

## D. TRUJILLO

### 1. SUMMARY

Rafael Trujillo was assassinated by a group of Dominican dissidents on May 30, 1961.

Trujillo was a brutal dictator, and both the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations encouraged the overthrow of his regime by Dominican dissidents. Toward that end the highest policy levels of both Administrations approved or condoned supplying arms to the dissidents. Although there is no evidence that the United States instigated any assassination activity, certain evidence tends to link United States officials to the assassination plans.

Material support, consisting of three pistols and three carbines, was supplied to various dissidents. While United States' officials knew that the dissidents intended to overthrow Trujillo, probably by assassination, there is no direct evidence that the weapons which were passed were used in the assassination. The evidence is inconclusive as to how high in the two Administrations information about the dissidents' assassination plots had been passed prior to the spring of 1961.

Beginning in March of 1961, the dissidents began asking United States officials for machine guns. By the time four M-3 machine guns were shipped to the CIA Station in the Dominican capital in April, it was well known that the dissidents wanted them for use in connection with the assassination. Thereafter, however, permission to deliver the machine guns to the dissidents was denied, and the guns were never passed. The day before the assassination a cable, personally authorized by President Kennedy, was sent to the United States' Consul General in the Dominican Republic stating that the United States Government, as a matter of general policy, could not condone political assassination, but at the same time indicating the United States continued to support the dissidents and stood ready to recognize them in the event they were successful in their endeavor to overthrow Trujillo.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Rafael Trujillo came to power in the Dominican Republic in 1930. For most of his tenure, the United States Government supported him and he was regarded throughout much of the Caribbean and Latin America as a protege of the United States. Trujillo's rule, always harsh and dictatorial, became more arbitrary during the 1950's. As a result, the United States' image was increasingly tarnished in the eyes of many Latin Americans.

Increasing American awareness of Trujillo's brutality and fear that it would lead to a Castro-type revolution caused United States' officials to consider various plans to hasten his abdication or downfall.

As early as February 1960, the Eisenhower Administration gave high level consideration to a program of covert aid to Dominican dissidents. (Special Group Minutes, 2/10/60) In April 1960 President Eisenhower approved a contingency plan for the Dominican Republic which provided, in part, that if the situation deteriorated still further:

\* \* \* the United States would immediately take political action to remove Trujillo from the Dominican Republic as soon as a suitable successor regime can be induced to take over with the assurance of U.S. political, economic, and—if necessary—military support. (Memo from Secretary of State Herter to the President, 4/14/60; Presidential approval indicated in Herter letter to Secretary of Defense Gates, 4/21/60)

Simultaneously, the United States was trying to organize hemispheric opposition to the Castro regime in Cuba. Latin American leaders, such as President Betancourt of Venezuela, pressed the United States to take affirmative action against Trujillo to dispel criticism that the U.S. opposed dictatorships of the left only. A belief that Castro's road to power was paved by the excesses of Batista led to concern that the Dominican Republic might also eventually fall victim to a Castro-style Communist regime. (Rusk, 7/10/75, pp. 8, 9)

### 3. INITIAL CONTACT WITH DISSIDENTS AND REQUEST FOR ARMS

During the spring of 1960, the U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Joseph Farland, made initial contact with dissidents who sought to free their country from Trujillo's grasp. They asked for sniper rifles. Although documentary evidence indicates that a recommendation to provide these rifles was approved both within the State Department and the CIA, the rifles were never provided.

#### (a) *Dissident contacts*

Ambassador Farland established contact with a group of dissidents regarded as moderate, pro-United States and desirous of establishing a democratic form of government.<sup>1</sup> (Farland affidavit, 9/7/75, p. 1) Prior to his final departure from the Dominican Republic in May 1960, the Ambassador introduced his Deputy-Chief-of-Mission, Henry Dearborn, to the dissident leaders, indicating that Dearborn could be trusted. Then on June 16, 1960, CIA Headquarters<sup>2</sup> cabled a request that Dearborn become the "communications link" between the dissidents and CIA. The cable stated that Dearborn's role had the "unofficial approval of [Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Roy R.] Rubottom." (Emphasis in original.) (Cable, HQ to Station, 6/16/60)

Dearborn agreed. He requested, however, that the CIA confirm the arrangement with the dissidents as being that the United States would "clandestinely" assist the opposition to "develop effective force to ac-

<sup>1</sup> This loosely-organized group, with which contact was established, was referred to in cables, correspondence, and memoranda as "the dissidents" and is so referenced herein.

<sup>2</sup> As used herein "Headquarters" refers to Headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency; "Department" indicates the Department of State.

comply with Trujillo overthrow," but would not "undertake any overt action itself against Trujillo government while it is in full control of Dominican Republic." (Cable, Station to HQ, 6/17/60) CIA Headquarters confirmed Dearborn's understanding of the arrangement. (Cable, HQ to Station, 6/16/60)

(b) *The request for sniper rifles*

During the course of a cocktail party in the Dominican Republic, a leading dissident made a specific request to Ambassador Farland for a limited number of rifles with telescopic sights. The Ambassador promised to pass on the request. (Farland affidavit, 9/7/75, p. 1) He apparently did so after returning to Washington in May 1960. (CIA Memo for the Record, 6/7/61)

Documents indicate that consideration was given within the CIA to airdropping rifles into the Dominican Republic. At a June 21, 1960, meeting with an officer of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division, Ambassador Farland reportedly suggested possible sites for the drops. (CIA memo, 6/21/60)

Documents also indicate that a meeting was held around the end of June 1960 between Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Roy R. Rubottom and Col. J. C. King, Chief of CIA's Western Hemisphere Division. Apparently King sought to learn the Assistant Secretary's view regarding "[to] what extent will the U.S. government participate in the overthrow of Trujillo." A number of questions were raised by King, among them:

Would it provide a small number of sniper rifles or other devices for the removal of key Trujillo people from the scene?

King's handwritten notes indicates that Rubottom's response to that question was "yes." (CIA memo, 6/28/60; King affidavit, 7/29/75, pp. 1-2)<sup>1</sup>

On July 1, 1960, a memorandum directed to General Cabell, the Acting Director of Central Intelligence, was prepared for Colonel King's signature and, in his absence, signed by his principal deputy. (I.G. Report, p. 26) The memorandum stated that a principal leader of the anti-Trujillo opposition had asked Ambassador Farland for a limited number of arms to precipitate Trujillo's overthrow, and recognized that such arms presumably "would be used against key members of the Trujillo regime." The memorandum recommended that the arms be provided, since the fall of the Trujillo regime appeared inevitable, and therefore United States relations with the opposition should be as close as possible. "Providing the arms as requested would contribute significantly toward this end." (CIA memo, 7/1/60)

Specifically, the recommendation was to deliver to dissidents in the Dominican Republic 12 sterile<sup>2</sup> rifles with telescopic sights, together with 500 rounds of ammunition.

Paragraph 4 of the memorandum stated:

Approval for delivery of these arms has been given by Assistant Secretary of State Roy Rubottom, who requests that the arms be placed in hands of the opposition at the earliest possible moment. (CIA Memo, 7/1/60)

<sup>1</sup> Neither King nor Rubottom recalls such a meeting, nor does either recall any proposal for supplying sniper rifles. (Rubottom affidavit, King affidavit, 7/29/75)

<sup>2</sup> "Sterile" rifles are regarded as "untraceable." (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 69)

The Acting Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division's recommendation was concurred in by Richard Helms, as Acting DDP, and approved by General Cabell. (I.G. Report, p. 26)

The kind of arms approved, sterile rifles with telescopic sights, together with the statement that they presumably would be used against key members of the Trujillo regime clearly indicated the "targeted use" for which the weapons were intended. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 77)

On July 1, 1960, a cable was sent to Dearborn by CIA Headquarters informing him of the plan to airdrop 12 telescopically-sighted rifles into the Dominican Republic. The cable inquired whether the dissidents had the capability to realign the sights if thrown off by the drop. On July 14, 1960, Dearborn replied that the dissident leaders were against any further action in the Dominican Republic until after resolution by the OAS of a Venezuelan complaint then pending against Trujillo. The dissidents reportedly believed that sufficiently strong action by the OAS could bring Trujillo's downfall without further effort on their part. (Cable, Station to HQ, 7/14/60) The 12 sniper rifles were never furnished to the dissidents.

