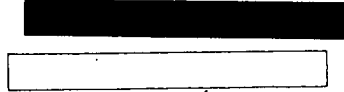


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INTELLIGENCE APPRAISAL

**CUBA:
SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITIES(U)**

26 SEPTEMBER 1978

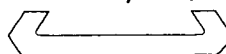
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Intelligence Appraisal

CUBA:

SOVIET

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CUBA: SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITIES (U)

Summary

(S SPOKE/NOFORN) The Soviets' operation of the Torrens electronics facility, arms deliveries to Havana, and naval deployments to Cuba demonstrate the USSR's interest in Cuba as well as in the Western Hemisphere. Since the latter half of 1977, there have been alleged Soviet ground forces in the country, unidentified construction near Cienfuegos, and an increase in the number of Soviet pilots in Cuba. While these activities may cause concern over the Soviet military presence in Cuba, they do not seem at the present time to constitute a direct challenge to US interests.

Discussion

(S/NOFORN) Through its relations with Cuba, the USSR has established a foothold in the Western Hemisphere, a forward listening post for Soviet intelligence, and a base for Soviet naval and air deployments. About 2,000 Soviet military personnel in Cuba are believed to be advisers, instructors, and technicians providing continuous support to the Cuban Armed Forces. Some 200 Soviet advisers are assigned to the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. It is quite likely that most of the remaining Soviet military personnel are associated with complex weapons systems, such as surface-to-air missiles, MIG aircraft, and the STYX missiles. In addition to the military personnel, there are an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 Soviet civilian technicians in Cuba.

Lourdes Military Headquarters

(S/NOFORN) Lourdes Military Headquarters at Torrens, nine miles south-southwest of Havana, is in charge of the 2,000-man Soviet military mission in Cuba. It is also the site of a large, Soviet-operated electronics facility that provides the USSR with excellent access to the US electronics environment.

(TS UMBRA) The SIGINT facility at Torrens is administered by the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the Soviet General Staff. GRU SIGINT assets at the site, evidently supplemented by a Soviet-tailored Cuban SIGINT operation, most likely provide the USSR with information on US forces and support strategic warning. Additionally, the Torrens complex has the capability to track and collect telemetry from either Soviet or US satellites, and has long-range, high-frequency communications to the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and most of Africa. Electronics targeting has been

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directed against the National Emergency Airborne Command Post, Strategic Air Command (SAC) reconnaissance, SAC-North American Air Defense exercises, CINCLANT communications, and US naval and airborne activities in the Atlantic. Additionally, installations as far away as the Philippines, Alaska, and West Germany have been targets.

(TS RUFF) The equipment at Torrens includes an SDR-2 BAR BRICK electronic countermeasures (ECM) collector, BOX BRICK ECM collector, two FIX-24 direction finders, a modified FIX-24 direction finder, two five-meter mobile antennas, two SQUARE PAIR radars, an END TRAY radar, a 12-meter ORBITA, a seven-meter MARS satellite associated antenna, and an additional probable telemetry antenna.

Soviet Ground Forces

(S SPOKE) Limited SIGINT from July 1977 to September 1978 suggests that Soviet military units of undetermined size were involved on six occasions in small-scale training in Cuba. There is no collateral information or PHOTINT available that would further explain the activity. These six suspected exercises involved the following possible units:

- On 21 Jul 77, two units conducted various tank maneuvers.
- A motorized rifle unit and a tank unit were involved in a field training exercise on 6 Sep 77.
- On 28 Feb 78, a motorized rifle company and three platoons staged an exercise.
- Three motorized infantry companies and a tank company participated in tactical training activity on 14 Mar 78.
- On 17 Aug 78, a motorized rifle unit conducted a field training exercise.
- On 12 Sep 78, unidentified elements were active.

(S SPOKE) There are several possible explanations for these exercises. Since the Soviet electronics facility at Torrens requires a large number of security personnel, some of them may have been participating in periodic proficiency training. It is also possible that specially trained Soviet instructors were demonstrating new equipment. Soviet troops could also have been acquiring semitropical training or evaluating the performance of weapons, materiel, and equipment in this type of environment. Soviet

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advisers, on the other hand, may have been working with undetected Cuban units. In view of Cuban-Soviet cooperation in Africa, it is also possible that the Soviets were conducting exercises to familiarize themselves with Cuban operation procedures.

