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Paramilitary Case-Study-The Bay of Pigs

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The capabilities for conducting effective intelligence gathering and paramilitary operations have long been essential tools in the conduct of national policy. Unfortunately, however, certain misconceptions regarding the manner and circumstances in which they can be employed arose in this country after World War II and led directly to setbacks like the Bay of Pigs. Rather than shunning the possibility of using covert operations in the future to gain policy objectives, experiences like the Bay of Pigs merely underline the fact that policymakers must be educated as to what is possible, and the responsibility for this lies with the career intelligence community.

PARAMILITARY CASE STUDY

THE BAY OF PIGS

A lecture delivered

by

Professor Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr.

I think that the usual caveat is necessary before I get into the subject at hand. What I am about to say today are my personal views; they do not represent the official CIA view nor the official U.S. Government view. This is an after-action report on an episode in our history which engendered perhaps the most intense emotions and public reaction we have seen since World War II.

President Kennedy in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs made the comment that "Victory has a hundred fathers; defeat is an orphan." I would simply say that as Inspector General of the CIA at the time, I was probably in charge of the orphanage.

There is a very specific definition of covert operations. In the broad literature of intelligence, covert operations are about as old as espionage, which has been called the world's second oldest profession. To be properly considered

covert, an operation must be designed in such a way that it can easily be disavowed by the originating government. The hand of the sponsor must not be visible.

Covert operations, on the other hand, must not be confused with irregular warfare. An example of irregular warfare that has received recent worldwide attention is the operation in Laos. Everybody on both sides knows who is doing what to whom; the aid and assistance is obvious. That is irregular warfare. A covert operation, however, to be totally covert must be so clandestine, so well hidden, that its true sources may never be specifically proven. Guesses, allegations, speculations may be made in the public media, but no proof or verification is permissible if the operation is to be properly considered covert.

At this point in our discussion I believe it will prove helpful to simply list some of the questions that must be

asked before a covert operation is properly undertaken.

- Can it be done covertly? Can the role of the sponsoring government be sufficiently concealed at each step so as to avoid disclosure and thus either failure or a diplomatic setback for the sponsor? And if the cover of the operation is destroyed at any stage, are alternative measures or withdrawal possible?

- Are the assets available to do the job required? Are the indigenous personnel available who are secure and in the proper place to do the work required? If not, are there those available who can be put into place?

- Are all of the assets of the sponsoring government being used? Can the operation be controlled? Will the indigenous forces being used respond to direction or are they likely to go off on their own? Will they accept cancellation of the operation at any time?

- If it succeeds or fails, will they maintain silence? The maxim "Silence is golden" has never been fully accepted in this country, but it is still worth asking. Also, can it be handled securely within the sponsoring government?

- Finally, and this is perhaps the most important question the United States must ask, is the risk worth the potential gain? Has there been a true evaluation of the chance of success or failure by an objective group not directly or emotionally involved with its implementation? Do the policymakers have a realistic understanding of the operation?

These are some of the basic questions which must be asked prior to the mounting of any clandestine or covert operation.

Before turning to the case study itself, a brief review of recent Cuban history is appropriate. Fidel Castro landed in eastern Cuba in 1956 with what turned out to be 12 men. He gathered forces in the Sierra Maestra in 1956 and 1957. Even more important,

however, was the growth of anti-Batista groups in the cities of Cuba among the middle class, the professionals, and the elite. It was the erosion of Batista's vital political support in the cities which led directly to his downfall. The guerrillas in the countryside served merely as a catalyst in this process. And eventually, on 1 January 1959, Castro stepped into the vacuum left by the fleeing Batista.

A fact which many people do not seem to recall was that despite our misgivings about Fidel Castro, and the U.S. Government did have them, we recognized his government fairly promptly. The first cabinet of the Castro regime was probably one of the finest in Cuban history. It is worthy to note, however, that very few of the new Cabinet members stayed very long.

