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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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October 4, 1969

HAK has seen

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Jeanne W. Davis JWD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Review Group Meeting on Cuba,
Thursday, September 23

The minutes of the Review Group meeting of September 23 are attached. They have been reviewed and approved by Peter Vaky.

Attachment

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NSC REVIEW GROUP MEETING # 338

September 23, 1969

Time and Place: 2:10 P.M. - 3:15 P.M., White House Situation Room

SUBJECT: U.S. Policy Toward Cuba (NSSM 32)

Participation:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chairman - Henry A. Kissinger | JCS - LTG F. T. Unger |
| State - William I. Cargo | OEP - Haakon Lindjord |
| - Robert Hurwitch | USIA - Frank Shakespeare |
| - Donald McHenry | |
| Defense - G. Warren Nutter | NSC Staff - Viron P. Vaky |
| | Jeanne W. Davis |
| CIA - R. Jack Smith | |

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The IG paper is to be revised to:

- a. Contain an analysis of the different types of possible outcomes in Cuba and the impact of each on U.S. interests;
- b. Discuss U.S. options and their operational consequences.
- c. Expand discussion of how one makes the transition from option 2 to option 3; define the "breaks"; and spell out the criteria for "constructive change".
- d. Consider the hostage value of Cuba to the USSR
- e. Discuss the pros and cons of para-military operations, including a discussion of the technical difficulties;
- f. Consider, in any possible discussions with the USSR, what we would want the Soviets to do or not do with regard to Cuba

The revised paper will go to the President for his decision as to whether the NSC should consider it.

The OAS aspect and the effect of Cuban policy on Western Hemisphere policy will be included in the NSC discussions of Latin America on October 15 and 17.

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Mr. Kissinger opened the meeting saying this paper had been prepared in response to the President's request to look at the options available to us vis-a-vis Cuba. He thought it an interesting, thoughtful analysis which correctly identified the problem Cuba represented for the U.S. as a base for Soviet military power and as an exporter of revolutionary doctrine in Latin America. He referred to the ordering of U.S. interests into vital, major, important and limited categories saying he understood there was some disagreement on the placement of certain interests in certain categories, e.g., the Guantanamo base, and asked for General Unger's views.

General Unger said he thought it was a fine paper. The Joint Staff had considered rearranging the U.S. interests in general categories of military, political, psychological, etc. The present categorization was merely an attempt to look at the priorities among U.S. interests. For example, he considered number 2 (inhibiting the use of Cuba as a Soviet military base) -- now listed under "major" -- as no less vital than number 1 (prevent introduction into Cuba of strategic weapons -- now listed as "vital"). He thought there was a good case for putting maintenance of the Guantanamo Base into the "major" category (it is presently number 8 in the "important" category) both because it denies the naval base to the Soviets and protects the mid-Atlantic and Caribbean approaches to the Panama Canal.

Mr. Kissinger asked what the operational difference was between important and major. What practical consequences would flow from such a division?

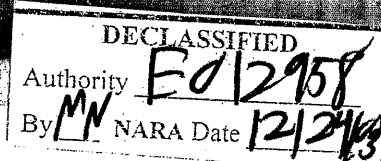
Mr. Hurwitch replied that the categories had no operational significance.

General Unger commented the categories were an attempt to consider U.S. interests from the point of view of priority; that the interests could have been divided as political, military psychological, etc.

Mr. Kissinger asked the difference between limited and important.

Mr. Cargo returned to General Unger's comments about number 1 (strategic) and number 2 (military), saying he thought there was a qualitative difference between them -- that the U.S. would move faster in the case of a strategic threat than of a military threat -- and he thought they were listed in the right order in terms of the paper. He thought we should not spend a lot of time discussing these categories, noting that the JCS differences had been included in a footnote.

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General Unger agreed that the JCS views were adequately stated in the footnote. He thought the first two U.S. interests -- introduction of strategic weapons and a Soviet military base -- impinge more on U.S. - Soviet or Cuban-Soviet relations [] than U.S. -Cuban relations. He wondered whether this aspect had been treated adequately in the paper. He also wondered whether the possibility of seeking to negotiate with the USSR limitations on Cuban conduct, which was one of the four approaches reviewed and rejected, might not be worthwhile to explore.

