

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

19 July 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Robert R. Bowie  
Deputy Director, National Foreign Assessment

FROM : [Redacted]  
National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

SUBJECT : The Army Dissent Issue

1. Attached for your inspection and approval is the final draft of the IIM on the Possible Presence of Soviet Ground Forces in Cuba. Changes and concurrences, with the large exception noted below, were handled telephonically during the day and I believe the agencies involved other than the Army will regard this as a fair and accurate reflection of their views. [Redacted]

2. The proposed Army footnotes are a different matter. The picture has changed somewhat since Bob Bowie filled you in and received your direction to exclude the nuclear site security force mission tick proposed by Army. I conveyed this decision to the Army rep who informed me that another Army LDX with revised language was on the way. Our LDXs broke down so I had to have the text of the proposed footnote dictated over the phone. It was accompanied by a long paragraph, which was read to me, citing chapter and verse of laws which forbid suppression of dissenting intelligence Agency views and enjoin the DCI to ensure that differing views are disseminated to policymakers, etc. [Redacted]

3. The new footnote is less offensive and inflammatory than the two it replaces, but still quite far-fetched and dubiously germane to the discussion in the IIM.

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, would point out that, although the mission of this Brigade is not clear, its presence in Cuba would provide the Soviets with a contingency force and would enhance their capability for power projection in the Western Hemisphere. If necessary, extra transport aircraft could be introduced into Cuba to deploy these troops to a crisis area. Should the Soviets decide to introduce nuclear weapons into Cuba this force could also be used to insure that appropriate security is provided.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

SUBJECT: The Army Dissent Issue (U)

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP81B00401R000200020006-5

you previously decided to reject and because the issue of right of dissent has been raised, I believe you will want an opportunity to review the new Army language before I go ahead and enforce your previous decision.

25X1

4. Your options:

(a) Reject the footnote as before and publish the IIM as in the present draft with a footnote identifying those agencies with which it was coordinated and stating that ACSI, Department of the Army, does not concur. The ACSI, perhaps supported by General Tighe, will probably try to take you to court.

(b) Agree to include the footnote in which case it is essential that other agencies be informed of its content and offered the opportunity to refute it, which I am certain at least some of them will insist on doing. I might in that case attempt to draft a position reflecting the views of all agencies other than Army. This would take some time tomorrow and almost certainly would prevent the IIM from being distributed until Monday.

(c) Propose to ACSI the following substitute footnote drafted by

25X1

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, believes that the above list of possible missions does not cover the full range of possibilities. In the interests of disseminating this IIM to policymakers in a timely fashion, the Director of Central Intelligence has directed that interagency discussion of the possibility of additional missions be deferred until the NFIB representatives meet again on the forthcoming IIM on the Soviet-Cuban military relationship.

This would permit the ACSI to indicate disagreement while you asserted your authority to channel the dispute into a more appropriate and less time-constrained channel. This would be an ideal solution, but I doubt very much that the ACSI would buy it, unless perhaps you dealt with him personally.

25X1

5. In any case, I will need to have your decision very quickly if we want to have any chance at all of disseminating an IIM tomorrow. I shall be phoning you at home this evening from the Ops Center to discuss this further and receive your instructions.

25X1

Attachment:  
As Stated

- 2 -

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP81B00401R000200020006-5

19 July 79

25X1

25X1

To refresh your memory the underlined is  
the footnote language originally proposed  
by the Army which has now been superceded  
by the language in Paragraph 3 of my  
memorandum.

[Redacted Signature]

Arnold

19 July 79

Date

FORM 101 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP81B00401R000200020006-5

Next 5 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP81B00401R000200020006-5

TOP SECRET [redacted]

