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CUBA AS A BASE FOR SUBVERSION

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: CUBA AS A BASE FOR SUBVERSION

PROBLEM

To prepare a country-by-country analysis in relation to Mr. McNamara's statements to the Stennis Committee:

1. "Every [Latin American country] has a Communist apparatus of greater or lesser extent, depending upon the country, and the leadership. Every one of them are linked in an intimate way to Havana, and from Havana to Moscow. There is no question about the fact that this is the bridgehead of communism into all of Latin America.

2. "[Central and South America] will erode away quite rapidly, in my opinion [if we don't get the Communists out of Cuba]."

Include in this analysis an estimate of the strengths and weaknesses and future prospects of communism in Latin America and the extent to which the strengths and future prospects could be influenced by either continuation or removal of a Communist government in Cuba.

FACTS HEARING ON THE PROBLEM

See country tabs which are appended.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

During and immediately after the crisis the reputation of Castro and the Soviets fell in Latin America, even among ardent supporters of Castro/Communism. Castro was criticized for handing Cuba over to the USSR and was later derided for being ignored by his ally. The Soviets were held to be blatantly aggressive in moving into Cuba with missile bases. Later, they

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lost face for backing off from the U.S. quarantine and further possible sanctions. For the moment at least the climate was hostile to subversion by local activists and to penetration by the Soviet government.

By now the bitter edge of the reaction has worn off and the situation in the area has come increasingly to resemble what it was pre-crisis. There is still a real attraction among leftists for revolutionary solutions to problems of backwardness. Support from Havana is better than none at all in the view of the Latin American revolutionary left. Moreover, the Soviet Union continues to be attractive to established governments which seek to reduce their dependence on the U.S.

The Soviets will try to hold their position in Cuba and at the same time they will continue to search for new routes into Latin America. Both the Soviets and Castro are aware that a Communist regime in Cuba, should it be able to demonstrate to Latin America an ability to flourish economically, improving living standards and maintaining the pretense that lands have been distributed to the common man, would represent an appealing example to the rest of the Western Hemisphere. Cuba was more prosperous than most of Latin America before Castro; there are indications that even at the current level of Soviet economic aid it can by 1965 become so again. Furthermore, Cuba has provided^a Moscow/Havana doctrinal blend in the way of training facilities in the Western Hemisphere, well suited for the indoctrination of revolutionary tactics in Latinos in familiar climate and mores. Moscow's and Havana's objectives may not always be identical, but they have proven sufficiently compatible for a modus operandi thus far.

The Soviets are probably not trying to create another Cuba as such. They will probably concentrate on Brazil, Chile and Argentina--more or

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less in that order. Brazil currently offers the most promising opportunity for long-range Soviet exploitation. Venezuela's close ties with the U.S. tend to rule out a Soviet attempt to foster neutralism there and for this reason continued Communist--and Castroite--efforts to subvert the government are likely.

The Soviets' prime objective, expanding their influence over established governments, can be harmonized with Cuban-promoted subversion because of the variety of opportunities in the area. In fact, the Soviets can see a useful supporting role for Castro-sponsored violence in countries from which they are shut out. They will want Castro to avoid getting caught, however, fearing that this would justify additional U.S. and Latin American measures against Cuba and create more problems for the USSR.

In short, while it is true that every Latin American country has a Communist apparatus of greater or lesser extent, the evidence is that Moscow's influence came first and continues independently in all Latin American countries, including Cuba, while Castro's influence is superimposed on that of the USSR and only in some instances overshadows Moscow's influence. It would be proper to speak of Havana being a bridgehead into some parts of Latin America. It is misleading to conclude that "There is no question about the fact that this is the bridgehead of communism into all of Latin America."

With respect to the strengths, weaknesses, and future prospects of Communism in Latin America, with or without Castro and a Communist Cuba, it is well to bear in mind that conditions of poverty, backwardness, lack of educational opportunities, wealth concentrated into the hands of a very few, etc., have made Latin America susceptible to extremist solutions

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(of the Right or Left) for many years. This is a chronic disease of the area. Moscow found some support in every Latin American country long before Castro's Cuba came into being; were Cuba to sink beneath the waves tomorrow, Moscow's influence, directly or through other intermediaries, would continue to be felt.

