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I84-0215

CRF87-0348

original Executive Order request.

6 December 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR : John H. Wright, Chief
Information and Privacy Division, OIS

FROM : Jack B. Pfeiffer

SUBJECT : Mandatory Review Request

1. As specified in Attachment 1 to this request, I submitted an UNCLASSIFIED version of my manuscript on the Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs to Charles E. Wilson, Chairman, Publications Review Board on 8 November 1984 on the assumption that his concurrence was required on the classification of the manuscript prior to my seeking possible non-official publication. My presumption was based on HR 6-2, Revised: 7 August 1984 (1677).

2. As indicated in Attachment 2 to this request, my assumption that the Publications Review Board was the proper reviewing authority was in error.

3. Following Mr. Wilson's suggestion, I contacted Gay Haran of your office; and she subsequently informed me that you and she believed that the appropriate procedure for me to follow was to request a mandatory review of my manuscript through IPD. To that end, I submit the enclosed manuscript of The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs. (See Attachment 3)

4. Inasmuch as my Agency employment is scheduled to terminate on 31 December 1984, it would be most helpful to have your decision soonest.

5. Please let me know if I can be of assistance to you in this effort.

Three Attachments as specified

Jack B. Pfeiffer

Dr. Jack B. Pfeiffer

APPROVED FOR
RELEASE DATE:
25-Jul-2011

ATTACHMENT 3

UNCLASSIFIED

THE TAYLOR COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION

OF

THE BAY OF PIGS

9 NOVEMBER 1984

JACK B. PFEIFFER
CSI/OTE, 1036 COC

UNCLASSIFIED

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The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs

Chapter 1

Introduction

More than twenty years after the event, CIA personnel who were closely involved in the Bay of Pigs (BOP) operation continue to speak bitterly about the outcome. That the criticism of the Agency for its "fiasco" began even as the search for survivors from the beaches at Playa Giron and Playa Larga was underway--and continues to the present--has done nothing to mollify the feelings of those who were involved that they have taken a "bum rap" for a political decision which insured the military defeat of the anti-Castro forces the Agency had been authorized to organize and train for the overthrow of Fidel Castro.

As a result of the collapse of the anti-Castro invasion effort, reference to the Bay of Pigs continues to be used by any media expert, academician, politician, or demagogue who chooses to snipe at the Agency. As late as 1979 one worshippper of John F. Kennedy published a volume which, among other charges, claimed that at the time of the Bay of Pigs, the Agency acted "out of control and independently," "covered up," and was "routinely, daily, committing unconstitutional acts against its own citizens in its own country."*

* Wyden, Peter H. Bay of Pigs (New York; Simon and Schuster, 1979, pp. 7-8).

This volume critically examines the investigation of the Bay of Pigs operation conducted by General Maxwell D. Taylor at the behest of President John F. Kennedy during the period from 22 April - 13 June 1961. An almost immediate spate of rumors and leaks were that CIA's blunders were responsible for the "debacle." The relatively recent publication of most of the Taylor Committee's report probably will do little to change that impression among the general public.*

This volume reviews in detail the testimony of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee. It focuses on the errors of fact, the omissions of critical information, the exchanges between witnesses and interrogators, and it assesses the validity of the Committee's findings on the basis of the documentary evidence available at the time of the investigation. The failure of the anti-Castro operation PLUTO would make the definitive break between the Kennedy and Eisenhower administrations. As a youthful, liberal, and untested Kennedy brought together the likes of Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Douglas Dillon, Adlai Stevenson, and Chester Bowles at the cabinet, or near-cabinet level, he was faced with the task of orchestrating their endeavors with Theodore Sorensen, McGeorge Bundy, Walt Rostow, Richard Goodwin, Arthur Schlesinger, and Sargent Shriver among other White House advisers; and,

* Operation Zapata (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1981).

of course, Attorney General Robert Kennedy crossed all lines as the President's alter ego. If the interplay among these principals and the highly educated, articulate, and often abrasive members of their various staffs and departments was not enough, there was the additional problem of evolving relations with the new Congress. This would be less of a problem with the Senate where the President had closer ties than with the House, but each had its full quota of egos to be massaged, special interests with which to contend, and post-election fences (both inter- and intra-party) to be mended.

As the new administration moved into operation, it faced the usual domestic issues of the ecnomic health of the nation, social welfare, resource and defense policies, and clearly emerging civil rights issues. In the international area there were, in addition to the continuing problems of any new administration of reassuring members of the Western alliance that the US could be depended on to be the linchpin of the alliance, the ongoing challenges presented by the USSR and its Eastern Bloc allies and by China and its surrogates in SEA, especially in Laos and Vietnam. Almost simultaneously with its installation, the new administration also showed its concern for developing active programs to meet the challenges presented by the African nations and Latin America. The Food for Peace program, the Peace Corps, and the Alianza para el progreso were well into the planning stages even as the Kennedy troops were waiting in the wings.

In addition to the ferment of his own administration's shakedown, when competition for presidential attention, approval, and favor was extreme, President Kennedy inherited the anti-Castro program which had been initiated formally and officially on 17 March 1960 by President Eisenhower and handed over to the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of State for implementation. Following his own initial interest in the developing program, President Eisenhower's personal involvement dropped off sharply by the late summer of 1960. Following the November elections, however, there was a resurgence of interest on the President's part, and it was clear that he favored the planned use of the Cuban exile force which was being supported by the US Government. President Eisenhower, however, deferred to the incoming administration rather than authorizing implementation of the paramilitary plan.

By the time that the new President was sworn in, what had been planned in the spring of 1960 as a program to infiltrate the necessary experts, expertise, and supplies to develop the strength of anti-Castro elements inside Cuba had been abandoned as a result of effective security measures developed by Castro. By early fall 1960, CIA's revised plans called for an air supported, amphibious invasion by a force of no less than 600 troops, and more likely by 1,200-1,500 men.

The Agency backed the Frente Revolucionario Democratico (FRD), the most active and vocal of the many Cuban exile organizations, as the group with the best prospects for unifying the anti-Castro elements in the US. Under Agency guidance the FRD was to promote financial support from the business community in the New York City area; and, in the Florida area, the FRD was developed as the focal point for the recruitment of the Cubans who would form the 2506 Brigade. The Cuban community in Miami and Dade County, Florida, was a hotbed of anti-Castro politics of all degrees from improbable intellectualizing to strident calls for direct and immediate US intervention--particularly if US forces would oust Castro and then turn the country over to "them". As polemicists and publicists, the Cubans were developing a talent for directing political pressures at points where they believed there was the most to gain. Both local politicians and congressional representatives were quite aware of these lobbying efforts against the Castro government.

For good or ill, Castro himself was widely known in the US; and the media sought by whatever means to uncover the "secret" war plans which were being developed for his overthrow. By the late fall of 1960 when the concept changed from developing a guerrilla potential to the creation of an amphibious invasion force, the US Government's plan to maintain "plausible deniability" of its anti-Castro involvement had the impenetrability

of the emperor's new clothes. The overt recruitment efforts in Miami by the FRD, the general inability of Cubans--particularly the leaders of the numerous exile factions--to retain confidentiality, and persistent pursuit of leads by local and national media made a mockery of attempts to deny that training bases had been established in Guatemala and that the Agency was the mechanism being used by the US Government to support the anti-Castro exiles.

Upon assuming office, President Kennedy inherited a paramilitary contingent in training with aircraft (bomber/ground support and transports) and an infantry brigade which probably had the heaviest concentration of firepower in the Caribbean basin, if not in all of Latin America. To insure the success of the planned landing on a hostile shore, US Army Special Forces trainers, USAF and Air National Guard pilot instructors and mechanics, and pilot instructors from CIA were assigned to, or volunteered for, the project. In addition to CIA and the Department of State, Kennedy almost immediately ordered that the Department of Defense, under its new Secretary, Robert McNamara, become a more active participant in CIA's paramilitary planning for the overthrow of Castro and the installation of a government which would be anti-Communist and, preferably, pro-US.

Whether the new Administration believed in the program which was jointly evolved--a moot point after the collapse of the invasion when political reputations were being protected at all cost--it became obvious almost immediately following his inauguration that the President was going to have to make some decisions on Cuban policy. Pressures to use the Brigade came not only from the Agency, which had been conducting training activities since June 1960, but also from the Government of Guatemala which provided the air and ground training sites for the Cubans and from the Government of Nicaragua which had agreed to the use of Puerto Cabezas as the operational base for launching the invasion of Cuba.

Whatever else concerned the Kennedy administration during the period between 22 January 1961 when the principal cabinet members first were briefed by CIA on the details of the anti-Castro plan until the evening of 16 April 1961 when--after consultation with Secretary of State Rusk--the President cancelled the D-Day air strike, the planned anti-Castro operation was a burr under its saddle and could not be wished away. The increasing concern about the problem improved cooperation between the Agency and the Department of Defense, and DOD's support for the operation increased as JCS evaluations indicated that the chances for success were greater than for failure. On the other side, the Department of State

and influential elements in the White House hoped that the confrontation might be avoided completely, but that if it did come it would be with minimum risk--particularly domestic political risk and negative international repercussions.

With the collapse of the invasion, and the almost immediate request by President Kennedy for General Maxwell Taylor to investigate the operation, the remaining linkage between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations would be shattered almost completely. It was this investigation which, even more than the formal transition of administrations on 20 January 1961, ended any remaining doubts about the need for, or desirability of, worrying about the policies of the previous incumbent.

At the time that he was asked to serve President Kennedy in April 1961, Taylor was, perhaps, the most Universal Man of the 20th Century--decorated soldier and military commander in heroic mold, engineer, linguist, teacher, author, diplomat, and business executive. As head of the committee to review the Cuban operation he saw himself as the impartial judge assigned to insure that the record of events was presented in as unskewed a manner as possible in view of the parochial interests of the other committee members: Attorney General Robert Kennedy's concern for the Oval Office; Admiral Arleigh Burke's for the welfare of the JCS and the military; and Allen Dulles's for CIA. Taylor's background should have made it possible for

him--more so than for any other member of the committee--to render objective judgments on controversial issues. It is apparent from the record of testimony of the witnesses before the committee that, although Taylor did redirect or soften some of the more blatantly obvious attempts of Attorney General Kennedy to discredit witnesses from the military or the intelligence service, his strongest tilts were toward deflecting criticism of the White House.

At the conclusion of the testimony of the witnesses, it was clear that Burke and Dulles, the latter a particularly strong figure in the Eisenhower administration, were headed for the elephants' burial ground--thanks to Robert Kennedy's denigration of them and their Agencies and, in no small part in the case of Dulles to his abysmal performance as a witness. Even before the testimony of the Taylor Committee witnesses ended, Dulles and Burke were nattering at each other over the matter of degree to which the Navy's representatives had been taken into the full confidence of the Agency regarding the anti-Castro plan. By the end of 1961, both men had retired from government service.

All witnesses testifying before the Taylor Committee had interests to protect, but it was evident before the close of the hearings that those military officers who had been involved in the anti-Castro project from early on risked career damage if, during their testimony, they suggested that the

modifications to the operational plans made by the White House or its staff might have had any negative effect on the outcome of the invasion. Intimations to this effect made by military or CIA witnesses were immediately cried down or cavalierly dismissed as irrelevant by Robert Kennedy.

