



**Director of  
Central  
Intelligence**

**Top Secret**

# Possible Presence of Soviet Ground Forces in Cuba

**Interagency Intelligence Memorandum**

**Top Secret**

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*19 July 1979*

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POSSIBLE PRESENCE OF SOVIET GROUND FORCES IN CUBA\*

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1. This memorandum addresses the possible presence of an organic Soviet ground force unit in Cuba.\*\*

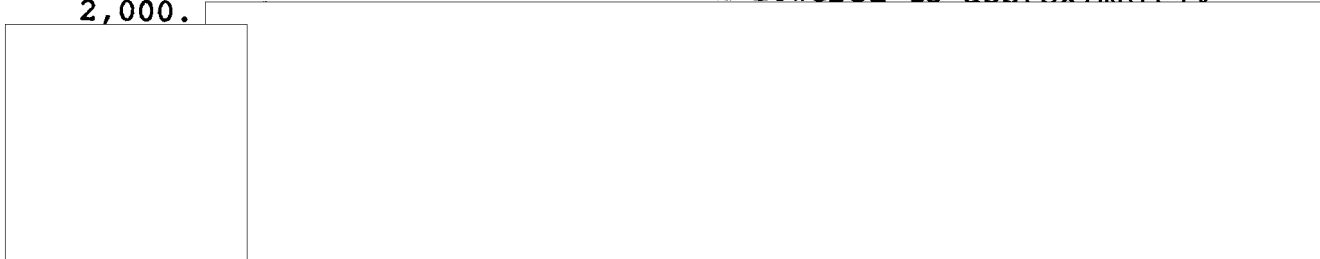
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Background

2. After the withdrawal in late 1962 and early 1963 of Soviet strategic weapons and of some 20,000 combat troops from Cuba, the Intelligence Community estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 Soviet military personnel remained there. By the early 1970s this estimate had been lowered to approximately 2,000.

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\* This memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for USSR and Eastern Europe in the Office of Political Analysis, National Foreign Assessment Center. It was coordinated within the Central Intelligence Agency; with the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; with the Defense Intelligence Agency; with the National Security Agency; and with the intelligence organizations of the Departments of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Information available as of 1200 EDT on 19 July 1979 was used in the preparation of this memorandum.

\*\* The full range of issues involved in the Soviet-Cuban military relationship will be dealt with in a forthcoming Interagency Intelligence Memorandum.

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Missions

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12. Depending on the size of the Soviet unit, [redacted] its mission could include any, some combination, or all of the following:

- Training for Soviet personnel.
- Training for Cuban personnel.
- Development of Soviet tactics and training, and evaluation of equipment, for tropical areas.
- A small but concrete commitment of Soviet military support for the Castro regime, which might be intended as the nucleus of an expanded Soviet military capability in time of crises.

[redacted]

13. Efforts are under way to obtain more information on the presence of a Soviet ground force unit in Cuba:

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