On August 26, 1960, Dearborn cabled Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Lester Mallory reporting on a meeting between a dissident leader and a Consulate political officer. The dissident leader was reported to have lost enthusiasm for an assassination attempt and was then speaking of an invasion from Venezuela. However, by September 1, 1960, dissidents were again speaking about the possible provision to them of arms. This time the request was for 200 rifles. For the next several months, consideration centered on providing 200 to 300 guns.

#### 4. SUMMER AND FALL OF 1960

In August 1960, the United States interrupted diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic and recalled most of its personnel. Dearborn was left as Consul General and *de facto* CIA Chief of Station.<sup>1</sup> Consideration was given both to providing arms and explosive devices and to the use of high level emissaries to persuade Trujillo to abdicate. By the end of the year, a broad plan of general support to anti-Trujillo forces, both within and without the country, was approved.

##### (a) *Diplomatic development—withdrawal of United States personnel*

Events occurring during the Summer of 1960 further intensified hemispheric opposition to the Trujillo regime. In June, agents of Trujillo tried to assassinate Venezuelan President Betancourt. As a result, the OAS censured the Trujillo government. At the same time, in August 1960, the United States interrupted diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic and imposed economic sanctions.

With the interruption of diplomatic relations, the United States closed its Embassy. Most American personnel, including the CIA Chief

<sup>1</sup> Dearborn's role as communication's link and *de facto* Station Chief was, according to the evidence before the Committee, quite unusual. This open involvement, by the senior State Department representative, in clandestine activities was a subsequent concern within both the State Department and the CIA.

of Station, left the Dominican Republic. With the departure of the CIA Chief of Station, Dearborn became *de facto* CIA Chief of Station and was recognized as such by both CIA and the State Department. Although in January 1961, a new CIA Chief of Station came to the Dominican Republic, Dearborn continued to serve as a link to the dissidents.

(b) *Dearborn reports assassination may be only way to overthrow Trujillo regime*

Dearborn came to believe that no effort to overthrow the Trujillo government could be successful unless it involved Trujillo's assassination. He communicated this opinion to both the State Department and the CIA. In July 1960, he advised Assistant Secretary Rubottom that the dissidents were

\*\*\* in no way ready to carry on any type of revolutionary activity in the foreseeable future except the assassination of their principal enemy. (Letter, Dearborn to Rubottom, 7/14/60)

It is uncertain what portion of the information provided by Dearborn to State was passed above the Assistant Secretary level. Through August of 1960, only Assistant Secretary Rubottom, his Deputy, Lester Mallory, and his Staff Assistant, were, within the Latin American Division of the Department, aware of Dearborn's "current projects." (Letter, Staff Assistant to Dearborn, 8/15/60) <sup>1</sup>

By September 1960, Thomas Mann had replaced Roy Rubottom as Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, and the Staff Assistant had become a Special Assistant to Mr. Mann. While serving as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary, the Special Assistant reportedly spent ninety percent of his time coordinating State Department-CIA activities in Latin America. It was in this capacity that the Special Assistant maintained almost daily communication with officials of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division. (Special Assistant, 7/9/75, p. 7) <sup>2</sup>

Mann solicited Dearborn's comments concerning plans under discussion for forcing Trujillo from power. Dearborn replied in a detailed letter which concluded:

One further point which I should probably not even make. From a purely practical standpoint, it will be best for us, for the OAS, and for the Dominican Republic if the Dominicans put an end to Trujillo before he leaves this island. If he has his millions and is a free agent, he will devote his life from exile to preventing stable government in the D.R., to overturning democratic governments and establishing dictatorships in the Caribbean, and to assassinating his enemies. If I were a Dominican, which thank heaven I am not, I would favor destroying Trujillo as being the first necessary step in the salvation of my country and I would regard this, in fact, as my Christian duty. If you recall Dracula, you will remember it was necessary to drive a stake through his heart to prevent a continuation of his crimes. I believe sudden death would be more humane than the solution of the Nuncio who once told me he thought he should pray that Trujillo would have a long and lingering illness. (Letter, Dearborn to Mann, 10/27/60)

<sup>1</sup> Dearborn's candid reporting to State during the summer of 1960 raised concern within the Department and he was advised that certain specific information should more appropriately come through "the other channel." (presumably, CIA communications) Dearborn was advised that his cables to State were distributed to at least 19 different recipient offices. (Id.)

<sup>2</sup> The Special Assistant to the Assistant for Inter-American Affairs is currently serving, in another capacity, in the State Department. He is referred to hereinafter as the "Special Assistant."

(c) *Efforts to convince Trujillo to abdicate*

Throughout the fall of 1960, efforts were made on both the diplomatic and economic fronts aimed at pressuring Trujillo into relinquishing control, and ideally, leaving the Dominican Republic. The use of high level emissaries, both from within and without the ranks of government, was considered. (Special Group Minutes, 9/8/60; letter, Mann to Dearborn, 10/10/60) None of the efforts proved successful, and at the end of 1960, Trujillo was still in absolute control.

(d) *CIA plans of October 1960*

A CIA internal memorandum dated October 3, 1960 entitled "Plans of the Dominican Internal Opposition and Dominican Desk for Overthrow of the Trujillo Government" set forth plans which "have been developed on a tentative basis which appear feasible and which might be carried out \* \* \* covertly by CIA with a minimal risk of exposure." These plans provided, in part, for the following:

a. Delivery of approximately 300 rifles and pistols, together with ammunition and a supply of grenades, to secure cache on the South shore of the island, about 14 miles East of Ciudad Trujillo.

b. Delivery to the same cache described above, of an electronic detonating device with remote control features, which could be planted by the dissidents in such manner as to *eliminate certain key Trujillo henchmen*. This might necessitate training and introducing into the country by illegal entry, a trained technician to set the bomb and detonator. (Emphasis added.) (CIA Memo, 10/3/60)

(e) *December 1960 Special Group plan of covert actions*

On December 29, 1960, the Special Group considered and approved a broad plan of covert support to anti-Trujillo forces. The plan, presented by Bissell, envisioned support to both Dominican exile groups and internal dissidents. The exile groups were to be furnished money to organize and undertake anti-Trujillo propaganda efforts and to refurbish a yacht for use in paramilitary activities. Bissell emphasized to the Special Group that "the proposed actions would not, of themselves, bring about the desired result in the near future, lacking some decisive stroke against Trujillo himself." (Special Group Minutes, 12/29/60)

## 5. JANUARY 12, 1961 SPECIAL GROUP APPROVAL OF "LIMITED SUPPLIES OF SMALL ARMS AND OTHER MATERIAL"

On January 12, 1961, with all members present,<sup>1</sup> the Special Group met and, according to its Minutes, took the following action with respect to the Dominican Republic:

Mr. Merchant explained the feeling of the Department of State that limited supplies of small arms and other material should be made available for dissidents inside the Dominican Republic. Mr. Parrott said that we believe this can be managed securely by CIA, and that the plan would call for final transportation into the country being provided by the dissidents themselves. The Group approved the project. (Special Group Minutes, 1/12/61)

<sup>1</sup> The members of the Special Group were at the time: Livingston Merchant, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs; Gordon Gray, Advisor to the President for National Security Affairs; John N. Irwin, Deputy Secretary of Defense; and Allen Dulles, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

*(a) Memorandum underlying the Special Group action*

On January 12, 1961, Thomas Mann sent a memorandum to Under Secretary Livingston Merchant. The memorandum, sent through Joseph Scott, Merchant's Special Assistant, reported the disillusionment of Dominican dissidents with the United States for its failure to furnish them with any tangible or concrete assistance. Further, it reported:

Opposition elements have consistently asked us to supply them with "hardware" of various types. This has included quantities of conventional arms and also, rather persistently, they have asked for some of the more exotic items and devices which they associate with revolutionary effort. (Memo, Mann to Merchant, 1/12/61)

Mann suggested for Merchant's consideration and, if he approved, for discussion by the Special Group, the provision of token quantities of selected items desired by the dissidents. Mann specifically mentioned small explosive devices which would place some "sabotage potential" in the hands of dissident elements, but stated that there "would be no thought of toppling the GODR [Government of Dominican Republic] by any such minor measure." (Memo, Mann to Merchant, 1/12/61) This memorandum was drafted on January 11 by Mann's Special Assistant for CIA liaison.