With the conclusion of the Taylor investigation, there was a period of mistrust of both CIA and the JCS by the new President; and he turned to his inner circle for guidance which previously would have been sought from the Agency or the Department of Defense. General Taylor performed in such acceptable fashion that he was recalled to active duty and into the elite inner circle to become President Kennedy's military adviser and subsequently Chairman of the JCS.

It was in this atmosphere of doubt and questioning of the old administration's experts and tolerance for witnesses of the new that the Taylor Committee would be pushed to reach its conclusions as quickly as possible. After his mea culpa and acceptance of responsibility for the operation, the President and his less than squeaky clean coterie escaped all blame for the invasion's failure; but CIA has continued to bear the full brunt of responsibility for the "fiasco" at the Bay of Pigs.

This volume presents the first and only detailed examination of the work of, and findings of, the Taylor Committee to be based on the complete record. In the examination of the

procedures followed, identification of the sins of commission and omission by committee witnesses, and in raising questions about the choice of witnesses, it is hoped that there will be a better understanding of where the responsibility for the "fiasco" truly lies.

Chapter 2

Organization and Procedures of the Committee

April 22, 1961

Dear General Taylor:

I am delighted that you have consented to serve as my advisor on a series of important problems, and I send this letter to indicate the range of the matters which I hope you will consider.

It is apparent that we need to take a close look at all our practices and programs in the area of military and paramilitary, guerrilla and anti-guerrilla activity which fall short of outright war. I believe that we need to strengthen our work in this area. In the course of your study, I hope that you will give special attention to the lessons which can be learned from recent events in Cuba.

Since advice of the kind I am seeking relates to many parts of the Executive Branch, I hope that you will associate with yourself, as appropriate, senior officials from different areas. I have asked the following to be available to you in this fashion: Attorney General Robert Kennedy from the Cabinet, Admiral Arleigh Burke from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Director Allen Dulles from the Central Intelligence Agency. I hope that each of them will have an opportunity to review and comment on your conclusions. But in the end what I want is your own report, drawing from past experience, to chart a path toward the future. I hope I may have a preliminary report by May 15th.

I hereby authorize you to obtain from all officials of the Government any information or records which you may find pertinent to your work. While your appointment will be as a Consultant to me, on the White House staff, the Department of Defense will provide travel, funds, and administrative support that you may require. 17

Sincerely,

/s/ John F. Kennedy

is no evidence that their subsequent testimony had any detectable impact on the final report of the CSG--particularly regarding the strong views of Burke, Dulles, and Esterline that the political restrictions on the Brigade's air operations made the difference between victory and defeat.

3. For all practical purposes the preliminary findings on the causes for the failure of the operation and the preliminary conclusions reached by the CSG would be incorporated almost en toto in the final report. These portions of the final report were based on an 11 May 1961 "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion (Zapata)," presumably prepared by, or at the direction of, the Committee.*

4. A draft memorandum on the 16 May 1961 meeting of the Taylor Committee with the President provides one of the few records of President Kennedy's personal thoughts about the Bay of Pigs operation. Because it was one of the two principal sessions between the President and the Committee it is cited in full:

* See Appendix D for a copy of the 11 May 1961 "Study."

The Cuba [n] Study Group met at luncheon with the President to give orally an interim report on their conclusions to date. In the course of the conversation, the following points were developed:

There was no formal governmental review after March, 1960 of the necessity for a paramilitary operation to replace the Castro government. Although the President had many doubts with regard to such an operation, the pressure for an affirmative decision arising from the need to use the Cuban Brigade quickly or disband it was a strong factor in causing an affirmative decision. In the President's mind there was reasonable hope for a popular uprising following a successful landing as well as the possibility of setting up a free Cuban government in the beachhead after it had been firmly secured.

The President was always reassured by the assumption that the Cuban Brigade in an emergency could pass to a guerrilla status. There was a breakdown in communication someplace between the training base in Guatemala and the senior officials in Washington which occassioned the misunderstanding of the feasibility of exercising the guerrilla option.

It was clear to the President that the Trinidad Plan had military advantages over Zapata. However, the choice of the latter overcame many of the political objections raised against Trinidad.

With regard to the cancellation of the D-Day strikes, the President is inclined to think that a special NSC meeting should have been called to deal with this important matter. However, the CIA officials in charge of the operation did not speak to him directly with regard to the critical nature of the cancellation.

The President was aware of the serious shortage of ammunition in the beachhead at the end of D+1. However, he was never approached for authority to extend the Navy air cover over the ammunition convoy in its movement to Blue Beach.

In connection with Paragraph 14 of the Committee's paper "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion Zapata" dated 11 May 1961, the chart and paper entitled "A Mechanism for the Planning and Coordination of Cold War Strategy" were discussed. The President encouraged the group to develop this organizational concept in greater detail for inclusion in their final report. The latter is to be oral, supported by written memorandum. It was agreed that this final report and the supporting memorandum would not get beyond the President, but the possibility was left open of some sanitized document to set right the past misstatement of the press.

There was some discussion of the desirability of changing the name of CIA in order to reduce its visability. Mr. Dulles undertook to study the matter and see if he could make a recommendation. 1/*

B. The Final Report

1. Letter of Transmittal

On 13 June 1961, General Taylor forwarded the final report of the Cuban Study Group to President Kennedy. Taylor's letter of transmittal referred to the oral briefing given to the President on 16 May 1961, identified the four memoranda which made up the final report, and indicated that the committee was prepared to give the President the oral briefing he had requested on the final report.

* Even though he was not listed as one of those in attendance at the 16 May 1961 meeting with the President--the memorandum listed only the four members of the CSG--the writer presumes it may have been written by J.C. King, Chief, WH/D and frequently a fifth presence at the meetings of the CSG.

The letter also stated:

> In your letter of April 22 [1961], you invited me to submit an individual report subject to the review and comment of my associates. As we have found no difficulty in reaching a unanimous view on all essential points under consideration, we are submitting this view as a jointly agreed study. 2/*

As will be noted, the above statement ignored that the most controversial question about the Bay of Pigs operation--how close the landing came to success--drew the only formal dissent recorded by the Committee. Both Admiral Burke and DCI Dulles objected to the position taken by General Taylor and Attorney General Kennedy that the project never could have succeeded.

2. The Four Memoranda

a. Memorandum No. 1

"Narrative of the Anti-Castro Cuban Operation Zapata" is a 36 page summary based on the testimony taken from more that 60 witnesses in a little over five weeks. There also were 32 Annexes which were specifically cited in support of Memorandum No. 1. These annexes represented a selection from among the many hundreds of pages of background information and documents which had been requested from CIA, DOD, and State by the committee during the course of the individual meetings and conversations with witnesses.

In the introduction to "Narrative of the Anti-Castro Operation Zapata," the committee outlined President Eisenhower's

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* For a complete copy of Taylor's 13 June 1961 memorandum see Appendix E.

17 March 1960 anti-Castro plan and indicated that its focus would be on the paramilitary portion of the plan to overthrow Castro's government. To that end, it pointed out how, during the Eisenhower administration, the 5412 Committee--commonly referred to as the Special Group--assumed the basic responsibility for details concerning the anti-Castro planning activity.* It also noted the establishment within CIA's Western Hemisphere Division of the WH/4 Task Force headed by Jacob D. Esterline and the line of command that ran from Esterline directly to Richard Bissell, the Deputy Director for Plans, to General Charles P. Cabell, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, and finally to Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence. With reference to Mr. Dulles, the committee report stated "while accepting full responsibility for the operation, [Dulles] generally did not inject himself into military operational matters." 3/

Although the reference to Dulles is borne out by the record, one important factor which was ignored by the committee, not only at this point, but also during the course of Dulles's appearance as a witness before the committee, was that Dulles did play a principal role in many of the high level briefings on

* The Special Group consisted of the Deputy Under Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. It was referred to as the 5412 Committee because it was authorized under NSC 5412/2.

the paramilitary plan. Both Jake Esterline and Jack Hawkins emphasized that it was unfortunate that Dulles and other senior Agency officials did not defer more frequently to those who were closer and more knowledgeable about military plans when such briefings and meetings were called. Insofar as Esterline was concerned, rank in these instances had too many privileges. 4/

Memorandum No. 1 noted that between March and early November 1960, the original concept of the paramilitary plan was to prepare a number of guerrilla units to infiltrate and promote dissidence among the Cubans; but by the fall of 1960, improvements in Castro's security forces indicated that it would require an amphibious operation with air support to oust Castro. It also was reported that President Kennedy had been first informed about plans for an anti-Castro effort following his election in November, 1960, but that it was only after he was sworn in that details of the plan were revealed to the Kennedy administration. On 22 January 1961, a briefing including Secretaries Rusk, McNamara, Robert Kennedy and Chairman of the JCS, General Lemnitzer, among others, spelled out in detail plans for pre-D-Day, D-Day, and post-D-Day air strikes which were to be an integral part of the CIA plan for the invasion of Cuba. A brigade of 750-800 men would lead

the invasion and establish a beachhead from which a provisional government might be established.*

Memorandum No. 1 also noted the developing interest on the part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the anti-Castro plan:

> JCSM-44-61...in which they [the JCS] recommended the institution of an interdepartmental group to consider various courses of action in ascending degree of US involvement, which, after approval by the President, would become an over-all plan [to oust Fidel Castro] to be supported by subordinate plans prepared by the agencies concerned. This recommendation reached the Secretary of Defense, but appears to have been lost in the activities arising out of the change in the administration. 5/

What the JCS had in mind had been carefully explained by General David Gray of the Joint Staff to C. Tracy Barnes, Mr. Bissell's principal deputy, shortly before the publication of JCSM-44-61. Rather than the Agency going it alone, Gray pointed out that the operation should be regarded as a series of increasingly strong actions and a commitment on the part of the US to insure Castro's removal. Included in such actions

* There is some indication that as plans for briefing President-elect Kennedy were being made consideration had been given to establishing a joint CIA/DOD force of 1,500-3,000 Cubans to undertake the invasion. Unfortunately the three Agency principals thought most likely to be knowledgeable of this plan--DDP Bissell, project chief Esterline, and project operations officer Drain--were unable to recall the plan.

would have been support for an internal uprising; possibly a small invasion force to help promulgate such an uprising; and then the use of trained guerrilla forces and/or a voluntary army in conjunction with the US effort. At the time of the discussion with Tracy Barnes, General Gray indicated that having begun the training of the volunteer army:

> The planning now needed should carry us from our [CIA] plans ends [sic] through the various phases in the scale, including the final step of overt US military action. He [Gray] stated that a paper [JCSM-44-61, 27 January 1961] is being prepared by Defense to explain this planning cycle...As of the present, he believes that probably the most likely action would be the use of our [CIA] element followed by substantially overt US support, presumably after the recognition of some provisional government. He said that his worry is that a decision might be made to land the FRD force without having first decided upon and prepared the supporting US effort. His position was that it would be too late to try to do this after the FRD force was on its way. I told him that all of us agreed thoroughly with him and we were all equally anxious to obtain firm plans and decisions that would permit the use of such force as the situation may require. 6/

On 28 January 1961, DCI Dulles gave a briefing on the Agency's anti-Castro plan to President Kennedy and various senior members of his administration including, among others, the Vice President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, the Chairman of the JCS, McGeorge Bundy, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America (Thomas Mann), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

(Paul Nitze), and Tracy Barnes. The President approved the continuation of CIA's "current activities" despite warnings from the State re-presentatives regarding the "grave political dangers" to US relations with other members of the Organization of American States. The DOD was authorized to review the paramilitary plan with CIA and "the results of this analysis will be promptly reported to the President." 7/* This reference to CIA-DOD cooperation probably was the result of the meeting between General Gray and Tracy Barnes on 18 January with reference to DOD's work on JCSM-44-61. It is most difficult to understand why the Taylor Committee cavalierly ignored Secretary McNamara's failure to have responded to JCSM-44-61. In retrospect it appears that the presidential interest in DOD-CIA cooperation provided a most opportune time for DOD to have pushed hard for a joint operation on the order of the proposals in JCSM-44-61; but this never happened. Moreover, the State Department's reluctance to risk the harsh words and bitter recriminations that might originate from Latin America could have been brought into better focus.