Mr. Nutter remarked concerning the ordering of U.S. interests, that "vital" was supposed to mean that the U.S. would go to a nuclear confrontation to stop it. He thought there was a question as to whether we would go that far and thought the paper could explore more the linkage between U.S. policy toward Cuba and toward the USSR. He noted that the paper rejects an approach toward Cuba which involves our policy toward the USSR.

Mr. Kissinger commented that the paper leaves the impression that the benefits of our present policy are declining because of rising costs. He asked whether we have reached the point where this factor alone requires a change in our policy or is this a general observation?

Mr. Cargo replied it was the latter. He cited a passage in the Annex to the paper to the effect that the net calculus is still in the U.S. favor and is likely to remain so for three to five years, depending on Cuba's export posture. He also noted a comment in the paper that income from sugar exports to non-Communist countries will probably increase, and the Cuban economy, with luck during 1970-75, should approach a 3% per capita annual growth rate with some increase in labor productivity, substantially better sugar crops and an improved balance of payments, all of which should translate into slightly improved Cuban living standards.

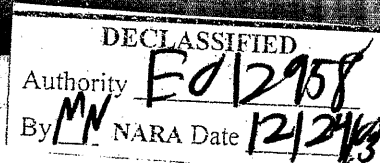
Mr. Kissinger asked if everyone agreed with this observation and that there was no immediate pressure to change our policy unless we can come up with a better one.

Mr. Smith agreed with the statement in the Annex which Mr. Cargo had cited.

Mr. Kissinger cited the four basic approaches -- force, isolation, carrot and stick (active and passive versions) and normalization, and asked if this was a fair statement of our alternatives and if anyone had anything to add.

Mr. Shakespeare commented that they appeared to be reasonable statements.

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Mr. Cargo asked that the words "continue present policy" be deleted from the description of Package 2 -- Isolation. He thought a response to Castro overtures was embraced in our present policy.

Mr. Shakespeare noted that present policy appears to be a combination of Isolation and Carrot and Stick, Version B.

Mr. Kissinger noted that the paper rejects as alternative approaches (a) negotiations with the USSR; (b) para-military activities; (c) unilateral normalization; and (d) holding Cuba as a hostage. He asked why the hostage approach had been rejected. If the Soviets blockaded Berlin, would it be beyond the realm of possibility that we blockade Cuba?

Mr. Shakespeare considered the situations not comparable. If you have a hostage you presumably have something valuable to the other side. Do we have any indication as to whether or not the USSR would like to give up this hostage?

Mr. Kissinger asked if the hostage approach had been rejected because we thought Cuba was not important enough to the USSR to use as a hostage.

Mr. Cargo said he understood the four rejected courses had been considered but it had been concluded that they should be rejected. He noted that the hostage approach gives us leverage with the USSR, and it had been agreed that we should use that leverage if appropriate, but should not seek to create Cuba as a hostage.

Mr. Kissinger asked if the hostage theory meant that we have a positive stake in keeping the Soviets in Cuba so that we might use Cuba as a hostage.

Mr. Hurwitsch stated the paper did not focus on that point.

Mr. Kissinger asked whether or not we have an interest in maintaining a Communist regime in Cuba so that we can use Cuba in a squeeze play vis-a-vis the USSR.

Mr. Vaky thought this had not been considered.

Mr. Shakespeare asked whether we should permit the present situation to exist in order to get something else. He asked specifically at the time when you want to play your hostage, what do you play?

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General Unger cited blockade as a possibility.

Mr. Kissinger thought we should examine these possibilities -- there may be other plays.

Mr. Shakespeare asked if we knew what value the USSR placed on Cuba.

Mr. Nutter replied "some."

Mr. Kissinger noted that this was missing from the paper and General Unger commented that some supplementary analysis was required.

Mr. Cargo noted that the paper in general lacked any consideration of Cuba as an element in U. S. - Soviet relations.

Mr. Kissinger noted, in this connection, the rejection of negotiations with the USSR.

Mr. Shakespeare commented that this might be considered by the Kremlinologists with the Latin American people playing a role. He thought they should address specifically the hostage value of Cuba -- of what use is Cuba as a symbol?

Mr. Kissinger agreed that the Interdepartmental Groups for Latin America and Europe should address this question jointly.

Mr. Vaky noted that the paper was written prior to the Soviet fleet visit to Cuba.

