

VIII. JUNTA REVOLUCIONARIA CUBANA (JURE)

(266) In a Miami press interview on July 23, 1962, Manuel Ray Rivero announced the formation of the Cuban Revolutionary Junta (JURE), an anti-Castro Cuban exile group designed to unite all the popular splintered factions outside Cuba into an effective working organizations. (1) Other key leaders involved in the new organization included Felipe Pazos, Raul Chibas, Rogelio Cisneros, Ramon Barquin and Justo Carrillo. (2) Although Ray felt the Cuban Revolutionary Council was no longer effective, he attempted to receive financial assistance from it until JURE gained momentum. (3)

(267) As its opening promotional salvo, JURE issued a "Declaration of Principles." It called for free elections, the restoration of human rights and social justice, new economic development programs and agrarian reform, breaking relations with the Soviet bloc, restoration of legitimate property, proscription of the Communist Party and release of political prisoners. (4)

(268) Ray's group was considered an "autonomous" anti-Castro Cuban group by the CIA. (5) The concept of autonomous operations was conceived by Walter Rostow, State Department counsel. (6) Rostow proposed a "track two" approach to Cuban operations to parallel regular CIA-controlled Cuban teams. (7) This approach would enable financial aid, advice and guidance to Cuban leaders such as Ray. (8) Autonomous operations were approved June 1963. (9)

(269) The rule under which the operations functioned set forth the following guidelines:

1. Operations to be executed exclusively by Cuban nationals dedicated to the idea that the overthrow of the Castro/Communist regime must be accomplished by Cubans inside and outside Cuba working in concert.

2. If the effort to overthrow the Cuban regime became too costly in human lives, the United States would withdraw financial support and would not consider resumption at any future date.

3. All operations had to be mounted outside the territory of the United States.

4. If ever charged with complicity, the U.S. Government would publicly deny any participation in the groups activities.

5. U.S. presence and direct participation would be kept at an absolute minimum. An experienced liaison officer would be assigned to each group to provide general advice, funds and material support.

6. No fixed time schedule would be given to these operations. (10)

(270) Possibly because of this loosely structured control over JURE, the day-to-day activities of the group were closely monitored. A JURE member, for instance, was in frequent contact with an individual and supplied him with a variety of confidential information about JURE. This source provided information on Ray's meeting with Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy in September 1963; (11) Ray's

negotiations on behalf of JURE;(12) secret JURE meetings;(13) allegations that the Governor of Puerto Rico was purposely sidetracking an FBI and INS investigation of illegal arms possessed by JURE;(14) JURE animosity toward Manuel Artime and the MRR;(15) and the location of JURE training bases.(16)

(271) Manuel Ray himself was personally critical of the CIA and told one JURE associate that he thought CIA agents "... were more dangerous than the Kennedy administration." He maintained that, "The Kennedy administration would end but CIA agents always stayed, and their memory was longer than the memory of elephants and they never forgot or forgave."(17)

(272) During a JURE meeting in Miami in August 1962, Ray claimed that JURE had arsenals in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic; a B-26 airplane, territory available for training in Costa Rica; and support through indirect means from the United States.(18) According to an FBI report, JURE was considered one of the five major exile groups with clandestine assets (19) and the U.S. Government was interested in the group because of its potential.(20)

(273) Because of its size and Ray's dynamic leadership, JURE seemed destined for a role of some importance in the anti-Castro movement. (21) The group set a target date of October 31, 1962 to raise \$100,000. The money would be used to recruit new members, begin a propaganda campaign against Castro and purchase arms and supplies.(22) Within a year, JURE had membership delegations in 12 cities in the United States, a chapter in Puerto Rico, and 12 delegations in foreign countries, mostly Latin American.(23)

(274) In August 1963, JURE planned to sabotage a powerplant in Havana (24) and Ray requested that certain high explosives and grenades be cached inside Cuba or San Juan. (25) It was recommended that the request be granted in order to test Ray's capabilities (26) in regard to this plan. (27) Ray acquired a 25-foot boat for infiltration and exfiltration purposes and expressed a desire to purchase another vessel that would enable him to extend operations along the south coast of Cuba. (28)

(275) Plans were made to deliver military equipment to JURE that would then be transported into Cuba. (29) The operation, originally scheduled for November 23, 1963, was moved up two days.(30) The cache was completed. (31) The JURE boat failed to make the scheduled pick up,(32) and Ray offered no satisfactory explanation for this failure to perform. (33) Ray claimed the vessel was low on gas, (34) a doubtful explanation, as the vessel arrived at its destination on schedule. (35)

(276) Ray was not physically scheduled to be on the boat during operation(36) because his activities during the latter part of 1963 were political. He was, at this time, conferring with Attorney General Kennedy (37) about the Cuban situation(38) and traveling extensively in Latin America seeking support for JURE.(39)

(277) No documentation has been found to substantiate the success or failure of any of the JURE raids or infiltrations during this period, but by January 1964, the organization had gained enough strength to induce several other Cuban exile organizations to merge with it. (40) The largest of these groups were the Ejercito Libertador de Cuba

(ELC) and Cuba Libre. (41) The ELC's union with JURE brought to the organization former veteran rebel army officers in exile and had the potential of giving JURE the best military expertise and support in the entire exile community. (42)

(278) Carlos Zarraga of Cuba Libre became the JURE chief of support (43) and was responsible for acquiring most of the JURE arms and the large supply of explosives which were stored in Miami and Puerto Rico. (44)

(279) Manuel Ray again began formulating plans to infiltrate Cuba in March 1964. (45) He planned to accompany two teams of commandos into Oriente Province and, once successfully inside Cuba, initiate continuous bombings of strategic and nonstrategic targets. (46) Ray's plans, however, were delayed and a new target date of May was set.

(280) Ray's seriousness of purpose was open to question at the time because he permitted persons from the media to observe infiltration attempt. (47) Andrew St. George, on assignment with Time-Life magazine, planned to accompany Ray, (48) as did Tom Duncan, then a Life photographer. (49) Rogelio Cisneros received word on May 30, 1964, that the JURE boat to be used by the infiltrators had developed motor trouble. (50) Ray's group was arrested by the British near Cayo Largo and taken to Nassau. (51)

(281) Ray's failure to infiltrate Cuba severely damaged his credibility within the anti-Castro community. Some exiles felt his grand infiltration scheme was a publicity stunt and others considered it a joke. (52) JURE members were confused and undecided over how to defend Ray. (53)

(282) Another episode on May 1964 compounded JURE's problems. Rogelio Cisneros had obligated \$50,000 of JURE money to an El Monte, Calif., arms manufacturing company for weapons to be shipped to Florida. (54) The Revenue Division of the Treasury Department considered a raid on the arms company. (55)

(283) At this point, there began a general disintegration of JURE membership. (56) Rogelio Cisneros announced in August 1964 that he was resigning from the organization. He contended Ray was incapable of directing both political and military activities. (57) Then another key leader, Carlos Zarraga, resigned in September.

(284) JURE received \$75,000 during the period of October to December 31, 1964. The money was intended to underwrite JURE's relocation of its activities outside the United States. (58) Ray's liaison officer noted at the time: "If Ray is successful in Cuba, he will not need our help; if he is not, our help won't do much good. He is honest and at least he assumes it will be largely spent for the purpose he wants to achieve. Whatever Ray may ever say, he was treated the way he asked to be treated. We have played the game in a manner beyond reproach." (59)

(285) JURE continued in existence until August 1968 (60) but was relatively ineffective in its latter years. (61)

Submitted by:

GAETON J. FONZI,
Investigator.
ELIZABETH J. PALMER,
Researcher.

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