

~~SECRET~~

Nº

9

PSYCHIATRIC PERSONALITY STUDY OF FIDEL CASTRO



December 1961

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Psychiatric Staff

Declassified under the provisions
of the JFK Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992 (PL102-526)

~~SECRET~~

1 DEC 1961

By MMK NARA, Date 8/17/98

S-E-C-R-E-T

PSYCHIATRIC PERSONALITY STUDY OF FIDEL CASTRO

I. Psychiatric Summary

Fidel Castro is not "crazy," but he is so highly neurotic and unstable a personality as to be quite vulnerable to certain kinds of psychological pressure. The outstanding neurotic elements in his personality are his hunger for power and his need for the recognition and adulation of the masses. He is unable to obtain complete emotional gratification from any other source.

Castro has a constant need to rebel, to find an adversary, and to extend his personal power by overthrowing existing authority. Whenever his self-concept is slightly disrupted by criticism, he becomes so emotionally unstable as to lose to some degree his contact with reality. If significant vulnerable aspects of his personality were consistently attacked by those he now looks to for approval, the result could be personality disorganization and ineffectuality -- possibly even clinical emotional illness. This illness would probably be depression or some variant of depression, such as an overexcited state, an addiction, or an increase in suspicion to the point of complete withdrawal from reality.

Castro's egoism is his Achilles heel. The extreme narcissistic qualities of his personality are so evident as to suggest predictable patterns of action during both victory and defeat. When he is winning, he must control the situation himself without delegation of authority, and he must continue to seek new areas of authority to overthrow. When faced with defeat, his first concern is to retreat strategically to a place where he can regroup his assets and personally lead another rebellion.

Castro's aggressiveness stems from constant attempts to achieve a special position that is denied him. When he achieves what he desires, he needs constant reassurance that he is justified in occupying this special position. In the past he has sought approval from varying sources but currently he is wringing it from the Cuban masses, the current source of his sense of power and prestige. As long as the masses continue to support him, he will not suffer from anxiety, depression, or overt psychiatric symptoms. The chronic threat to the equilibrium of his personality is that this source of gratification might be withdrawn.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Additional sources of gratification and ego bolstering appear to be his relationship to Che Guevara and his brother Raul. There are strong indications that Castro is dependent and submissive to Che intellectually and that his emotional stability would suffer if Che did not maintain a steady, positive attitude toward him. Disruption of this relationship, therefore, would discomfit Castro and reduce his effectiveness.

Paradoxically, Castro seems to be basically a passive individual who defends himself against his fears of passivity by overreacting in aggressive and sadistic ways. His overactivity, avoidance of routine, lack of organization, impulsiveness, temper tantrums, and masochistic tendencies (including a wish for martyrdom) appear related to passive-feminine wishes or identification. His compulsive need to be "on top" and never to submit to control or authority is another indication of his fears regarding passivity.

Castro's consistent pattern of strong insistence on undoing the wrongs of "the little people," his preoccupation with the care and feeding of the poor masses, his concern for educational opportunities for the underprivileged, and his wish to be known to them as a benevolent "brother" indicate that he is to some degree conscience-stricken. His extreme punitive measures against rape and theft also indicate a backlog of unconscious guilt which may be exploited to his disadvantage.

Although he depends on the masses for support, he has no real regard for them and does not trust them sufficiently to hold elections. His first consideration is to maintain power control for himself. He probably would destroy both himself and the Cuban people to preserve this status. This is the basis for his continuing the revolutionary stage beyond its period of usefulness.

Castro is a person of superior intellectual endowment with insatiable narcissistic and exhibitionistic needs, and propaganda aimed at these characteristics would have an impact on Castro and would also appear plausible to his supporters. His obvious inconsistencies and striking deficiencies can best be highlighted in this manner.

Castro is an ideal revolutionary leader, agitator, and fomenter of unrest, but he has no capabilities for organization and administration nor does he have any concern for the implementation of detailed plans. Furthermore, he can trust no one sufficiently to enable him to delegate authority.