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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM RELEASE AS SANITIZED 1999

18 June 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Agent in Charge
Miami Field Office

SUBJECT : Field Office Memorandum of 1st June 1969
Re: Charles GOVEA and Francisco
Wilfredo "Pancho" VARONA (Alonso)

1. I have now read with care the referenced memorandum which deals specifically with charges by a former agent Wilfredo "Pancho" VARONA against his handler known as "Frank" or Enrique. As you will have perceived from reading VARONA's file by the time you read this memorandum, Mr. VARONA is not well regarded by our Station and/or the people who have handled him to date. This constitutes the reason for his termination. I would also like you to examine the field traces on Mr. Charles GOVEA, an attachment to this memorandum. These traces indicate that Mr. GOVEA has had in the past, and possibly still may have, some contact with Castro intelligence organizations. We are presently waiting for a more complete read-out on Mr. GOVEA from the New York Office of the FBI. Understandably, therefore, you can see we look somewhat askance at the GOVEA/VERONA information. Although we recognize the integrity of the unwitting intermediary Mr. Winston Guest of Palm Beach, Florida, we also recognize the implications for "Frank" in Mr. GOVEA's knowledge of our affairs given his possible Castro intelligence connection. Axiomatically, we will be interested in knowing, at some point in the near future, whether "Frank's" true identity is known by either VARONA or GOVEA.

2. I have discussed this memorandum in detail with "Frank". Our views on VARONA's allegations are presented below, keyed to your basic memorandum.

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a. In paragraph 4 of your memorandum of
11 June 1964:

Mr. VARONA was recruited sometime during 1957 by Mr. William Murray then assigned to the Agency's Station in Havana. He was subsequently handled by Mr. Jack Stewart another Agency Officer presently stationed in Kingston, Jamaica. Later, still in Cuba, he was handled by Mr. Frank Belsito now serving in Panama and Emilio Rodriguez (deceased.) Mr. Rodriguez turned Mr. VARONA over to "Frank" in November 1960. In August 1961, Mr. VARONA took asylum in the Brazilian Embassy in Havana. He was later granted "salvo conducto" to Rio de Janeiro. In the interim "Frank" was exfiltrated from Cuba to the U.S. When Mr. VARONA arrived in the Florida area during March 1962, he was met by his Havana Case Officer "Frank" who continued to handle him until August 1962, at which time he was turned over to the Greek Case Officer he refers to. The Greek Case Officer handled him for approximately three years. Along about 1965, the Greek Case Officer turned Mr. VARONA over to Mr. Al McQuade aka Fred who handled Mr. VARONA until May 1968, at which time he was turned over to "Pepe" introduced by "Frank" who served as an intermediary because of his previous connection with Mr. VARONA. Pepe's specific job was to give Mr. VARONA one last chance to prove that he could be productive before being terminated. Pepe, an experienced agent handler's problems with Mr. VARONA were precisely like those of his predecessors. He found Mr. VARONA to be untruthful, bellicose and generally unsatisfactory for any form of continued employment by WH Miami. Therefore, after due consideration of Mr. VARONA's potential to cause trouble because of his long experience with the Agency, the decision was taken to terminate him recognizing full well there might be security repercussions.

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In the light of the foregoing, it is worrisome to find out that Mr. VARONA is aware that "Frank" recently received transfer orders from the Organization. We need more information on this. We suspect that the origin of this statement is the fact that Mr. VARONA recently met "Frank" on the street in Mexico City by complete happenstance. During that meeting "Frank" alluded to the fact that he was no longer working in Miami (although in fact he was) to confuse Mr. VARONA as to his true whereabouts. It should be noted that Mr. VARONA refers to "Frank" as "Frank" because at one point during the time that he was being handled by "Frank", otherwise known as Enrique, he instructed Mr. VARONA to introduce him to the Vasco de CUNHA family as "Frank" Stevens, otherwise he had known "Frank" under the name, Enrique. The basis for Mr. VARONA saying that he believed "Frank" mishandled the WOFIRM program in many ways appears to be vituperation plus frustration. The vituperation being a basic ingredient in his opportunistic character.

b. Re paragraph 5 of your memorandum of
11 June 1969.

