

17 Jul 53

D R A F T C O P Y

For Discussion Purposes Only.

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL

-MEMORANDUM-

SUBJECT: Transfer of Cargo from GROUP to RUFUS.

2003

I. Conditions governing sea transfer of cargo from GROUP'S vessal to that of RUFUS.

1. That rendez-vous shall be effected well off, and out of sight of, the Atlantic Coast of Central America.
2. That GROUP'S VESSAL SHALL REACH, off-load cargo, and depart the rendez-vous unobserved.
3. That, subsequent to "b" above, and on GROUP'S orders, RUFUS will report to the rendez-vous and on-load cargo.

II. Possible methods of cargo transfer under the above conditions.

1. Ship-to Shore. Under this procedure GROUP'S vessal would lay down the cargo on some previously selected beach site and withdraw. Following this RUFUS, on orders from GROUP, would report to the beach site and on-load cargo.
2. Ship-to-Ship. Under this procedure RUFUS would place and anchor his vessal at the rendez-vous and, taking its crew with him, withdraw from the area on a second vessal. GROUP'S vessal would then approach, tie-up to the anchored vessal, and transfer all cargo. On completion of the transfer GROUP would depart the area and order RUFUS back to his vessal.
3. Evaluation of the two methods.
 - a. Communications. Communications, which would be via radio, would be the same under both methods.
 - b. Cargo Handling. Cargo handling under the ship-to-ship procedure would be simpler and faster. Personnel charged with cargo handling report that ship-to-ship operations could be completed in 12-14 working hours, whereas beach operations would require some 35 working hours as a minimum, and would be restricted to daylight periods. Further, beach operations would require small boats to shuttle cargo to the beach or, if water depths permit, the construction of a provisional pier. Personnel requirements would be higher, namely a beach party.
 - c. Operational Control. Operational control will remain completely with GROUP under both procedures in that GROUP can suspend ~~OPERATION~~ at its discretion. Break-off could be effected most quickly under ship-to-ship operations as it would require only the releasing of mooring lines. Beach operations would require the retrieving of small boats and the beach party.

- d. Operational Security. If it is accepted that the most sensitive phase of the entire operation will be that period when GROUP'S vessel is discharging cargo then it follows that, all other factors being equal, the shorter this period the greater the security. Thus ship-to-ship operations, requiring about 1/3 the time necessary for beach operations, would give the best security. In addition, under ship-to-ship operations, RUFUS' second vessel would be available for picket duty over the horizon.
- e. Summary. RUFUS has accepted the fact that responsibility for his vessel throughout the entire operation will remain with him. This includes those two periods when his vessel will be left unattended. Considering the two procedures it is believed better to leave a vessel unattended for two or three hours than to leave a considerable tonnage of equipment similarly unattended on an open beach. This point has no bearing on the greater or less security for GROUP'S vessel but on the greater or less security for the overall operation.

III. Selection and reconnaissance of sites for cargo transfer.

1. In selecting possible sites for cargo transfer the following reconnaissances will be carried out;
 - a. Map reconnaissance by GROUP. This reconnaissance has been completed. A list of the sites selected is included in paragraph IV of this memorandum.
 - b. Ship and/or aerial reconnaissance by RUFUS. An aerial reconnaissance of the sites selected is now in progress. RUFUS hopes to have in GROUP'S hands a report, including photographs, of this reconnaissance by 17 July.
 - c. Ship reconnaissance by GROUP. This reconnaissance will be carried out upon the satisfactory completion of the reconnaissance by RUFUS. The purpose of GROUP'S reconnaissance, aside from personnel training, will be to make a final selection of a Principal, First and, Second, alternate sites.
2. Value and limitations of the reconnaissances.
 - a. Value.
 1. Training and familiarization of GROUP personnel.
 2. Provide basic data necessary for the preparation of an operational plan.
 - 3.

b. Limitations.

1. The reconnaissances will not provide assurance that , on the date GROUP'S vessal arrives to carry out the cargo transfer, the site and/or area will be devoid of other persons or ships.

c. Summary. In light of the above it will be necessary, in the development of an operational order, to provide the commander of the operation sufficient latitude and flexibility to enable him to adjust to local conditions on arrival in the area. The over-riding requirement, once the operation is set in motion, is that it, the operation, be carried out to completion. Therefore the commander must be authorized, and prepared to, speed-up, change, or delay his schedule as on the spot conditions dictate.

