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### Current Support Brief

SOVIET BLOC - CUBA AIR PASSENGER TRAFFIC  
JANUARY - JUNE 1963



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During the first 6 months of 1963, three airlines maintained scheduled weekly round-trip flights between the Soviet Bloc and Cuba -- Aeroflot, using Tu-114's between Moscow and Havana, and CSA and Cubana, both flying Britannia aircraft between Prague and Havana.

In the first half of 1963, nationals of 64 countries (including at least 65 US citizens) traveled between the Soviet Bloc and Cuba (see Table 1). It is estimated that 1,075 Soviet nationals returned to the USSR by air during this period, whereas only 734 entered Cuba.\* This preponderance of returnees is consistent with the trend toward the reduction of Soviet personnel in Cuba. On the other hand, only 592 persons from the European Satellite countries left Cuba by air, whereas 1,335 arrived, reflecting continued technical aid and assistance. Following the trend noted in 1962, more Cubans (1,622) continued to leave Cuba by air for the Bloc than returned (1,394) during this period. Of the total number of passengers traveling to the Bloc from Cuba, 85 percent are either Cuban or Sino-Soviet Bloc nationals as are 89 percent of those traveling to Cuba.

1. Comparison of Air Carriers

Aeroflot, which flies Tu-114's nonstop between Murmansk and Havana (thus curtailing the payload that can be carried and reducing the economic effectiveness of the aircraft), averaged only 28 passengers per flight to Havana and 38 on the return trip to Moscow. In comparison with the Moscow-Havana route operated by Aeroflot, the superior commercial feasibility of the

\* The estimate of the total number of passengers carried on all flights in the first 6 months of 1963 is based on a projection of the number of passengers carried on flights for which passenger data are available. The proportions, by nationality, of the total number of passengers are assumed to be the same as exist in the aggregate for those flights for which passenger data are available.

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operations of CSA and Cubana is apparent from the fact that flights of these two airlines averaged 57 passengers each from Prague to Havana and 55 passengers in the opposite direction. This route, flown with efficient Britannia equipment, presents no operating difficulties, because refueling is provided at Shannon and Gander.

Although the volume of passenger traffic between Havana and Prague is essentially the same in both directions, the same is not true of traffic carried by Aeroflot between Havana and Moscow. The directional imbalance on Aeroflot flights may be attributed to the fact that favorable winds permit a greater payload in the westerly direction to Moscow and that more Soviet nationals are leaving Cuba by air than are arriving.

2. Projected Traffic for 1963

If passenger traffic in the second half of 1963 continues at the same rate as in the first half, it is expected that about 16,000 passengers will fly between the Soviet Bloc and Cuba in 1963 -- an increase of about 7 percent above 1962 (see Table 2). The addition of the Aeroflot route to the Cuban air service, particularly in view of the meager increase in traffic this year, further reduces the possibility of economic operation for any of the three carriers.

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Table 2  
Passengers Carried on the Prague-Havana Service of CSA and Cubana Airlines  
1962

	Prague-Havana		Havana-Prague		Both Directions		
	CSA	Cubana	Total	CSA	Cubana	Total	Total
Soviet	525	650	1,175	485	556	1,041	2,216
Cuban	1,259	1,880	3,139	1,492	2,823	4,315	7,454
Czechoslovak	1,084	292	1,376	1,231	128	1,359	2,735
Other	455	289	744	260	258	518	1,262
Total Bloc	<u>3,323</u>	<u>3,111</u>	<u>6,434</u>	<u>3,468</u>	<u>3,765</u>	<u>7,233</u>	<u>13,667</u>
Non-Bloc	<u>175</u>	<u>308</u>	<u>483</u>	<u>261</u>	<u>513</u>	<u>774</u>	<u>1,257</u>
Total passengers	<u>3,498</u>	<u>3,419</u>	<u>6,917</u>	<u>3,729</u>	<u>4,278</u>	<u>8,007</u>	<u>14,924</u>