A covering memorandum from Scott to Merchant, forwarding Mann's memo, was apparently taken by Merchant to the Special Group meeting. Merchant's handwritten notations indicate that the Special Group "agreed in terms of Tom Mann's memo" and that the Secretary of State was informed of that decision by late afternoon on January 12, 1961. (Memo, Scott to Merchant, 1/12/61)

There is no evidence that any member of the Special Group, other than Allen Dulles, knew that the dissidents had clearly and repeatedly expressed a desire for arms and explosives to be used by them in assassination efforts.<sup>1</sup> While it is, of course, possible that such information was passed orally to some or all of the members of the Special Group, and perhaps even discussed by them on January 12, 1961, there is no documentary evidence of which the Committee is aware which would establish this to be the case.

On January 19, 1961, the last day of the Eisenhower Administration, Consul General Dearborn was advised that approval had been given for supplying arms and other material to the Dominican dissidents. (Cable, HQ. to Station, 1/19/61) Shortly thereafter, Dearborn informed the Special Assistant that the dissidents were "delighted" about the decision to deliver "exotic equipment." (Cable, Dearborn to Special Assistant, 1/31/61)

6. JANUARY 20, 1961—APRIL 17, 1961 (THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION THROUGH THE BAY OF PIGS)

On January 20, 1961, the Kennedy Administration took office. Three of the four members of the Special Group (all except Allen Dulles) retired.

<sup>1</sup> Various CIA cables, including those dealing with the sniper rifles, indicate that copies were sent to the DCI, Allen Dulles.

Prior to the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion on April 17, 1961, a number of significant events occurred. These events included meetings with Dominican dissidents in which specific assassination plans were discussed, requests by dissidents for explosive devices, the passage by United States officials of pistols and carbines to dissidents inside the Dominican Republic and the pouching to the Dominican Republic of machine guns which had been requested by the dissidents for use in connection with an assassination attempt.<sup>1</sup> These events are discussed below under subheading (a).

Evidence reflecting the degree of knowledge of these events possessed by senior American officials is treated thereafter. As used herein, "senior American officials" means individuals in the White House or serving as members of the Special Group.

(a) *Specific events indirectly linking United States to dissidents' assassination plans*

(i) *Assassination Discussions and Requests for Explosives*

At meetings held with dissident leaders in New York City on February 10 and 15, 1961, CIA officials were told repeatedly by dissident leaders that "the key to the success of the plot [to overthrow the Trujillo regime] would be the assassination of Trujillo." (CIA Memo for the Record, 2/13/61) Among the requests made of the CIA by dissident leaders were the following:

(a) Ex-FBI agents who would plan and execute the death of Trujillo.

(b) Cameras and other items that could be used to fire projectiles.

(c) A slow-working chemical that could be rubbed on the palm of one's hand and transferred to Trujillo in a handshake, causing delayed lethal results.

(d) Silencers for rifles that could kill from a distance of several miles. (*Id.*)

Other methods of assassinating Trujillo proposed by dissidents at the February 10 or February 15 meetings included poisoning Trujillo's food or medicines, ambushing his automobile, and attacking him with firearms and grenades. (CIA Memos for the Record, 2/13/61, 2/16/61)<sup>2</sup>

The dissidents' "latest plot," as described in the February CIA memoranda, was said to involve the planting of a powerful bomb, which could be detonated from a nearby electric device, along the route of Trujillo's evening walk. (*Id.*)

On March 13, 1961, a dissident in the Dominican Republic asked for fragmentation grenades "for use during the next week or so." This request was communicated to CIA Headquarters on March 14, 1961, and was followed the next day by an additional request for 50 fragmentation grenades, 5 rapid-fire weapons, and 10 64-mm. anti-

<sup>1</sup> As indicated in the post-Bay of Pigs section, *infra*, permission to pass these machine guns was denied and the guns were never passed.

<sup>2</sup> There is no record that the CIA responded affirmatively to any of these requests and the CIA officer who drafted the February 13 memorandum stated the view that some of the questions raised by the dissidents did not require an answer.

tank rockets. This further request was also passed on to CIA Headquarters. (Cable, Station to HQ, 3/15/61) There is no evidence that any of these arms were supplied to the dissidents.

The documentary record makes clear that the Special Assistant at the State Department was also advised of related developments in a March 16, 1961, "picnic" letter from Dearborn who complained that his spirits were in the doldrums because :

\* \* \* the members of our club are now prepared in their minds to have a picnic but do not have the ingredients for the salad. Lately they have developed a plan for the picnic, which just might work if they could find the proper food. They have asked us for a few sandwiches, hardly more, and we are not prepared to make them available. Last week we were asked to furnish three or four pineapples for a party in the near future, but I could remember nothing in my instructions that would have allowed me to contribute this ingredient. Don't think I wasn't tempted. I have rather specific guidelines to the effect that salad ingredients will be delivered outside the picnic grounds and will be brought to the area by another club. (Letter, Dearborn to Special Assistant, 3/16/61)

After reviewing his "picnic" letter, together with the requests in the March 14 and 15 cables discussed above, Dearborn concluded during his testimony before the Committee that the "pineapples" were probably the requested fragmentation grenades and the restriction on delivering salad ingredients outside of the picnic grounds was, almost certainly, meant to refer to the requirement, of the January 12 Special Group decision that arms be delivered outside the Dominican Republic. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, pp. 25-27)

(ii) *The Passage of Pistols*

(1) *Pouching to the Dominican Republic*

In a March 15, 1961 cable, a Station officer reported that Dearborn had asked for three .38 caliber pistols for issue to several dissidents. In reply, Headquarters cabled: "Regret no authorization exists to suspend pouch regulations against shipment of arms," and indicated that their reply had been coordinated with State. (Cable, HQ to Station, 3/17/61) The Station officer then asked Headquarters to seek the necessary authorization and noted that at his last two posts he had received pistols via the pouch for "worthy purposes" and, therefore, he knew it could be done. (Cable, Station to HQ, 3/21/61) Two days later, Headquarters cabled that the pistols and ammunition were being pouched. However, the Station was instructed *not* to advise Dearborn. (Cable, HQ to Station, 3/24/61).<sup>1</sup>

(2) *Reason for the CIA instruction not to tell Dearborn*

A Station officer testified that he believed the "don't tell Dearborn the pistol is being pouched" language simply meant that the sending of firearms through the diplomatic pouch was not something to be unnecessarily discussed. (Didier, 7/8/75, pp. 78, 79) Dearborn said he never doubted the pouch was used, since he knew the Station had no other means of receiving weapons. (Dearborn, 7/20/75, p. 33)

<sup>1</sup> The Inspector General's Report, issued in connection with a review of these events, concludes that:

"There is no indication in the EM/DEED operational files that the pistols were actually pouched. The request for pistols appears to have been overtaken by a subsequent request for submachine guns." (I.G. Report, p. 60)

This conclusion is difficult to understand in light of the March 24, 1961, Headquarters to Station cable, which provides:

"Pouching revolvers and ammo requested TRUJ 0462 (in 20040) on 28 March. Do not advise (name Dearborn deleted) this material being pouched. Explanation follows."