Soviet Pilots

(S SPOKE) In December 1977, the number of Soviet pilots operating in Cuba significantly increased to 24. Previously, about three Soviet pilots operated there, presumably in a liaison capacity. The current contingent has been involved in normal operational activities, including airfield and zonal training, ground-controlled intercept, navigational training penetration exercises, and mock combat. No Soviet pilots have been noted participating in the air intercept of foreign aircraft that have violated Cuban airspace. They have probably been precluded from such activities in order to prevent the possibility of an international incident.

(S SPOKE) The Cuban Air Force has 191 operational MIG-15/FAGOTs, MIG-17/FRESCOs, MIG-21/FISHBEDs, and MIG-23/FLOGGERS, but only about 135 fighter pilots. The Soviet pilots are believed to have been sent to Cuba to maintain the operational strength of the Cuban Air Force and to provide filler personnel for the Cuban pilots in Ethiopia. The Soviets are flying Cuban planes from the island's regular operating bases and are operating within the administrative structure of Cuban squadrons. While the number of Soviets and their aircraft assignments have changed slightly each month, the number of Soviet pilots in Cuba flying the FRESCOs and FISHBEDs has generally corresponded to that of Cubans flying these aircraft in Ethiopia.

(S SPOKE) A previous augmentation took place during the first half of 1976. At that time, 20 Soviet pilots were assigned to Cuba when the first contingent of Cuban pilots was sent to Angola. Eventually, the Cuban Air Force was able to get its own replacements, and the Soviets returned home. The only significant difference in assignments of Soviets to Cuba in the last three years is that in 1976 the ground controllers were Soviets and this year they have been Cubans who speak Russian.

(S SPOKE) Although the Soviet pilots in Cuba have routinely flown the FRESCO and FISHBED, two pilots were detected in early June flying the newly delivered FLOGGER. Since then, the Cubans have been the sole pilots of this aircraft. The number of Soviet pilots operating in Cuba increased early this year, but began to decline in May; there were 38 in April and 28 in August. Since no Cuban pilots are believed to have returned from Ethiopia, Soviet pilot activity in Cuba will probably continue. Unless additional Cuban pilots are assigned overseas, however, the number of Soviet pilots in Cuba should not increase significantly.

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Naval and Air Deployments to Cuba

(S/NOFORN) The USSR has continued to conduct naval and naval air deployments to Cuba. In the past year, there have been three naval deployments and a total of 19 since they were begun in 1969. The 17th deployment, which took place between December 1977 and January 1978, involved two destroyers, a conventionally powered attack submarine, and an oiler. In addition to port visits to Havana and Cienfuegos, the task group made two operational transits of the Gulf of Mexico and conducted an antisubmarine warfare exercise.

(S/NOFORN) The 18th deployment was in Cuban waters from March to May 1978. The task group was composed of a guided-missile destroyer, a minesweeper, and a replenishment oiler. The Soviets made an operational transit of the Gulf of Mexico and conducted an antiair warfare exercise with the Cubans.

(S/NOFORN) The 19th deployment, comprised of a guided-missile destroyer, two guided-missile frigates, a conventionally powered attack submarine and a replenishment oiler, arrived in Havana harbor on 16 Sep 78.

(U) Since the deployments began, 10 operational transits have been into the Gulf of Mexico to demonstrate the Soviet capability to carry out operations in waters contiguous to the US, to monitor US reaction to the Soviet presence, and to respond to US naval operations in the Black Sea. The deployments to Cuba afford the Soviets open-ocean training opportunities and demonstrate their support of the Castro government and interest in Latin America. Additionally, the USSR may believe that through these operations the West will become less sensitive to the Soviet naval presence in the area.

(C/NOFORN) Since 1970, there have been 45 deployments of Soviet BEAR Ds to Cuba. These aircraft operate in pairs and the deployments have often been associated with NATO and Soviet exercises, the transit of Soviet or US ships, and increased international tensions, such as the Angolan Civil War and the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict.

(C/NOFORN) Between 1970 and 1974, the number of BEAR D deployments to Cuba fluctuated between two and four each year; this number increased to five in 1975, six in 1976, nine last year, and nine thus far in 1978.