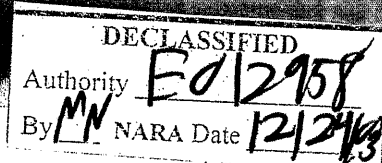
Mr. Kissinger said that we were reviewing Berlin contingency planning and an analysis of the hostage value of Cuba would be helpful in this context.

Mr. Hurwitch said that five years ago he had participated in Berlin contingency planning and some thought had been given to Cuba at that time. He would review that planning since this may be something of value in that regard.

Mr. Kissinger commented that if Cuba is an important base the Soviets may have considerable interest in maintaining it.

Mr. Vaky thought we should consider the role of Cuba in Soviet eyes with regard to the Communist world.

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Mr. Kissinger asked why the possibility of negotiations with the USSR concerning limitations on Cuban conduct had been rejected. If there were negotiations looking toward a global settlement would we try to get restraints on Cuban conduct?

Mr. Hurwitch thought this should be considered on a bilateral basis and Mr. Vaky noted the the question had come up as to whether something might be done in a post-Vietnam context; this was not further addressed in this paper, however.

Mr. Kissinger said that assuming negotiations were held on a global settlement and assuming Cuba was discussed, what would we ask the Soviets to do or not do with regard to Cuba. He asked that a page be added on that point.

With regard to para-military pressure, Mr. Kissinger said the President has specifically asked that this be looked at and that we owe him a paper on it. He thought such a paper might be considered in the Review Group and need not go to the NSC for a while. It should include the pros and cons of para-military operations including a discussion of the technical difficulties.

Mr. Nutter suggested that the "Force" approach might be changed to "Coercion" and the para-military possibility be included under that approach.

Mr. Kissinger repeated that we owe the President inclusion of this approach with our best judgment as to its feasibility, noting that it might require an effort of a magnitude approaching overt military action.

Mr. Vaky commented that we could view para-military activity as an effort either to exert pressure or to bring down the Castro regime.

Mr. Kissinger said that we have responded in a limited way in the 303 Committee on the question of covert action. He thought it would be useful to go through the exercise and that omission of para-military activity from a survey of our options with regard to Cuba would be noticed.

Mr. Cargo recalled Mr. Nutter's comment that it might be considered under the "Force" or "Coercion" approach, and Mr. Kissinger replied that it could be considered separately or as a sub-topic under "Force."

Mr. Smith saw a difference in timing between the four approaches discussed in the paper and those that had been rejected. He considered the latter to be limited and more tactical.

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Mr. Kissinger moved to a discussion of the four options considered by the paper and asked what we mean by "constructive change" in package 3.

Mr. Nutter commented that they had suggested "accommodation" as a substitute.

Mr. Kissinger said he had no preference as to the words, but we needed to spell out the criteria as to what we mean.

Mr. Vaky thought we meant a change in Cuban conduct --- stopping the export of guerrillas, for example.

Mr. Nutter thought "constructive change" was described on page 1 of the paper ("change in Cuban attitudes and behavior so as to eliminate eventually the basis for the security and subversive threats to U.S. interests; and to promote meanwhile the realization of subsidiary and lesser U.S. interests in improved relations with Cuba").

Mr. Kissinger asked if a Communist Cuba can not be a force in Latin America?

Mr. Vaky and Mr. Smith replied it was not a force now.

Mr. Shakespeare commented that an unsuccessful Communist Cuba was not a force.

Mr. Kissinger asked if it would be in our interest if Cuba should become Titoist, pursue more rational economic policies and prosper? Or if Cuba should remain Communist and prosper?

Mr. Shakespeare thought in the short range, no, but in the longer range, yes. He thought Tito had been useful since, when a country moves away from Soviet domination, it constitutes a gradual confession that Soviet Communism doesn't work. He thought a Titoist Cuba would not be as detrimental as an image in Latin America.

Mr. Kissinger thought it worthwhile to examine this question. He commented that geographic proximity makes a difference. The Romanians are relaxed about the U.S. but are concerned about the Soviets as a security problem. Latin America has to look at the U.S. as their security problem. One of the advantages of Castro Communism is that it is an unattractive form of Communism. Is there an attractive form of Communism that would not be inimical to U.S. interests in Latin America?

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Mr. Hurwitch commented that it was theoretically possible for Cuba to exist without being oriented toward the USSR or China.