While ^{the} McCone's judgment that Communism will make great strides in Latin America might prove to be true, it would be misleading to attribute this solely to Castro/Communism and Cuba. It is a fact that Castro's violent revolutionary appeals have seized the imaginations of (primarily) the youth in many Latin American countries. To say, in Mr. McCone's words, that "(Central and South America) will erode away quite rapidly, in my opinion (if we don't get the Communists out of Cuba)" exaggerates the role and influence of Cuba. The question is a complex one which involves (a) some LA countries which are more strongly influenced by Castro/Communism - such as Venezuela; (b) some LA countries which are more strongly influenced by Moscow/Communism - such as Brazil; (c) some LA countries in which leftist splinter parties split the influence; and (d) indications of conflict between Moscos and Havana. No generalization seems adequate on current evidence.

No discussion of Cuba as a base for subversion would be complete without reference to Communist Chinese influence, direct and indirect. The direct influence, unfortunately, cannot be assessed adequately on the basis of our current intelligence. (One example: the numbers of Chinese Communist advisors in Cuba have been variously estimated as 30 in one case, and 3,000 in another.) The indirect evidence, while presumptive, relates to the close ideological and tactical agreement between, for instance, Che Guevara's work on guerrilla warfare and that of Mao Tse-Tung. Furthermore,



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at the time of the missile crisis in Cuba, huge demonstrations in favor of Castro's "five points" took place in China. Previous to the missile crisis, we had reports that the numerically small Chinese community in Cuba had come under Communist Chinese control. After the missile crisis, continuing to the present, we have received numerous unconfirmed reports from emigres that one form of Castro's annoyance with the Soviets for removing the NKVDs and LNKVDs was a threat to turn to Communist China for support; this, however, is impossible for the Chinese to supply and may be dismissed as pique. That Castro's impatient push for guerrilla actions everywhere he can manage in Latin America more nearly resembles the Communist Chinese dogma at the present than the Soviet, is beyond question. Finally, that the Communist Chinese emphasis on agrarian collectivization (however unsuccessful) is more directly applicable to Cuba, and by extension to Latin America, as opposed to the Soviet drive toward heavy industry, surely cannot have been overlooked either by Mao Tse-Tung or by Castro.

THE EFFECT OF THE MISSILE CRISIS UPON THE CUBAN AND SOVIET POSITIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

1. Castro's influence and capability for effective subversive action.

a. Popularity plunges - Fidel Castro suffered a further decline in personal attraction in virtually every country in Latin America during and immediately after the crisis. The decline was particularly noticeable among labor groups, leftist intellectuals, and politicians. His image was most seriously tarnished among the noncommunist popular groups which formerly had either sympathized passively with his anti-U. S. gyrations or

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had actively supported him in one way or another within their own countries. Many former supporters expressed shock and disillusionment at the evidence of his subservient relationship to Moscow. These and others have had second thoughts regarding the wisdom of depending upon unconditional support from the Soviet Union in attempts to achieve independence from U.S. "imperialism".

Among much of the revolutionary left, the trend of discussion shifted to the need for indigenous, nationalist revolutions, and away from internationalism and alliance with Moscow--oriented Communists and Fidelistas. Castro has been rejected as a leader of the popular revolutionary movement in the hemisphere by many noncommunist leftists, but they are uncertain as to where next to turn.

A larger part of the public, formerly passive or hostile toward Castro derided him as a weak puppet and as a tool used by the Soviets primarily to further their own national interests. The Latin public, always deeply stirred by affronts to personal dignity, was disturbed by Castro's exclusion from the crucial stage of the U.S.-Soviet negotiations over his country's fate and by his inability to prevent the withdrawal of the weapons systems which he regarded as vital to Cuba's defense. The crisis caused many moderate center and conservative groups to be more aware of the aggressive aims of the USSR in this hemisphere and of the threat posed by Cuba as an operational base for the Soviets. At the same time, they were heartened by the decisive U.S. response.

In those countries bordering the Caribbean, the crisis heightened pressures for a final and definitive solution to the Cuban problem, and in the aftermath there has been fear that the U.S. resolve would weaken and that

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Castro's position would be ensured. In most countries of South America, however, popular antagonism toward Castro resulting from the crisis has cooled and many people regard the affair as ended by the U.S. show of resolve.

b. Subversive capability momentarily lessened--The decline in Castro's prestige as a result of the missile crisis has at least for the moment reduced his capability for subverting popular groups and moving them into action against their own governments and against U.S. interests. With the decline in receptivity among popular groups to Castro's blandishments, local Fidelistas have encountered greater difficulty in mobilizing mass support for antigovernment strikes, violence, and demonstrations on other than local issues. Pro-Castro agitators are concentrating their efforts increasingly in the interior as they have done in Peru recently. In addition, there has been an increase in sabotage and other violence perpetrated by extremists, of the sort not requiring the participation of large popular groups, yet designed to provoke drastic counter-measures by governments and to increase popular antigovernment sentiment.

c. Appeals for revolution continue--Meanwhile, Castro continues his now familiar appeal for revolution in Latin America on the Cuban model. His subversive apparatus remains essentially intact. The Cuban news agency Prensa Latina operates in at least four major cities. Havana radio continues its schedule of broadcasts in support of antigovernment groups in other Caribbean countries, and Cuba's diplomatic missions in Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay still serve as important channels for subversion and propaganda. The hard-core element among pro-Castro leftist organizations continues to function--in some cases (Ecuador and

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Peru) with the expectation of increased material aid from Cuba.