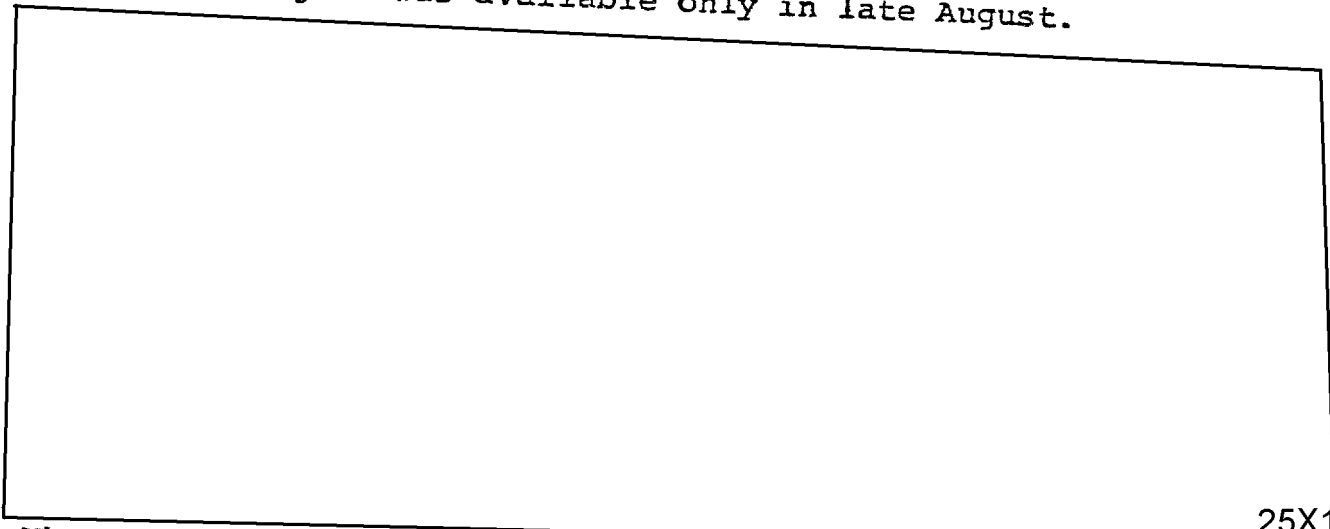
SECRET [redacted]

*Handwritten:* 25X1  
MATERIAL 25X1

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

When Did This Unit First Appear? - The bulk of the evidence indicates that most or all of the present elements of this brigade were deployed by early 1976. We have seen no sign of a significant alteration of the unit's composition since that time. These conclusions are possible because, with the recent pinpointing of the site of the brigade's home station, we can trace its record through available photography over the last several years. In fact, we can also note that preparations for this unit's arrival were begun early in 1975, although the major construction efforts started a year later.

When Did You First Learn That The Soviets Had A Combat Unit In Cuba? - The first relatively persuasive indications of Soviet ground force activity in Cuba became apparent at the beginning of August 1978. Prior to that time, occasional [redacted] were too ambiguous and fragmentary to allow the conclusion to be reached that Soviet ground force activity was taking place. The fact that this activity reflected the actual presence of a Soviet unit became clear only in July 1979 and the confirmation of an essentially fully manned and equipped brigade was available only in late August.



What Did You Do With This Information? - This information led to a realization that expanded collection [redacted] in Cuba that could be relevant to the Soviet unit. (Satellite photography had long been employed in search for the unit, but it had not turned up pictures that offered any evidence differentiating Cuban from possible Soviet units on the island.) Quintupled collection (by aircraft well off Cuba's shores) during the first two weeks of August resulted

TOP SECRET [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP81B00401R000200020006-5

in advance tipoff of a Soviet ground force exercise at a named location. The employment of photography against this site provided the first concrete evidence of the numbers of personnel and pieces of equipment that might be involved with the Soviet unit. A further recent acquisition of information from a human source about the camp where Soviets might be located alerted itself to photographic collection. From the totality of this information has come the data now at hand which has led to the Government's action, of which you are aware.

What Does The Soviet Combat Unit In Cuba Consist Of? - The brigade consists of ~~three motorized rifle battalions~~ and probably three, motorized rifle battalions, one armored (tank) battalion, one artillery battalion (including 122mm howitzer and multiple rocket launcher elements), and support elements, such as headquarters staff, medical, transport, repair, anti-aircraft, and anti-tank units, etc. In all, this probably amounts to some two to three thousand men, commanded by a Colonel. One motorized rifle battalion is apparently stationed at the large Soviet communication and SIGINT facility at Torrens (Lourdes), while the rest of the brigade is at a cantonment 5 miles east of the town of Santiago de las Vegas. These locations are on the southern fringes of the Havana metropolitan area.