Mr. Kissinger said that Tito's foreign policy position was not very helpful to the U. S. except when he fears Soviet attack. Latin America would not have that fear. He thought a Communist country in Latin America would bring a threat to U. S. interests that would make the Peru case look mild, and asked if an enlightened Communist country in Latin America would be in our interest.

Mr. Vaky commented that a Titoist regime could not remain completely independent -- its success would eventually depend on us and its policies would be affected by this dependence. The test would be its relative position in the orbit.

Mr. Kissinger questioned that Tito's control of his foreign policy had been weakened by his acceptance of U. S. aid. He asked whether the most benign regime in Cuba could have no impact in Latin America. If Cuba could be isolated as an exporter of revolution, it could become a Latin American Switzerland which would be in our interest. He thought we should examine what we want to bring about in Cuba -- what would a Cuban regime have to look like to be more in the U. S. interest?

Mr. Shakespeare commented that one advantage of a Tito-type movement was that the economic and other liberalizing forces become almost irreversible unless outside force is applied. The leadership becomes swept up in the tide to a point that they are accommodating to a situation and are not leading.

Mr. Kissinger cited a democratic Latin American leader who had thanked God for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on the grounds that if the Czech model had succeeded, it would have been a respectable Communist model for others to see.

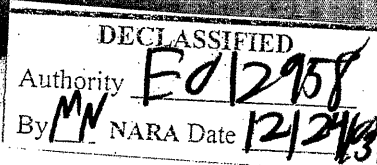
Mr. Shakespeare added "if it worked in the Communist framework." He noted that Yugoslavia works because it is moving away from Communism.

Mr. Vaky commented that the second echelon of power under Castro is not Communist but is 26th-of-July oriented.

Mr. Kissinger remarked that we needed an analysis of the different types of possible outcomes in Cuba and the impact of each on U. S. interests.

Mr. Vaky also thought we needed a better definition of "constructive change."

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Mr. Smith thought there were other strikes against Cuba in that they were not part of the main force of Communism.

Mr. Vaky commented that Cuba can't be successful until it sells its sugar.

Mr. Shakespeare added that if Cuba had succeeded economically as a Communist state, Latin America would be lost to us.

Mr. Smith thought this would have had an impact but that it would not have been cataclysmic.

Mr. Shakespeare thought Cuba represented a declining, decayed situation and thought an examination of its worth to anyone would make an interesting analysis.

Mr. Cargo thought that Cuba, independent of the Soviets, could not be successful without our help. He thought it better to have a poor Communist example with Soviet support and approval than not.

Mr. Kissinger commented that our efforts to equate economic principles with political success had not been too successful -- as witness our aid program. He found it hard to believe that the 26th of July revolutionaries were the sort of people who would find economic advances sufficiently attractive to make them their main goal. In general, the type of people who go in for revolution don't go for economics. He cited the U.S. conviction that everyone wants economic advancement and questioned whether a country could not be a tenth-rate political power and an economic success.

Mr. Hurwitch thought the leaders may not see economic advances as their goal but the people did. Castro was working for this now.

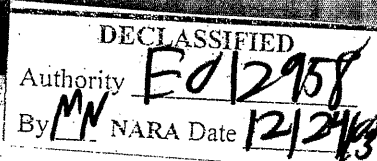
Mr. Kissinger asked whether it is possible to raise the standard of the lower groups while the average is declining -- may this not be possible in an isolated population.

Mr. Hurwitch commented that a Cuban looks at his own situation in contrast with what he has had before and does not compare himself with others.

Mr. Smith noted that Castro has set a goal of 10 million tons of sugar as a great national aspiration -- a finite goal rebounding to the glory of Cuba.

Mr. Shakespeare considered this as camouflage.

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Mr. Kissinger asked if the President decided to pick one of the four options, what would happen? For example, if he should choose package 3, the A version, would we then move to the list of illustrative quids and quos on page 21 of the basic paper? If he chose package 4, would we then choose elements of package 3A if we got into a negotiating phase?

Mr. Hurwitch remarked that, if once you start down the line of quid pro quos, a momentum may be generated which is difficult to reverse and which may create difficulties with other countries in the hemisphere. He thought package 4 might lose us more in the hemisphere than it would gain us in relation to Cuba and that package 1 would involve greater risks to U.S. national security than Castro represents. For reasons of national self-interest, therefore, he would eliminate land 4.