(S/NOFORN) From mid-1973 until mid-1977, BEAR D aircraft conducted periodic South Atlantic maritime reconnaissance missions out of Conakry, Guinea. Since the Guinean Government denied the Soviets access for BEAR D deployments in mid-1977, BEARs deploying to Angola have used Cuba as a stopover point. If the Angolan deployments are discounted, there were only six BEAR D operations to Cuba in 1977 and five thus far this year.

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(S/NOFORN) While assigned to Cuba, BEAR D aircraft conduct reconnaissance over the Atlantic and along the US east coast. Most of these flights involve routes over 100 nautical miles from shore; in April 1977, however, BEAR Ds monitoring a US naval exercise flew within 75 nautical miles of the coast of the Carolinas.

(C/NOFORN) A number of Soviet interests are served by the BEAR D flights. While the aircraft are in the vicinity of Western naval ships, they make possible crew and sensor operator training. In addition, they permit observation and collection against Western ships and aircraft and to some degree against shore facilities. They also test the response of Western defense forces to the presence of Soviet aircraft.

Cienfuegos Construction

(TS RUFF) Since September 1977, construction activity has been under way at Punta Movidá, a small peninsula in the southeast area of Cienfuegos Harbor. This remote part of the harbor is almost opposite the commercial port. The two most prominent construction features are a 200-meter pier, which was begun in December 1977, and extensive land clearing, most of which has been done since 1 January.

(TS RUFF) The Punta Movidá construction is about 750 meters southeast of Cayo Alcatraz Island where, in 1970, the Soviets built an administration building, two barracks, two messhalls, three support buildings, extensive athletic and recreational facilities, and a small boat pier. It was first thought that the new 200-meter pier at Punta Movidá, along with the Cayo Alcatraz complex, could provide an out-of-area support facility for visiting Soviet naval combatants. As construction progressed, however, several other uses have been considered. The Cubans may be building a depot for weapons delivery and export, a refinery/POL storage facility, or a nuclear powerplant.

(TS RUFF) Based on similar characteristics of the pier under construction and the main pier serving the La Habana Petroleum Refinery and Storage Area -- Cuba's largest refinery -- it is probable that a refinery/POL storage facility is being built. Both piers have breasting platforms and a wide root that narrows just beyond the shoreline. Recent photographs indicate that the initial laying of pipe along the pier has begun. Although there is no evidence that an associated tank farm is being constructed, the approximately 1.5 square kilometers of recently cleared area would provide ample space for it. Additionally, the Cubans may construct the pier first in order to use it for handling the equipment and materials needed to complete the remainder of the facility.

(TS RUFF) The possible use of the facility as a refinery and for POL storage would not preclude visiting Soviet naval combatants from occasionally docking at the pier for short periods.

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Military Equipment Deliveries

(S/NOFORN) During the last three years, Cuba has received nearly \$100 million worth of arms annually, and this year's figure may exceed that amount. Total military aid to Cuba since 1960 is about \$1.5 billion. Moscow usually provides Havana with second-line military equipment, but the Cubans have recently received some first-line weapons that have been in the Soviet inventory for several years.

(TS RUFF) The shipment of FLOGGERS, apparently in May, was the most significant delivery to date. Twelve crates were observed; six aircraft were uncrated and five are thought to be probable ground-attack FLOGGER Fs and one a FLOGGER C trainer. The Cubans already have FRESCOs and FISHBEDs, which are ground-attack capable, but the FLOGGER F is specifically designed for this mission and can therefore carry a greater payload and has an increased combat radius. The addition of FLOGGERS has modernized the Cuban forces, improved the military's sense of professionalism, enabled the Cubans to perform better missions, and possibly served as a reward for overseas military participation.

Outlook

(S SPOKE/NOFORN) The Soviet military presence in Cuba is not expected to increase significantly in the near future. While arms deliveries to Havana will probably continue at the current high level, the increasing proficiency of the Cuban military will quite likely preclude a large increase in the number of Soviet advisers. In addition, the level of Soviet aircraft deployments to Cuba is not likely to increase and Soviet ground forces in the country will not pose a threat to the US in the near future. (Recipients are advised that decompartmentation of [redacted] and derived information is not authorized)

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CONTRIBUTIONS BY:

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