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CUBA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Fidel Castro's address before the United Nations General Assembly on 26 September showed the degree to which Cuba has become committed to Soviet foreign policy objectives. Reactions among Latin American delegates were generally negative, but delegates of some of the new African states were impressed and struck by Castro's "sincerity." A member of the French delegation expressed the opinion that Castro's simple language, effective delivery, and unsophisticated concepts were on a level to make a maximum appeal to the "simple" Africans.

Castro's particular emphasis on the issue of Guantanamo follows two public references to the base earlier this month, one by Fidel and the other by Raul Castro, in which an early demand for US withdrawal from the base was intimated. Although these statements have emphasized that any "aggressive acts" with respect to the base would originate with the United States, the Cubans might attempt to provoke the US into an action that could be used to challenge US treaty rights to the base before an international tribunal. It is known [redacted] that Castro agents regularly report to Cuban G-2 headquarters on US military and naval activities on the base.

The American Embassy in Havana, in response to the growing climate of hostility in Cuba, is encouraging American citizens to leave the island. A former Foreign Ministry official advised an American Embassy officer on 23 September that in view of the temperament of the new Cuban chargé d'affaires in Washington, Flores Ibarra, the United States should expect him to provoke a US request for his recall as a pretext for a Cuban

demand that Ambassador Bonsal be called home.

Following the arrival in Cuba on 8 September of the first major shipment of Soviet bloc military equipment, the Soviet vessel Solnechnogorsk docked in Havana on 22 September with additional military equipment. At least five crates containing Soviet aircraft were unloaded. Although the American air and naval attachés believe they may have contained MIG aircraft, the description of the crates suggests they probably contained helicopters, five or six of which were delivered to Cuba from the USSR earlier this year.

[redacted] suggest that at least two more Soviet vessels are probably en route to Cuba with military cargoes. These deliveries may include MIGs. An unconfirmed report of 23 September alleges, however, that Cuba is still attempting to secure jet aircraft from Western sources. According to a former Cuban diplomat now in London, Raul Castro has closed a deal with a company in Belgium for 20 Vampire jets alleged to be in Sweden.

Shipment of Soviet bloc industrial machinery and equipment is getting under way in implementation of the trade and credit agreements signed earlier this year. These shipments are scheduled to increase steadily in volume through next year.

[redacted] plans for the delivery in 1961 and 1962 of three 100-bed hospital units from Czechoslovakia.

Meanwhile, there is an increasing volume of travel to the Sino-Soviet bloc by Cuban students, labor unionists, artists, and others. A number

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of Cuban students have evidently received scholarships at bloc educational centers. Two top officials of the Cuban Communists' Popular Socialist party left for Moscow early this month.

The Cuban Communists continue to strengthen their position. In an evident response to a decision at the party congress in August to unite all revolutionary groups into a single front under "the leadership of Fidel Castro," Communists are organizing "united fronts" at the local level in many parts of Cuba. These fronts are probably intended to become the bases for provincial, then national, political machines.

In addition, the Communists now have virtually taken over the powerful Cuban Workers' Confederation. Veteran Cuban Communist labor leader Lazaro Pena has been a regular participant in recent labor meetings, although he holds no formal union office. Communists are probably also active in indoctrination programs directed at various segments of the population.

lectures scheduled for members of the police on such subjects as "the recognition of the People's Republic of China, the Congolese and Algerian problems, world disarmament, and discrimination against Negroes in the United States.

Although the Castro regime has become increasingly discredited elsewhere in Latin America, there still are some politically potent non-Communist leaders in a number of countries ready to defend Castro. The popular ex-President Lazaro Cardenas of Mexico, for instance, is reported

[REDACTED] to have expressed the belief that the time is ripe to form a strong front of the peoples of Latin America and the Afro-Asian countries in support of Castro.

Guerrilla warfare in the mountains of central Cuba continues, and government forces are reported by the Cuban press to have suffered casualties in efforts to dislodge the several hundred guerrillas estimated operating there.

