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Partial Duplicate

[Redacted]
See Tab 24

21 May 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Maxwell Taylor

I attach a memorandum, dated 20 May, on paramilitary activities prepared by Mr. Bissell in consultation with various members of his paramilitary staff. I am in basic agreement with this general presentation, subject to two observations.

A. Once high policy approval has been obtained for the planning or conduct of a major paramilitary activity, either in support of a friendly government or directed towards hostile or unfriendly areas, which calls for C. I. A. support, the Department of Defense should have the direct and primary responsibility, in consultation with C. I. A., for developing the plans for the overt actions to be taken by Defense and the complementary or supplementary activities of a covert nature to be run by C. I. A. As regards all actions run by C. I. A., I believe that the closest liaison should be maintained throughout, with the Department of Defense and wherever appropriate, Department of Defense personnel should be assigned to review and approve all military features of the covert action.

B. Paragraph 7 includes the recommendation that the Development Projects Division (DPD) of C. I. A., should be enlarged to meet requirements in the field of land and sea paramilitary activities. Since I believe that the Department of Defense should assume primary responsibility for these activities, any present enlargement of the DPD Division for their conduct should be largely of a cadre character, (1) to facilitate effective planning, and (2) to permit the earmarking of assets to be made available both through existing DOD and C. I. A. facilities or through the recruitment of volunteers and "soldiers of fortune" whose proficiencies and availability had been previously determined. In effect, I do not favor any present increases in C. I. A. personnel in this field except as needed for planning, for the development and maintenance of techniques and assets, and for general cadre use.

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Finally, I believe it would be desirable that a joint DOD - C. I. A. study should be immediately made in order to submit recommendations as to the chain of command for all reasonably foreseeable paramilitary operations and for the provision, in both DOD and C. I. A. , for the most rapid and efficient marshalling of assets for any foreseeable emergency in the paramilitary field.

Subject to the above, I feel that the attached paper furnishes a satisfactory basis of approach to the paramilitary problem as far as C. I. A. is concerned.

ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

Enclosure

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20 May 1961

PARAMILITARY ACTIVITIES

1. Historically and logically the CIA has responsibilities with respect to paramilitary activities only because, and to the extent that, these have to be carried on either in true secrecy or in such a manner that official U. S. support of them can be plausibly disclaimed. In order, therefore, to determine what should be the extent of this Agency's responsibility and, more broadly, how the U. S. Government should be organized for the conduct of these activities, it is necessary to consider exactly what it is that needs to be done covertly (or in a disclaimable fashion) and under what circumstances.

2. Many kinds of paramilitary activities have at one time or another had to be performed in a covert or disclaimable manner, including the following:

Recruiting and organization of military forces.

Training.

Provision of U. S. and third national technicians -- especially communicators, trainers and tactical advisers.

Logistics support (in training and in combat).

Operation and maintenance of transport and tactical aircraft.

Provision of air and sea lift for personnel and materiel.

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Exercise of de facto command control.

Typically, the above functions have been performed with respect to (a) sub-military operations of a classic resistance type, (b) guerrilla warfare and (c) very small scale conventional warfare.

3. It should be emphasized that very few situations have historically, or are likely prospectively, to require covert or unofficial performance of all of the required functions. In this respect, there is a basic distinction between two types of situations in which covert techniques are required: (a) those in which the U. S. is assisting a friendly and legally recognized government to conduct paramilitary operations, and (b) those in which the U. S. is working with a rebel group seeking to overthrow either a recognized or at least a de facto government. In the former type of situation, organization, training and at least initial equipment of the forces being supported can be carried out in friendly territory and, for the most part, perfectly overtly. U. S. support of these forces must be covert or disclaimable only after they are committed to combat in enemy territory. Moreover, the friendly government in greater or lesser degree furnishes cover for such U. S. support. On the other hand, when the objective is the overthrow of a de facto government or the support of a rebellion against it, as in Guatemala, Indonesia and Cuba, there is apt to be a strong desire to conduct all U. S. activities in a disclaimable manner.

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4. As recent events have demonstrated with distressing clarity, however, there is a limiting size and scope beyond which it is simply impossible to keep an operation plausibly disclaimable, let alone truly covert. It was probably a mistake in the Cuban operation to attempt to maintain the pretense that certain activities were being conducted covertly though they were in fact widely known and reported in the press. The consequence was a sacrifice of various features which determine military effectiveness in the effort to buy an inevitably unreal disassociation from U. S. support. In any future operations of this type, those activities that exceed the limit of what can plausibly be disclaimed should presumably be acknowledged openly, even though their ultimate purpose may still have to be officially denied until after the paramilitary operation is launched. If the fact that certain things are being done can be openly recognized, no sacrifices that reduce effectiveness need be made. Then also the responsibility for these acknowledged activities can be placed in Defense or State and both the U. S. Government and the Agency will avoid the anomaly of pretending to conceal what everyone knows.

5. Applying this philosophy to the Cuban operation, for instance, it might have been better to have organized military training for Cuban volunteers in the U. S., either fairly openly in refugee camps or (as has been proposed since the failure of the landing) in a special unit of the Army. Likewise, on the political front, State Department might have handled.