Memorandum No. 1 noted that in response to the President's request during the meeting of 28 January, the Joint Chiefs

* Writer's emphasis. The Taylor Committee's reference to this briefing states that the results of the DOD review of the CIA plan "were to be promptly reported to the CIA." 8/ Inasmuch as it was to be a joint DOD-CIA review, the version in the text above would appear to be correct.

of Staff evaluation of the Agency's paramilitary plan (JCSM-57-61, "Military Evaluation of the CIA Paramilitary Plan-Cuba," 3 February 1961) had been submitted to the Secretary of Defense. The Taylor Committee indicated that the conclusions of this JCSM generally supported CIA's Trinidad plan; and even though noting some shortcomings the JCSM stated: "This plan has a fair chance of ultimate success and, even if it does not achieve immediately the full results desired, could contribute to the eventual overthrow of the Castro regime." 9/ The CSG's comments on JCSM-57-61 made no reference to any of the points which had been covered previously in JCSM-44-61, nor had any of the witnesses from DOD been questioned on the proposals of the earlier JCSM which had outlined both the need for the military to play a major role in the Agency's anti-Castro effort and the probability that overt military action by the US might be required to support the invasion.

Considering the importance which the CSG hearings had attached to both the choice of Zapata over Trinidad and to air operations, Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee largely ignored JCSM-57-61's treatment of both subjects.* It also

* Of the invasion sites, the Joint Chiefs evaluation of the CIA paramilitary plan reported that: "Based on an independent analysis by the Joint Staff, the beachhead area [Trinidad] is considered to be the best area in Cuba for accomplishment of the Task Force Mission. 10/

would seem to have been appropriate--considering the committee's responsibility to inform the President about the reasons for the failure of the operation--to have indicated the dramatic revision between the CIA air plan which was evaluated in JCSM-57-61 and the air operations which were authorized from D-2 until the end of the action.

As evaluated by the JCS in February 1961, the air plan called for a D-1 air strike by 14 B-26s against the six airfields containing all of Castro's potential combat aircraft, against three microwave communication centers, naval units, and interdiction targets. Reattack by the same number of aircraft was planned for the afternoon of D-1, the morning of D-Day, and the afternoon of D-Day. Each aircraft headed for the airfield targets was to carry 2-750 lb. napalm bombs, 16-220 lb. fragmentation bombs, and 2,400 rounds of .50 caliber machine gun ammunition for the 8-gun nose. This was the maximum air effort of the original plan and, in addition, one of the aircraft intended for the strike against each of the six airfields would have an American pilot. 11/ Neither the Taylor Committee members nor Agency personnel who testified before the committee contrasted the impact of the cutback in the air plan on the outcome of the operation--particularly the restrictions on the number of planes, the use of napalm, and the targets that were imposed from D-2 through D-Day. If the operation was judged to have only a

"fair" chance with full-scale air operations, it should have been obvious that anything less would lead (as it did) to defeat.

Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee also stated that the representative of the Joint Staff who visited the infantry and air training facilities in Guatemala reported that both the ground and air units were well trained and that the expectation of initial success was good. The CSG memorandum did emphasize, as had the report of the JCS evaluators, that failure to gain control of the air over Cuba would seriously jeopardize the whole operation and that survival of a single Castro combat aircraft armed with .50 caliber machine guns could sink all or most of the invasion vessels. As discussed earlier the probability of such sinkings was regarded as inconsequential by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and the President when they cancelled the D-Day air strike. 12/

Memorandum No. 1 then reviewed the discussions which took place following CIA's 11 March 1961 presentation of the Trinidad plan and the President's request for a quieter, more deniable type of operation which resulted in the evolution of the Zapata plan. During the Taylor Committee hearings, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reported that they had informed the Secretary of Defense that none of the alternative plans, including Zapata, was "as feasible and likely to have accomplished the objective as the basic [Trinidad] paramilitary plan." Memorandum No. 1 reported that:

> This preference for the Trinidad operation seems to have been overlooked in the subsequent consideration of the plan by some of the senior civilian officials including the Secretary of Defense to whom the views of the Chiefs were addressed. 13

As had been the case during the committee hearings nothing more was said about the breakdown of communications between the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In stating that the JCS preference for Trinidad "seems" to have been overlooked, the committee ignored, an act of carelessness, if not irresponsibility, which had a significant impact on the plan to overthrow Castro. With regard to the "extent" of the JCS approval of the Zapata plan, the implication of the CSG's memorandum was that because they subsequently participated actively in the discussions of the Zapata plan the Joint Chiefs were satisfied with it. That JCS approval was based on the assumption that there would be a major air strike on D-Day was ignored.

In its record of the evolution of the Bay of Pigs operation, the Taylor Committee also stated that because of the extended discussions of planned air operations--particularly the Department of State's resistance to the "noisy" tactical air strikes that had been specified for the Trinidad plan, and which it was expected, at least by the Agency, also would be incorporated into the Zapata

plan--"a compromise was reached with regard to the air plan. Early in April, it was decided to stage limited air strikes on D-2 at the time of the diversionary landing of 160 men to be made in eastern Cuba." [14/] The suggestion that the D-2 air strike was evolved as a compromise in response to State's objection is a novel thesis, unsupported by the record. The question of softening, pre-D-Day air strikes had been under consideration as early as 8 December 1960, and was the subject of continuing interest from that date. Moreover, there was never any implication that the D-2 effort was intended to reduce the level of the D-Day attack.

Taylor Committee Memorandum No. 1, however, emphasised that the political advantages were the basic reason for the D-2 deception/defection operation; and reported: "Mr. Bissell of CIA also later stated at a meeting on April 6 that CIA would prefer to conduct an all-out air strike on the morning of D-Day rather than perform the D-2 defection strikes followed by limited strikes on D-Day." [15/] Bissell, of course, was never given the D-Day choice; and, in fact, Bissell--with Colonel Hawkins and Tracy Barnes--was one of the originators of the D-2 air strike for added insurance to guarantee the grounding of Castro's combat aircraft.*

* If Bissell were presented with this choice, his response was most logical. This is the only reference the writer has seen which suggests that the D-2 strike was intended to reduce the level of the planned D-Day strikes.

The committee's narrative of the operation then ran through the various planning meetings, including the several delays prior to the 12 April meeting with the President which outlined the latest version of the invasion plan. Among other items discussed at that meeting were: the D-2 air strike, the diversionary landing plan for Oriente Province on the night of D-2, the D-Day landing, and the subsequent air strikes on D-Day once the landing strip had been secured at Playa Giron so that the B-26s could touch down on Cuban soil.

President Kennedy continued to withhold final approval of the plan until the White House received a copy of the cable that Col. Jack Hawkins sent to Headquarters from Puerto Cabezas on 13 April 1961 expressing his full confidence in the readiness of both the anti-Castro infantry and Air Force. The President then gave the go-ahead for the D-2 diversionary operation by Nino Diaz's guerrilla group and for the D-2 air strike. It was not until about noon on 16 April (D-1) that Kennedy finally authorized the landing by the Brigade. In reporting on this progression, the Taylor Committee accepted that the senior officials responsible for approving the operation assumed that the guerrilla option was, at worst, available. None of the contrary opinions

which had been expressed during the course of the hearings, particularly by military witnesses, were indicated.

The memorandum then related the story of the conversations involving Secretary of State Rusk, Mr. Bundy, Mr. Bissell, General Cabell, and the President of the United States on the evening of D-1 (16 April 196]) when the President cancelled the D-Day air strikes. As with the records of the testimony of witness when the subject was discussed, the final report of the committee failed to indicate any concern about the rationale for this Presidential decision. The premise of deniability of US involvement if the B-26s could be said to be taking off from Cuban soil already had been blown with the D-2 attacks on Castro's airfields. The knowledge that the attacking B-26s were not part of Castro's Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria was not limited to the Cubans, but it had already been picked up by the media. 16/ The real issue was that without the planned D-Day air strike, the defeat of the invasion was inevitable.

In describing the action over the beach on D-Day--where Castro's Sea Furies and T-33s had clearly established a no-win position for the brigade unless superior US aircraft were introduced for their support--the Taylor Committee report made the following interesting comment: "Impressed by the ease with which the T-33 aircraft could destroy the obsolete B-26 type aircraft, the CIA leaders decided to attempt, by a bombing

attack, to destroy the remaining Castro aircraft at night [on D-Day and D+1] on the ground." 17/ The suggestion that it took the shooting gallery over Playa Giron on D-Day to impress the CIA leadership with the necessity of eliminating the T-33s was absurd. Gar Teegen, Chief, Air Operations at Puerto Cabezas had requested authorization for a restrike on the airfields during the late afternoon of D-1; but Teegen request already had been received and rejected by Washington prior to the time that Kennedy made his arbitrary decision to cancel the D-Day strikes.*

Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee Report then related the story of the action at Red and Blue beaches during the course of D-Day, D+1, and D+2. The thrust of the story was that the heaviest casualties inflicted on the Castro forces resulted from B-26 attacks on D-Day and D+1, and specific reference was made to the air action on the afternoon of D+1 which was led by American contract pilots. In reporting on the extent of the casulties caused by the B-26 attacks, the committee accepted the grossly exaggerated figures that had been presented during the initial CSG meeting.**

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* The reader might recall that the original air plan called for all out air strike on both the morning and afternoon of D-2 and D-Day and subsequently as required.

** Although President Kennedy initially cancelled all D-Day air strikes, he and Rusk finally agreed to permit the B-26s to fly ground support actions in the immediate area of Red and Blue Beaches on D-Day. Attack against any of the targets originally scheduled for D-Day was specifically prohibited.

The committee's memorandum also discussed the question of the ammunition supply and the requests which started on D-Day for resupply of ammunition for the beachhead, noting that the decision to cancel the plan to run supplies to the beach using the LCIs and LCUs was CIA's unilateral decision. Although no specific criticism was made of the Agency for failure to push the resupply effort by the ships, the implied criticism was apparent.

With reference to the air action on D+2 the Taylor Committee accepted the US Navy's version of the combat air patrol which had been authorized from 0630 - 0730R on the morning of D+2, putting the full blame for the loss of the American pilots on the Agency because of the early arrival of the B-26s. As mentioned earlier in this chapter and as spelled out in detail in the first volume of this history, this judgment left unanswered many critical questions regarding the performance of the US Navy. Even in the more detailed section which the committee devoted to the role of the US Navy during the course of the Bay of Pigs Operation, the failure of the combat air patrol was again passed over.