2. Castro's options to restore his appeal

a. Course of pseudo-independence foreseen--Fidel Castro's intransigent posture against on-site inspection at the time of Soviet Deputy Premier Mikoyan's visit raised his stock in at least a few countries. His claims to have got the better of the U.S. in the recent prisoner exchange may be expected to have a similar effect. Moreover, merely staying in power in Cuba when the logical outcome of the crisis seemed to many to indicate his downfall has taken the bitter edge off reaction against Castro among some anti-U.S. groups.

Castro probably stands to gain most by adopting a public posture independent of Soviet political domination while at the same time attempting to demonstrate in Cuba the benefits of economic association with the socialist camp. Such a policy of "pseudo-independence" would involve a minimum of fundamental policy reorientation. Castro's independent political course might be easily developed through public harangues: a propaganda campaign calling for violent rebellion and guerrilla warfare in the countryside, less emphasis upon Marxist-Leninist dogma, re-enunciation of the 'original' 26th of July ideals, and a softening in the appearance of his domestic programs.

b. Soviets' response--The Soviets would welcome Castro's efforts to demonstrate independence and would probably tolerate his militant stance in Latin America if it did not run counter to Soviet policy. They would hope that by helping him to refurbish his image, they could restore some of his value as an agent of political subversion among restive popular

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groups. A campaign of independent-sounding oratory would allow Castro to let off steam and preen his vanity without having measurable effect upon Soviet 'peaceful' policy objectives elsewhere in Latin America.

At the same time, a few big 'impact' projects in Cuba would seem to vindicate Castro's policy of close economic cooperation with the USSR in the eyes of Latins elsewhere. Such projects would reduce pressure for economic aid from the Cubans themselves and restore hope among potential revolutionaries of securing economic aid in defiance of the U.S. without risking foreign political controls.

3. Soviet influence and standing in Latin America

a. Soviets shared Castro's loss of appeal--The Soviet Union shared Castro's setback in almost every country of Latin America. The revelation of its war-like intentions and its plans for secretly installing an offensive base in Cuba detracted from its carefully-cultivated image as a peace-loving nation. In areas within range of the Soviet missiles, it aroused for the first time an awareness of the danger of nuclear destruction.

Many leftist intellectuals who are still drawn to the Cuban model condemned the Soviet Union for its cynical exploitation of the revolution for its own purposes. To some extent, they shared the general disdain felt by most Latins for what appeared as a cowardly backdown from risky confrontation with the U.S.

Nevertheless, the rationale for Soviet behavior propounded by Moscow and by local communist parties as well--that the Soviet tactics have succeeded in guaranteeing Cuba's safety from U.S. invasion--has been accepted by those who have a strong desire to maintain their faith. Moreover, although the Soviet actions during the crisis period detracted from the reputation of

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the Soviet Union in Latin America, they are not likely to have lasting ill effects on the usual type of Soviet moves to expand their influence in the area.

b. Moscow behavior criticized by Latin communists--There are few indications of any change in relations between Moscow and local Latin American communist parties, although the communist parties have undergone varying degrees of soul-searching and recrimination. Parties have found it more difficult to get members out in the streets for propaganda projects and demonstrations since late October. In Argentina and Guatemala, communist leaders have been asked for explanations of the Soviet moves by party members who viewed the withdrawal as a humiliation for Cuba. In Peru, Costa Rica, and Venezuela, longstanding rifts within the parties over personalities and local policies have been widened by disagreement on the wisdom of the Soviet actions; most of the 'old guard' supports the Soviet policy and many 'young turk' dissidents condemn it as a show of weakness. According to one report, demoralization of Ecuadorean communists has been severe enough to threaten a takeover by Peiping-liners.

4. Crisis' effect on governmental relations with the USSR and Cuba

The missile crisis led to changes in the attitudes of a number of governments toward the Soviet Union and dimmed the possibility of new diplomatic gains by the Soviets in some countries. It also caused several of the five governments maintaining diplomatic ties with Cuba to consider breaking relations with the Castro regime.

