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21 August 1962

A CHRONOLOGY OF UNEVALUATED REPORTS ON
RECENT SOVIET MILITARY AID TO CUBA

Early July 1962--Around 12 July Fidel Castro personally ordered the evacuation of a farm just south of Havana city, saying he needed all the farms bordering a special zone. Rumors were that the area was to be used for military storage.

15 July-15 August--In this period 18 Soviet ships with relatively light loads passed Istanbul from Soviet ports on the Black Sea and falsely declared their destinations; COMINT later indicated that all 18 were bound for Cuba. Such Soviet behavior has frequently indicated military shipments in the past, and many of the 18 ships involved are frequent arms carriers. Subsequent reports have confirmed that many of these ships did in fact deliver military or military-related equipment to Cuba. During the same period two Soviet ships traveled to Cuba from the Baltic with small naval craft on deck.

25 July--Residents of several private homes in the vicinity of a former reformatory near El Chico, Havana province, were ordered to vacate their homes within 72 hours. Cuban authorities told the residents that

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the housing was needed for Soviet technicians. Several days later a number of trucks driven by Soviet personnel and carrying equipment arrived in the area.

26 July--The Soviet merchant vessel Mariya Ulyanova docked at Havana, discharging a number of Soviet passengers. An untested source reported the number of passengers as high as 1,600. The normal passenger capacity of the ship is 340.

27 July--The Soviet vessel Uritskiy discharged passengers at Mariel, and the Soviet vessel Khabarovsk discharged passengers at Bahia Honda. Untested sources reported 1,000 to 1,100 persons disembarked from the Uritskiy and 1,500 from the Khabarovsk. The normal passenger capacity of each ship is 340.

29 July--The Soviet vessel Latvia discharged from 1,000 to 1,200 passengers in Mariel, according to untested sources. The Latvia, which had declared 365 passengers at the Bosphorus, has a normal passenger capacity of 340.

Late July--An untested source who is a member of an anti-Castro group inside Cuba reported that 5,000 Soviets, 3,000 North Koreans, and between 1,000 and 2,000 Africans "with rings in their noses" had recently entered Cuba. The Soviets were said to have occupied key military installations in Cuba.

Late July-early August--A refugee source reported that grading and leveling of a hill near Matanzas by Bloc personnel and equipment had been under way for two weeks prior to 8 August. Tight security conditions prevailed. On 6 August the source saw a Soviet ship in Matanzas unloading boxes 8 meters long, two meters high, and 1.5 meters wide; the boxes were put on flatbed trucks and taken to the construction site.

30 July-2 August--A refugee source reported two Soviet ships at Matanzas on 30 July; for three days he watched the ships unload under strict security. About 135 Soviets arrived in jeeps to handle the operation. Most of the cargo consisted of "giant four-wheeled trucks," van type, completely enclosed except for two windows on the vans and two on the cabs. Each van had a trailer measuring three meters in length and three in height covered with canvas. A metal pole protruded upward in the rear.

1 August--A refugee source said he passed three slow-moving and apparently heavily loaded trucks, all ZIL-150s, between Arcos de Canasi and Jibacao near Santa Cruz del Norte. The trucks had no sideboards and each was carrying a large box-like object about two meters tall and fitting within the bed of the truck.

Vertical edges of the canvas covering appeared to be fastened by zippers.

Early August--A refugee source said he saw three Soviet ships in Matanzas on or about 1 August, and later observed a bus loaded with some 40 Soviets coming from across the Canimar Bridge and going toward Matanzas. He said the bus passengers appeared dirty and partly covered with sand or cement dust. In the next few days he saw many trucks, ZIL-151s, going back and forth between Puente Canimar and Matanzas; he also saw dump trucks and trucks covered with canvas.

1-11 August--A refugee source was told by the owner of a farm located on top of a hill near Santa Cruz del Norte called Loma Colorada that Cuban military authorities had forced him to sell his farm and that troops and equipment were moved into the area. On 10 August the source saw five trucks coming from the farm driven by Soviets and containing men dressed in work clothes. On 11 August the same source saw tracked vehicles pulling heavily loaded trucks up the road to the farm. On 5 August a highly reliable source confirmed that construction activity was under way at this site.

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2 August--A refugee source was held up in a cafe near the Canimar Bridge for nearly an hour while a convoy of trucks, cranes, and vehicles passed. The source described tracked vehicles, radar vans, medium tanks, tractor trucks, fire-control apparatus, and direction-finding gear.

2-7 August--A refugee source reported that on 2 or 3 August intermittent convoys of trucks passed his house located east of Matanzas and were traveling toward the Canimar River. The source identified equipment similar to SMALL CROSS radio direction-finding equipment, ZIL-151 trucks with prefab huts on the beds, numerous trucks and trailers with canvas-covered cargoes, and other vehicles. On 6 or 7 August the source saw some 50 trucks traveling east from Matanzas carrying liquid tanks which were about six feet in diameter and eight feet long. The trucks and convoys went to the site south of Canimar Bridge called El Bongo where on 5 August a highly reliable source confirmed that unidentified military construction was getting under way involving many trucks and other vehicles.

7 August--A Cuban refugee source reported that he had seen a "large" group of African males being escorted around the city of Mariel, most of them dressed in

Western style, but a few dressed in native costumes and with rings in their noses. The source concluded that they were African students visiting Cuba.

6-9 August--An untested source, a Cuban lawyer, who said he received his information from a member of an anti-Castro organization, reported that during the period 6 to 9 August Cuban nationals were excluded from the Santa Clara pier (probably in Havana) during the unloading of a ship by Soviet personnel. The source reported that approximately 2,000 Soviet nationals were quartered at the reformatory at Torrens, near El Chico, in Havana province.

9 August--A refugee source observed a convoy of 12 trucks east of Sancti Spiritus in Pinar del Rio headed westward. The trucks were hauling small trailers, among which were power generators. The trucks were driven by Soviet or Bloc personnel and appeared to have huts built on the truck beds. The source positively identified CHEESE BRICK ECM equipment installed on GAZ-63 vehicles.

9-10 August--The intelligence coordinator of an anti-Castro group in Cuba, a fairly reliable source, reported the following from a resident of the area described: As of 9 August there were slightly more than 1,000 Soviet nationals at Guatana, Pinar del Rio province,

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and Cuban nationals had been moved out of the area; as of 10 August there was an "army" of Soviet, Chinese, and Congolese nationals at Guatana.

Prior to 11 August--An untested source, a former Cuban army officer who said he received the information from the wife of a Havana municipal employee, reported that prior to 11 August a large group of Soviet nationals, "specialists in the installation of rocket bases," had disembarked at Mariel and were being transported to Santa Lucia in Pinar del Rio province.

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