The portion of Memorandum No. 1 devoted to "The Exercise of Control in Washington" provides a glaring example of the attempt to protect President Kennedy's reputation. The report explained the establishment of the CIA command post in Quarters Eye, the around the clock presence of senior project personnel--

Jake Esterline, Colonel Hawkins, Colonel Germosen, and Captain Scapa--and the easy access that these operational personnel had to Mr. Bissell and DDCI Cabell should they need policy guidance. It then was noted that there was formal, continuous, and effective liaison maintained between CIA and DOD--including contact with CINCLANT--and that within the Department of Defense the Joint Staff effectively provided information to both the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff maintained liaison officers with General Gray of the Joint Staff and so they too were informed. The memorandum then stated:

> The technical performance of the CIA communications net was reported to have been excellent. There was an impressive volume of traffic transmitted over it. Nevertheless, the President, the Secretary of State, and others had insufficient knowledge of the situation to react in time and to make the needed decisions. This inadequacy resulted from many factors: the loss of important signal equipment in the sinking of the Rio Escondido, the wetting of the portable radios carried ashore and the resulting failure of radio communications within the Brigade net ashore, the lack of information on the part of the Brigade commander himself, and, most importantly, the absence of an experienced American officer or Headquarters in the combat area with the responsibility to summarize and present the changing situation to the authorities in Washington.
>
> As a result of these factors, the President and his advisors were generally in the dark about important matters as to the situation ashore and were uninformed of the flight of the cargo ships. To clarify the

> situation, the US Navy was directed to fly a reconnaissance mission over the beach on the afternoon of D+1, reporting about 1900 that there was no evidence of fighting at Blue beach where the beachhead apparently had a depth of about 10 miles. This was the last indication of the situation ashore which the President received until the following morning when he received the message that the beachhead had collapsed and that men were fighting in the water." 18/

This portion of the Taylor Committee report raises more interesting questions. It is stated that the President, the Secretary of State, and "others" had insufficient knowledge of the situation to react; and at another point it says the President and his advisers were generally in the dark about important matters concerning the situation ashore. There would seem to be a contradiction between these statements and the previous comments in Memorandum No. 1 which indicated that there was extremely close liaison between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense. Inasmuch as one of the President's principal advisers was Secretary of Defense McNamara, it is difficult to understand how the President could have been uniformed. Similarly, on at least one occasion during the course of the Taylor Committee hearings, Robert Kennedy specified that during the invasion Mr. Bissell was in constant contact with the President. That either the

President or the Secretary of State could have been in ignorance of the course of events at Playa Giron is difficult to believe, let alone explain. Perhaps the Taylor Committee itself failed to raise the proper question with reference to the Navy recon over the beach on D+1 when there was no evidence of fighting in the Playa Giron area or, perhaps, the President upon being informed that there was no evidence of fighting should have asked what the hell was going on.

Finally with refererence to Memorandum No. 1 of the Taylor Committee, mention must be made of the response to the speculation of how near the landing ever came to success. The comment was:

> Had the ammunition shortage been surmounted, which is to say, had the Castro air been neutralized, would the landing force have accomplished its mission? Considering their lack of experience, the Cubans ashore fought well and inflicted considerable losses on the Castro militia while they had ammunition. Contrary to the view held prior to the landing that with control of the air the CEF could have maintained themselves for sometime, with the rapid appearance of the vastly superior Castro forces on the scene, the ultimate success of such a small landing force became very unlikely. The limited number of B-26 crews, if forced to continue to operate from Nicaragua, would have been strained to provide continuous daylight air support to the beachhead. An attempt by the landing force to exercise the guerrilla option and take to the hills would have been virtually impossible because of the presence of the encircling Castro forces and of the instructions which the invasion units had received to fall back on the beaches in case of a penetration of the beachhead.

> Under the conditions which developed we are inclined to believe that the beachhead could not have survived for long without substantial help from the Cuban population or without overt US assistance. Although under these conditions the guerrilla alternative did not exist, with control of the air the CEF might have been able to withdraw wholly or in part by the sea. 19/

It was this portion of Memorandum No. 1 which moved committee members Burke and Dulles to take the only exception recorded in the CSG report:

> Admiral Burke and Mr. Dulles consider that there is insufficient evidence to support the conjectures in this paragraph. The well motivated, aggressive CEF fought extremely well without air cover and with a shortage of ammunition. They inflicted very severe losses on the less well trained Cuban militia. Consequently, it is reasonable to believe that if the CEF had ammunition and air cover, they could have held the beachhead for a much longer time, destroyed much of the enemy artillery and tanks on the roads before they reached the beachhead, prevented observation of the fire of artillery that might have been placed in position, and destroyed many more of the local militia en route to the area. A local success by the landing party, coupled with CEF aircraft overflying Cuba with visible control of the air, could well have caused a chain reaction of success throughout Cuba with resultant defection of some of the militia, increasing support from the populace, and eventual success of the operation. 20/

Even here, however, not enough stress was placed on the fact that restrictions on the use of Brigade aircraft guaranteed the operation's failure. Each of the above responses indicated acceptance of the testimony from the first and second meetings

of the committee regarding the effectiveness of the performance of the Brigade in opposition to the Castro militia. The tales told by the escapees from the beachhead who appeared before the Taylor Committee hinted, however, that perhaps there were more lovers than fighters among those who went ashore. In roughly 72 hours of contact with the enemy, the Brigade suffered fewer than 100 killed in action; and Castro's forces suffered fewer than 150 killed in action. If the ammunition expenditure was as great as estimated and if there were more heroes than cowards in the Brigade, it strains credibility to accept that the losses would have been so limited in view of the numerous reports of close contact--practically hand-to-hand combat in many instances--that ranged from Playa Larga down to Playa Giron.

The presumptions by Taylor and Kennedy that if the B-26s were forced to continue to operate from Nicaragua they would have been unable to provide continuous air support to the beachhead and that even if the Brigade air arm had controlled the air it would not have affected the outcome ignored completely that the plan supported by the President and Rusk required that the Brigade aircraft would operate off the strip at Playa Giron as well as from Nicaragua. Consequently the B-26s could have provided not only continuous daylight support, but might possibly have supported some night operations, thus limiting the effective forces that Castro could move into action.

b. Memorandum No. 2

"Immediate Causes of Failure of the Operation Zapata" is a four page, eleven paragraph segment which repeats almost in toto the causes of failure which were given in the 11 May 1961 "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion (Zapata)" and which was the basis for the 16 May "preliminary" briefing of President Kennedy on the findings of the Taylor Committee. The memorandum began by listing the "proximate" cause for the failure of the invasion as the shortage of ammunition which developed from D-Day forward. The reasons the CSG presented to explain this shortage were the lack of ammunition discipline, the loss of the Rio Escondido and the Houston which carried reserve supplies of ammunition and other materiel, and the flight of the Brigade vessels to the open sea in order to escape the attacks of Castro's aircraft.

Although excusable because relatively few Cubans from the invading force were available for interrogation and debriefing at the time that the Taylor Committee report was written, none of the "popular" volumes which have been written on the Bay of Pigs subsequent to the release of the prisoners in 1962 have challenged the "proximate" cause of the failure as anything other than the ammunition shortage. As suggested in a

preceding paragraph, cowardice on the part of the invading Brigade--especially as it became apparent that Castro retained control of the air--may have been more directly responsible for the surrender than any lack of ammunition.*

Examination of the testimony presented during the course of the trial of the Brigade prisoners consistently indicated that their performance was less than admirable. Consider the following examples:

> 1. We entered playa Giron practically without firing a shot and found loaded artillery, artillery that had been loaded some time before, tanks in position, machine guns, rocket launchers, and huge amounts of rockets and munitions . . .
>
> This means that they did not fight bravely and resolutely to the end as they could have done.
>
> 2. That cowardice was demonstrated later by the number of prisoners who are present today--a brigade of 1,400 men, where there are 1,200 prisoners. . . A brigade in which not one battalion leader has died in combat; a brigade whose battalion and company leaders are all here as prisoners . . .
>
> 3. President [i.e., the presiding judge] - Do you remember the state you found them in when they were captured?

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*It is doubtful that there was a shortage of ammunition. Within a few months of the invasion, a Cuban publication, Playa Giron: Derrota del Imperialismo (Havana: Burgay y Cia, August 1961) ran photos of arms and ammunition which were reputedly captured from the invaders. Other Cuban publications of unidentified or later date also contain photos and comments which indicate a lack of spirited resistance: "Huge amounts of American army weapons and ammunition left behind by the cowardly mercenaries as they fled from the advance of the Revolutionary Forces. Had the invaders fought more courageously, they could have held that territory for a longer length of time." And, "When the Revolutionary forces advanced, the invaders abandoned 57mm. and 75mm. recoiless guns, rocket launchers, .50 caliber machine guns, 60mm., 81mm. and 4.2 inch mortars, Garand and Browning rifles, many of which were still unpacked. 21/

Witness - In a completely deplorable state.
President - Deplorable? In what way?
Witness - Deplorable for a combatant, deplorable behavior for men who came here with weapons in their hands.
President - Who are you referring to?
Witness - I am referring to all those who were captured here. We dedicated the 19th [of April 1961] to picking them up, not capturing them.
President - Did they turn themselves in?
Witness - They simply turned themselves in. You saw them and you picked them up, that's all there was to it.

4. There were some who confined themselves more or less to their defense, but there were others who, even at the time when only 70 or 100 members of the brigade were prisoners, spoke on television and gave data that the revolutionary [Castro] forces were able to use in effecting a speedier capture of their other buddies, whom they should have supposed were still fighting.

I was not dealing only with the prisoners who admitted defeat and recognized their guilt, but those--like Mr. Artime--who did not at that time hestitate to accuse others, including individuals in the counterrevolutionary underground here in Cuba. That is not the behavior of leaders. 22/*

By the time nearly 1,200 Brigade members who had been imprisoned were returned to the United States in December 1962, all were heroes and none were cowards. Getting reliable information about the performance of the Brigade during the three days of the invasion proved almost impossible. Both the commercial publications on the Bay of Pigs that began even before the release of the prisoners from Cuba and the most

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*Both Manuel Artime and Jose Perez San Roman, two of the leading figures in the anti-Castro brigade, signed confessions of treason and blamed the U.S. for having conned them into joining the attempt to overthrow Castro. 23/

recent volume of the operation have perpetuated the myth that all of the invaders fought furiously and heroically until overwhelmed by Castro's militia.*

Possibly the most realistic evaluation of the performance of the Brigade was that made by Fidel Castro about the time that the Taylor Committee forwarded its final report to President Kennedy. Castro is reported to have said:

> The invading forces fought very well as long as they thought they had air cover. After it failed, it was an easy matter to get them to surrender. 24/

In the same context regarding the Brigade's performance, the Cuban leader said that if the paratroops had been dropped further inland, if they had succeeded in controlling the roadways into Playa Giron and Playa Larga as planned, and if the battalion from the Houston had immediately joined their comrades in the fight at Playa Larga a provisional government probably could have been established. Castro conceded that "from a tactical point of view, in studying the terrain and choosing the appropriate place, the Pentagon strategists did very well." 25/

This is not to deny that there were truly brave men among the members of the invading force, but the percentage of heroes among the infantry brigade was far less than among

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*For example, see Peter Wyden, Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979). Wyden presented much of his material as verbatim conversations that were taking place during the course of the action.

the anti-Castro flyers. By and large the bulk of the latter group had, as Gar Teegen so bluntly put it, "their asses on the line" any time they got into a B-26, C-46, or a C-54 headed for Cuba after D-2. There was a strong possibility that they would be met by a FAR T-33 or Sea Fury, yet Thorsrud said that only three fliers quit. Included among the group of heroes of the air operation were those US pilots, including the four who, with ten Cubans, gave their lives in the attempt to oust the Castro government.*

By the way of explanation of the shortage of ammunition on the beach, Memorandum No. 2 noted the loss of the Rio Escondido and Houston to the FAR aircraft, stating: "The effectiveness of the Castro Air Force over the beach resulted from the failure to destroy the airplanes on the ground (particularly the T-33s whose importance was not fully appreciated in advance) before or concurrently with the landing." Again the committee ignored the fact that those most directly involved in planning the CIA air operation were aware of the T-33 threat and, that both senior CIA personnel and the JCS representatives involved in the operation fully understood the need for controlling the air over Cuba if the invasion plans were to succeed. There were no exceptions to

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*The Americans were Riley Shamburger, Leo Baker, Thomas "Pete" Ray, and Wade Gray of the Alabama National Guard.

this, and contrary to the wording of the committee report just cited, there was no opportunity provided for destroying Castro's aircraft on the ground "concurrently with the landing." A few sentences later the committee seems to have revised its opinion when it reported that the cancellation of the D-Day strike "was probably the most serious [of the restraints imposed to insure deniability] as it eliminated the last favorable opportunity to destroy the Castro Air Force on the ground." 26/ The committee's second memorandum offered as an explanation for the cancellation of the D-Day strike the on-going debate in the UN over Cuba and the Agency's failure to push Kennedy on the military consequences of the cancellation. It ignored the fact that ex-naval officer Kennedy was unconcerned about the loss of Brigade shipping and couldn't understand that denial of the D-Day strike posed a critical threat to the operation--though General Cabell called him at 0430 hours to request air cover from the Navy.