What Has This Soviet Combat Unit Been Doing In Cuba? - The only activities observed have been routine exercises indistinguishable from those conducted by Soviet ground force units of similar size and composition in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

What Are The Combat Capabilities Of This Brigade? - One can hypothesize the capabilities of such a unit. For example, it could engage a unit of similar size and composition. It could defend a small piece of the coast. It could provide some protection to fixed installations. (Except that it is hundreds of miles distant, it could probably successfully attack such a lightly defended U.S. base as Guantanamo. Of course, Cuban units of much greater strength have long been readily available for any action against Guantanamo.) The brigade does not have air or sea lift capability available to it (or even available in Cuba) for assault operations outside of the island.

How Do You Know That There Aren't More Combat Forces There Than You Now Believe? - The designation of this unit as a brigade indicates that it is independent and not subordinated or related to any other Soviet unit. Moreover, "brigade" is not a regular or frequent designation in Soviet practice. Whereas, over time, we have had considerable evidence about

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP81B00401R000200020006-5

the existence of this unit, we have not, even with an extensive collection effort, obtained indications of any kind of any other units. Nevertheless, we are maintaining a strong collection program to see whether additional evidence becomes available.

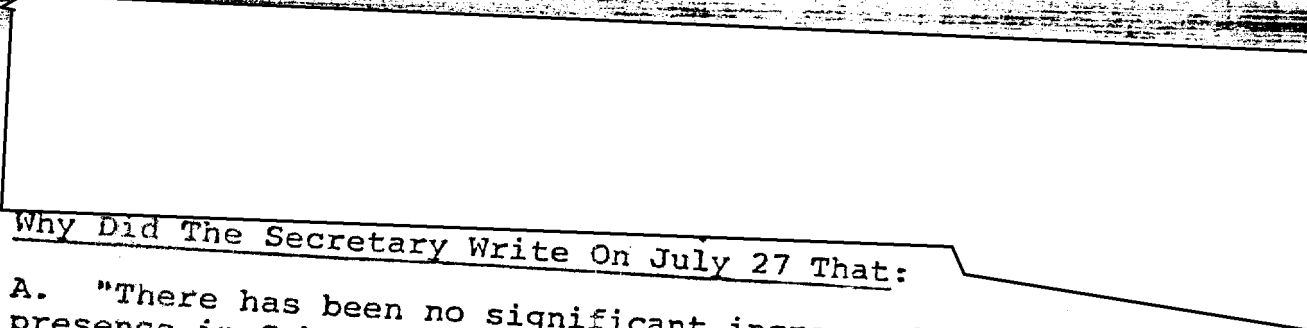
What Missions Might The USSR Have It Perform? - The mission of this brigade is not known.

Five hypotheses are:

1. Security of Soviet installations and personnel.
2. Protection of the Castro regime against internal enemies.
3. Limited participation in the defense of Cuba against external attack.
4. Training for Cuban military personnel or for Soviet personnel in tropical conditions.
5. Provisions of psychic reassurance to Castro at a time when 40,000 Cuban troops are in Africa and the Middle East on contentious and possibly risky adventures.

Does This Unit Communicate Directly With Moscow? - We do not know, but we assume it communicates either through the advisory mission or directly to the General Staff in Moscow via the General Staff communications link between Havana and Moscow.

