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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Raul Castro Ruz

Raul Castro Ruz, the 27-year-old brother of Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro (32 years old), became commander-in-chief of the Cuban armed forces in mid February 1959. He had previously been designated by Fidel Castro as the second most important leader and heir to the Cuban revolution should Fidel die.

Raul Castro is one of the top members of the revolutionary regime most frequently charged with being Communist or pro-Communist. Whether or not he is actually a Communist, his actions and attitudes have encouraged and facilitated Communist activities in Cuba. He is bitterly anti-American and has made frequent public statements blaming the United States for all of Cuba's economic, political and social problems. The United States, he charges, has controlled a disproportionate share of Cuba's wealth and has supported dictatorial governments. He has also charged that the United States continued to supply

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Batista with arms, even after the embargo on arms shipments was established in March 1958.

Born on his father's plantation near Mayari, Oriente Province, on 3 June 1931, Raul attended secondary schools in Santiago de Cuba and later went to the University of Havana, although he is not believed to have received a degree. Shortly after Batista's ouster in January 1959, Raul married Vilma Espin, a fellow rebel who has been reported as being a Communist. Her sister is considered to be a Communist.

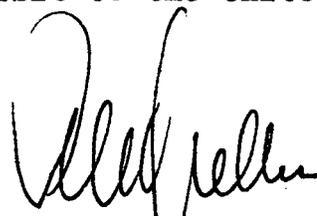
In 1953 Raul attended a Conference for the Defense of the Rights of Youth in Vienna from 22 to 27 March, at which he was one of the speakers. Following the conference, which attracted both Communist and non-Communist delegates, Raul is believed to have travelled in Europe and possibly behind the Iron Curtain. He returned to Cuba in June and was reportedly detained briefly by Havana customs agents for having in his possession a quantity of "Communist propaganda material."

He participated in the abortive attack led by Fidel Castro against the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba on 26 July 1953. He was captured and remained in prison until freed under a general amnesty declared by Batista in May 1955. He followed his brother into exile and was a member of Fidel's original invasion force which landed in Cuba on 2 December 1956.

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In March 1958, he led a small column of men to the Sierra Cristal in northern Oriente Province and successfully established the "Second Front." He came into international prominence in mid-1958 when he kidnapped more than 50 US and Canadian citizens, including a bus load of personnel from the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay. Although Fidel Castro disapproved of the kidnappings and instructed Raul to release the captives promptly, Raul delayed the process for approximately three weeks, gaining a great deal of publicity as well as a brief respite from Cuban air force bombings. The episode provoked much speculation that Raul was attempting to establish his own reputation as a revolutionary leader at Fidel Castro's expense.

Both Fidel and Raul Castro have consistently maintained that their relations are harmonious. A speech by Raul at the University of Havana on 20 April, however, attacked the United States as an "enemy of the Cuban revolution," in sharp contrast to Fidel's concurrent speeches during his visit to the United States.



ALLEN W. DULLES
(Director)

Attachment:

- 1 - Photo of Raul Castro

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Sturley
took
foto of Raul
for copying
2/14/97