(3) *Were the pistols related to assassination?*

Dearborn testified that he had asked for a single pistol for purposes completely unrelated to any assassination activity. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, pp. 29-31) He said he had been approached by a Dominican contact who lived in a remote area and who was concerned for the safety of his family in the event of political reprisals. Dearborn testified that he had believed the man's fears were well-founded and had promised to seek a pistol.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is no direct evidence linking any of these pistols to the assassination of Trujillo, a June 7, 1961, CIA memorandum, unsigned and with no attribution as to source, states that two of the three pistols were passed by a Station officer to a United States citizen who was in direct contact with the action element of the dissident group. It should also be noted that the assassination was apparently conducted with almost complete reliance upon hand weapons. Whether one or more of these .38 caliber Smith & Wesson pistols eventually came into the hands of the assassins and, if so, whether they were used in connection with the assassination, remain open questions.

Both Dearborn and the Station officer testified that they regarded the pistols as weapons for self-defense purposes and that they never considered them to be connected, in any way, with the then-current assassination plans. (Dearborn 7/29/75, p. 70; Didier, 7/8/75, pp. 38, 73) However, none of the Headquarters cables inquired as to the purpose for which the handguns were sought and the Station's cable stated only that Dearborn wanted them for passage to dissidents. (Cable, Station to HQ, 3/15/61) Indeed, the March 24, 1961, cable advising that the pistols were being pouched was sent in response to a request by the dissidents for machine guns to be used in an assassination effort. As with the carbines discussed below, it appears that little, if any, concern was expressed within the Agency over passing these weapons to would-be assassins.

(iii) *Passing of the Carbines*

(1) *Request by the Station and by Dearborn and approval by CIA*

In a March 26, 1961, cable to CIA Headquarters, the Station asked for permission to pass to the dissidents three 30 caliber M1 carbines. The guns had been left behind in the Consulate by Navy personnel after the United States interrupted formal diplomatic relations in August 1960. Dearborn testified that he knew of and concurred in the proposal to supply the carbines to the dissidents. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, pp. 42, 43) On March 31, 1961, CIA Headquarters cabled approval of the request to pass the carbines. (Cable, HQ to Station, 3/31/61)

(2) *Were the carbines related to assassination?*

The carbines were passed to the action group contact on April 7, 1961. (Cable, HQ to Station, 4/8/61) Eventually, they found their way into the hands of one of the assassins, Antonio de la Maza. (Cable, Station to HQ, 4/26/61; I.G. Reports, pp. 46, 49) Both Dearborn

<sup>1</sup> Dearborn is clear in his recollection that he asked the station officer to request only one pistol. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, pp. 30, 31) The station officer on the other hand, testified that if his cables requested three pistols for Dearborn then Dearborn must have asked for three pistols. (Didier 7/8/75, p. 72)

The pistols were, however, apparently sent in one package. (Cables, HQ to Station, 3/21/61, 3/24/61) and Dearborn testified that, what he believed to be the one gun, came "wrapped up" and that he passed it. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, p. 30)

and a Station officer testified that the carbines were at all times viewed as strictly a token show of support, indicating United States support of the dissidents' efforts to overthrow Trujillo. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, pp. 46-48; Didier, 7/8/75, p. 39)

(3) *Failure to Disclose to State Department Officials in Washington*

There is no indication that the request or the passage of the carbines was disclosed to State Department officials in Washington until several weeks after the passage. In fact, on April 5, Headquarters requested its Station to ask Dearborn not to comment in correspondence with State that the carbines and ammunition were being passed to the dissidents. This cable was sent while a Station officer was in Washington, and it indicated that upon his return to the Dominican Republic, he would explain the request. The Station replied that Dearborn had not commented on the carbines and ammunition in his correspondence with State and he realized the necessity not to do so. (Cable, Station to HQ, 4/6/61)

Dearborn testified, however, that he believed, at the time of his April 6 cable, that someone in the State Department had been consulted in advance and had approved the passage of the carbines. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, p. 44)

(iv) *Requests for and Pouching of the Machine Guns*

(1) *Requests for Machine Guns*

The Station suggested that Headquarters consider pouching an M3 machine gun on February 10, 1961. (Didier, 7/8/75, pp. 63, 64; cable, Station to HQ, 3/15/61) The request was raised again in March but no action was taken. On March 20, 1961, the Station cabled a dissident request for five M3 or comparable machine guns specifying their wish that the arms be sent via the diplomatic pouch or similar means. The dissidents were said to feel that delivery by air drop or transfer at sea would overly-tax their resources. (Cable, Station to HQ, 3/20/61)

The machine guns sought by the dissidents were clearly identified, in the Station cable, as being sought for use in connection with an attempt to assassinate Trujillo. This plan was to kill Trujillo in the apartment of his mistress and, according to the Station cable:

To do they need five M3 or comparable machine guns, and 1500 rounds ammo for personal defense in event fire fight. Will use quiet weapons for basic job. (Id.)

In essence, CIA's response was that the timing for an assassination was wrong. The Station was told that precipitous or uncoordinated action could lead to the emergence of a leftist, Castro-type regime and the "mere disposal of Trujillo may create more problems than solutions." It was Headquarters' position that:

\* \* \* we should attempt to avoid precipitous action by the internal dissidents until opposition group and HQS are better prepared to support [assassination]<sup>1</sup> effect a change in the regime, and cope with the aftermath. (Cable, HQ, to Station, 3/24/61)

The cable also stated that Headquarters was prepared to deliver machine guns and ammunition to the dissidents when they developed

<sup>1</sup> Word supplied by CIA previously sanitized cable.

a capability to receive them, but that security considerations precluded use of United States facilities as a carrier.<sup>1</sup> Soon thereafter, on April 6, 1961, while a station officer was in Washington for consultation with Headquarters, he reported on events in the Dominican Republic and:

\* \* \* especially on the insistence of the EMOTH [dissident] leaders that they be provided with a limited number of small arms for their own protection (specifically, five M3 .45 SMG's) (CIA Memo for the Record, 4/11/61)

(2) *Pouching of Machine Guns Approved by Bissell*

On April 7, 1961 a Pouch Restriction Waiver Request and Certification was submitted seeking permission to pouch "four M3 machine guns and 240 rounds of ammunition on a priority basis for issuance to a small action group to be used for self protection." (Pouch Restriction Waiver Request, 4/7/61)

The request, submitted on behalf of the Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, further provided:

A determination has been made that the issuance of this equipment to the action group is desirable if for no other reason than to assure this important group's continued cooperation with and confidence in this Agency's determination to live up to its earlier commitments to the group. These commitments took the form of advising the group in January 1961 that we would provide limited arms and assistance to them provided they develop the capability to receive it. Operational circumstances have prevented this group from developing the assets capable of receiving the above equipment through normal clandestine channels such as air drops or sea infiltration. (*Id.*)

The Waiver Request was approved by Richard Bissell, as DDP, on April 10, 1961. (*Id.*)

Walter Elder, Assistant to the Director, issued a memorandum, also on April 10, which stated:

Mr. Dulles wants no action on drops of leaflets or arms in the Dominican Republic taken without his approval. (Elder Memo, 4/10/61<sup>2</sup>)

The Elder memorandum suggests that Dulles did not then know that an air drop of arms was regarded as unfeasible and that consequently pouching of the arms had been approved.

The machine guns were pouching to the Dominican Republic and were received by the Station on April 19, 1961.<sup>3</sup> (I.G. Report, p. 42; Cable, Station to HQ, 4/19/61)

(b) *Knowledge of senior American officials (pre-Bay of Pigs)*

On February 14, 1961, prior to the passage of weapons, but a month after the generalized approval of the passage of arms by the prior Administration, a meeting of the Special Group was held with Messrs. McNamara, Gilpatric, Bowles, Bundy, Dulles, Bissell and General Cabell in attendance.

The minutes state that:

<sup>1</sup> This same cable of March 24, 1961, is the one which advised that the revolvers and ammunition were being pouching.

<sup>2</sup> Elder testified that this note, sent the weekend before the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, was intended to make sure that there were "no unusual planes shot down or any unnecessary noise in the Dominican Republic" prior to the Cuba invasion. (Elder, 8/13/75, p. 51)

<sup>3</sup> Permission to pass the machine guns was never obtained and the guns never passed into the hands of the dissidents.