Memorandum No. 2 also suggested that the ammunition shortage at the beach was not fully understood because Headquarters could not keep up with what was happening in the combat area. The remedy for this, of course, would have been to have had "a command ship in the sea area with

an advance CIA command post on board." What this suggestion ignored was the presence of the US carrier task force in the immediate area with a CIA liaison officer aboard the flagship, and there were never any questions raised during the course of the committee hearings on the failure by either CIA or DOD to suggest that the flagship of the USN task force should have been made the C.I.C. either before, or immediately after, D-2. causes of failure, was one with which no one involved in the Bay of Pigs operation would disagree--the United States Government was not organizationally prepared to handle a paramilitary operation on this scale. It is correctly pointed out that there was no single authority short of the President who could have coordinated the actions of CIA, Defense, State, and the USIA.*

*For whatever reason, the committee did not follow up on the possibility that the failure of the D-2 diversionary landing planned for Oriente Province east of Guantanamo by Nino Diaz had contributed to the failure at Zapata. This speculation had been made in Memorandum No. 1, but was ignored as a contributing factor here. 27/ Considering that the committee suggested that the diversionary landing failed "because of weak leadership on the part of the Cuban officer," it was unfortunate that no investigation was made regarding the selection of Diaz.

In late January 1961, a report from the infantry training base in Guatemala indicated that Diaz was well known to all trainees as a blowhard agitator and troublemaker and he was not desired as brigade trainee. A former COB claimed that his protests to WH/4 that Diaz was a loser and incapable of leading the diversionary landing were ignored. Howard Hunt, whose perception of the caliber of the anti-Castro Cubans was quite good, had nothing favorable to say about Diaz; and his remarks implied his concern about the choice of Diaz. 28/

c. Memorandum No. 3

Of the eleven "Conclusions of the Cuban Study Group" reported in the three page memorandum prepared by the CSG, roughly half warranted general acceptance--especially after the fact. As with Memorandun No. 2, most of the conclusions were direct repeats of portions of the 11 May 1961 "Study of the Anti-Castro Invasion (Zapata)." These conclusions, therefore, were reached by the committee within 19 days from its first meeting and were basically unchanged in the following five weeks prior to submission of their report to the President. Included among the conclusions were: 29/

> 1. By about November 1960, the impossibility of running Zapata as a covert operation under CIA should have been recognized and the situation reviewed. The subsequent decision might then have been made to limit the efforts to attain covertness to the degree and nature of US participation, and to assign responsibility for the amphibious operation to the Department of Defense. In this case, the CIA would have assisted in concealing the participation of Defense. Failing such a reorientation, the project should have been abandoned.

One other element which was introduced during the course of the committee hearings which might have been added as an alternative to cancellation, of course, was for the U.S. to mount an overt military effort against Castro.

> 2. Once the need for the operation was established, its success should have been the primary consideration of all agencies in the government. Operational restrictions designed to protect its covert character should have been

> accepted only if they did not impair the chance of success. As it was, the leaders of the operation were obliged to fit their plan inside changing ground rules laid down for non-military considerations, which often had serious operational disadvantages.

On the few occassions when this subject was broached during the hearings, it was dismissed without discussion or disputed by the Attorney General. DCI Dulles declined to become involved in the dispute.

> 3. The leaders of the operation did not always present their case with sufficient force and clarity to the senior officials of the government to allow the latter to appreciate the consequences of some of their decisions. This remark applies in particular to the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the D-Day strike.

The "leaders of the operation" against whom this particular charge was directed were General Cabell and Mr. Bissell. Based on review of both the testimony at the hearings and of Memorandun No. 1, this conclusion appears to have had the purely political motive of protecting President Kennedy--and automatically Secretary Rusk--from any direct responsibility for the failure of the operation. In a memorandum he wrote prior to completion of the Taylor Committee Report (but after he had seen "a preliminary draft of the conclusions"), Bissell may have had the above conclusion in mind. He wrote that decisions on the military operation had been made by qualified military professionals who

"suffered relatively few frustrations through either inability to obtain decisions or through receiving unwelcome decisions on matters that were within my authority and that of the DCI to determine [and]...and they suffered relatively little interference from within the Agency." 30/ Certainly the last minute cancellation of the D-Day strike was clearly a case where professional military judgment was negated by political expediency. As noted in their testimony, the JCS were completely ignored when this decision was made.

> 4. The planning and conduct of the operation would have been improved if there had been an initial statement of governmental policy, assigning the mission and setting the guidelines within which it was to develop. Thereafter, there was a need for formalized procedure for interdepartmental coordination and follow-up with adequate record keeping of decisions.

This was made quite apparent during the course of the hearings held by the Cuban Study Group, and had such decision been made early in the game, some of the difficulties which were apparent in the relationship between the Agency and the Department of Defense, particularly in the period shortly prior to the change of administration on 20 January 1961, might have been avoided--much to the benefit of the overall operation.

> 5. We are of the opinion that the preparations and execution of paramilitary operations such as the Zapata are a form of Cold War action in which the country must be prepared to engage...Such operations should be planned and executed by governmental mechanisms capable of bringing into play, in addition to

> military and covert techniques, all other forces, political, economic, ideological, and intelligence, which can contribute to its success. No such mechanism presently exists but should be created to plan, coordinate, and further a national Cold War strategy capable of including paramilitary operations.

Although Cold War issues fell within the general charter President Kennedy gave to General Taylor, they were treated only marginally. Suggestions such as this were supported without objection by the Director of Central Intelligence at various points during the course of the hearings.

6. Among the other stated conclusions of the Taylor Committee Report, each of the following raised some specific questions as to their validity or completeness: 31/

a. "There was a marginal character to the operation which increased with each additional limitation and cast a serious doubt over its ultimate success." One of the points used in support of this conclusion was that the 36 mile beachhead at Zapata stretched the Brigade forces too thin. It might be recalled that this point had been made by the JCS in its evaluation of the Zapata plan, but in the hearing, the committee passed over it in cavalier fashion; and little protect was heard about the

loss of the shock value which would have attended the initial operation as planned for Trinidad. The shock value being intended, of course, to encourage dissident Cubans to rally round the invading forces.*

b. The discussion with reference to the marginal character of the operation also emphasized that there was a shortage of B-26 pilots "if the beach was to require cover for a long period." The committee again ignored the fact that before the cancellation of the D-Day strike the Zapata plan specifically called for operational use of the Playa Giron airstrip by some of the anti-Castro B-26s. Moreover, it was not expected that there would be any opposition from FAR.

c. It also was the committee's opinion that the effect of demobilizing (rather than using) the Cuban Brigade would have posed a political problem which had both national and international ramifications--internationally in terms of loss of face among the anti-Castro Latin American nations and nationally because of its impact on the Democratic party. The latter concern probably had more to do with the President's "go" decision than the former--

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*The actual beachhead was about 20 miles long from Blue beach to Red beach. No landing was made at Green beach which was 18 miles SE of Blue beach.

Dean Rusk notwithstanding. Arthur Schlesinger noted that when Kennedy believed that the cost of failure was reduced to an acceptable level, he said: "If we have to get rid of the 800 men, it is much better to dump them in Cuba than in the United States, especially if that is where they want to go." 32/

d. On the point that the Cuban Expeditionary Force had achieved tactical surprise in its landing, the CSG was correct, but it reiterated the doubtful proposition discussed earlier in this paper that the Brigade "fought well and inflicted heavy casualities on the enemy." Another part of this same conclusion was that because of the short life of the invasion "Castro's repressive measures following the landing made coordinated uprising of the populace impossible," and there could be little argument about this. Actually, however, Castro's repressive measures were instituted almost immediatley following the D-2 air strike which he properly assessed as a precursor to larger scale military activities.

e. The CSG also concluded that the President and his senior advisers had been confused about the guerrilla option being available to the Brigade if the situation at the beachhead should become too difficult. Robert Kennedy, of course, had been

the most vociferous in his assertions that the President had been led down the primrose path on this matter. Where the committee failed in this instance was in not suggesting that all parties--the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense--were remiss for not having made specific studies of developments which had taken place in the Zapata area since Castro's take over. This point had been ignored during the course of the hearings, but had such studies been undertaken they would have revealed the great interest which Castro had taken in developing the area--and consequently winning strong support from the area's inhabitants.* Moreover they also chose to ignore testimony which stressed that the guerrilla option was realistic only in terms of the Trinidad plan where refuge in the Escambrays was possible.

If the CSG had done its homework it also could have pointed out that even cursory exmination of a map of Cuba should have made it clear to the poorest military planner--and White House "experts"--that to exercise the guerrilla option to get from Zapata to the Escambray through a hostile countryside was unrealistic. To

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*Castro made a point of this in his 23 April 1961 TV special on the Bay of Pigs.

accomplish such a feat from the beachhead implied a breakthrough and a journey of 50 - 70 miles through hostile country to reach the foothills of the Escambray area. The final sentence of this conclusion stated: "As we have indicated before, the guerrilla alternative as it had been described was not in fact available to this force in the situation which developed."