When Will You Know The Purpose Of This Brigade? We continue to collect whatever evidence becomes available, but we may never know what was in the minds of the Soviet leadership when it authorized the deployment of the brigade. Indeed, its mission might have changed or evolved over the years. As a guess, purposes 1 and 5 of the last question seem the most plausible. 25X1



Why Did The Secretary Write On July 27 That:

A. "There has been no significant increase in Soviet military presence in Cuba over the past several years or of the presence of a Soviet military base" and

Our evidence points to the arrival of this unit <sup>by at least</sup> (early in) 1976, and the unit has remained virtually unchanged since then. Until late August, however, we could not determine that this unit included more than a skeleton structure of perhaps only several hundred men. Thus, what has changed over the past months has been our estimate, not the actual size, of Soviet military in Cuba

B. That apart from a military advisory group "our intelligence does not warrant the conclusion that there are any other significant Soviet forces in Cuba"

As the Administration has stated, this brigade is not a significant Soviet unit in terms of a threat to U.S. security

How Does The Brigade Relate To:

1. Construction activities at Cienfeugos
2. Soviet naval activities in the Caribbean
3. The appearance of Soviet pilot flying aircraft in Cuba
4. The delivery of MIG-23s

At present, we see no direct connection with any of these, in the sense that there is no evidence that the brigade functions in conjunction with or in support of these other Soviet activities. In a broader sense, the brigade may well represent one aspect of an expanding Soviet-Cuban military relationship, of which these other activities are also manifestations. One of the missions of the brigade may however, be to protect other Soviet assets in Cuba.

Where Does The Soviet Union Have Other Brigades Deployed? And For What Purposes? - There are only a few other comparable units designated as brigades in the Soviet Army - one in