That "Frank" had certain responsibilities re Juanita Castro is very true. "Frank" was fundamentally responsible for the defection of Juanita Castro although Mr. VARONA furnished the lead. The "Frank"/Juanita Castro relationship is now quasi-legendary. He did not fumble the very difficult handling of this controversial person. Mr. VARONA would have been in no position to know the load placed upon "Frank" by the Agency in trying to gain operational mileage from Miss Castro. Re the information that "Frank" was in possession of information which could have resulted in the assassination of Fidel Castro, the following comment must be made: This refers to the Plan RAPHAEL which

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involved Mr. VARONA's brother. "Frank" was not the Case Officer on this operation, although he had originally recruited Mr. VARONA's brother in Cuba prior to his exfiltration. The Case Officer for the RAPHAEL operation, if one considers that there was a case officer, would have been Stephen P. Mangello. Re Mr. VARONA's charge that five of his family went to jail in Cuba and four of his friends "went to the wall" in Cuba because of the shortcomings of "Frank," "Frank" has the following specifically to say in rebuttal:

"VARONA was continuously admonished from the time of his arrival in the U.S. in March 1962 to be discreet concerning his connection as well as his relatives' connection with the Agency. It was common knowledge in the exile community that VARONA and his family were dedicating their lives to the overthrow of Castro. No member of VARONA's family was molested by Castro until the exfiltration of VARONA's brother in 1964. VARONA's brother left a wife and two children behind and later within a period of three months initiated divorce proceedings. VARONA's brother and probably his wife, and possibly other members of the family knew of Plan RAPHAEL. It would be difficult, if well nigh impossible, to ascertain who could have been the cause of the arrest of members of VARONA's family, since besides the family members, other agents who were also involved in this Plan were arrested at approximately the same time. Re the four friends "who went to the wall," this appears to be sheer embellishment on the part of Mr. VARONA."

c. Re paragraph 6 of your memorandum of
11 June 1969:

Re Mr. VARONA's statement that the Cuban who holds the highest position for the Agency in Miami and who works directly for "Frank" is one Joaquin SANGENIS, this again is embellishment. Mr. VARONA has obviously known for some years that Mr. SANGENIS heads the EMOT Organization. This is one of the WH/Miami Station's several projects. Fortunately,

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Mr. VARONA is not informed on other Station operations, so it is understandable that in his attempt to bring attention to himself that he would focus on those things he is aware of.

Mr. VARONA's opinion of Mr. SANGENIS and his handling of money is his own opinion. The Station's view is that it is lamentable that Mr. VARONA, over the years, did not show the same amount of personal dedication to getting the job done that Mr. SANGENIS has shown. Again, it appears to be one more vituperative allegation which has little basis, based on information so far provided by Mr. VARONA.

d. Re paragraph 7 of your memorandum of
11 June 1961:

VARONA was in fact the messenger sent by "Frank" to the person who was going to conduct the exfiltration of "Frank" and several co-workers in June 1961. He did not, as he suggests, have a prime or organizing role in this exfiltration which was, in fact, handled by the NORBREGAS family, long time assets of the Havana Station. Whether he was actually involved in the exfiltration of Pedro DIAZ (Lanz) and Manuel ARTIME is not known. It is probable that he was somewhere on the periphery as was true in "Frank's" case.

e. Re paragraph 8 of your memorandum of
11 June 1961:

~~It is true that Mr. VARONA is a good friend of the Vasco de CUNHA family. He got to know this family when Vasco LEITAO was Ambassador to Cuba. The Ambassador gave him asylum during the BATISTA period, and this formed the basis of their friendship. From time to time over the years, the~~

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Agency found it useful to use this friendship as a means of controlling Mr. VARONA when he became unmanageable.

f. Re paragraphs 9 and 10 of your memorandum of 11 June 1969:

We know that Mr. VARONA has written at least one article for VIDA LATINA. We have no information, however, to the effect that he is being at all successful in re-establishing and/or revitalizing the old "Autentico" Party. Given his unfavorable reputation in the Cuban community, it is unlikely that he would enjoy any success in this endeavor.