A more accurate statment would have been: "The guerrilla alternative from the Zapata area was not in fact available to this force." According to Jake Esterline, this reality was clearly recognized by the Cuban Brigade leaders;

> It must be stated that little interest or enthusiasm was displayed by the Brigade personnel concerned for any aspect of the plan that involved retreat and defeat, to include this contingency for guerrilla operations plan. It was generally recognized and openly stated by the key officers that any military force involved in an airborne/amphibious landing and subsequent field operations against an enemy defending his homeland would have an extremely difficult time assuming a guerrilla role in any substansive [sic] force subsequent to defeat in the field. The defeat itself implied that the enemy in close combat had surrounded or ruptured and destroyed the Brigade as a military force, thus allowing only a fraction of its combat effectives to escape to assume role as escapees and evaders with a limited potential for later guerrilla operations. 33/*

f. The opening statement of a conclusion beginning: "The operation suffered from being run

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*The question is, of course, why the committee did not recognize this. Perhaps in their hurry to meet the President's deadline, they didn't take time to read a memorandum dated 31 May 1961.

from the distance of Washington..." was undisputable. The questionable portion of the conclusion was whether there was a clear understanding in the Washington headquarters of the Agency and in the operations center in the Pentagon of the state of affairs at the beachhead. Memorandum No. 3 of the Taylor committee stated "This [lack of understanding about the state of affairs at the beachhead] was particularly the case on the night of D+1 when an appreciation of the ammunition situation would have resulted in an appeal for US air cover in an all-out effort to supply the beach by all available means." This suggests greater responsiveness and willingness to risk loss of deniability by the Kennedy administration than had been evidenced at any time earlier. In fact, the President's reluctance to grant more than one hour for the Navy CAP on the morning of D+2 would not seem to warrant a judgment that the President would have loosened the reins in favor of overt US support for the Brigade.

7. Another conclusion took up the issue of the JCS's support of the Zapata plan, and mentioned that the JCS position in favor of Trinidad over Zapata--even though

they supported Zapata as the best alternative plan, "apparently never reached the senior civilian officials." But here again the committee blatantly ignored the real issue in not faulting the single "senior civilian official"--Secretary McNamara--who ignored, lost, or misplaced two critically important JCS papers. Nor did they criticize either the JCS for failing to follow through with the Secretary of Defense concerning the official DOD position re Trinidad and Zapata or senior CIA officials--particularly Allen Dulles--for not pursuing the matter of JCS support for Trinidad with Mr. McNamara or with President Kennedy. In short, the Taylor Committee failed to place blame where it really belonged--on a principal member of the President's cabinet.

8. One of the most positive conclusions recorded by the Taylor Committee stated: "Although the intelligence was not perfect, particularly as to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the T-33s, we do not feel that any failure of intelligence contributed significantly to the defeat." This conclusion poses serious semantic problems. It would have been impossible for intelligence to evaluate the "effectiveness" of the T-33s prior to the invasion. What could be evaluated was the "capability" of the T-33s.

Both the US and Cuban pilots who were preparing for the anti-Castro effort were thoroughly familiar with the capabilities of the T-33s; and, in addition, the Cuban pilots were also familiar with their compatriots who had remained loyal to Castro. More precisely put, there was no failure of intelligence which contributed to the defeat. The failure was on the part of the President and Secretary of State who refused to permit the fullest exploitation of the anti-Castro Air Force in order to eliminate the capability of Castro's Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria to get off the ground.

d. Memorandum No. 4

The final eleven page memorandum of the Taylor Committee, "Recommendations of the Cuban Study Group," contained six recommendations, four of which dealt with the broad aspect of preparations that the United States should make for meeting Cold War threats and included:

1. A mechanism for the planning and coordination of Cold War strategy; to be known as the Strategic Resources Group (SRG);
2. Establishing responsibility for paramilitary operations;
3. Improving effectiveness in the paramilitary field; and

4. Defining relations of the JCS to the President in Cold War operations.

As Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Dulles noted that Recommendations 1-4 were "not within my range of competence." Dulles did suggest, however, that if General Taylor and others were to undertake revision of NSC 5412--which the DCI strongly recommended--that he would willingly participate in that review. 34/*

The fifth recommendation was without title and stated:

> It is our feeling that every effort should be made to draw all lessons from the Cuban operation, particularly those which point up the errors made and the reasons therefor. For this purpose all the principal participants in the decision making process should be informed of what took place so that the operation can be viewed objectively in its totality. Because of the tight security which surrounded the operation in governmental circles, probably no one official now knows all the important facts concerning it. We believe that the Cuban Study Group should give an oral presentation to the participants of the highlights of their study. 36/

The next paragraph suggested the need for the President to emphasize to his principal advisers the need for a change in attitude on the part of the government and in the people of the United States toward the "life and death struggle which we may be losing, and will lose unless we change our ways and marshall our resources with an intensity associated in the

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*The Agency had made detailed proposals for the CSG's consideration in formulating recommendations on paramilitary activities. 35/

past only with times of war." Among the suggested changes were the declaration of a limited national emergency, review of treaties and agreements which would restrain the full use of US resources in Cold War, and the allocation of foreign aid based on the attitude foreign nations showed toward the United States. Two other sections of recommendation Number 5 related to the establishment of governmental machinery to handle cold war problems and to the need for "a critique of the Cuban operation accompanied by a statement of the views of the President, [to] be held with at least the following present: The Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and General Taylor." 37/

The sixth recommendation of the CSG emphasized that as a result of its work, the members of the committee had become convinced that Fidel Castro's leadership of Cuba "constitutes a real menace capable of eventually overthrowing the elected governments in any one or more of weak Latin American republics." It said that hoping that Castro would just go away was unlikely, and that his ouster would require direct, overt US action with any support it could get from Latin America. The committee did caution that any action against Castro would have to be

weighed against events in other parts of the world where US interests were involved. It concluded by stating: "It is recommended that the Cuban situation be reappraised in the light of all presently known factors and new guidance be provided for political, military, economic, and propaganda action against Castro." 38/

In effect, what the CSG recommendations on Cuba amounted to was approval and restatement of the anti-Castro program which had been authorized by President Eisenhower in March 1960. Except for two political decisions by the Kennedy Administration--the switch from Trinidad to Zapata and cancellation of the D-Day strike--the Castro "problem" might have been fully resolved in April 1961 instead of being left on square one.

CHAPTER 5

General Taylor's Retrospective Views

> I am afraid that I could not be of real assistance to you in providing qualified answers. While I worked very intensively on the broad aspects of this affair in 1961, I have forgotten many of the details which were available to our committee. I would only say that I felt at the time that the committee had access to all the facts necessary to allow us to form a qualified judgement [sic] as to the major causes of the failure of this undertaking.
>
> Albert C. Persons, Bay of Pigs (Birmingham, AL: Kingston Press, 1968), p. 77.

However poor his memory may have been in response to questions posed by Mr. Persons, one of the US pilots who had been directly involved in air transport operations related to the Bay of Pigs, General Taylor's recall had improved greatly by 1972. In his book, Swords and Plowshares, the general repeated practically all of the findings of the four Taylor Committee memoranda; and he showed little or no evidence of any second thoughts in the interval since the committee had done its work. If anything, his views on the correctness of the findings seem to have hardened. This was particularly true of the emphasis which he placed on the inadequacy of the planning for air operations and on the evaluation of the chances for success of the operation.

Communications between the Headquarters area and the vessels carrying the anti-Castro Brigade toward Playa Giron were never in doubt at the time when the question of possible recall came up--on the evening of D-1 following the President's cancellation of the D-Day strike. There was no question but that the recall message could have been received. The only question was whether the Cubans might refuse to obey such an order and attempt to go it alone--infeasible as that would have been. As noted earlier, there were rumors that the Brigade had been encouraged to take such steps, perhaps even by one of their principal American advisers. Such communications problems as did develop occurred only on D-Day following the sinking of the Rio Escondido by Castro's aircraft. At no point, however, was communication completely cut off from those on the beach.

Finally in his retrospective newspaper article, General Taylor suggested: "One would hope that at a proper time President Carter would conduct a post-mortem review of the rescue mission as President Kennedy did of the Bay of Pigs." The value of doing post-mortems of operations is an established fact, but one might question the wisdom of undertaking such an analysis on a crash basis before the final results are really known. That the Taylor Committee began its hearings even as rescue operations were still underway in the Bahia de Cochinos and for practical purposes had reached its conclusions--faulting the Agency principally and JCS secondarily--

even prior to the testimony of such principals as Mr. Dulles, Admiral Burke, General Lemnitzer, and Jake Esterline illustrates that the investigation had political as well as fact finding objectives. An impartial observer might question which took precedence with Taylor.

CHAPTER 6

Assessment of the Taylor Committee Investigation

In his 22 April 1961 request asking General Maxwell Taylor to undertake an unbiased examination of US "military and paramilitary, guerrilla and anti-guerrilla activity which fall short of outright war," President John F. Kennedy also asked that Taylor "give special attention to the lessons which can be learned from recent events in Cuba." Although the "Recommendations" of the committee did present a broad spectrum of strategies for the Cold War--with only minor reference to the Bay of Pigs--the principal focus of the Taylor Committee investigation was that operation.

Despite General Taylor's opinion that the group selected by the President--himself, DCI Allen Dulles, CNO Arleigh Burke, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy--would protect the interests of the CIA, the military, and the White House, it was apparent from the first meeting of the committee that Robert Kennedy and Taylor would set the tone for the investigation and that, whatever else, President Kennedy's image would remain untarnished. The President's quick acknowledgment of responsibility for the operation would be regarded as a chivalrous gesture to protect his subordinates, but neither the Agency nor the JCS were

effectively defended by Dulles or Burke--even though they jointly registered the only official dissent in the course of the committee's investigation.* Had the President been more concerned with a thorough investigation than with his image, he would have waited at least until all the troops had been returned from the invasion area or otherwise been accounted for; he would have eliminated Dulles, Burke, and his brother from consideration as members of the committee; and he would have selected a group of "statesmen" with reputations similar to Taylor's for the committee.

There is no question that the report of the Cuban Study Group suffered from the haste with which it was prepared. For all practical purposes, the Committee had completed its report by 11 May 1961--less than three weeks from the initiation of the project, four days in advance of the date on which the President had requested a preliminary report, and prior to the appearance of Admiral Burke, General Lemnitzer, DCI Dulles, and Jake Esterline as witnesses. Moreover, the CSG failed to call a number of witnesses whose testimony could have contributed significantly to improving the assessment of the operation. Among CIA personnel in this category were the following:

> C. Tracy Barnes who, as Bissell's principal deputy, had the closest and most continuous contact with--and input to--the project of anyone outside of WH/4. Barnes had been responsible for the controversial 8 April 1961 briefing of Adlai Stevenson about the operation.

* See page 205.

Richard D. Drain who served in various senior capacities during the project and was Chief of Operations for the project prior to and during the attack on Cuba.*

J. C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, who attended a majority of the sessions of the CSG and, though not technically assigned to the project, was thoroughly involved in the operation.

[redacted] King frequently added unsolicited--and often erroneous--comments during the sessions but he warranted an in-depth debriefing.

Gerard Droller and E. Howard Hunt who were directly responsible for trying to bring order out of the chaos among the anti-Castro political leaders.

Lawrence K. White, Deputy Director of Support (DDS), Sherman Kent, Chairman of the Board of National Estimates (BNE), and Robert Amory, Deputy Director of Intelligence (DDI).

It was particularly unfortunate that the last three individuals, as senior members of the Director's staff, were not pressed to explain why they failed to play more active roles as the operation was developing. Ever since the collapse of the operation, Amory, in particular, escaped all criticism because he supposedly was ignorant of the planned operation. Arthur Schlesinger claimed that Amory "was not informed at any point about any aspect of the operation," and Roger Hilsman, State's intelligence chief, stated that Amory was "kept in the dark," 2/** Considering the very

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*Drain commented that: "I was standing by all the time...[but] I was never called before Bobby Boy's little proctological group." 1/

**As late as 1975, one newspaper report stated that "When the 'covert operations' people were organizing the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, they did not tell the Agency's own Deputy Director of Intelligence, Robert Amory, who might have figured the whole trip would be a bummer." 3/

nature of CIA's business and the length of time that the project was under way, to believe that any Deputy Director--particularly one charged with responsibility for producing finished economic, current, geographic, military, and photo intelligence on Latin America (including Cuba)--could have been as "in the dark" as claimed for Amory defies belief.

