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*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures  
pour le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs  
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

CONFIDENTIAL

[Ottawa], April 17, 1961

## DEVELOPMENTS IN CUBA

According to unconfirmed radio reports from Florida, seaborne invaders from Guatemala made this morning a successful landing in the vicinity of Matanzas, some 200 miles east of Havana. This invasion attempt was preceded on Saturday, April 15, by air attacks. Two B26 bombers of United States manufacture caused explosions and fires at military bases in Havana, Santiago and San Antonio. At a state funeral for the eight persons killed during this raid, Dr. Castro accused yesterday the United States of having planned this aggression which he compared to the attack on Pearl Harbour, denied that the crews manning the planes were defectors from the Cuban Air Force, (as Mr. Stevenson had stated on April 15 in the United Nations First Committee in reply to charges made by the Cuban Foreign Minister, Dr. Roa), and ordered national mobilization.

2. The Canadian Ambassador in Havana reported by telegram† that all Embassy personnel were safe and his reassurances were transmitted to the wives of two members of the staff in Ottawa. The Acting Foreign Minister, Dr. Olivares, pledged on Saturday to all members of the diplomatic corps the fullest guarantee of their safety. The Ambassador stated on April 15 that he did not recommend any action at present. I understand that telephone communications with Cuba are interrupted but that telegraphic services are still operating and we should be receiving direct cables on developments from the Embassy.

3. The anti-Castro forces in Guatemala and Florida are undoubtedly receiving weapons and active financial assistance in the United States, from either official or private sources. At his press conference on Wednesday, April 12, President Kennedy insisted that United States armed forces would not intervene in Cuba and emphasized that the United States Government would do everything possible to make sure that there are no Americans involved in any action inside Cuba. However, he did not discuss the indirect support which the United States Government would give to an invasion launched from another country.

4. If the anti-Castro groups led by Dr. Miro Cardona manage to overthrow the present régime, they have been assured that their government would be recognized by the United States. Should they fail, the United States would have to decide whether it should intervene or abandon the anti-Castrists to their fate. In such a case, intervention would be denounced as another instance of "Yankee imperialism" not only by Communist states but by nationalist elements in Latin American countries; non-intervention would mean a loss of face and prestige while merely postponing the issue. President Kennedy's dilemma is that he cannot abandon the Cuban refugees any more than he can abandon the principles of the Organization of American States charter which specifically forbid him to use force against the internal or external affairs of another country.

5. The Canadian Ambassador in Havana wrote on April 11, in a despatch† which has just been received, "What I fear for Cuba is the possibility of an attempt which might be unsuccessful. I cannot see the immediate and complete defeat or surrender of the Castro forces. Failing that, I fear that a partly, or even largely successful attempt could lead only to bitter civil war and a totally unsuccessful attempt to a wave of reprisals and executions."