



Cuba: The following message was received from Prague
on 9 January via CRITIC channels:
"According to a Czech official, via the [redacted] ambassador
to the US air attaché, Cuban First Secretary Perez stated to

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several Czech officials. . . today that Fidel Castro intends to save his Cuba by launching a simultaneous air-ground attack on Guantanamo Naval Base before the Kennedy inauguration, claiming publicly that the US initiated the action. The Cuban ambassador in Prague, who reportedly has been very nervous in the past few days, allegedly left by air for England today, ostensibly in response to a British Council invitation to his wife to inspect the English school system."

Members of the Watch Committee of the USIB have individually examined the above report and have evaluated it as probably false. In reaching this evaluation, the committee members note that the [redacted] ambassador, who professed to have gotten the report from a Czech official, is notoriously unreliable. In any event, the Cuban first secretary would be unlikely to have been informed of such an operation plan by his government. Moreover, Castro is not considered to have the capability, at least in the air, to succeed in such an operation, and a failure of this order would have disastrous consequences for the Castro regime. It is unlikely that the Soviets, whose advice would have some weight with Castro, would favor such a course of action in view of their current professed conciliatory policy toward the President-elect. The Soviets would probably estimate that an attack on Guantanamo would result in the defeat of the Cubans at the hands of the US and would show up their own unwillingness to honor their vaguely worded promises of military support for Cuba.*

The Committee members further note that the report may possibly reflect an attempt by bloc elements to cause reactions in US armed forces whose nature would support the internal Cuban tension-building propaganda that a US invasion of Cuba is imminent. There is no information from other sources to corroborate this report. Nevertheless, the possibility of military action against Guantanamo by Castro, given his rashness and instability, cannot be completely discounted. [redacted]

*The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, would omit this sentence for the reason that it is estimative in nature and thus beyond the purview of the Watch charter.

Latin American Reactions to Cuban Situation

Officials of a number of Latin American countries have privately stated that, while their governments could not now unilaterally break with Cuba without being subjected to the charge of too closely following US footsteps, they would support multilateral action--i. e., through the 21-member Organization of American States (OAS)--severing diplomatic ties with the Castro regime. Six governments had already broken or suspended relations with Cuba prior to the US action on 3 January. A majority of OAS members now appear ready to begin discussions looking toward a multilateral break and the imposition of economic sanctions, although the necessary two-thirds support for such action by the OAS is still not certain.

Colombian Foreign Minister Turbay told the US ambassador on 5 January he felt the time had come for collective OAS action and urged the United States to make special efforts to persuade the three "doubtful" governments of Mexico, Brazil, and Ecuador, since he considered that unanimity was essential for collective action to be effective. Mexican Foreign Minister Tello had already advised the US Embassy that his government would feel obliged to abstain on any OAS action taken under the Caracas resolution against international Communism, but implied that Mexico would not actively oppose such action.

In Brazil, where policy making is virtually suspended pending the President-elect's return from Europe and his inauguration on 31 January, there is pressure for an attempt to mediate US-Cuban "differences." The Ecuadorean Government, preparing to play host to the 11th Inter-American Conference scheduled to open there in March, appears anxious to avoid any action that might jeopardize its plans. Three other countries--Chile, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic--appear reluctant to associate themselves with moves for strong action against Castro. In Chile, the government hopes to keep the Cuban

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problem out of the congressional election campaign during the next two months, fearing a further swing to the left if emotions are raised over the Castro issue.

Demonstrations by pro-Castro groups protesting the US break with Cuba--in Uruguay, El Salvador, and Panama thus far--have been relatively ineffective, a fact that may encourage some regimes that have been reluctant to support anti-Castro moves for fear of strong domestic reaction.

Argentina, which has been the sharpest critic of Cuba among the major Latin American countries, would probably support economic sanctions against Cuba but would be reluctant to break diplomatic relations at this time for both hemisphere and internal security reasons. The government believes it should maintain a listening post in Cuba, where a number of important Peronista leaders reside, and Cuban opposition leaders have requested Argentina to maintain its embassy in order to furnish assistance to these seeking asylum. The foreign minister has said that relations with Cuba could definitely not be severed before the 5 February local and senate elections.

The Cuban situation is not now on the agenda for the Inter-American Conference, which was prepared some time ago.

_____ however, that Uruguay is seeking to enlarge the agenda to include "Communist penetration of America." _____ Some governments, on the other hand, are giving thought to convening a special foreign ministers' meeting to deal with Cuba, and Panamanian Foreign Minister Solis told Ambassador Farland on 4 January that Panama would be happy to host such a conference.

The US break in relations coincided with intensive preparations within Cuba to resist "imminent aggression" and with a drastic tightening of police state controls, leaving the majority

of the people in Havana in a state of frightened expectancy.