The evidence shows that as early as 22 June 1960 one of Amory's staff, [redacted] attended a special NSC briefing on the Cuban situation when General Cabell outlined the Agency's anti-Castro program, including a discussion of the on-going training of a cadre of nearly [redacted] PM instructors and radio operators. At the latest, Amory learned the details about the planned operation on 10 March 1961. He was present when DCI Dulles briefed the CIA subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on all phases of the Trindad plan, including the paramilitary invasion. Amory also was present at the DCI's morning meeting on 30 March 1961 when DDS White discussed indemnification for the owners of the vessels to be used in the invasion "against the loss of their ships and whatever casualties may be suffered among the crews." Perhaps the most accurate statement regarding Amory's knowledgeability about the operation was made by Stewart Alsop who said: "The DDI was never given an opportunity to evaluate its [the Bay of Pigs] chance of success." 4/*

* Recent declassification of the Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee revealed that Amory certainly knew about the invasion plan by 11 January 1961 when he accompanied DCI Dulles to Dulles's off the record briefing of the Committee. The DCI prefaced his comments by noting: "The Cuban and Guatemalan problems are so closely tied together, sir, that with your approval I would like to present the two together." 5/

Sherman Kent, Director of the BNE, told one interviewer that neither he nor anyone on the BNE had been "officially" consulted about the Bay of Pigs operation; however, a Memorandum for the Record of 30 January 1961 highlights details of the briefing Colonel Jack Hawkins gave to DDCI General Cabell and BNE members Admiral Jeruald Wright and Generals Earl Barnes and Harold Bull on the planned operation. It was reported that these "senior Agency officials critiqued the plan at some length." 6/ Also in late January 1961 at the request of Director Dulles, Kent's Office of National Estimates prepared an internal memorandum on "Probable International Reactions to Certain Possible US Courses of Action against the Castro Regime." One of those courses of US action was to "provide active support, of varying degrees of magnitude and overtness, to an attempt by Cuban opposition elements, internal and in exile, to overthrow Castro." As with both DDS White and DDI Amory, Kent was a participant in the DCI's morning meetings; and he did indicate that "in general" attendees at these sessions were aware of the anti-Castro project.

One of the strangest oversights, however, was the Taylor Committee's failure to question Colonel "Red" White, the Deputy Director for Support. Even before the establishment of WH/4, (18 January 1960), White's Directorate had been involved in supporting the Agency's activities [redacted] including Cuba. Unlike the Clandestine Services which ignored its own Contingency Task Force Plan, Colonel White insisted that

the best qualified personnel from his Directorate--logistics, security, communications, and other support activities--be assigned to the project. His observations concerning problems in these areas should have been explored by the committee. It would have been valuable, for example, to have heard White's comments on the impact that the change from Trindad to Zapata had on logistics operations.*

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*Richard M. Helms who was Chief of Operations for the Deputy Directorate of Plans at the time of the Bay of Pigs operation has deliberately been omitted from the list of Agency personnel who might profitably have been called as witnesses by the Taylor Committee. There were rumors--subsequent to the operation--that Helms purposely had isolated himself from the operation because he foresaw it as a failure. In his book on Helms, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, Thomas Powers has repeated all the innuendoes and rumors about the Machiavellian tactics that were being employed by Bissell and Helms to discredit each other during the course of the operation--Helms reportedly wanting to force cancellation of the operation and Bissell wanting to arrange Helm's transfer. 7/

In direct response to my question about his relationship to Helms at the time of the Bay of Pigs activity, the following conversation with Mr. Bissell is believed to reflect a more accurate view of the situation:

> "Bissell: I think he saw most all the cable traffic and I think he was pretty well informed as to what was going on--very well informed; but he was really out of the line of command on this operation. There was something of a tacit agreement between us that he would be devoting himself to a lot of the other ongoing business of the DDP office because this [anti-Castro project] was taking a great deal of my time.
>
> "JBP: This was a tacit agreement? This wasn't a session with you and Helms?
>
> "Bissell: Let me say that this probably was not that explicit. I would make an observation here,
(Footnote continued on next page)

From the Department of State there also were at least three individuals who should have been asked to appear as witnesses: Thomas Mann, Roger Hilsman, and Adlai Stevenson. Thomas Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs until a few weeks before the invasion, had expressed strong reservations about the capability of the anti-Castro brigade to achieve success without the intervention of US forces and about the need for the US to be more overt in its support of the anti-Castro movement. Mann's objections drew heavy fire from WH/4. Roger Hilsman, Director of Intelligence and Research, had his proposal to make a study of the feasibility of a covert attempt to oust Castro rejected by Dean Rusk; and Adlai Stevenson became the scapegoat for a bumbled briefing by CIA's Tracy Barnes and the disastrous policy decisions of Secretary Rusk and President Kennedy. Each of the three would seem to have warranted a hearing before the committee.

> and I don't want you to infer anything really beyond what it says. It was not particularly easy--I did not find it particularly easy--to discuss things clearly and derive a clear understanding with Dick about the division of labor between us when he was my Deputy. I don't imply by this any sense of conflict or rivalry, but he would go ahead and handle certain kinds of matters. We saw one another, of course, all the time. Quite often I would consult him about something that I was handling. I think rather less often he would consult me. I don't mean to imply, however, in any kind of concealment from me--I never had that feeling at all. But it really was our habit during the whole time that we were in those positions that the division of labor between us was more tacit than explicit." 8/

The failure of the Taylor Committee to call on the above, and others, to testify cannot be justified for lack of time--even within the time frame set by the President. In the period between 22 April 1961 when the committee held its first meeting and 16 May when General Taylor gave the President the preliminary briefing he had requested, more than forty witnesses had completed testimony. In the period between 17 May and the final meeting to take testimony (30 May 1960) only a dozen witnesses would appear; and most of those were Cubans whose testimony was quite brief. Between 31 May and 13 June, the four memoranda which make up the Taylor Committee Report were prepared, but considering that significant portions of two of these memoranda were taken from the preliminary briefing paper, it should have been possible to have interviewed many, if not most, of those identified above.

In its haste to complete the report by the President's deadline, it appears that the committee put its priorities in reverse order. The narrative portion of the final report (Memorandum No. 1) traces the history of the operation from its inception under President Eisenhower's 17 March 1960 authorization of an anti-Castro program through the collapse of the invasion at Playa Giron on 19 April 1961. This story is told on the basis of the testimony of the witnesses and the more than thirty "Annexes" which the committee requested as a result of the

testimony of various individuals. Unfortunately this procedure made it impossible--or apparently impossible since no witnesses were recalled--to resolve differences among the testimony of witnesses or discrepancies between testimony and documents, including the Annexes. Inasmuch as most of the documents that the CSG requested were available prior to the committee's first session--only a few documents of a statistical nature were prepared specifically in response to the DSG's requests--it was unfortunate that the committee did not first attempt to collect and review pertinent materials before examining witnesses.

As a result of the committee's failure to resolve these kinds of discrepancies, such critical issues as the following were ignored:

1. Claims by Secretary Rusk and others with reference to the cancellation of the D-Day air strike that President Kennedy was unaware that the Zapata plan called for both a D minus 2 and a D-Day strike. Not only was there ample evidence that McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Adviser, was an early advocate of a pre-D-Day strike, but the "Summary of White House Meetings" that General David Gray prepared for the committee noted that during a 6 April 1961 meeting--after Mr. Bissell had specified that there would be a D minus 2 strike: "The President questions whether or not a preliminary strike wasn't an alarm bell."*

2. The Committee's complete lack of concern about the handling of JCSM-44-61 and JCSM-166-61. Both reports were lost, forgotten, or ignored by Secretary McNamara. The papers represented the thinking of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and could have had a direct impact on the operational plan had they been properly evaluated. JCSM-44-61 proposed that an interdepartmental group plan Castro's ouster with the US military playing a leading role, and JCSM-166-61 specified that CIA's Trinidad plan was better than any proposed alternatives, including Zapata.

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*General Gray's memorandum was dated 9 May 1961.

3. The confusion about the possibility of the Brigade going to guerrilla status from the Zapata area into the Escambray. Reference to even the most simplistic topographic map would have quickly ended all such speculation. The only realistic chance to move as guerrillas into the Escambrays would have been from the Trinidad site and it was only with reference to Trinidad that this option had been specified by CIA.

4. The failure to resolve the confusion over matters related to air operations such as the appreciation of the capabilities of Castro's T-33s, whether Castro's B-26s were of more concern to the Brigade than the T-33s, whether the T-33s were armed, and whether Castro's FAR had MiG aircraft. The individuals directly responsible for WH/4's air training and air operations--Billy Carpenter, George Germosen, Gar Teegen, and all of the pilots (Cuban and American)--knew exactly what they were up against. That Beerli, Bissell, Hawkins, and even General White confused the situation without contradiction or questions from the committee was inexcusable considering the criticality of air operations to the success or failure of the operation.

5. The committee failed to raise any questions concerning the capability of the Trinidad airfield to handle B-26 traffic. Perhaps this became a point of no consequence once the President and Secretary of State decided that a "quieter" invasion was required. Since it was offered as one of the reasons for changing the invasion site, it should have been examined more carefully, particularly since use of the Playa Giron air strip not only required drastic revisions in the loading plans for the ships, it also impinged directly on planned air operations by requiring the landing of two B-26s on D-Day prior to the planned air strikes.

6. In this same context was the committee's failure to question the validity of statements by witnesses that the switch from Trinidad to Zapata presented no particular problems. Unfortunately, even some of the CIA air operations personnel, as well as members of the JCS, tended to regard this as a minor matter. In fact, the shift caused a massive readjustment of the logistics plan, including the reloading of the Rio Escondido to provide support for air operations off of the Playa Giron airstrip. The reloading including the avgas which exploded when Castro's aircraft attacked the Rio on D-Day. Additionally, the need to plan for three--rather than one--landing sites

compelled readjustments of cargoes on the Houston and other vessels. It was the shift from Trinidad to Zapata that led to the mad scramble at the last minute to acquire the aluminum small boats to off-load the troops at the Playa Larga site at the north end of the Bahia de Cochinos.

7. No serious questions were raised by the committee concerning the performance of the Brigade despite the sharp differences immediately apparent between the 24 April 1961 memorandum that Col. Hawkins presented to the committee at its third meeting and his 13 April 1961 cable from Nicaragua extolling the virtues of both the Brigade's infantry and its Air Force. The committee apparently took for granted the comments made at its first meeting concerning the heroic fight waged by the invaders, despite the fact that well before completing their work they learned that the bulk of the Brigade had been taken prisoner and that fewer than a hundred men had been killed.

8. The failure of the USN's CAP to meet the Brigade's B-26s for the one hour of protection on 19 April 1961 was never challenged. How the B-26s could overfly the Essex one hour early without being detected was ignored, even though the USN's most senior officer, Admiral Burke, was a committee member. The destruction of the operational records of the Essex which probably could have clarified the situation regarding the missed CAP strongly suggests that senior naval officers were interested in protecting their careers and/or the reputation of the USN than in admitting to error. This episode would not have changed the outcome at the Bay of Pigs, but it might have permitted the orderly withdrawal of some of the Brigade from the beach. Moreover, no question was raised as to why, at this stage of the operation, President Kennedy limited the air support by the USN to one hour.