In addition to recognizing Castro, the United States continued its subsidy of Cuba's sugar crop which at that time amounted to approximately \$100 million. The three major U.S. oil companies doing business in Cuba advanced him \$29 million because his treasury was bare when he took over. Batista and his cohorts had seen to that. Castro was not invited to the United States on an official trip, but he came here unofficially to attend a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, and he did have an interview with the then Vice President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon. Then, one by one, the men around Castro began dropping off. He speedily expropriated U.S. property worth \$968 million. Even his closest barbados—the bearded ones—that had been with him in the hills started to turn against him as he appointed more and more Communists, and by the middle of 1960 it became obvious that the United States was not going to be able to do business with Fidel. This, I might say, was a very great shock to Americans. Cuba was a country that we regarded as our protege. We had helped liberate it from Spain; we had assisted it through the

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birth pangs of becoming a nation; we had helped it achieve independence. We had looked at it as one of our offspring, but perhaps we were guilty of having looked after it too closely and in too patronizing a manner.

It was in 1960 that President Eisenhower, based upon advice of his most senior advisers, made the decision that we should try to do to Castro what he had done to Batista. Here is the germ of the first mistake—no one seriously studied the question as to whether this was possible. Most of the anti-Castro people had left Cuba; they were pouring into Florida and if there was a resistance to Fidel Castro, it was mostly in Miami. One of the realities of life was that Fidel Castro had shown unique abilities, together with his brother Raul, Che Guevara, and others, in developing a militia and armed forces of some consequence. Further, they succeeded in establishing one of the better intelligence services in Latin America. It was learned at a very early date that agents sent into Cuba spent more time trying to survive than carrying out their assignment. When this happens to clandestine agents, the situation is obviously quite serious.

President-elect Kennedy was first briefed on the Cuban operation on 17 November 1960. The basic concept was to recruit exiles, send them in by ones, twos, and teams to develop the basic ingredients for overthrowing a government: an intelligence network first, and then sabotage nets, units for psychological warfare, and fitgally guerrilla bands—hopefully all sufficiently independent to be watertight and operable.

It should be noted that these clandestine operations in 1960 were successful only to a degree. There were many brave Cuban exiles who volunteered even though they knew full well that anyone suspected of active opposition to the Castro government in Cuba faced the prospect of a firing squad. Anybody caught landing on the shores of Cuba, either by airdrop or by maritime opera-

tion, could hardly expect clemency from the new Cuban authorities.

On 29 November 1960 President-elect Kennedy was given a briefing at length on a new approach to the Cuban problem. It had become fairly apparent, under pressures of external events, that perhaps there was not going to be sufficient time to build up a large enough underground in Cuba to do to Castro what he had done to Batista. Castro was moving closer and closer to becoming a full member of the Soviet bloc, and the Soviets were sending increasing amounts of military equipment to Cuba. Cuban pilots had been sent to Eastern Europe for training, and Moscow as supplying or planned to supply aircraft. The Russians were also supplying or planning to supply advanced patrol boats which would make maritime infiltration difficult, if not impossible. Those were grave concerns because it was felt that the pressures of time might soon eliminate any possibility of building up any clandestine operation. One cannot reasonably take slow aircraft in against jets, for if their air defense was at all adequate, C-47's and the like would surely be shot down while trying to get agents and supplies in. Further, one cannot infiltrate a hostile coast if the opposition maintains extensive patrol activities in the surrounding waters.

Rather than trying to build clandestine nets all over Cuba—particularly in the cities with guerrilla forces supporting from the Escambrays and Sierra Maestra—it was proposed that a more substantial force be landed in order to seize a beachhead. It was hoped that support from popular resistance within Cuba or perhaps, more importantly, that support from defections within Cuba's militia and armed forces would materialize, thereby contributing significantly to the anti-Castro forces momentum and help assure their victory through more conventional military means.

On examination of what the biographers of President Kennedy have written, it can be concluded that the President never really fully understood that this proposal entailed a military operation in the true sense of the word. Instead of an assault landing consisting of some 1,500 men, President Kennedy seemed to think this was going to be some sort of mass infiltration that would perhaps, through some mystique, become quickly invisible.

Two major plans were considered. The original plan was directed at capturing the small town of Trinidad on the south coast. Intelligence available indicated it was fairly lightly held. There was an airstrip nearby, but perhaps most importantly, it was at the foothills of the Escambray Mountains, and the brigade, if it got into trouble, could head for the hills and theoretically live off the land. When this plan was reviewed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and others, the reaction was that the capture of a town would be too visible and create excessive "noise." Therefore another locality should be picked which would not be quite as conspicuous.

