

Pentagon Proposed Pretexts for Cuba Invasion in 1962

In his new exposé of the National Security Agency entitled *Body of Secrets*, author James Bamford highlights a set of proposals on Cuba by the Joint Chiefs of Staff codenamed OPERATION NORTHWOODS. This document, titled "Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Cuba" was provided by the JCS to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on March 13, 1962, as the key component of Northwoods. Written in response to a request from the Chief of the Cuba Project, Col. Edward Lansdale, the Top Secret memorandum describes U.S. plans to covertly engineer various pretexts that would justify a U.S. invasion of Cuba.

These proposals - part of a secret anti-Castro program known as Operation Mongoose - included staging the assassinations of Cubans living in the United States, developing a fake "Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities and even in Washington," including "sink[ing] a boatload of Cuban refugees (real or simulated)," faking a Cuban airforce attack on a civilian jetliner, and concocting a "Remember the Maine" incident by blowing up a U.S. ship in Cuban waters and then blaming the incident on Cuban sabotage. Bamford himself writes that Operation Northwoods "may be the most corrupt plan ever created by the U.S. government."



[Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Justification for US Military Intervention in Cuba \[includes cover memoranda\], March 13, 1962, TOP SECRET, 15 pp.](#)