g. Re paragraph 11 of your memorandum of 11 June 1969:

It should be noted that Mr. Osorio DAVILA, presently living in Miami, is the brother of a prominent Communist in Cuba today and should be viewed in that light. "Frank's" recollection of the situation involving servants and the ASPRU home, which he took over with the servants, does not jive with Mr. VARONA's report. There were two white and two black servants in the house. The night of the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Internal Service sent agents to the ASPRU home to pick up "Frank." One colored and one white servant were at home at that time and they told the DSE agents that "Frank" was "a gay blade" and would not be home until early the next morning. The DSE left the residence leaving behind a note for "Frank" to report to their headquarters the following morning. In this context, it should be noted that "Frank's" cover in Cuba during the period in question was that of a professional gambler; a cover which served him well during most of his service there.

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h. Re paragraph 12 of your memorandum of
11 June 1964.

(i) "Frank" has no knowledge of the material referred to. A further check will be made to determine if this information was passed to "Pepe" who would have made it available to the Station.

(j) This material apparently was passed to "Pepe" and subsequently analyzed by the Station. DSE personalities were carded. Mr. VARONA's statement that "Frank" did not properly utilize the information again appears to be another vituperative attempt to strike at "Frank" who he apparently blames for his downfall with the Agency.

(k), (l), (m). No Comment.

(n), (o), (p), (q). This is probably completely fabricated material. Nevertheless because of its rather sensational nature, the Station would be interested in receiving true copies of this material so that it can be analyzed in the light of specific, positive collection, evidentiary material at hand. It would also be appreciated if your office could glean the source or sources of this alleged sensational material.

Re: (k), (l), (m).

(i) No comment.

(j) ~~Henri VIXAMAR is a Haitian exile living most of his time in Canada. There is no information that Mr. VIXAMAR is a Communist.~~

(m) As in (g), (h), (i), (j) above, the Station would like to know the source of the alleged photograph which Mr. VARONA refers to. This again appears to be sheer fabrication.

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(1) No comment. Nicolas GUILLEN is
a well-known Mexican Communist poet.

2. If you read the foregoing analysis in the light of Mr. VARONA's file, I believe you will clearly ascertain that we put little, if any, confidence in any statements made by Mr. VARONA. We are deeply troubled, however, by the fact that Mr. VARONA has used one Mr. Charles GOVEA as his means of getting to the eminent American citizen Mr. Winston Guest, who in turn used his good offices to establish contact with you. We consider it highly important to determine whether Mr. GOVEA has any current connection with Cuban intelligence and to that end, we have urgently requested from the Bureau any and all current information bearing on the matter. Although Mr. VARONA cannot provide Cuban intelligence through Mr. GOVEA anything really current, he could albeit unwittingly provide a tremendous amount of information dealing with Agency modus operandi which we would not like them to have. This becomes quite important in view of the fact that we have several indications of aggressive DGI/EN operations to gain information on the AMOT as well as our AMCRAFT operations.

3. Your paragraph 15 clearly reveals the fact that VARONA has an axe to grind and he has chosen this way of reingratiating himself with the Agency by passing information on "Frank" the man who handled him for the longest period of time. For tactical political reasons you may deem it wise to "receive his report" under no circumstances, however, would we want this to be used as a bridge to become involved again with a man in whose integrity or objectivity we have no confidence whatsoever. To reiterate re the previous paragraph, we are most concerned about GOVEA and if we can develop any current information on Mr. GOVEA's contacts with Cuban intelligence, we believe it will be necessary to get some word to Mr. Guest to disengage himself from contact with this person.

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4. This memorandum has not been completely researched. It is suggested, however, that you forward it with your memorandum of 11 June 1969 to your office so that this matter may be placed in perspective.

5. I would appreciate notification when you forward your memorandum to your Headquarters as I would like to furnish a copy simultaneously along with my analysis of the situation. I appreciate your promptness in bringing the VARONA/GOVEA contact to my attention.

Anthony R. PONCHAY
Chief of Station, WH/Miami

Attachment: a/s

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