The second plan was to land at the Bay of Pigs. Since the area was sparsely populated, the proposed landing would not involve capturing a town. The interior was swampy, and there was a limited road network. The area posed problems for the brigade; but it was hoped that it would pose more problems for the defending forces, particularly if the airborne men captured a crossroads and blocked off the incoming Castro forces, and the brigade with their large tanks and fairly heavy hand-carried guns could establish a beachhead.

Plans envisioned two air raids which, in fact, were very critical factors to the potential success of the landing. It is not known whether the President examined in any depth the concept of the air raids or the attention they would attract. The initial raid was designed to take place at **D minus 2** and was directed at knocking

out the Castro air force and particularly, if possible, the Castro tanks. B-26 aircraft were to be flown by Free Cubans based in Nicaragua. This would allow the Cuban exile pilots approximately 20 to 30 minutes over target area. This strike was to be followed at H-hour by a second strike with the objective of destroying whatever remained of Castro's air forces. It was anticipated that the first strike would be noticed not only in Cuba, but elsewhere. Therefore, a light deception plan was conceived whereby one of the B-26's returning from the strike would land at Key West and the pilot would announce he was one of the group of Cuban pilots who had decided they had enough of Castro, were leaving the Cuban Air Force, and had dropped some bombs on the way out. There was hope that this would provide sufficient cover for at least a few days until the operation was mounted, at which time I presume it was thought that either the cover would not be necessary or simply be merged into the whole operation itself.

In mounting such an operation, it was necessary to first train those who were to take part in it. There were more than adequate resources of Cuban manpower available in the exile colonies in Florida and elsewhere. There was one exceedingly difficult political problem however, that being the strong desire not to use any Batistianos—people who had been prominent in the Batista military forces or close to Batista himself. This almost automatically eliminated anybody that had had any experience with the Cuban Armed Forces.

The recruiting in Miami was done under goldfish bowl circumstances. There were 113 Cuban exile groups. Some of them were significant and some of them were insignificant, but they were all active, they were all vocal, and they were all there. It was most difficult for the State Department, the CIA, the Attorney General, and others involved to persuade the Cubans to work to-

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gether in a cohesive organization simply because many of them did not want to work together due to prior political associations.

The system of recruiting was done as clandestinely as possible. The recruits were then taken to the deactivated Opa Locka Naval Air Station and were flown out "covertly" to Guatemala where a wealthy landowner had made a sizable portion of his mountainous *finca* available for training. A training base had been hacked out of the wilderness. The President of Guatemala, Ydigoras, was aware of what was going on and co-operated fully. President Somoza of Nicaragua provided the airfield for the B-26's.

In retrospect, it might have been wiser to have trained everybody in the United States where they could have been isolated somewhere in the vast reaches of a Fort Bragg or a Fort Benning. Latin America is not an easy place to do such training because in countries the size of Guatemala or Nicaragua nearly everybody knows what is going on. As early as 30 October 1960 an article appeared in the Guatemalan paper *La Hora* which described a military base in the mountains designed to train men for an invasion of Cuba. This was when the cover started to unravel. Paul Kennedy of *The New York Times*, a very astute journalist whose circuit ran from Mexico City to Panama, was not far behind *La Hora* in producing a story on the base—who was there, what they were doing, and what they were going to do. The discussions in Miami were such that in his book Schlesinger quotes three separate newsmen who upon returning from Miami were able to describe exactly what was going on without being specific as to where the landing was going to be made or when it was going to be made, but that there was going to be a landing, that it was going to be against Cuba, and that it involved a great number of the exiles.

The operation was exclusively under

the direction of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were asked if they would provide evaluations first of the feasibility of the plan and secondly of the quality of training. They also, of course, provided upon request both supplies that were necessary and manpower to assist in training and administration. But the Joint Chiefs of Staff were not responsible for the plan. It was not their plan, and the postoperation blame that was placed on them was put on them by others running for cover. It was a CIA operation.