Mr. Dulles, assisted by Mr. Bissell, then summarized for the benefit of the new members of the Special Group the specific actions taken by the predecessor group during the past year, and also a list of significant projects which antedate the beginning of 1960 and which it is planned to continue. (Special Group Minutes, 2/14/61)

In the course of the discussion, the following point, among others, was made:

*Dominican Republic*—Mr. Bundy asked that a memorandum be prepared for higher authority on the subject of what plans can be made for a successor government to Trujillo. (*Id.*)

The request attributed to Bundy suggests that the Dominican Republic had been one of the matters on which Dulles and Bissell briefed the new members.

What is unclear from the February 14 minutes (just as it is unclear from the January 12 minutes) is the degree to which the Special Group was informed concerning the means by which the dissidents planned to accomplish the overthrow of the Trujillo regime. Specifically, it is not known if the new members of the Special Group were told that the dissident group had expressed the desire to assassinate Trujillo. Nor is it known if the Special Group was advised that the State Department representative in the Dominican Republic had made the assessment that the Dominican government could not be overthrown without the assassination of Trujillo.

Bissell testified that he had no clear recollection of the details of the February 14 briefing and he was unable to say whether or not the method of overthrow to be attempted by the dissidents was discussed. (Bissell, 7/22/75, pp. 101, 102) Robert McNamara, one of the new members of the Special Group in attendance for the briefing, had no recollection as to the specificity in which the Dominican Republic was discussed at the February 14 meeting. He did not recall any mention by either Dulles or Bissell of dissident plans to assassinate Trujillo. (McNamara affidavit, 7/11/75)

#### *February memoranda*

The Secretary of State sent the President a memorandum on February 15, 1961, in response to a request concerning progress to assure an orderly takeover "should Trujillo fall." The memorandum advised that:

Our representatives in the Dominican Republic have, at considerable risk to those involved, established contacts with numerous leaders of the underground opposition \* \* \* [and] \* \* \* the CIA has recently been authorized to arrange for delivery to them outside the Dominican Republic of small arms and sabotage equipment. (Memo, Rusk to President Kennedy, 5/15/61)

This reference to recent authorization for delivery of arms indicates that Secretary Rusk had received some briefing concerning events in the Dominican Republic and the January 1961 Special Group decision to provide arms to anti-Trujillo elements. Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas Mann; Deputy Assistant Secretary William Coerr; and the Special Assistant continued in their respective positions throughout the transition period. The Committee has been furnished no documents indicating that Secretary Rusk or Under Secretary Bowles were specifically advised as to the intentions of the Dominican dissidents to kill Trujillo; intentions of which

the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs certainly had knowledge. Indeed, Secretary Rusk testified that he was not personally so advised. (Rusk, 7/10/75, pp. 41, 42)

On February 17, 1961, Richard Bissell sent a briefing paper on the Dominican Republic to McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's National Security Advisor. The paper, requested by Bundy for "higher authority," made note of the outstanding Special Group approval for the provision of arms and equipment to Dominican dissidents and stated that the dissidents had been informed that the United States was prepared to provide such arms and equipment as soon as they developed the capability to receive them.

The briefing paper also indicated that dissident leaders had informed CIA of "their plan of action which they felt could be implemented if they were provided with arms for 300 men, explosives, and remote control detonation devices." Various witnesses have testified, however, that supplying arms for 300 men would, standing alone, indicate a "non-targeted" use for the arms (i.e., a paramilitary or revolutionary implementation as opposed to a specifically targeted assassination use). (Bissell, 7/29/75, p. 80)

Concerning the briefing paper, Bissell testified that :

\* \* \* it is perfectly clear that I was aware at the time of the memorandum to Mr. Bundy that these dissident groups were, and had for a long time, been hoping they could accomplish the assassination of Trujillo. As a matter of fact, the request, since some seven or eight months earlier, was a perfectly clear indication of that, so that fact was not new knowledge. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 102)

When asked why the memorandum did not include the fact that the dissidents intended the assassination of Trujillo, Bissell replied :

I cannot tell you, Mr. Chairman. I do not remember what considerations moved me. I don't know whether it was because this was common knowledge and it seemed to me unnecessary to include it, or as you are implying, there was an element of concealment here. I would be very surprised if it were the latter, in this case. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 101)

In response to questions concerning the lack of information in the February 17, 1961 briefing paper concerning the uses to which the requested arms might likely be put by the dissidents, Bissell stated :

\* \* \* I would say that the Agency's failure, if there be a failure here was [not] to state in writing that the plans of the dissidents would include assassination attempts. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 99)

Bissell's briefing paper for Bundy concluded with the assessment that a violent clash might soon occur between Trujillo and the internal opposition, "which will end either with the liquidation of Trujillo and his cohorts or with a complete roll up of the internal opposition." In this regard, the fear was expressed that existing schedules for the delivery of weapons to the internal opposition might not be sufficiently timely, and it was therefore recommended that consideration be given to caching the requested arms and other materials. (Memo, Bissell to Bundy, 2/17/61)

Thus, by the middle of February 1961, the senior members of the new Administration (and in view of the "for higher authority" nature of Bundy's request, presumably President Kennedy himself) were aware of the outstanding Special Group approval for the passage of arms and other materials to opposition elements within the Domini-

can Republic. There was no modification or rescision of the "inherited" Special Group approval and it would seem fair, therefore, to regard the approval as having been at least acquiesced in by the new Administration.

During March and early April 1961, operational levels within both the CIA and the State Department learned of increasingly detailed plans by the dissidents to assassinate Trujillo. There is no evidence that this information was passed to the White House or to any member of the Special Group, except Allen Dulles.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, there is no evidence that the passage of the pistols or the carbines or the pouching of the machine guns to the Dominican Republic was disclosed to anyone outside of the CIA during this period.<sup>2</sup>

7. APRIL 17, 1961-MAY 31, 1961 (BAY OF PIGS THROUGH TRUJILLO ASSASSINATION)

Following the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion, attempts were made by State and CIA representatives in the Dominican Republic to dissuade the dissidents from a precipitous assassination attempt. These efforts to halt the assassination of Trujillo were the result of instructions from CIA Headquarters and were prompted by concern over filling the power vacuum which would result from Trujillo's death.

The machine guns arrived in the Dominican Republic but permission to pass them to the dissidents was never given and the guns never left the Consulate.

Dearborn returned to Washington for consultation and a contingency plan for the Dominican Republic was drafted.

The day before Trujillo's assassination, Dearborn received a cable of instructions and guidance from President Kennedy. The cable advised that the United States must not run the risk of association with political assassination, since the United States, as a matter of general policy, could not condone assassination. The cable further advised Dearborn to continue to hold open offers of material assistance to the dissidents and to advise them of United States support for them if they were successful in overthrowing the Trujillo government. The cable also reconfirmed the decision not to pass the machine guns.

(a) *Decision not to pass the machine guns and unsuccessful United States attempt to stop assassination effort*

By April 17, 1961, the Bay of Pigs invasion had failed. As a result, there developed a general realization that precipitous action should be avoided in the Dominican Republic until Washington was able to give further consideration to the consequences of a Trujillo overthrow and the power vacuum which would be created. (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 113) A cable from Headquarters to the Station, on April 17, 1961, advised that it was most important that the machine guns not be passed without additional Headquarters approval.

<sup>1</sup> Copies of CIA cables, including the March 20, 1961 cable describing the plan to assassinate Trujillo in the apartment of his mistress, were apparently sent to the office of the Director of Central Intelligence.

<sup>2</sup> Although a copy of the CIA cable advising that the pistols were being pouching was sent to the Director's office, Dulles apparently did not receive copies of the cables approving passage of the carbines or pouching of the machine guns.

