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Executive Registry  
76-8447/5

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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

OLL 76.2022

PAT M. HOLT, CHIEF OF STAFF  
ARTHUR M. KUHL, CHIEF CLERK

July 21, 1976

The Honorable George Bush  
Director, Central Intelligence  
Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. *Bush*

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oceans and International Environment of the Committee on Foreign Relations, I have been particularly concerned about the unconfirmed reports concerning the covert use of weather modification techniques designed to cause droughts or severe rainstorms to damage crops of nations considered hostile to U.S. interests (see enclosed article from the Providence Journal). I would appreciate the Agency providing me with answers to the following questions:

(1) During the period of 1968 to 1972, did the CIA conduct, finance or encourage other groups, in any way, to seed the wind currents and clouds off the coast of Cuba (or any other nation) to cause them to drop rain before they passed over that country?

(2) Did the CIA during the period of 1968 to 1972 seed the wind currents and clouds passing over Cuba (or any other nation) to cause severe storms or flooding that would impede the harvest activities within that nation?

*All best wishes*

Sincerely,

*(Signature)*

Claiborne Pell  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
Oceans and International  
Environment

Enclosure

P.T. 6/29/70

## U.S. denies it tried to alter Cuba weather

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department denied charges yesterday that the United States tried to change the weather over Cuba in 1969 and 1970 in order to damage that nation's sugar crop.

"It's not true," a Pentagon spokesman said of the charge made Saturday by a former Defense Department consultant, Lowell Ponte.

Ponte, formerly an environmental researcher with the International Research & Technology Corp. of Washington, D.C., said the CIA and the Pentagon cooperated in a program to seed clouds near Cuba so they would drop their rain before reaching the island, thus causing a damaging drought.

"We have never conducted weather modification around Cuba," the Pentagon spokesman said.

He added that there has only been one classified weather modification program in the past. That one was over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Vietnam, he said, and was made public in 1974.

The spokesman said the only current weather change program being conducted by the Pentagon involves fog dispersal at airports.

The CIA could not be reached for comment.

Ponte said the CIA embarked on a major cloud-seeding program over Cuba after Cuban Premier Fidel Castro staked his honor in 1970 to producing a record 10-million metric ton harvest of sugar cane.

He said that the 1970 Cuban sugar harvest fell two million metric tons short of Castro's goal. But Ponte added that there is "no way to say definitely" the CIA's cloud seeding caused the harvest shortfall.

He said the CIA decided to seed wind currents about 200 miles from Cuba "to get clouds heading towards Cuba to drop their rain early before they reached Cuba." He said the seeding was done with silver iodide, but that it would have been impossible to detect because the rain would

fall into the ocean before ever reaching Cuba.

Ponte said he does not know whether any similar cloud seedings took place in the area of Cuba after 1970.

He said he has no documentary evidence to support his charges. Nor does he claim to have been personally involved in the project. He says his information was obtained from "conversation with two think-tank people and one foreign intelligence officer" with access to information on the seeding project.

Executive Registry

76-8447/4

I am sorry it has taken so long to get back to you re your attached question of 7 July, but we have now checked all appropriate files and the institutional memory of various personnel in DDS&T/ORD and OTS, as well as DDO/LA Division, and I am assured that we have never been involved in any operations directed to weather modifications over Cuba. There is an old feasibility study done by the DDS&T re the possibilities, but the project was abandoned.

AT



BCEvans

*CB*  
*7/17/76*

Date 16 July 1976

Executive Registry

NEW YORK TIMES

DD/S&T# 3059-76

PAGE 30

A-7.1  
12 July

### C.I.A.: Fidel Castro's Helpers

To the Editor:

One of the favorite arguments of the Latin-American left is that the development of the Southern Hemisphere is impossible because of the stifling incubus of North American power.

An Ecuadorean politician once observed, quite confidentially, that the *gringos* controlled everything in his country, even the traffic lights. In "One Hundred Years of Solitude," the most widely read novel in Latin America, Gabriel Garcia Marquez alleges that the Americans control the weather. What audacity! What a tragedy this *cratinismo* and paranoia which afflict Latin America's underdeveloped intellectuals!

But wait: C.I.A. to the rescue. This weekend, as President Ford was lecturing Fidel Castro against political interventionism, a former Defense Department researcher revealed that the United States has been waging a secret weather war against Cuba, trying to topple the Castro regime by artificially stimulating a drought in order to wreck the island's agricultural economy.