Frequent meetings with the President from January through March and periodic progress reports were used to keep the President informed. As the evidence of apparent Russian assistance to Cuba continued to grow, pressure was put on the President to mount the operation. Let me also note that there was a very considerable Cuban lobby operable. The Cuban exiles had considerable money. Many of them were apparently wise enough to have kept the bulk of their wealth in the United States prior to 1959. They were acquainted with Americans and the American political system, and a steady stream of them descended on Washington to urge greater U.S. action in support of the exile movement up to and including a full-scale invasion of Cuba by the United States.

During this period a serious conflict arose within the exile training camp as a result of some of the Batistianos being brought into the brigade. These former members of Batista's army were professional military men whose talents were judged to be useful to the operation. A mutiny occurred, however, which quickly became known to the rest of the world. Twelve Cubans were arrested and incarcerated, and the entire affair was written up in the press.

With a brigade of 1,453 trained Cubans in being, the Joint Chiefs of Staff assessed both the Trinidad plan and the Bay of Pigs plan as being

feasible. The U.S. military personnel who reviewed the brigade described them as well trained and capable of doing their job. Here we run into what will perhaps throughout history be the most controversial part of the operation: I label it what the Cubans thought, what the Americans thought, and what Castro thought.

There are no available figures on Castro's intelligence operation in the United States. However, given the great number of Cubans in this country, he undoubtedly had a fairly complete information flow from not only our press and radio, but from his own sources of information as well. Castro was highly nervous in the spring of 1961, to say the least. He was aware that an operation was being mounted. He was not aware of its size or whether U.S. forces would be involved. He feared the latter greatly, without question.

The anti-Castro Cubans in exile, on the other hand, were convinced that the United States would not let the operation fail. One of the aspects of the postoperation inspection was specifically directed to the question of whether any of the U.S. personnel told the Cubans that U.S. military forces would back them up. That, I would submit to you, is almost an impossible question to answer. If you are training a group of men to go into battle, you aren't saying, "Okay fellows, go ahead, but if you don't make it, it's rough." As an instructor you would give your trainees every bit of encouragement, and if you say something like, "We're behind you all the way," does that mean that you are committing U.S. military forces? The best available evidence indicated that no U.S. national who was involved in training, assisting, or direction of the Cubans ever promised U.S. military assistance, but obviously they were not discouraging the Cubans. On the other hand, the Cubans to a man as well as the Cuban Revolutionary Council, expected that should

the brigade falter, U.S. Marines would pour out of Guantanamo, airborne units would be dropped, and it would be over about like that.

As to President Kennedy's intentions, however, there can be no question. The President frequently reiterated his statement that no U.S. personnel would be involved, that he wanted no Americans on the beach, that there would not be any commitment of U.S. forces behind the Cubans, that this was to be an exile operation.

The allegation has been made that "the operators" deceived the President. That is not correct. "The operators" principally involved were Allen W. Dulles, Gen. Charles P. Cabell, and Richard Bissell. They are all men of honor and integrity. They were all very much involved in the operation. They were all reasonably convinced that it would succeed or had a good chance of success. Mr. Dulles has been quoted by both Schlesinger and Sorenson as telling the President that he thought that this operation had a better chance of success than the Guatemala operation. Perhaps he did not tell the President the Guatemala operation only succeeded by the narrowest of margins. This was to be a very close matter and entirely different from the operation against Arbenz, who had but a very limited force to support him as opposed to Castro whose 200,000-man army and militia were rapidly increasing in both quality and strength.

The method by which the President was oriented on the operation has been described as a series of meetings where three or more of the operators would brief the President on the latest developments. The President would have one or two of his personal staff with him, the Secretary of State, and any others he deemed necessary. There would be no papers left; there were no staff papers circulated. The operation was very closely held within the U.S. Govern-

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ment. Similarly, it was very closely held within the CIA.

Many aspects of the operation were well done. The B-26 strike on D minus 2, despite having to operate at maximum range, was successful. It did manage to damage the Castro air force, but the quality of the Castro air force had been underestimated. The Sea Furies were known to be there and were considered dangerous, but the P-33's, which were ignored or were not considered to be dangerous, did prove to be one of the more decisive elements.