The machine guns arrived in the Dominican Republic on April 19, 1961, and Headquarters was so advised. The earlier admonition that the machine guns should be held in Station custody until further notice was repeated in a second cable from Headquarters, sent April 20, 1961. This decision was said to have been "based on judgment that filling a vacuum created by assassination now bigger question than ever view unsettled conditions in Caribbean area." (Cable, HQ to Station, 4/20/61)

The dissidents continued to press for the release of the machine guns and their requests were passed on to Headquarters in cables from Dearborn and from the Station. (Cables, Station to HQ, 4/25/61) On April 25, 1961, the Station advised Headquarters that an American living in the Dominican Republic and acting as a cut-out to the dissidents had informed the Station that Antonio de la Maza was going to attempt the assassination between April 29 and May 2. The Station also reported that this attempt would use the three carbines passed from the American Consulate, together with whatever else was available. (*Id.*)

In response to the April 25 cable, Headquarters restated that there was no approval to pass any additional arms to the dissidents and requested the Station to advise the dissidents that the United States was simply not prepared at that time to cope with the aftermath of the assassination. (See C/S comments. Cable, Station to HQ, 4/27/61) The following day, April 27, 1961, the Station replied that, based upon further discussions with the dissidents, "We doubt statement U.S. government not now prepared to cope with aftermath will dissuade them from attempt." (Cable, Station to HQ, 4/27/61)

Dearborn recalls receiving instructions that an effort be made to turn off the assassination attempt and testified that efforts to carry out the instructions were unsuccessful. In effect, the dissidents informed him that this was their affair and it could not be turned off to suit the convenience of the United States government. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, p. 52)

On April 30, 1961, Dearborn advised Headquarters that the dissidents had reported to him the assassination attempt was going to take place during the first week of May. The action group was reported to have in its possession three carbines, four to six 12-gauge shotguns and other small arms. Although they reportedly still wanted the machine guns, Dearborn advised Headquarters that the group was going to go ahead with what they had, whether the United States wanted them to or not. (Cable, Station to HQ, 4/30/61)

Dearborn's cable set forth the argument of the action group that, since the United States had already assisted the group to some extent and was therefore implicated, the additional assistance of releasing the machine guns would not change the basic relationship. The cable concluded:

Owing to far-reaching political implications involved in release or non-release of requested items, Headquarters may wish discuss foregoing with State Department. (*Id.*)

Beginning with Dearborn's April 30 cable, there was a fairly constant stream of cables and reports predicting Trujillo's imminent assassination. Certain of these reports predicted the specific date or dates on which the assassination would be attempted, while others

spoke of the attempt being made at the first propitious opportunity. In addition to cables sent directly to CIA Headquarters, the substance of these assassination forecasts was circulated throughout the intelligence community and the higher echelons of the government in the form of intelligence bulletins. These bulletins did not, however, contain references to any United States involvement in the assassination planning.

As a result of these reports, Robert Kennedy had a discussion with Allen Dulles, apparently sometime in the early part of May, and thereafter "looked into the matter." (June 1, 1961, dictated notes of Robert F. Kennedy.)<sup>1</sup> Robert Kennedy reportedly called the President and it was "decided at that time that we'd put a task force on the problem and try to work out some kind of alternative course of action in case this event did occur." Robert Kennedy's notes state that at the time he called the President, "He [the President] had known nothing about it [the reports of Trujillo's imminent assassination]." (*Id.*)

There is no record as to the specificity with which Allen Dulles discussed the matter of Trujillo's predicted assassination with Robert Kennedy. Dulles was, of course, fully informed at this time both as to the relationship between State Department and CIA representatives in the Dominican Republic and the dissidents planning Trujillo's removal, and, also, of the weapons which had been furnished to the dissidents and those which they were then requesting for use in connection with the assassination effort.

(b) *Further consideration of passing machine guns*

In response to Dearborn's cable, a cable was drafted at CIA Headquarters authorizing passage of the machine guns. The cable which was sent to Allen Dulles, with Bissell's recommendation for its dispatch, provided:

Since it appears that opposition group has committed itself to action with or without additional support, coupled with fact ref. C items [the carbines] already made available to them for personal defense; station authorized pass ref. A items [the machine guns] to opposition member for their additional protection on their proposed endeavor." (Draft Cable, HQ to Station, 5/2/61)

The cable was never sent.

In his testimony before the Committee, Bissell characterized his reasoning for recommending release of the machine guns as

\* \* \* having made already a considerable investment in this dissident group and its plans that we might as well make the additional investment. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 127)

The following day, May 3, 1961, the Deputy Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division of CIA, who frequently acted as liaison with the State Department in matters concerning covert operations in the Dominican Republic, met with Adolph Berle, Chairman of the Inter-agency Task Force on Latin America.

A Berle memorandum of the meeting states that the CIA officer informed Berle that a local group in the Dominican Republic wished

<sup>1</sup> These notes were dictated by Robert Kennedy on June 1, 1961, after he learned of Trujillo's assassination.

to overthrow Trujillo and sought arms for that purpose. The memorandum continued:

On cross examination it developed that the real plan was to assassinate Trujillo and they wanted guns for that purpose. [The CIA officer] wanted to know what the policy should be.

I told him I could not care less for Trujillo and that this was the general sentiment. But we did not wish to have anything to do with any assassination plots anywhere, any time. [The CIA officer] said he felt the same way. (Berle, Memo of Conversation, 5/3/61)

Copies of Berle's memorandum were sent to Wymberly Coerr, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, and to the Special Assistant.

Both the CIA officer and the Special Assistant, who had been in almost daily contact with each other since August of 1960, had been advised of the assassination plans of the dissident group. In fact, the CIA officer, along with Bissell, had signed off on the proposed cable of May 2, releasing the machine guns for passage.

*(c) Special group meetings of May 4 and May 18, 1961*

On the day following the Berle-CIA officer meeting, the Special Group met and, according to the Minutes:

The DCI referred to recent reports of a new anti-Trujillo plot. He said we never know if one of these is going to work or not, and asked what is the status of contingency planning should the plot come off. Mr. Bundy said that this point is covered in the Cuba paper which will be discussed at a high level in the very near future. (Special Group Minutes, 5/4/61)

Once again, the cryptic reporting of Special Group Minutes makes subsequent analysis as to the scope of matters discussed speculative. It is not known to what extent and in what detail Allen Dulles referred to "recent reports" of a new anti-Trujillo plot. Certainly, the most recent report of such a plot was Dearborn's April 30 cable—disclosing an imminent assassination attempt potentially utilizing United States-supplied weapons.

On May 18, 1961, the Special Group again considered the situation in the Dominican Republic and, according to the Minutes:

Cabell [Deputy DCI] noted that the internal dissidents were pressing for the release to them of certain small arms now in U.S. hands in the Dominican Republic. He inquired whether the feeling of the Group remained that these arms should not be passed. The members showed no inclination to take a contrary position at this time. (Special Group Minutes, 5/18/61)<sup>1</sup>

*(d) Final requests by dissidents for machine guns*

On May 16, 1961, Dearborn cabled the State Department (attention Acting Assistant Secretary Coerr) with an urgent request from the dissidents for the machine guns. The cable advised that the assassination attempt was scheduled for the night of May 16 and that, while the chances of success were 80 percent, provision of the machine guns would reduce the possibility of failure. The dissidents reportedly

<sup>1</sup>There was no meeting of the Special Group at which the Dominican Republic was discussed between May 4 and May 18. The language attributed to General Cabell as to whether the feeling of the Group remained not to pass the arms, tends to suggest that the question of passing these arms must have been raised prior to the May 18 Group meeting, perhaps at the May 4, 1961 meeting.

stressed to Dearborn that if the effort failed, due to United States refusal to supply the machine guns, the United States would be held responsible and would never be forgiven. Dearborn reported that he had informed the dissidents that, based on his recent conversations in Washington, he was reasonably certain that authorization could not be obtained for handing over machine gun. (Cable, Dearborn to Department, 5/16/61)

A return cable from the State Department to Dearborn, sent the same day, confirmed Dearborn's judgment. It instructed him to continue to take the same line until he received contrary instructions which clearly indicated they had been cleared in advance by the State Department itself. This cable from State was approved by Under Secretary Bowles. (Cable, Department to Dearborn, 5/16/61)