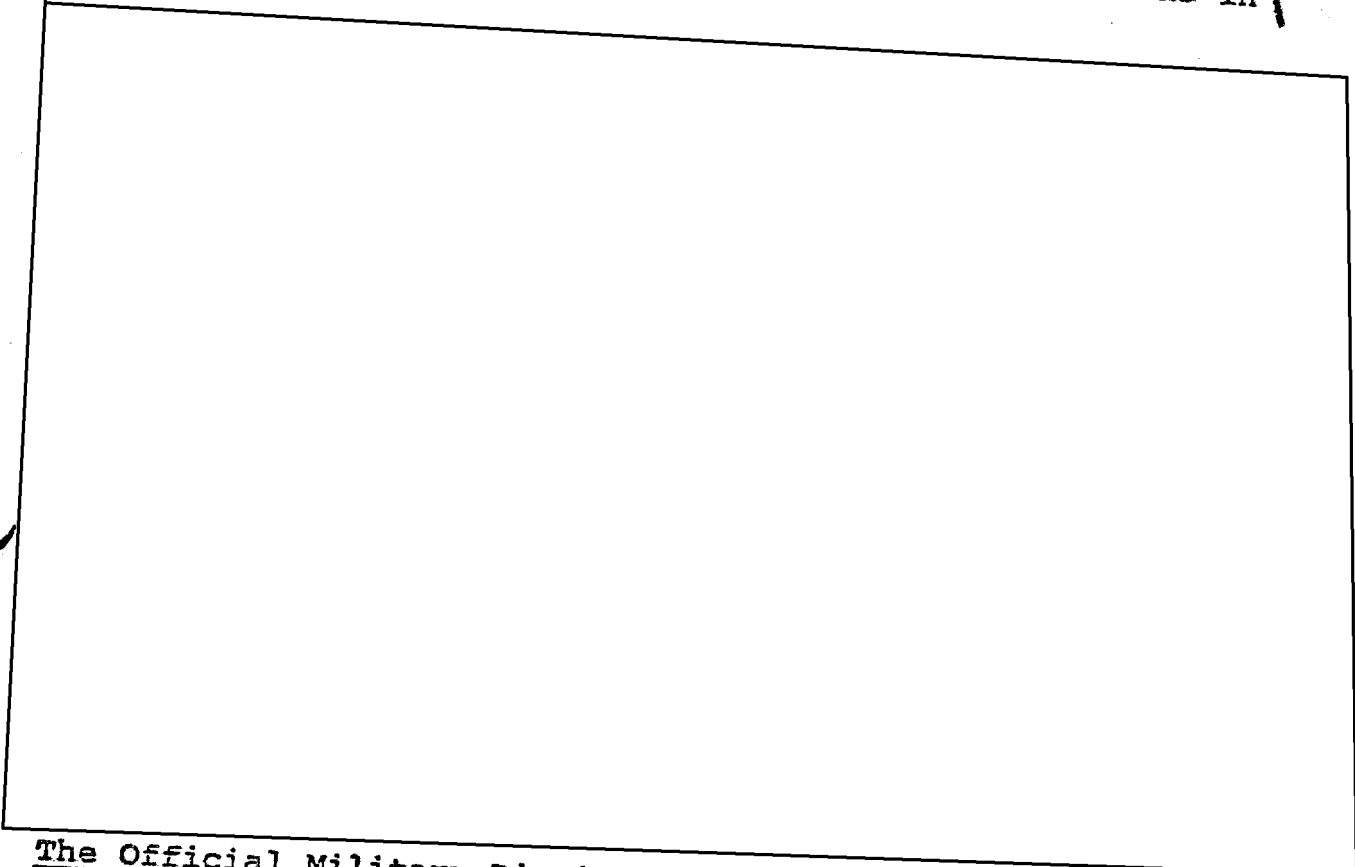


TOP SECRET  
SECRET/

25X1

East Germany, one in central USSR, one in the Far East Military District, and one recently formed in the Kurile Islands. We do not know what their missions are but they appear to have been formed for general purpose missions in specific areas.

142  
2  
5  
25X1



The Official Military Dictionary Of The US Defines A Base As A Place From Which Military Operations Are Supported. Does Not The Presence Of A Brigade Indicate That The Soviets Have A Base In Cuba? We cannot now characterize this unit's presence as constituting a base in the sense of a locality from which to support military operations--the common definition of a "base." Whatever this unit's mission and capabilities, however, it is not a unit that could operate without extensive outside logistic support; it could not conduct assault operations without the kind of air and sea lift not presently in Cuba. (The agreed definition of a "base", according to the Department of Defense, NATO, and the Inter-American Defense Board is: "1) A locality from which operations are projected or supported; 2) An area or locality containing installations which provide logistic or other support.")

TOP SECRET  
SECRET

25X1

TOP SECRET  
SECRET

25X1

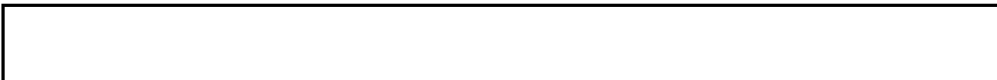
Doesn't The Commitment Of A Soviet Brigade Indicate Virtually Complete Identity Between Soviet And Cuban Foreign Policy Aims? - It certainly suggests a high degree of security cooperation. ~~ILLEGIB~~  
The Cubans would have had some reasons of their own for deploying armed forces abroad to serve what they call revolutionary causes, but these actions as a rule, seem to have coincided with Soviet objectives as well; and these same actions probably made them more anxious about Cuba's own security. Hence, Soviet troop presence.

But Why Should The Cubans Feel A Need For Soviet Protection When We Promised In 1962 That We Would Not Invade Cuba? - As you recall, that promise had been conditioned on permission for adequate inspection in Cuba of the withdrawal of nuclear missiles and bombers from the island. In 1962, this permission was refused. Of course, the U.S. has since then repeatedly stated its intention not to invade Cuba. However, given the overwhelming power of the U.S. compared to Cuba, given Cuba's location adjacent to the U.S., and given Cuba's practice of pursuing foreign policy objectives and foreign operations completely inimical to Washington's interests, Havana may well have doubts about the reliability under all contingencies of U.S. pledges of non-intervention. In any case, Cuba would want as much ~~visible~~ Soviet commitment to Cuban security as possible.

out

Does The Unit Present In Cuba Constitute A Violation Of The Understanding With The Soviets On Cuba? - Ground forces per se in a generic sense do not figure in our bilateral understanding with the USSR, which was directed at offensive weapons systems, although the U.S. made known its concern about any Soviet forces in Cuba. Nonetheless, the USSR did withdraw those forces which had come to Cuba to operate or to protect the missiles which the Soviets had installed.

NOTE: All questions related to current US-Soviet and US-Cuban diplomatic activity should be characterized as a non-intelligence matter, and should be referred to Secretary Vance for answers during his forthcoming SFRC testimony.



TOP SECRET  
SECRET

25X1