The cover on the D minus 2 airstrike, mentioned before, was ripped off in a matter of minutes. Circumstances had this event occur on the same day that an actual pilot in the Castro air force defected and landed in Jacksonville. The press was all over both Cuban planes instantly. The Foreign Minister of Cuba in the United Nations denounced the United States for open attack on Cuba. The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, had not been thoroughly advised on the operation. He had been given what was later described as a rather vague briefing of the operation. Ambassador Stevenson immediately denied U.S. complicity, and practically before the words were out of his mouth it was fairly obvious that they were not true. This then created a rising crescendo of concern on the part of the President, Secretary of State, and others. On Sunday night—the landing was to be made on Monday morning—the President cancelled the H-hour strike. The B-26's were already warmed up and ready to take off from Nicaragua when the word came in to cancel.

General Cabell, Acting Director of the CIA at the time, was given permission to appeal to the President who was at Glen Ora in Middleburg, Va. Cabell decided not to appeal, but after going back to the operational headquarters and seeking advice from a representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he called the President in Middleburg at 4:30 a.m.

Monday morning and asked whether the President could supply some U.S. military assistance, specifically some aircraft from the carrier *Boxer* to come in and cover the landing. The President turned it down.

The landing went in as scheduled. Of the five battalions—I would call them reinforced companies—that landed, only one landed in the wrong place; it hit a reef. The rest got ashore, and the tanks got ashore. The airdrop was successful, and then Castro's jets appeared: two Sea Furies and three P-33's. Two of the principal landing ships, one containing the bulk of the ammunition, were sunk. The others were driven away, not to return. And from that moment on, the operation was doomed.

The brigade fought brilliantly. They probably took 10 to 1 casualties from the other side. But it was 1,453 men against 20,000 with another 80,000 in reserve. Not only were Castro's planes available, but all of his tanks started to move south from Camp Libertad outside of Havana. Despite the most strenuous efforts to assist the brigade and to get them additional ammunition, they could not win against such odds. By Wednesday it was all over as the brigade was out of ammunition.

At a meeting Tuesday night in the White House, after a congressional reception, the situation was described to the President. He authorized two unmarked planes from the *Boxer* to fly high cover in support of the B-26's, but they were not to engage in hostilities unless attacked. There was a mixup in time. The B-26's arrived an hour before the *Boxer* planes; four of the B-26's were shot down, and among the men lost was an Alabama Air National Guardsmen crew who had volunteered to substitute for the Cuban pilots, who were exhausted.

The President was under the impression initially that the H-hour airstrike was actually going to be made from the beachhead. But, of course, the airstrip

was never secured to that degree, and the concept of eight B-26's bombing from the beachhead was simply not feasible. Also, there was no reserve available to reinforce the brigade, and the rationalization that once the beachhead was secured then Cubans could pour in from Florida and that assistance would come from the United States and Latin American countries was not valid. The Cuban Revolutionary Council, which had been held incommunicado up to the time of the landing, was taken to Washington to see the President. They asked if they could be immediately sent to the beachhead—three of them had sons with the brigade—but by then the operation had failed.

Now let us look at why the Bay of Pigs landing failed. Why did we mount it in the first place? We mounted it for a political objective, to get rid of a government that we disliked intensely that had cropped up near our southern shores. We mounted it with the thought that the objective would be accomplished by a covert operation when we did not want to use our conventional forces. We had not been able to get rid of Castro by diplomacy, and our increasing economic pressure was not proving to be any more effective. All intelligence reports coming from allied sources indicated quite clearly that he was thoroughly in command of Cuba and was supported by most of the people who remained on the island.

About 2 weeks before the operation, the President had announced that the United States would not intervene in Cuba. Nevertheless, shortly before the landing, the Castro security forces rounded up approximately 200,000 Cubans and put them in concentration camps. These people whose commitment the Castro regime suspected were precisely the elements in Cuban society upon which the success of the landing depended.

