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TOP SECRET - EYES ONLY

April 11, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Bundy

SUBJECT: Cuba -- Policy

1. We are all concerned about solving our Cuba problem, but so far, we have been looking seriously at only one side of the coin -- ways to hurt Castro by varying degrees of overt and covert nastiness. We have not yet looked seriously at the other side of the coin -- quietly enticing Castro over to us.

2. If the sweet approach turned out to be feasible and, in turn, successful, the benefits would be substantial. In the short run, we would probably be able to neutralize at least 2 of our main worries about Castro -- the reintroduction of offensive missiles and Cuban subversion. In the long run, we would be able to work on eliminating Castro at our leisure and from a good vantage point.

3. While the practical obstacles to this sort of approach may be immense, they may not be insuperable. Two such obstacles are the domestic political situation and Castro's reluctance to be enticed.

(a) Domestic Problem -- If the American people can be shown that the offensive missile threat and the subversive threat are under control, that the Russian presence in Cuba is reduced and that Castro is much more a nationalist than a Communist, the selling job necessary for a careful, quiet policy turn-around may not be impossible.

(b) Castro's Reluctance to be Enticed -- This may be an easier nut to crack now than it once would have been. Castro may have received, from our point of view, some very valuable education over the past couple years. Hopefully, he has learned that the Russians are not as tough and reliable as he thought they were and that we are a lot tougher and nastier than he thought we were; also hopefully, he is scared.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5(b)

TOP SECRET - EYES ONLY White House Staff  
By AT NARA Date 2/9/77

Our present nasty policy is probably a necessary prelude to a sweet approach. The more we can (1) scare Castro and (2) demonstrate to him that the Bloc is either unwilling or unable to fill his security and economic requirements, the more amenable Castro probably will be to a new approach. In this regard, perhaps the worst thing we can do is to let our nasty policy ease off without a particular objective in sight.

4. I understand that, in the near future, the President will be looking at some more violent solutions to the Cuban problem. It might be interesting if, at roughly the same time, he could have a look at a feasibility study on a policy turn-around.

Do you think this timing for such a study is right? Or do you think it is still premature?

Gordon Chase