The crisis enabled President Paz Estenssoro of Bolivia to move ahead--if only momentarily--in his effort to keep Bolivia allied with the West. The left-wing faction of Paz's governing MNR party had been

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pressing him to adopt a new program of "positive neutralism", hostile to the U.S., strongly pro-Cuban, and involving closer aid and trade ties with the bloc. Resistance by the public to the new leftist line grew as a result of the crisis and permitted the government to lay aside for the time being consideration of closer relations with Moscow.

Mexico, which had remained aloof from strong efforts to block Soviet penetration into this hemisphere, turned its legalistic approach to world problems against the USSR. It accused the Soviets of intervening in the internal affairs of Cuba and of denying the Cubans self-determination in matters pertaining to their own welfare. With the relaxation of the crisis, however, the Mexican Government was able to avoid taking a forthright stand on Cuba and has now determined now to prejudice domestic politics by breaking with Cuba.

The first flush of enthusiasm in favor of breaking diplomatic ties with Cuba by other countries like Mexico which still retain them has dissipated in the post-crisis atmosphere. In Chile, which might have broken with Castro under U.S. pressure in the early days of the crisis, domestic political considerations again hold sway and the government is unwilling to give leftist opposition groups a political windfall by arousing pro-Cuban sympathies. In Uruguay, popular sentiment in favor of a break has quieted down, and politicians prefer to let the issue lie. In Brazil, the developments in the Caribbean have been offset by domestic economic problems which are straining relations with the U.S. and inclining President Goulart to look to the bloc for economic aid.

5. Soviets' post-crisis views of their capabilities and opportunities

a. No lasting damage foreseen--The Soviets probably think of their capabilities and opportunities in Latin America in much the same way as

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they did before the missile crisis. They see no lasting damage to their influence in the area despite temporary anti-Castro, anti-Soviet reactions. Salvage from the crisis includes the presence of Soviet troops and advanced defense systems in Cuba.

Seen through Communist eyes, Latin America is ripe for violent social revolution. The Alliance for Progress recognized this possibility, and yet, so the Soviets probably believe, is powerless to produce the social and economic changes needed to alter the trend. Reform proposals only make the economic elite nervous and the population restless. The prospects for evolutionary reform are nil because of the elite's predatory and defeatist outlook. The Latin form of capitalism is fundamentally different from that in Western Europe, where increased production and wider distribution of goods is creating modern industrial democracy on the U.S. pattern.

According to the Soviet view, many dominant groups in leading Latin American countries, now in control or with a good chance to take over, are ready to seek a way out of their frustrations by maneuvering between the two great powers. Populist forces, although shocked by the missile crisis, are again deeply absorbed in their own problems. These groups are trying to appear as advocates of rapid change. For this reason, they are available as allies to the side demonstrating the most force and confidence in pressing for radical change.

The revolutionary left, moreover, lacks another alternative. In the revolutionary left view, Castro's economic failure is not critical since economic development is secondary to "social justice". The revolutionary left is driving to upset the established order and to rebuild on a totalitarian model, not to maximize GNP. The Cuban example shows social

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revolution is possible, even in a small country near the United States, if the Soviets lend a helping hand.

b. Another Cuba not desired--The Soviets are obviously aware of a wide range of very different possibilities. Many of the countries are fairly similar to Cuba, viz., Central American and Andean republics. In the Soviet view one ally of Cuba's quality is probably enough for now. Cuba is a test-proved case of how far the Soviets can go in the area, and the point is now made. In setting up shop in Cuba, moreover, the Soviets have become aware of the problems and expense involved, and they now recognize, since the missile crisis, that there is a limit on returns to be expected.

Some countries probably interest the Soviets as trouble spots where agitation by Castro/Communist forces can have a destructive impact on reform movements and governments now amenable to Soviet ties and influence. The governments in these countries, which are among the most hostile to the Soviets in any case, can be harassed through popular pressures, sabotage, and other means.

c. Concentration on more developed countries likely--If the Soviets are not working for a proliferation of satellite regimes in Latin America, their focus is probably on some of the larger countries which can be seen as hesitating between dependence on the U.S. and a new course. These countries, in the Soviet view, can be pushed from a status quo economic and political alignment with the U.S. into neutralism, relying on Western and Eastern Europe, holding the U.S. at arms length, and sooner or later breaking through to violent social revolution.