In addition to its failure to focus on any of the above issues, the committee deserved sharp criticism for failing to provide a verbatim transcript of its meetings. The loss of information from this decision is clearly evident in the comparison between the verbatim record and the "official" record of the first meeting--the only session for which there is known to be a verbatim transcript. In this same category was the committee's failure to insure that the record of all meetings with witnesses clearly identified questioners,

respondents, and commentators. Considering the confusion and problems noted above, it was unfortunate that all US personnel who appeared as witnesses were not provided an opportunity to review the record of their testimony. Had this been done, even under the deadline set by the President for completion of the report, useful corrections and clarification of the record might have been accomplished before the final report was forwarded. (The only witness to whom this privilege is known to have been extended was McGeorge Bundy.)

The Taylor Committee neglected to make any assessment of leadership at the White House and cabinet level, despite the fact that policy decisions which had a major impact on the operational plan originated with Secretary Rusk's caution, Secretary McNamara's ignorance (for whatever reason) of two important JCS papers, and President's Kennedy's insistence on attempting to maintain plausible deniability beyond the point of reason. The challenges to leadership by the committee were aimed--often rudely and crudely--only at CIA and DOD personnel. The only exception to this generalization which has been surfaced appeared in a report about the committee's meeting on 12 June 1961 which stated:

> During the meeting General Cabell and Mr. Bissell were being questioned about the events leading up to the cancellation of the D-Day strike. General Taylor commented, "This was the time to take the issue to the President. The situation did not penetrate the Secretarial brain (he is referring to Secretary Rusk). By training, Secretary Rusk is not prepared to deal with this kind of problem." 9/

The sting was taken out of this comment, however, as the memorandum pointed out that General Taylor also criticized General Cabell for his failure to get on the phone with President Kennedy when Rusk offered him the opportunity to present his case against the cancellation of the D-Day strike. Taylor's remark ignored the fact that Cabell stated that Rusk was repeating to the President exactly what he (Cabell) had told Rusk and that Cabell saw no point in personally repeating the information to the President.*

The reputation of President Kennedy suffered no diminution as a result of the Taylor Committee's investigation thanks in large part to the vigilant efforts of Attorney General Robert Kennedy to deflect or block the slightest hints that the failure at the Bahia de Cochinos in any way resulted from actions taken by the resident in the White House or his principal advisers. Of the latter, one writer has stated: "Associates of President Kennedy have reported their memories so as to insulate the President from responsibility for the fiasco." 11/ Taylor, too, displayed no inclination to question the actions or inaction of the Chief Executive; and his criticisms were of the Agency's principals and the Joint Chiefs.

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*The information on Taylor's comments is found in a J.C. King memo for record of 12 June 1961 which incorrectly gives the date of the meeting as 25 June 1961. There was no committee meeting on 25 June which the DCI was scheduled to attend. 10/ Presumably Secretary Rusk was not in attendance.

The President's understanding of the guerrilla option and his cancellation of the D-Day air strike were issues that engendered some of the bitterest exchanges between the Attorney General and various witnesses during the committee hearings. That the President believed that there was a guerrilla option once the invasion site had been shifted from Trinidad to Zapata and that cancellation of the D-Day strike had little or no relation to the failure of the invasion suggests both inattention to--or disregard for--the advice he had been given by the individuals most qualified to make the operational judgments for successful implementation of the agreed plan. The most dramatic evidence of the President's contempt of the experts was provided during a meeting between Kennedy and John McCone a few weeks after McCone had replaced Allen Dulles as DCI. One knowledgeable source has written:

> In a private meeting with President Kennedy on 7 January 1962, the President told McCone that he, the President, had been persuaded to approve the operation on the basis that if the invasion failed to inspire large-scale defections, then the force which had been put ashore, could retreat into the Escambray mountains and would represent a substantial guerrilla force which would be rather easily reinforced and resupplied from the United States or elsewhere. He said that he learned much to his surprise the operation was so planned and the landing so located that there was no possibility of such an escape. The President made a second point. He had concluded that modest air power, even if successful, would have only postponed defeat for a few days. He said that indeed he doubted if even substantial

> amounts of U.S. air power over a considerable period of time would have given the necessary cover to permit a retreat into the Escambray. It was the President's opinion that the operation was doomed to defeat and the fact that an air strike was not forthcoming at a particular hour or day probably hastened the defeat but would not have made the difference between success and failure. 12/*

Secretary Rusk, with the President, was the other individual most responsible for the political alterations that ruled out implementation of the Agency's Trinidad Plan--which was favored at all times by the Joint Chiefs of Staff--and for cancellation of the D-Day air strike. As indicated in the discussion of his testimony before the Taylor Committee, Rusk found no fault with his own performance, but his dissimulative remarks about the judgments and performance of others not only shaded the truth but were demonstrably in error. As with Robert Kennedy, Secretary Rusk would subsequently continue to provide disinformation about the Agency's estimates and the importance of the air operations.

Secretary of Defense McNamara's opinions could have had a significant impact on the planning of the anti-Castro operation, particularly if he had studied the two JCSM's which seem to have disappeared from sight after having been sent to his office.**

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*Questions regarding the importance of the cancelled air strike on D-Day were ones about which the Attorney General would continue to be most protective of the President--even to the point of disingenuousness. This topic is discussed in detail in Volume I of this history (pp. 295-305).

**The papers were JCSM-44-61, 27 Jan 61, "US Plan of Action in Cuba," and JCSM-166-61, 15 Mar 61, "Evaluation of the Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts, CIA paramilitary Plan, Cuba."

For whatever reason, the Taylor Committee did not pursue the breakdown in the system which resulted in this loss. After the fact, there is no question that McNamara was concerned about the operation; but he never intervened with the President at the critical time on D-Day when it was apparent that control of the air was at issue.

The absence of Allen Dulles at the time that the crucial decision on cancellation of the D-Day strike was being made by Kennedy and Rusk was inexcusable, the more so considering that Dulles had not departed the US for Puerto Rico prior to the D-2 air strike. There was no question that once the attack on Cuba began that both Dulles and the CIA were going to be targets for attack by Castro and the pro-Communist nations. For all practical purposes, the committee ignored this matter when, had he been present, Dulles was the one man who might have persuaded the President to permit the D-Day strike.*

Inexplicably, the focus of CIA's bitterness came to be Adlai Stevenson rather than either the President or Secretary Rusk. With regard to the Bay of Pigs, Stevenson was more sinned against than sinning. A cable from Stevenson to Rusk as the invasion was in its final stages clearly indicated how isolated Stevenson was from the anti-Castro project. Although not recommending such action, Stevenson did express hope that if

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*The severest critic of Dulles was Dick Drain, C/OP/WH/4 who said the DCI upon his return was more concerned about [redacted] than the fate of the on-going invasion. 13/

There can be no doubt that the Agency will continue "to bear the brunt of the criticism" for the failure at the Bay of Pigs until a decision is made to release details such as presented in this volume. CIA's leadership was not without fault, but the documentary evidence included in this examination of the Taylor Committee's investigation shows that the major causes for the failure--contrary to the image which has been and continues to be popularized--were directly attributable to actions, or inactions, of the Kennedy Administration, specifically including the President, Secretary Rusk, and Secretary McNamara.

Before the end of February 1962, however, Director Allen W. Dulles, Deputy Director General Charles P. Cabell, and Deputy Director for Plans Richard M. Bissell, Jr.--had either resigned or retired* In addition to these three senior officers, progress

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*Mr. Dulles retired on 29 November 1961, General Cabell resigned on 31 January 1962, and Mr. Bissell resigned on 17 February 1962. Bissell's forced resignation was particularly ironic in view of the fact that very serious consideration had been given to his appointment as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs as late as 25 February 1961 but:

> "The first choice of all concerned for this job, you [President Kennedy] know, was Dick Bissell, but in the light of your own feelings about the future of CIA, you urged him to stay where he is, and he, of course, followed your advice. What I now wonder is whether you might find it wise to reconsider that decision...One final argument in favor of this shift is that Bissell and the State Department would be very good for each other. If Dick has a fault it is that he does not look at all sides of the question, and, of course, the State Department's trouble is that it is usually doing exactly that and not much else." 15/

in the careers of the three principal military assignees to the Agency--USMC Colonels Jack Hawkins, Chief, Paramilitary Section/WH/4 and [redacted] liaison officer with JCS, and [redacted] ground training officer--was stymied as a result of their participation in the Bay of Pigs operation. In the instance of Colonel Hawkins--the personal choice of Marine Corps Commandant, General Shoup, for the CIA assignment--it prevented his promotion to General, a rank for which he had been considered a sure bet.

By contrast, cabinet members Rusk and McNamara remained untainted despite their roles in the failure of the effort. McGeorge Bundy, a principal advocate of the essentiality of control of the air over Cuba--until the critical day (16 April 1961) following the D-2 air strike--remained unscathed despite the blatant contradictions between his record before the invasion and his testimony before the Taylor Committee after the invasion. General Taylor, with a powerful boost from Robert Kennedy, acquired new laurels as presidential adviser and then as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Kennedy. With the protective screen provided by his brother, by Taylor, and by members of the Camelot entourage--Schlesinger, Sorensen, and Goodwin among others--the conception that President Kennedy was a white knight misled by overconfident, if not mischievous, CIA activists has remained.

The significance of the failure at the Bay of Pigs--particularly in light of the current disarray in Central American, is perhaps best illustrated in the contrast between Richard Rovere's optimistic piece in 1961 and an historian writing in 1981. Rovere wrote:

> There is widespread recognition of the fact that the paramilitary operations of the Communists have confronted the West with a new kind of danger, and that some means of dealing with them must be found. And there is some recognition of the possibility that the President may, in his moment of failure and error [at the Bay of Pigs], have done something to give pause to the Khrushchevs and Castros of this world. The Russians have been put on notice that the United States cannot be counted on to abide by all the rules of late-nineteenth-century diplomacy...We may not try anything of this sort again, but Khrushchev cannot be sure of this, and there is always a certain gain, in dealing with men of his kind, in increasing the element of risk involved in his maneuvers. 16/

Unfortunately for the nation, neither the Soviets nor their Cuban surrogates were intimidated, despite their set-back at the time of the 1962 missile crisis. As the historian has noted:

> The rise and decline of American imperialism can be traced through Cuban events. The era, which began in 1898 with the Rough Riders' charge on San Juan Hill, ended in 1961 in the swamps of the Bay of Pigs. There is more than a grain of truth in Castro propaganda that his victory at "Playa Giron," which shattered the myth of American invincibility, was a turning point for America's international image. In this sense, the Bay of Pigs is a minor prelude to Vietnam. 17/

EPILOGUE

Kennedy began as President of the U.S. with the aggression that was underway, that he inherited, that he approved, and that he lost. The most difficult day for the revolution was the 19th of April 1961 when in sight of our troops was part of the North American fleet with marines, destroyers, aircraft carriers, etc.

Kennedy vacillated. If at that moment he had decided to invade us, he could have suffocated the island in a sea of blood, but he would have destroyed the revolution.

Luckily for us, he vacillated. If instead of Kennedy we had had any of the later presidents, they would have intervened and destroyed the revolution.

(Translation of a comment by Raul Castro during an interview with Teresa Gurza of El Dia, Mexico, 19 September 1975)

APPENDIX A

Topics for Discussion by the

Taylor Committee

25 April 1961