are several notable exceptions to this, however. For example, the subject file for the Junta Revolucionaria Cubana (JURE) contained traffic from well past the time of the JFK assassination, and included information on JURE's attempts to assassinate President Fidel Castro of Cuba in 1966. The folders also contain traffic related to Alpha-66 activity in the 1970's, and some documents date back to 1957.

For the most part, all of the group folders contain traffic for the November 1963, however, there are a few which do not. It is my judgement that in all of these cases, no traffic existed for the time frame of November, 1963. This conclusion was made based on two factors: traffic for the post-November period existed in some of the folders (going into 1964), or no traffic existed past a much earlier date (such as 1962).

Because of the completeness of these files, I believe that it is worth our while to limit our requests for additional documents to the solid leads that are outlined in the following paragraph. While there is the always the potential for the discovery of more documents that might shed some light on the assassination, such searches for "general" files could be an effort in proving a negative, and overtax our resources. More specific searches for "unique" records, such as the ones below, hold the best chance for additional records.

Over the course of my survey, I did uncover two leads which, in my opinion, are documents which would significantly augment the historical record as it relates to Cuban exile activity during the JFK assassination time frame. These documents are:

- Correspondence between the Assistant Attorney General, Walter Yeagley, and the General Counsel of the CIA, Lawrence Houston regarding the CIA's interest in different Cuban exile groups and the F.B.I.'s investigation of these groups in 1962-1963. I was only able to locate isolated documents on this subject in the folders, it is unknown if a more complete record of these letters and associated documents exist.
- Monthly Operational Reports for the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (D.R.E.). While traffic for the D.R.E. for 1963 resides in the folders, the more comprehensive Monthly Operational Reports for December, 1962 to April, 1964 are missing. (The range of reports starts with May, 1962 and ends with December, 1966, with the 1963 period representing one of a few holes in the complete file.)

The Yeagley-Houston correspondence is significant in that it may provide a clear outline of

high-level CIA officials' knowledge and interest in various Cuban exile activity and their policy on the curbing of exile raids into Cuba (enforcement of the Neutrality Act) in late 1962 and 1963.

The monthly operational reports for the D.R.E. for 1963 are significant in that they could provide insight on the CIA's knowledge of many of the activities that the D.R.E. was allegedly involved with during this time period, such as planning an invasion of Cuba.

ACTION

I will be working with Barry Harrleson at HRG to develop a strategy for finding the D.R.E. reports. Barry has indicated that he is willing to allow one of his reviewers to work with us to find out if the missing reports exist somewhere else in the collection. If we are still unable to locate the reports, we can submit an informal request to HRG, who will then task the relevant focal points (likely the D.O. records people and perhaps someone from the Latin America Desk) for a response.

In regards to the Yeagley-Houston correspondence, the Office of General Counsel of the CIA has indicated that their Executive Registry should have copies of all formal correspondence between the GC and the AAG. I will make arrangements to examine these records through HRG in the near future.