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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Cuban Developments

1. Reacting with characteristic demagoguery and violence to new evidence of opposition to his regime, Fidel Castro has again sought to enhance his mass support by ascribing all anti-government activity to Cuban war criminals, followers of Dominican dictator Trujillo, and "American imperialists." He has called for a new demonstration of loyalty by "one million citizens" for 26 October. While he still obviously enjoys the backing of the masses, his demagogic tactics and his endorsement of extremist leaders in the government and army is contributing to growing opposition to him on the part of middle-class elements.

2. The two and possibly three aircraft that dropped thousands of anti-Castro leaflets on Havana on 21 October have been used by the regime to support the claim that Cuba has become the victim of "aggression" by "American imperialists." Castro, in his long TV-radio tirade of 22-23 October, charged that "US-based planes bombed Havana" in a "base and unpardonable attack" which he likened to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. There is no evidence that any bombs were actually dropped. However, there were simultaneous forays by armed oppositionists who sped through the city in autos shooting at people and buildings and three bombs were exploded in Havana after the planes had departed. The casualties, reportedly 2 dead and 38 wounded, are being blamed on the "aggressor planes." The leaflets dropped on Havana were signed by Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz, Castro's first air force chief who defected and came to the US last June. He is now in Miami.

3. Protest demonstrations in front of the US Embassy on 22 October, the largest of which numbered about 400, were orderly and efficiently controlled by a police detail of about 30 men. Signs carried by the demonstrators included: "Yankee, this is not Guatemala;" and, "We protest against machinegunning Cuban people from the US."

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4. In his 22-23 October speech, Castro charged the US with attempting to keep Cuba defenseless against its enemies and referred specifically to US efforts to block the Cuban purchase of aircraft in Britain. "The people," he added, "have only their own forces." "We must prepare the people. The workers and peasants must be trained militarily." The proposal that Cuban workers be armed and organized into a peoples' militia had been advanced by the Communists earlier this year and may now be acted upon. The newly appointed minister of labor, a close associate of extremist Raul Castro, can be expected to support such a move.

5. The arrest on 21 October of the popular provincial military commander Major Huber Matos and subsequent efforts to link him with the "war criminals, followers of Trujillo, and American imperialists" is likely to enhance the growing opposition to Castro and significantly add to the number of Cubans who are becoming disillusioned with Fidel Castro. Matos, a highly respected officer of known anti-Communist sentiments, is reliably reported to have resigned in protest against the growing power of extremists such as Raul Castro, recently named Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. The Huber Matos affair is causing a "deep shock and more soul searching than any event since 1 January," in Santiago de Cuba, according to the American consulate there. Matos was favorably known in Santiago and regarded as the symbol of the best in the revolution. Considered a serious, loyal, and anti-Communist officer, his denigration is giving more ammunition to the growing opposition.

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