Mr. Kissinger noted that we have a good scenario for package 3 and asked how we move from 2 to 3 and what Castro should be expected to pay. He cited the paragraph on page 20 which refers to seeking to "manipulate in combination the Cuban perception of the prospect of benefits and of the realities of denial" and asked how we would go about changing Cuban perception.

Mr. Hurwitch remarked that we do not consider we are in package 2 -- isolation -- but are on 3B -- i. e., engaged in a policy of isolation but passively alert to any breaks in the situation that may arise.

Mr. Kissinger replied that the President was engaged in 2 and, indeed, leaning toward 1, and was not now ready to move to 3B. He thought the situation should be made clearer to him. It appeared that 3B is in fact 2 plus a willingness to respond without a clear definition of the types of breaks involved.

Mr. Cargo mentioned a move on highjacking as the type of break envisaged.

Mr. Kissinger thought we should define the breaks if we are to make it more convincing to the President why 3B is the right course. We can do this while maintaining the present optional structure of the paper and give the President a chance to study the options and their operational consequences. He saw nothing wrong with 3B.

Mr. Cargo commented that any moves in connection with package 3 could be modest.

Mr. Vaky thought the highjacking issue might be used as a test.

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Mr. Hurwitch commented that the State Department was considering a response to Castro on hijacking in accordance with their understanding of U. S. policy.

Mr. Kissinger reminded him of the overture through the Swiss which the President stopped. He thought we should use this paper to crystallize our views. He thought package 2 would be the mildest the President would choose at present. The purpose of the exercise is to give the President the spectrum of his choices, and he (Mr. Kissinger) was eager to use the paper to get the matter cleared up in terms of its operational significance. He thought the paper should expand on how you make the transition from 2 to 3.

Mr. Vaky commented that the OAS countries might be getting out in front of us -- might be getting closer to Cuba in a violation of U. S. interests. He saw some deterioration in the monolithic stance of the Latin American countries.

Mr. Shakespeare referred to the role of the Voice of America in Cuba, saying there was substantial evidence of widespread listening to the Voice. He thought that, if we are going to stay with option 2, we should take advantage of the saturation listening to the VOA and should use the Voice to tell the Cuban people that this is so and that they have no outside hope. He noted that the Cuban radio had been vitriolic against the President during the campaign but that their treatment had been mitigated in the last four or five months and they were apparently in a wait-and-see posture.

Mr. Smith commented "waiting for the breaks?"

Mr. Lindjord mentioned the peripheral item of the nickel shortage in the U. S. brought about largely by the Canadian strike. He noted that a French company which was a potential source of nickel had been embargoed because of its dealings with Cuba.

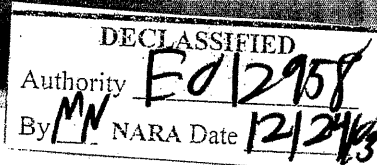
Mr. Nutter suggested that one option which had not been examined or rejected is the possibility of pushing the development of policy toward Cuba into the OAS -- a truly passive approach.

Mr. Kissinger asked what would be the practical consequences of OAS involvement? To work toward normalization?

Mr. Vaky remarked it would probably be toward accommodation.

Mr. Hurwitch agreed.

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Mr. Vaky suggested we might consider using the OAS as the point of the spear.

Mr. Shakespeare suggested in this connection a country-by-country analysis as to where the individual countries stand vis-a-vis Cuba.

Mr. Kissinger agreed and asked that it be done. After the paper had been revised along the lines agreed, he thought it should go to the President for him to decide whether or not he wants an NSC meeting on the subject.

Mr. Smith asked the time frame.

Mr. Kissinger replied that Messrs. Vaky and Cargo should work out a feasible deadline and that they were not under the gun.

Mr. Nutter commented that the effect of the Soviet naval visit needs to be assessed. He also thought the evidence was clear that the Cuban threat to Latin America was so far not successful, but he thought there should be an evaluation of Cuban capability and how it might be enhanced by more active Soviet cooperation.

Mr. Kissinger asked that the OAS aspect and how Cuban policy affects Western Hemisphere policy be considered in the NSC discussions on Latin America scheduled for October 15 and 17.

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