An officer in the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division referred to Dearborn's May 16 request in a memorandum he sent to the Special Assistant on the same date and asked to be advised as to the Department's policy concerning passage of the machine guns. The CIA officer noted that when this request was last taken to the Department, Berle made the decision that the weapons not be passed. (Memo to ARA from CIA, 5/16/61)

Devine responded to the CIA officer's memorandum on the same day, advising him that the Department's policy continued to be negative on the matter of passing the machine guns.<sup>1</sup> The CIA officer's attention was directed to the January 12, 1961 Special Group limitation concerning the passage of arms outside of the Dominican Republic. A copy of the Special Assistant's memorandum to the CIA officer was forwarded to the Office of the Under Secretary of State, to the attention of his personal assistant, Joseph Scott. (Memo, Special Assistant to [CIA officer], 5/16/61)

*(e) Dearborn in Washington for consultation—drafting of contingency plans*

At a meeting of the National Security Council on May 5, 1961, the question of United States policy toward the Dominican Republic was considered and it was:

Agreed that the Task Force on Cuba would prepare promptly both emergency and long-range plans for anti-communist intervention in the event of crises in Haiti or the Dominican Republic. Noted the President's view that the United States should not initiate the overthrow of Trujillo before we knew what government would succeed him, and that any action against Trujillo should be multi-lateral. (Record of Actions by National Security Council, 5/5/61) (Approved by the President, 5/16/61)<sup>2</sup>

Although the precise dates are uncertain, Dearborn was recalled to Washington to participate in drafting of these contingency plans and recommendations. Dearborn was in Washington at least from May 13, 1961.

<sup>1</sup> By May 27, 1961, Dearborn was advising the State Department that the group was no longer requesting the arms and had accepted the fact that it must make do with what it had. (Cable, Dearborn to State, 5/27/61)

<sup>2</sup> As noted *supra*, p. 207, the President, prior to his May 16 approval of the NSC Record of Actions, had been informed by Robert Kennedy of the reports that Trujillo might be assassinated. Richard Goodwin of the White House staff had also received, prior to May 16, a CIA memorandum which disclosed that Dominican dissidents, intending to "neutralize" Trujillo, had been supplied by the U.S. with certain weapons and had sought further weapons.

While in Washington, Dearborn met with State Department personnel and with Richard Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger of the White House staff. When testifying before the Committee, he was unable to recall the substance of his discussions with Goodwin and Schlesinger, aside from his general assumption that the current situation in the Dominican Republic was discussed. He did not recall any discussion with Goodwin or Schlesinger concerning arms, either those which had been passed to the dissidents or those which were being sought. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, pp. 58-61) Dearborn left the meeting at the White House, however, with the firm impression that Goodwin had been reviewing cable traffic between Washington and the Dominican Republic and was very familiar with events as they then stood. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, p. 62)

On May 11, 1961, Dearborn prepared a two-page draft document which set forth ways in which the U.S. could overtly aid and encourage the opposition to Trujillo. The draft noted that means of stepping up the covert program were considered in separate papers. (Dearborn draft document of May 11, 1961) This Dearborn draft of May 11, 1961, was apparently used as a basis for portions of the "Dominican Republic—Contingency Paper" discussed below.

Two documents entitled, "Program of Covert Action for the Dominican Republic" were provided to the Committee staff from State Department files. Each appears to be a draft of the covert activities paper described in Dearborn's May 11, 1961 memorandum. One draft recommended an expanded U.S. offer to deliver small explosive devices and arms. (Document indicating it was attached to "Dominican Republic—Contingency," dated 5/12/61 and bearing Nos. 306-308) The other draft is very similar except that it concludes that delivery of arms within the Dominican Republic to members of the underground is not recommended. (Document from State Department files bearing No. 310)

Attached to the second draft was a one-page document which the Special Assistant believes he wrote. It listed eight numbered points including the following:

1. The USG should not lend itself to direct political assassination.
2. U.S. moral posture can ill afford further tarnishing in the eyes of the world.
3. We would be encouraging the action, supplying the weapons, effecting the delivery, and then turning over only the final execution to (unskilled) local triggermen.
4. So far we have seen no real evidence of action capability. Should we entrust ourselves and our reputation to this extent in the absence thereof?
7. Can we afford a precedent which may convince the world that our diplomatic pouches are used to deliver assassination weapon? (Document from the State Department files bearing No. 313)

The other points raised in document No. 313 related to the likelihood that any such involvement by the United States would ultimately be revealed.

On May 15, 1961, Acting Assistant Secretary Coerr sent to Under Secretary Bowles a document entitled "Covert Action Programs Authorized With Respect to the Dominican Republic." That document outlined the existing Special Group approvals for covert assistance to Dominican dissidents and, while making no recommendation as to

further policy, suggested that the Special Group review the outstanding approvals and communicate to interested agencies the status of such authorizations. (State Dept. document from Coerr to Bowles, 5/15/61)

During this period a document dated May 13, 1961, was prepared at the request of Richard Goodwin and was thereafter circulated within the State Department.<sup>1</sup> This document, entitled "Program of Covert Action for the Dominican Republic" reported:

CIA has had in the direct custody of its Station in Ciudad Trujillo, a very limited supply of weapons and grenades. In response to the urgent requests from the internal opposition leaders for personal defense weapons attendant to their projected efforts to neutralize TRUJILLO, three (3) 38 Cal revolvers and three (3) carbines with accompanying ammunition have been passed by secure means to the opposition. The recipients have repeatedly requested additional armed support.

This memorandum is the first direct evidence of disclosure to anyone on the White House staff of the fact that arms had been passed to dissidents in the Dominican Republic.

The original ribbon copy of the memorandum has the above quoted material circled in pencil and the word "neutralize" is underscored. Goodwin testified before the Committee that he circled the above paragraph when first reading the memorandum because the information concerning passage of the arms was new to him and struck him as significant. (Goodwin, 7/18/75, pp. 48, 49)

Under the heading of "Possible Covert Actions Which Require Additional Authorization," the memorandum to Goodwin indicated that the CIA had a supply of four .45 caliber machine guns and a small number of grenades currently in the direct custody of the Station in Ciudad Trujillo and that a secure means of passing these weapons to the internal opposition "for their use in personal defense attendant to their projected efforts to remove Trujillo" could be developed by the Station. The memorandum made no recommendation to approve or disapprove passage of these weapons. (*Id.*)

On May 15, 1961, Bundy forwarded to Goodwin another memorandum. This one, entitled "The Current Situation in and Contingency Plans for the Dominican Republic," had been received by Bundy from the State Department. Attached was an underlying document which began:

Recent reports indicate that the internal Dominican dissidents are becoming increasingly determined to oust Trujillo by any means, and their plans in this regard are well advanced.

The May 15 memorandum stressed that it was highly desirable for the United States to be identified with and to support the elements seeking to overthrow Trujillo. The attachment recommended that Consul General Dearborn inform the dissidents that if they succeed "at their own initiative and on their own responsibility in forming an acceptable provisional government they can be assured that any reasonable request for assistance from the U.S. will be promptly and favorably answered." (Documents from State Dept. files bearing Nos. 279-286)

<sup>1</sup> See Scott to Bowles memorandum of May 19, 1961, enclosing copy of Goodwin memorandum.

*(f) Cable of May 29, 1961*

A copy of Dearborn's cable of May 16, 1961, requesting urgent State Department guidance, was forwarded to Richard Goodwin. At the specific request of Goodwin, the State Department replied to Dearborn on May 17, and advised him to keep in mind the President's view, as expressed at the May 5 National Security Council Meeting, that the United States should not initiate the overthrow of Trujillo before knowing what government would succeed him. (Cable, Department to Dearborn, 5/17/61)

Dearborn responded on May 21, 1961, pointing out that for over a year State Department representatives in the Dominican Republic had been nurturing the effort to overthrow Trujillo and had assisted the dissidents in numerous ways, all of which were known to the Department. It was, Dearborn stated, "too late to consider whether United States will initiate overthrow of Trujillo." Dearborn invited further guidance from State.