IV. Sites reconnoitered via map.

1. Data common to all sites reconnoitered.

a. Tides. Tides throughout the general area vary from 1 to 2 ft.

b. Currents. Currents vary from 0 to 2 knots per hour.

c. Prevailing winds. From the East and North-East.

d. Turtle Fishing Season. From April through July.

e. Source Data.

1. Nautical charts prepared by U.S. Hydrographic Office.

2. Text; "Sailing Directions for East Coasts of Central America and Mexico", by U.S. Navy Department, Hydrographic Office.

2. Site: SERRANILLA BANK - Lat. $16^{\circ} 00'$ N. Long. $79^{\circ} 50'W$
See H.O. Chart 1489

a. Location. Some 400 miles N. of Colon, Panama; 200 miles E. of Cabo Gracias a Dios, Nicaragua; 180 miles SW of Jamaica, BWI. The Bank is some 100 miles E. of the regular shipping channels.

b. Description. The Bank, some 24 miles long, consists of a series of reefs and cays, the former varying from 1 to 3 miles in length and from 100 to 300 yards in width. The half dozen or cays are from 400 to 600 yards in length. They are composed of coral and sand and covered with stunted brush and grass. They average six to eight feet above the sea level. There is no evidence of permanent or semi-permanent inhabitation though it is to be assumed that fishermen visit the Bank during turtle season.

- c. Sea approaches. Sea approaches from the S. and E. appear to be excellent. The sea bottom is covered with white sand. Channels between the cays range from 400 yards to 1 mile. Water depths throughout are reported to be very good.
 - d. Ownership. None indicated.
 - e. Operational value. There are several points throughout the Bank which would serve excellently for ship-to-ship or beach operations. The best of these are Beason Cay, Middle Cay, and East Cay. For the type of operation contemplated the Bank appears to fulfill every requirement, namely, it is well away from shipping channels, can be approached and entered with safety, its size would permit ships to enter and carry out operations with considerable local concealment.
3. Site: SERRANA BANK - Lat. $14^{\circ} 20' N.$ Long. $80^{\circ} 15' W.$
See H.O. Chart 1374
- a. Location. Some 300 miles N. of Colon, Panama; 150 miles E. of Cabo Gracias a Dios, Nicaragua; lies 20 miles E. of established shipping lanes.
 - b. Description. The Bank, some 20 miles in length, consists of a series of reefs and cays composed of coral and sand. It is covered with grass and stunted brushwood. The cays average 3 to 4 feet above sea level with a high point of 32 feet. No permanent inhabitation though visited by fishermen during turtle season. Southwest Cay has a beacon light 72 feet high visible at 12 miles.
 - c. Sea approaches. The best approaches are from the S. and W. but must be made with caution as there are coral heads just below the surface. The sea bottom is covered with white sand thus making the coral heads readily visible.
 - d. Ownership. None indicated.
 - e. Operational value. There are two points suitable for ship-to-ship operations; South Cay Channel and North Channel, both of which lead into sheltered lagoons. The reefs and cays would provide local concealment though not to the same extent as SERRANILLA BANK. It lies 100 miles closer to Colon than does SERRANILLA BANK.

4. Site: RONCADOR BANK.- Lat. $13^{\circ} 35'N$. Long. $80^{\circ} 04'W$.
See H.O. Chart 1374

- a. Location. 250 miles N. of Colon, Panama; 150 miles E. of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua; lies 35-40 miles E. of regular shipping lanes.
- b. Description. The Bank, some 7 miles in length, consists of reefs and one cay composed of coral and white sand. The cay, called Roncador Cay, lies 600 yards from the northern end of the Bank. It is some 15 feet high without foliage of any kind. It has a beacon light. SW of the cay and on the reef itself are two white sandy beaches. No permanent habitation, though visited by fisherman during turtle season.
- c. Sea approaches. From the W. the approaches are good. The bottom is covered with white sand and coral heads are readily visible.
- d. Ownership. None indicated.
- e. Operational value. The Bank is suitable for ship-to-ship or beach operations. Because the Bank consists of one long reef it would not provide a great measure of local concealment. Its major advantage lies in its closeness to Colon, 250 miles.