

Sino-Soviet Bloc Support for Cuba

1997

Repeated Soviet assurances of both economic and political support have strengthened Castro's hand in his attempts to reverse Cuba's traditional ties with the United States. [REDACTED]

Steps toward assuring a steady supply of Soviet oil have been accelerated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] recent Soviet-Cuban talks have involved future deliveries of up to 5,000,000 tons of Soviet crude annually--considerably more than Cuba's normal imports. Adjustments under way in bloc tanker operations suggest the Soviet Union is taking action to supply whatever amounts Cuba needs. The USSR has been shifting some of its long-term commitments to free-world tankers in order to free Soviet tankers for the Cuban trade. Arrangements already made will enable fulfillment of present commitments. [REDACTED]

The cutback in Cuban sugar exports to the United States may present new opportunities for bloc exploitation. The bloc's general low level of sugar consumption enables it to absorb whatever purchases are considered politically expedient. Cuba's losses on the US market could be only partially replaced by bloc imports, which would be at world prices and probably under barter arrangements rather than for foreign exchange.

Several contracts under the bloc economic agreements with Cuba have been concluded amid great public fanfare, but actual deliveries--other than Soviet oil and fertilizers--have been minor. Some agricultural machinery, a few trucks, five commercial helicopters, and small quantities of other machinery and equipment have been shipped. A greater volume of such shipments is expected during the remainder of this year and in 1961. Thus far no bloc military equipment is known to have arrived in Cuba, but such deliveries could begin at any time. [REDACTED]