

Operation Northwoods: The War That Existed on Paper

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A declassified Pentagon proposal outlined manufactured incidents that could justify invading Cuba. The document is real and disturbing; its listed scenarios were proposals, not evidence that those attacks were actually carried out.

STATUS	Authentic declassified proposal; not implemented
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	United States and Cuba
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Secrets & conspiracies
STORY HISTORY	March 1962

THE ACCOUNT

In March 1962, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent the defense secretary a paper describing ways to create a justification for military intervention in Cuba. The proposed incidents were designed to look like evidence of Cuban aggression. A ship, an aircraft and frightened civilians appeared within a planning exercise whose purpose was to make a chosen war seem necessary. The document's plain administrative form makes the ideas more unsettling.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

The National Security Archive publishes the declassified Northwoods memorandum and its cover papers, dated March 13, 1962. They document contemplated deceptive provocations, including staged or simulated incidents. Northwoods did not become an executed operation. The crucial factual boundary is between an authentic proposal and a completed attack; this file does not establish that unrelated later tragedies were secretly staged by the government.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

Many conspiracy stories search for a paper proving that officials could imagine manufacturing a pretext. Here that paper exists. Its reality makes precision more important, not less: readers can confront what was proposed without quietly changing the verbs to what happened. The historical shock sits in the proposal itself and the institutional setting in which it could be seriously submitted.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

Pentagon Proposed Pretexts for Cuba Invasion in 1962

National Security Archive, George Washington University

<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/news/20010430/>

RETURN TO THE STORY

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<https://u225x.com/record/STR-SECRET-030>
