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4 September 1962

MEMORANDUM: Chief, Task Force W

SUBJECT : British Press Speculation that DRE Raiders may have used British Territory as a Base

REFERENCE : DIR 32616 (OUT 70518)

This memorandum is for your information only, and does not recommend action. Bits and pieces of information have suddenly and recently appeared concerning Cuban exile activity in the Bahamas, and of equally sudden and recent probes by non-Cuban Bahamian residents, which may or may not mean something. I also continue to be somewhat puzzled, as mentioned below, by the unusual attitude of Chief, Special Branch, Bahamian Police, with regard to the Anguila Island query. 08

1. In response to a recent request from the London Station for guidance in the event it is queried by liaison concerning the DRE raid on Cuba, mainly resulting from British press speculation that the raiders may have used a secret base in the Bahamas, the Station was informed that the DRE, in a press conference of 25 August, said that the boats had sailed from Marathon in the Florida keys, and that British territory apparently was not involved. Also that the raid was launched without our knowledge or support.

2. In addition, on 27 August 1962, the FBI informed Mr. Wallen that it had received an inquiry by way of its Miami field office from Mr. Gregg Bentley, new head of Special Branch in the Bahamas concerning his recent investigation of a number of Cuban exiles on the Island of Anguila who allegedly told him they were there on a CIA mission. Mr. Bentley claimed to be concerned because he would of course have to report the matter through the Colonial Office, but would very much dislike having to do this if it was actually a CIA operation. Mr. Wallen suggested that the Bureau might inform Mr. Bentley that the Agent was definitely not Agency sponsored, but that we might get in touch with him at some point through MI-5 on this and similar problems. C/TFW, in being informed of this report, stated that he also had recently received the same query from the local MI-6 representative in Washington, D. C. and had also denied any Agency involvement. The above was brought to London Station's attention with the comment that because of coincidence and logical placement Anguila conceivably could have been used by the raiders as a staging area and base. 06, 08, 06, 24, 29, 24

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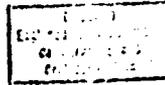
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3. It has since come to our attention that maritime operation PARROT mounted by WAVE on 22 August involved a scheduled rendezvous on Anguilla key between a WAVE asset and two UR internal officials. The operation was unsuccessful in that the two UR officials failed to make the rendezvous as scheduled. WAVE is now planning to rerun the operation on 30/31 August.

4. The above is being brought to your attention since our knowledge of the use of Anguilla as a rendezvous point may possibly cause some future embarrassment if the British should learn of it and mistakenly associate it with the activities of the exile group investigated by Mr. Bentley.

5. Another development, at least peripherally involving the Bahamas, is described below:

a. The U. S. Coast Guard on 21 August 1962 inquired as to any interest we might have in one W. Carney, who, in turn, is interested in obtaining rights on the Island of Navassa. Navassa was described as lying thirty miles due west of the westernmost tip of Haiti, and is under Coast Guard administration. According to TFW/PM we have looked into the island and found it uninhabited---and possibly uninhabitable---with no water or harbor facilities. CI/Liaison, at our instruction, has informed the Coast Guard that we are not sponsoring Carney, but probably had no objection, and would like more details.

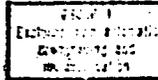
b. Carney describes himself as a retired marine engineer, who owns property in the Bahamas, and who takes out private fishing parties. He wants to use Navassa as a private fishing resort, a refueling station, and a watering point. The Coast Guard has apparently reminded him that there is no water and no harborage on Navassa, but he is still interested.

c. The Coast Guard has an unmanned radio station on the island. For some legal reasons they cannot sell, or even lease, property on the island, but they could give Carney a five year revocable permit, maintaining the right to inspect and approve any construction.

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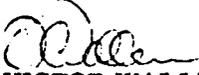


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d. The Coast Guard is continuing to check into Carney, and will probably give him the permission he is seeking if they find nothing derogatory on him. Although Carney is a permanent resident of the Bahamas, he also has a New York address which was given as 655 Pelham Parkway, North, Bronx 67, New York.

6. In addition, an Agency contact, a resident of the Bahamas, who travels extensively throughout the islands, recently reported that he had personally observed during a trip through the southern keys that several of the keys which previously were uninhabited were now occupied by a number of Cuban exiles. According to source, the British authorities apparently are puzzled as to their presence there and as to what to do about it.

7. Much of the above indicates that a number of Cuban exiles are showing up in remote areas of the Bahamas, and the British are no doubt concerned over their presence and possible CIA involvement. Mr. Bentley's query concerning the group of exiles he allegedly investigated on Anguilla Island emphasizes British concern. It also sounds somewhat provocative in that Mr. Bentley claims to have thought it prudent, after having been told by an unnamed Cuban exile leader that they were there on a CIA mission, to double check with us before submitting an official report to his own Headquarters. 24

  
VICTOR WALLEN  
C/TFW/CI

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