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In opening new courses for the major Latin American countries, Cuba has been and continues to be the key, though not the model. It stands for a pledge of Soviet support encouraging governments to use existing U.S. assets (outstanding loans, private investments) as leverage to force new U.S. aid without any quid pro quo in the shape of reform.

d. Brazil a prime objective--The preferred targets for Soviet planners are probably those countries where the U.S. has a large stake, where the political system is responsive to popular pressures, and where the dominant forces are immersed in acute economic difficulties. Brazil must seem accessible and also crucial in Soviet planning. With the greatest potential of any Latin American country, Brazil is caught in a morass of economic and political problems. In seeking to solve these problems, the Goulart regime could take a course leading on to neutralism and even more radical solutions.

Goulart's government, chafing at the conditions laid down by the U.S. for economic aid, made suggestive gestures toward the USSR in the latter half of 1962, negotiating for expanded trade and exploring possibilities for large-scale economic assistance. Such gestures were in part a tactic aimed at gaining U.S. concessions on the pre-conditions for aid. Goulart may well accept some Soviet economic offers and he might even accept large-scale Soviet aid in an effort to make his threat to the U.S. more credible.

Goulart, however, does not occupy a wholly secure position in domestic politics. His moves are circumscribed by the tenuousness of his own position. It may be assumed that any Soviet response to his

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actions will take this factor into account, especially the contingency that an overly hasty and overly zealous response could lead to a reaction inside Brazil that would remove Goulart from power. Despite these limitations, the Soviets probably would be willing to pour substantial sums into Brazil.

For the longer run, they are not able to supply by themselves an adequate substitute for U.S. aid. Brazil's need to look to Western Europe for supplies, markets, and even capital would tend to discourage the Soviets from pushing for violent social revolution in Brazil. A reasonable Soviet target in Brazil is a neutralist government.

e. Other Soviet possibilities--In other major countries of the area, the Soviets can probably see interesting situations, that promise returns through manipulation of governments to defy the U.S. and through support to populist movements linked with the Communists. The communist-linked popular front (FRAP) in Chile could win the elections scheduled for 1964, open the way for a Chilean expropriation of U.S. copper company holdings, and move the country to neutralism. The future political course of Argentina is still uncertain enough to suggest desirable possibilities for a Peronist alliance with the Communists and a resultant break with the United States.

Venezuela is a more complex problem. Because Venezuela is so closely interlocked with the U.S. economy, neutralism seems out of the question, and the Soviets probably consider Venezuela closer to the Cuban case than to opportunities in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Moscow will thus probably exercise caution with regard to Venezuela. The same cannot be said of Havana, which hopes to exploit the serious tensions there between rich and poor, old and young, local and foreign.

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f. Soviets' advice to Castro - If Castro insists on playing a strong revolutionary role throughout Latin America, he could induce strains in his relations with the Soviets. Overly militant tactics would run counter to higher Soviet strategy in some countries of the area, and in others it might involve Soviet prestige in undesirably risky situations. Nevertheless, Moscow will probably be willing to go along with Castro/Communist subversive activity in certain cases. It has a real value in countries where neutralism has no future; it is a means to precipitate violent social revolution by immobilizing government reform movements, frightening off foreign capital, and promoting the flight of domestic capital. While tolerating the destructive role that suits Castro's nature, the Soviets will probably encourage him to stay out of the countries which they hope to propel into a neutralist course and to concentrate on those where insurgency has a function.

CUBA AND THE COMMUNIST CHINESE

1. Communist Chinese Post-Crisis Views of Their Capabilities and Opportunities

a. Sino-Soviet Schism - Presumptively, the Communist Chinese must see Cuba as an attractive means to further their position on violent revolution. The evidence consists mostly of public statements by Chinese leaders which the FBIS has reported. However, the parallel of Chinese Communist and Castro points-of-view on strategy strikes all observers forcefully. While necessarily speculation, Castro's reported pique with the Soviets, combined with doctrinal agreement with the Chinese, leads many intelligence analysts to believe that if China could supply Castro's vitally needed economic help, the Communist Chinese and Castro-Communists

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would make common cause. Since the Communist Chinese cannot provide petroleum and other critically short items, Castro appears to have no alternative to the Soviets as backers at the present time.

b. Agrarian Parallel - The Communist Chinese probably see an opportunity in Cuba and Latin America based on their necessary pre-occupation with agriculture, the similarity of their environmental problems with those of the Latinos, and hopes to expand their influence over the long-term.

M/R Prepared By Bob Mandelstam
and Lt Col Patchell for
use by Secy McNamara at
Stennis Committee hearing
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