What we were really trying to do was to do something inexpensively that we

did not want to do the hard way. Affecting this choice was a mythology about covert operations that had arisen after World War II. The brilliant exploits of the French Resistance, of the Danish Resistance, of the Italian partisans, of Tito's partisans, of some of the operations behind the Japanese lines in Burma all helped create a belief that you could accomplish with covert operations what one did not wish to do by conventional or overt means. Similarly, the operations in Iran and Guatemala had been vaguely alluded to and written about without ever the full details of the operations being exposed either in the government or elsewhere. These added to the mythology that there was some mystique by which you could use a clandestine organization to neatly and cheaply remove most any dictator you wished. This is inaccurate and dangerous. A clandestine or covert operation can be used to support military operations and can be used when you do not want to commit regular forces. Such operations must be used, however, with the knowledge that if unsuccessful there will come a time when you have to end the support and lose the indigenous forces—as well as your integrity—perhaps never to be regained.

In looking back over both the planning and execution of the Bay of Pigs landing, several important lessons can be derived—the most vital of which arises from the operators' failure to secure accurate intelligence. Inaccurate intelligence was the basis for the Bay of Pigs disaster. There is no other place to put the blame for that than on the agency mounting the operation. There was a totally erroneous estimate of the quality of Castro's fighting forces, a lack of realism in evaluating the potential resistance, and therefore as a corollary, a lack of realism in estimating the number of forces required to do the job. There was a lack of knowledge about Castro's control in Cuba, even though

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the British and French intelligence reports were available on the subject.

Organizationally, a large part of CIA was excluded from the operation. The present Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Richard Helms, who was then Chief of Operations for CIA, was not involved in the operation. It was handled in a separate compartment, and a very great portion of the expertise in the agency was excluded. In like manner, the bulk of the military expertise of the Pentagon was excluded because knowledge of the operation was handled on such a close basis within the Joint Staff.

Now when I say that the bulk of the CIA was excluded, I mean that the operators running the operation were assessing and evaluating the intelligence, not the intelligence directorate, where it should have been done. Much of the intelligence came from the Cuban resistance, which was not always an objective intelligence source, and, as later in the missile crisis, their reports had to be scanned and evaluated based upon other information.

The White House advisers have noted in their books that nobody in the White House was really being critical about the operation. They assumed that the President was accepting the advice of qualified experts, and therefore they were unwilling to submit themselves to being the opposition to the operation. To my knowledge only two documents were written in the Federal Government opposing the operation, one by Chester Bowles, the then Under Secretary of State, who had inadvertently heard about the operation and opposed it. Roger Hilsman, then Assistant to the Secretary for Research and Intelligence, also heard about the operation, asked to be briefed on it, and was turned down. Arthur Schlesinger says that he too wrote a memorandum that was opposed to the operation after he had learned about it. But these documents were not given much weight.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr., was born in Rochester, N.Y., educated in public schools there and at Deerfield Academy, Deerfield, Mass., and graduated from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and

International Affairs of Princeton University in 1938.

After graduation he worked for the U.S. News Publishing Corporation in Washington, D.C., as an editor and personnel director. In 1942 he joined the Office of Strategic Services and served in Europe with that organization and as a military intelligence officer on the staff of Gen. Omar Bradley's 12th U.S. Army Group where he was the G-2 briefing officer. He left the military service with the rank of major, and for his service received the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, French and Belgian Croix de Guerre, and the European Theater Ribbon with five battle stars.

After the war he returned to the U.S. News as an editor of *World Report Magazine*. In 1947 he went to work for the Central Intelligence Agency where he served in a variety of positions, including Division Chief, Assistant to the Director, Assistant Director, Inspector General, and from 1962 to 1965 was Executive Director-Comptroller. In September 1965 he resigned from CIA to accept an appointment on the faculty of Brown University in Providence, R.I., as Professor of Political Science and University Professor. Professor Kirkpatrick was the occupant of the Chester W. Nimitz Chair of National Security and Foreign Affairs at the Naval War College during the 1971-72 academic year and has since returned to the faculty of Brown University.

In 1960 he received the National Civil Service League annual award as one of the 10 outstanding career employees of the Federal Government. In 1964 he received the President's Award for Distinguished Service, the highest award that can be given a civilian in the Federal Service.