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openly certain of the relationships with the Revolutionary Council which might have been permitted openly to raise money in the United States. There would then have been no effort at secrecy about these activities. What would have been left to have been done clandestinely would have been the planning and arrangement for logistic support, including ships and aircraft, and (if desired) the preparation of a staging base. It is noteworthy that as the operation was conducted, these activities never did receive any advance publicity or much publicity even after the fact. Although it would have required most careful arrangements to move Cuban personnel to the staging base without prejudicing the possibility of surprise, this would not have been much more difficult than the staging operation actually carried out. Without going further into detail it is clear that to have done openly those things that could not be kept secret, or (as the event proved) disclaimable, would have permitted a reallocation of responsibility as between CIA and the Department of Defense. It is to be noted that this mixture of overt and covert features during the preparatory period is feasible and establishes in advance the benign and moral blessing of the U. S. Government for the cause we are supporting. This may pre-determine that the over-all operation is not truly disclaimable after the launching but materially reduces the image of hypocrisy and deceit which otherwise might prevail.

6. It will still be necessary to bring the best professional military talent, together with appropriate civilian skills, to bear on activities

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organized and conducted as covert operations. How is this to be done?

There are, it is submitted, four elements to a solution:

a. First there should be created, within the Agency's administrative framework (for security reasons) subject to a degree of joint control, an organization properly structured and staffed to conduct covert paramilitary operations.

b. Secondly there must be maintained, partly in the Agency and partly in the Defense establishment, an adequate pool of the required skills.

c. Third proper provision must be made for the support of this organization and the review of its plans and activities by the Joint Staff and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

d. Fourth there should be created as an integral part of this organization a support component capable of providing logistics, personnel and administrative support to covert paramilitary operations. In addition to access to Agency and Department of Defense inventories, it should have procurement authorities, as required. (S)(1), (b)(3)

7. The Agency already possesses [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This organization should be enlarged to incorporate personnel with parallel responsibilities for land and sea operations. These

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responsibilities should include the development and maintenance of capabilities. The organization thus established should, however, also act as at least the cadre for the military staff having line of command responsibility for future covert paramilitary operations. It should have as its deputy chief a military officer provided by the Department of Defense, and should be staffed in considerable degree with military officers on assignment to the Agency.

8. The Agency already possesses a pool of skills in such unconventional warfare and supporting activities as sabotage, guerrilla training, agent communications, small boat operations, and air resupply. The Agency needs, however, to enlarge the group of career officers who possess certain of these skills.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] These skills then have to be maintained and advanced with the times. Similarly, the Department of Defense possesses pools of complementing skills, particularly in units such as the Special Forces. Access must be provided to utilize these skills as required, under procedures which would ensure the requisite degree of disclaimability.

9. A group of officers on the Joint Staff [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] should be designated as having continuing responsibility on behalf of the Joint Chiefs for support and

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(S)(1)
(S)(3)

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review of the activities of the proposed paramilitary organization. Their review should cover both those activities involved in the development of paramilitary capabilities (including training and arrangements for equipment) and specific contingency plans or operational plans for specific operations. In addition they would serve as a channel through which access could be had for the spotting of indigenous foreign nationals, trained for paramilitary operations under MAAG programs, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(S)(1) (S)(3)

10. The existing Development Projects Division contains a small materiel support group, which includes in its duties the supervision of an existing logistics installation. This group should be expanded, using the experience gained from and personnel assigned to the Cuban operation, in order to provide adequate and timely support for covert paramilitary operations. A continuing and important function of this group would be to ensure timely forewarning to Agency and Department of Defense logistics components of foreseeable requirements that may have to be met on a crash basis. It would have procurement authorities, and would develop procedures for sterile acquisition of items not obtainable through normal inventories.

11. The mode of operation, making use of these arrangements, will always be determined by the characteristics of the specific situation.

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It is almost invariably true that where covert paramilitary activities are called for, other kinds of covert activities are needed as well. Usually these include propaganda, political action, and intelligence collection. Where a combined operation threatens to be of considerable scale, it can best be handled under a task force concept. Typically, the task force should include sections responsible for political, propaganda, and intelligence activities as well as paramilitary and supporting functions. It is proposed for the future, however, that the expanded Development Projects Division would act as the military element in the task force with the line of command running through the chief of this division, who would in effect serve as commander of the paramilitary forces involved in the over-all operation. To the extent necessary, these cadres would have to be augmented [REDACTED] by the temporary assignment of additional military personnel. Through their direct and continuing relationship with the Joint Staff, the means would exist both for joint military planning and for review of those plans by the Joint Chiefs themselves. In the case of smaller scale paramilitary activities, a formalized task force may be unnecessary. In such a situation, the expanded Development Projects Division could either assign personnel to the appropriate area division or take command responsibility for paramilitary activities subject to coordination by the area division concerned.

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Typically, under such an arrangement, [REDACTED]

acts in effect as a unified field commander since supporting paramilitary activities come under his control. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(S)(1)
(S)(3)