Fortunately, this weather war, like so many of the agency's brilliant and well-publicized ploys against Cuba, was apparently a complete failure. Indeed, one wonders whether the agency and the supporters of clandestine

operations in the White House and the Congress have managed to achieve precisely the obverse of that intended. By creating a constant aura of threats to Cuba's security, the U.S. has provided Castro with the environment necessary for the rationalization of his police state. The agency may well be the best friend Castro ever had.

One suspects that the greatest impact of the agency's dirty tricks has been felt, not abroad, but rather within the United States. Each new revelation of the agency's derring-do is a new stroke in a portrait of an America without honor: a country capable of the shabbiest kind of behavior. The partisans of *realpolitik* have run amuck. They are force-feeding a new, and isolationist generation of young Americans, a generation steeped in cynicism and disillusionment about our activities overseas.

Of course, there are some sentinels of liberty who have warned against policies which cause the sapping of the national spirit. Henry Kissinger is one of them. But then, was he not also director of the National Security Council when the weather war was launched against Cuba?

ALFRED L. PADULA Jr.  
Asst. Prof., Dept. of History  
University of Maine  
Portland, Me., June 29, 1976



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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Routing Slip

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3	S/MC				
4	DDS&T	X			
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6	DDA				
7	DDO				
8	D/DCI/IC				
9	D/DCI/NID				
10	GC				
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12	IG				
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Remarks:

For response to DCI question.



A/Executive Secretary

8 July 1976

Date

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**Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt**

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OLC 76-2100  
28 July 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: DD/S&T  
DDO (Attn: [redacted] EO/DDO)

FROM: [redacted]  
Assistant Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT: Request from Senator Claiborne Pell

1. Attached is a letter from Senator Claiborne Pell requesting information on any CIA activities with respect to weather modifications from the period 1968-72. Would you please review your records to determine whether any of the allegations mentioned in Senator Pell's letter have any basis in fact.

2. Please note that in addition to the time period specified (1968-72), Senator Pell is interested in whether we either conducted, financed, or encouraged other groups in any way in weather modification activities; specifically, to cause drought or to cause severe storms or flooding. Although Senator Pell's interest is primarily in Cuba, he also asks whether we conducted any activities with respect to any other nation.

3. We need to respond to Senator Pell no later than 30 July.

SIGNED

[redacted]

Attachment:  
As stated

Distribution:  
1 - Each Add'e  
1 - OLC Subject  
1 - OLC Chrono

OLC:THW:ndl (28 July 1976)

OLC 76-2170

INTERNAL USE ONLY

30 July 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Office of Legislative Counsel

ATTENTION :  STA

SUBJECT : Request from Senator Claiborne Pell --  
Weather Modifications

REFERENCES : A. OLC 76-2100, 28 July 1976  
(DDS&T #3059-76/1, 28 July 1976)

B. Letter from Senator Claiborne Pell  
dated July 21, 1976

1. In response to referent correspondence, the Office of Technical Service has searched its files and records concerning the possibility of any weather modification activities that might have been conducted during the period 1968-1972.

2. Senator Pell may be advised that this Office has never conducted any such weather modifications during the specific time frame of 1968-1972 or any other time.

STA

David S. Brandwein  
Director  
Office of Technical Service

cc: SA/DDS&T

INTERNAL USE ONLY



OLC76-2136

ORD-1664-76

29 July 1976

AT  
MEMORANDUM FOR:

[Redacted]

Assistant Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT:

Weather Modification - Senator Pell's Inquiry

Per your request of 28 July 1976 regarding Senator Clairborne Pell's letter of 21 July 1976, the Office of Research and Development has reviewed its files and finds no record of involvement of ORD personnel or resources in any of the activities referred to.

[Redacted]

Acting Director  
of  
Research and Development

STA

10

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### EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

#### Routing Slip

TO:	ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
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7	DDA			
8	DDO			
9	D/DCI/NIO			
10	GC			
11	LC	✓		
12	IG			
13	Compt			
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15	D/S			
16	DTR			
17	Asst/DCI			
18	AO/DCI			
19	C/IPS			
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SUSPENSE		<u>July 30</u> Date		

Remarks:

*pls. prepare response for DCI*

A / Executive Secretary

7/26/76  
Date

STA