He is the author of *The Real CIA*, published by Macmillan in January 1968, and *Captains without Eyes*, published by Macmillan in 1969, numerous articles, and has contributed to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica Yearbook*.

The question of whether the same organization collecting intelligence should be permitted to conduct covert operations has provoked continuing debate in the intelligence community over the years. It was a question which was addressed when the National Security Act of 1947 was being considered before Congress. It is a question which has frequently come up, and it is certainly one that is worthy of note. Within an organization such as CIA, it is possible to compartmentalize it so that the intelligence evaluators are separated from the collectors, but in this instance this was not done.

And then, finally, the covertness or lack of visibility of the operation must be examined. It lost all of its veils, all five, before it was ever mounted. By the time the landing took place, it was well known an operation was being mounted. It was well known who was involved. It was well known that it was totally and completely supported by the United States. And at some point along the line somebody, somewhere around the President should have said, "Mr. President, this is going to create one hell of a lot of noise. It is going to be very obvious that we're behind it. If it succeeds, great; if it fails, we are in for deep trouble." Obviously most people thought it was going to succeed. In fact, most of those talking to the President thought it was going to succeed.

Also, trying to mount an operation of this magnitude from the United States is about as covert as walking nude across Times Square without attracting attention. (Although, I must say that the latter is becoming more of a possibility every day.) In retrospect, the use of the U.S. bases would have been more feasible because we did have the capability for controlling access to a sizable geographical area. We could have isolated the brigade; even the training of the B-26 pilots could have been done in the United States; and perhaps, only perhaps, it could have been done with-

out having been disclosed.

Policymakers must be educated as to what is possible. I think they will be in the future. The shock to President Kennedy was great and he blamed the CIA, but he blamed the military just as much. The latter was misplaced. Nevertheless, it is very important that policymakers be educated as to what covert operations can do or cannot do and not look on them as some type of easy device whereby one can simply reach out and press a button and bang, a resistance group comes up and suddenly an enemy is destroyed. The obligation for destroying this myth lies with the career personnel.

There was nothing more secret about the Bay of Pigs than about nuclear weapons. Yet it was handled as though it was so sensitive that people who were trusted with the highest secrets of the government could not be trusted with it.

The staff work must be complete. Periodic assessments must be made, and these, in turn, must be reviewed in the most tough, highly critical, and objective manner. There must be those that are going to say "no" or at least express all the warnings and let the President know the dangers that he is taking.

While no one questions the absolute authority of the President to make policy and to insure that it is properly implemented, the locus for the conduct of the operation is important. It should be at a much lower level of government. Having covert operations run out of the White House or even out of the Office of the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense makes absolutely no sense whatsoever in any society.

If the President makes the policy, get rid of Castro, that is about the last he should hear of it. If something goes wrong, he can fire and disavow, which is what a President should do, not acknowledge and accept blame. Of course, I am being critical of the President, but

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I think that this is essential in this area. Mr. Dulles, incidentally, after the failure of the Bay of Pigs, as he had done previously when the U-2 went down over Russia, said to the President, "If you wish, I will go." He was a very wise and able man, and he recognized that when an intelligence failure takes place, the first expendable person is the director of the operation.

There is a further corollary to what I have said thus far: a U.S. controlled intelligence base must be in existence. In this case it would have meant an intelligence network operating in Cuba which was knowledgeable, controlled, and reliable. There was no such network in Cuba at the time. Instead there were scatterings of intelligence nets. The information, to a large degree, was controlled by Cuban exiles who, of course,

wanted us to go into Cuba. It was not a U.S. controlled intelligence base.

My final comment is that the Bay of Pigs experience does not mean we should forget covert operations as a tool for implementing national policy. In fact, that is the last thing it means. We should continually examine the concept and doctrine and reevaluate all covert operations and irregular warfare activities, keeping the capability in being. As has been the case with our military forces, when a war is over our immediate instinct is to demobilize; the same is true in intelligence. But the capability for mounting a covert operation is an exceedingly important capability for our government to have. It may not be used but, like certain military capabilities in peacetime, the expertise should be available and ready if needed.

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The great thing is to get the true picture, whatever it is.

*Winston Churchill: Note to Chief of
the Imperial General Staff,
24 November 1940*