

OPERATION NORTHWOODS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Cuba

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered the attached memorandum for the Chief of Operations, Cuba Project, which responds to a request from that office for brief but precise description of pretexts which would provide justification for U.S. military intervention in Cuba.

2. The suggested courses of action are designed to create a credible scenario in which external aggression against the United States appears to have originated from the Cuban government. These measures are intended to garner domestic and international support for military action.

3. Proposed Scenarios Include:

a. Staging a series of well-coordinated incidents near Guantanamo Bay, including:

- Simulated attacks on U.S. naval assets.
- Destruction of property and sabotage blamed on Cuban operatives.
- Deployment of friendly Cuban refugees to act as provocateurs.

b. Orchestrating fake hijackings or attacks on civilian airliners:

- Use of a drone aircraft substituted for a commercial airliner.
- Simulated interception by Cuban MiG fighters.
- Broadcasting distress signals before remote detonation.

c. Simulating or initiating domestic terrorism:

- Bombings in U.S. cities with planted Cuban evidence.
- Public funerals for mock victims to stir outrage.
- Use of media assets to propagate the narrative of Cuban aggression.

d. Utilizing U-2 aircraft incidents:

- Engineering a shootdown scenario near Cuba.
- Fabricating photographic evidence to implicate Cuban military.

TOP SECRET - EYES ONLY

4. These operations would be executed with utmost secrecy and deniability. Plausible deniability must be maintained to prevent attribution to U.S. military intelligence or government entities.

5. The success of these operations depends on precise coordination, compartmentalization of knowledge, and the cooperation of allied media organizations to support the official narrative.

Prepared for high-level review and approval.

Lyman L. Lemnitzer

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff