

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

SECRET

DCI-2175-20

14 April 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: SAC Briefing (362nd), 14 April 1954

1. The following subjects were prepared:

- a. [REDACTED]
- b. [REDACTED]
- c. [REDACTED]
- d. [REDACTED]
- e. [REDACTED]
- f. [REDACTED]
- g. [REDACTED]
- h. [REDACTED]
- i. [REDACTED]) dropped
- j. [REDACTED])

2. The DCI briefed for 30 minutes. With one exception, he did not follow the texts closely, but used his own words and often his own sequence. He made no statements, however, which were contrary to the prepared texts. There were no questions.

a. [REDACTED]

b. [REDACTED]

c. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DELETED TEXT
NOT RELEVANT
TO BAY OF PIGS

~~SECRET~~

d. On the Cuban item he used the first and second paragraphs of the text stating that the attempt by Castro had generally fizzled. He said that the most important factor contributing to this was Castro's failure to subvert any portions of the armed forces and the security elements. He looked for a continuation of hit-and-run raids by Castro. He then handed out several photographs of Castro and his people which had been taken by a CIA agent in Oriente Province. The DCI passed on, and supported, the opinion of this agent that the Communists were not at the root of the Castro movement. He said that the agent had lived with the most edumacistic of Castro's followers and that it was his opinion that, while the man clearly had Marxist tendencies he was not a die-in-the-wool Communist. The DCI said that Batista would retain control of Cuba at least until the elections. He said that very little damage had been done to US property and that which had occurred was only incidental. US property has not been a target for sabotage by Castro's followers.

e. [REDACTED]

f. [REDACTED]

3. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, 24 April at 630C.

PRODUCTION STAFF

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RELEASE AS SANITIZED

1987

11 April 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Report on [REDACTED]'s Visit to the Fidel
CASTRO Headquarters in the Sierra Maestra.
(12 - 26 March 1958)

1. An agent of CIA who was with Fidel CASTRO in the Sierra Maestra from 12 to 26 March reports the following:

A. As of 26 March 1958 Fidel CASTRO's military forces in the Sierra Maestra Mountains, excluding administrative and support personnel, had increased to 1200 from the twelve survivors of the original expedition which landed in Oriente Province on 2 December 1956. However, CASTRO still does not have sufficient strength to engage the Cuban Army (28,000 men) in open combat. Therefore, CASTRO is still forced to confine himself to guerrilla warfare and sabotage activities.

B. Despite its numerical superiority, the Cuban Army would find it extremely difficult to liquidate the CASTRO forces in the confines of the Sierra Maestra or the northern foothills of that range. This terrain lends itself to repeated ambushes by CASTRO. In addition CASTRO has the complete support of the population in this area. As a result of this situation, it is unlikely that the Cuban Army will succeed in driving CASTRO and his forces out of this stronghold in the foreseeable future.

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C. CASTRO hoped to achieve his purpose of forcing BATISTA to abdicate through a campaign of intensified terrorism in Oriente Province and a nation-wide general strike. This campaign was scheduled to begin in early April 1958, inasmuch as CASTRO's plan called for the collapse of the BATISTA regime by 12 April.

D. CASTRO has declared that he would not negotiate an agreement with BATISTA. Neither would he deal with a military junta. He would be willing to negotiate a truce only with a civilian or a group of civilians not identified with BATISTA.

E. In regard to allegations that the CASTRO movement is Communist penetrated, [REDACTED] found no evidence of any penetration on a noticeable scale.

F. CASTRO emphasized that if the general strike failed, he would not give up the fight. He would retire to the mountains, rebuild his forces and await another opportunity to overthrow the BATISTA government.

2. [REDACTED] took a number of photographs while he was with CASTRO.

A selection of these is attached.

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NSC BRIEFING

13 April 1958

CUBA

- I. Castro's long awaited general strike and "all-out war" against Batista launched on 9 April has generally fizzled.
- A. Sabotage, shootings and partial strikes threw Havana into confusion for more than an hour, but the armed forces quickly had the situation under control.
1. The city ~~was~~ reported outwardly near normal ~~on 11 April~~.
 2. The strike had some initial success in outlying provinces, but there was no indication of a snowballing anti-Batista movement.
- B. The rebels were more successful in Santiago, in Oriente province, where their influence is greatest, but the strike was waning by 11 April after government troops dispersed groups of rebels fighting in the streets.
- II. The Castro movement attracts support from a variety of social groups.
- A. The greatest active support comes from youth groups; logistic and financial support from civic groups; and moral support from the population of Oriente Province, which is overwhelmingly anti-Batista.
- B. The Church, while increasingly anti-Batista, has never indicated a pro-Castro policy, although some individual members of the hierarchy are sympathetic to the rebels.

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III. We have not found much evidence of Communist influence in Castro's movement although there are some communists in his organization.

- A. CIA representative who was with Castro from 12-26 March 1958 found no evidence of significant Communist penetration.
- B. The outlawed Cuban Communist Party (membership 8,000 to 12,000) came out in support of Castro.
 - 1. Castro publicly refused this support.
 - 2. But the Communists will probably take advantage of the situation to carry out independent propaganda and sabotage campaign no matter what Castro says or does.
- C. The Soviet radio has indicated hostility to the allegedly US-backed Batista regime without committing itself to support Castro.

IV. US investment in Cuba is valued at over \$1 billion. US enterprises have incurred limited damage from the rebellion.

- A. Two US nickel plants in Oriente Province were briefly affected by absenteeism. Employees of other US enterprises are returning as transportation facilities are put back in operation.
- B. Some US interests--2 oil refineries and a cement plant near Havana and a manganese mine and a gas bottling company in Oriente--have incurred damage from sabotage in recent months.
 - 1. There is no indication that US interests are being singled out for sabotage.
- C. The US naval base at Guantanamo has not been affected. But the CO there is concerned over possible damage to the water works, which lie 12 miles outside of the base.

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- V. Castro's failure probably cost him a serious loss of prestige and psychological initiative.
- A. The abortive first activist all-out attempt of the rebellion underscored his lack of support not only in Havana and the provinces but also in Oriente, the stronghold of the rebel movement.
1. Castro can almost certainly retain his base in the mountains of Oriente.
- B. The rebellion has also proved the continued loyalty to Batista of both the armed forces and the organized labor movement. Castro had counted on defections from both of these most important groups.
1. There is, however, dissidence at all levels in the armed forces, and demoralization is reported on the increase.
- C. But Castro emphasized to the CIA representative in March that if the general strike failed, he would retire to the mountains, rebuild his forces, and await another opportunity to overthrow the Batista government.
- D. The next general election is set for November. Batista's term ends in February 1959.

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