In response to Dearborn's request for guidance, the State Department drafted a reply on May 24. The draft discussed a conflict between two objectives:

(1) To be so associated with removal Trujillo regime as to derive credit among DR dissidents and liberal elements throughout Latin America ;

(2) To disassociate US from any obvious intervention in Dominican Republic and even more so from any political assassination which might occur.

It was said to be the Department's considered opinion that "former objective cannot, repeat not, easily override latter." (Draft Cable, Department to Dearborn, 5/24/61—not sent)

This State Department draft was forwarded to Under Secretary Bowles with the comment that Goodwin considered it "too negative" and that he would try his hand on a draft "for Bundy to present tomorrow morning." (Memo from Achilles to Bowles, 5/24/61)

A May 26, 1961, memorandum from Bowles to Bundy begins:

Following up on our discussion of the Dominican Republic at yesterday's meeting of the Special Group, I am forwarding you a draft telegram which we would like to send to Henry Dearborn, our Consul General in Ciudad Trujillo, supplementing the guidance he will be receiving on the recently approved contingency plans.

The minutes of the Special Group meeting on May 25, 1961, do not, however, reflect any discussion of the Dominican Republic. If, as Bowles' memorandum suggests, a discussion concerning the Dominican Republic did occur at the May 25 meeting, it is not known what the discussion involved or what decisions, if any, were made.

Richard Goodwin personally prepared alternate drafts to the proposed State Department cable to Dearborn. Goodwin testified that it was his intent in revising the cable to communicate to Dearborn, President Kennedy's personal belief that the United States "\* \* \* didn't want to do anything that would involve us further, the United States further, in any effort to assassinate Trujillo." (Goodwin, 7/10/75, p. 32)

At the same time, Goodwin's draft raised the issue of further covert action and transfer of arms to the dissidents and advised Dearborn to hold out the arms as being available to the dissidents pending their ability to receive them.

It was the twofold intent of the cable as revised by Goodwin, (1) to express the desire to remain in the good graces of the dissidents who, it was believed, would constitute the new government following Trujillo's assassination, and (2) to avoid any action which might further involve the United States in the anticipated assassination. This dual purpose is clearly evident in the cable which advised:

\* \* \* we must not run risk of U.S. association with political assassination, since U.S. *as matter of general policy cannot condone assassination*. This last principal is overriding and must prevail in doubtful situation. (Emphasis added)

\* \* \* \* \*  
Continue to inform dissident elements of U.S. support for their position.

According to Goodwin, the italicized material was inserted in the cable at the specific direction of President Kennedy. (Goodwin, 7/10/75, pp. 22, 23)

With respect to the four machine guns which were in the Consulate and which had been repeatedly requested by the dissidents, the cable advised Dearborn that the United States was unable to transfer these arms to the dissidents. Dearborn was instructed

Tell them that this is because of our suspicion that method of transfer may be unsafe. In actual fact, we feel that the transfer of arms would serve very little purpose and expose the United States to great danger of association with assassination attempt.

The cable, as revised by Goodwin and approved by President Kennedy, was sent to Dearborn on May 29, 1961. (Cable, Department to Dearborn, 5/29/61)

#### 8. MAY 30, 1961 AND IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER

##### (a) *Trujillo assassinated*

Late in the evening of May 30, 1961, Trujillo was ambushed and assassinated near San Cristobal, Dominican Republic. The assassination closely paralleled the plan disclosed by the action group to American representatives in the Dominican Republic and passed on to officials in Washington at both the CIA and the State Department. (Cable, Dearborn to Department, 4/30/61) The assassination was conducted by members of the action group, to whom the American carbines had been passed, and such sketchy information as is available indicates that one or more of the carbines was in the possession of the assassination group when Trujillo was killed. (I.G. Report, pp. 60-61) This evidence indicates, however, that the actual assassination was accomplished by handguns and shotguns. (I.G. Report, p. 61)

##### (b) *Cables to Washington*

After receiving the May 29 cable from Washington, both Consul General Dearborn and the CIA Station sent replies. According to Dearborn's testimony, he did not regard the May 29 cable as a change in U.S. policy concerning support for assassinations. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, p. 74)

He interpreted the May 29 cable as saying:

\* \* \* we don't care if the Dominicans assassinate Trujillo, that is all right. But we don't want anything to pin this on us, because we aren't doing it, it is the Dominicans who are doing it. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, p. 104)

Dearborn testified that this accorded with what he said had always been his personal belief: that the U.S. should not be involved in an assassination and that if an assassination occurred it would be strictly a Dominican affair. (Dearborn, 7/29/75, pp. 100-101)

In contrast, the CIA Station officer did regard the cable as manifesting a change in U.S. policy, particularly on the question of supplying arms. (Didier, 7/8/75, p. 120) He believed the May 29 cable was the final word in United States policy on this matter and consequently felt that the government had retreated from its prior position, of offering material support to the dissidents, and had adopted a new position of withholding such support. His responsive cable to Headquarters stated:

HQ aware extent to which U.S. government already associated with assassination. If we are to at least cover up tracks, CIA personnel directly involved in assassination preparation must be withdrawn. (Cable, Station to HQ, 5/30/61)

Immediately following the assassination, all CIA personnel in the Dominican Republic were removed from the country and within a few days Consul General Dearborn was back in Washington. The State Department cabled the CIA station in the Dominican Republic to destroy all records concerning contacts with dissidents and any related matters, except not to destroy the contingency plans or the May 29, 1961 cable to Dearborn. (Cable, HQ to Station, 5/31/61)

*(c) Immediate post-assassination period*

The United States Consulate in the Dominican Republic was quick to dispatch its early reports that Trujillo had been assassinated, and the United States communications network transmitted the report to President Kennedy in Paris. The President's Press Secretary, Pierre Salinger, made the first public announcement of the assassination, preceeding by several hours release of the news in the Dominican Republic. Secretary of State Rusk testified that when he learned of Salinger's announcement he was most concerned. Rusk said that Trujillo's son Ramfis was also in Paris and he was afraid that Ramfis, upon first learning of his father's death from the press secretary to the President of the United States, might reason that the United States had been in some way involved and he might therefore try to retaliate against President Kennedy. (Rusk, 7/10/75, pp. 32-33)

Following the assassination, there were several high-level meetings in Washington attended by President Kennedy, Vice President Johnson, Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense McNamara, Attorney General Kennedy, and many lower-level officials who had been involved in the Dominican Republic operation. The meetings considered the crisis in the Dominican Republic, caused by Trujillo's assassination, and attempted to ascertain the facts concerning the degree of United States involvement in the assassination. The passage of carbines to the dissidents was discussed at one such meeting. (State Department Memorandum for the files, 6/1/61)

On June 1, 1961, Robert Kennedy dictated four pages of personal notes reflecting his contemporaneous thoughts on the situation in the Dominican Republic. A review of these notes evidences considerable concern regarding the lack of information available in Washington

as to events in the Dominican Republic.<sup>1</sup> The notes end with the following statement:

The great problem now is that we don't know what to do because we don't (sic) what the situation is and this shouldn't be true, particularly when we have known that this situation was pending for some period of time.

There is no indication or suggestion contained in the record of those post-assassination meetings, or in the Robert Kennedy notes, of concern as to the propriety of the known United States involvement in the assassination. Nor is there any record that anyone took steps following Trujillo's assassination to reprimand or censure any of the American officials involved either on the scene or in Washington, or to otherwise make known any objections or displeasure as to the degree of United States involvement in the events which had transpired. Whether this was due to the press of other matters, including concern over Trujillo's successor and the future government of the Dominican Republic, or whether it represented a condonation or ratification of the known United States involvement, is uncertain.

In any event, when, some years later, the project covering American involvement in changing the government of the Dominican Republic was terminated by the Agency, the project was described in Agency documents as a "success" in that it assisted in moving the Dominican Republic from a totalitarian dictatorship to a Western-style democracy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Kennedy's concern, immediately following the assassination, with the Agency's inability to provide first-hand information from the Dominican Republic as to popular support for the anti-Trujillo group, the extent of fighting, if any, in the country, and the likelihood of the dissidents seizing control of the country, was also discussed in a 1962 CIA report.

