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SITUATION IN CUBA

CHE GUEVERA'S ARTICLE ON GUERRILLA WARFARE

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SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

18 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF

SUBJECT: Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee of Cuban Affairs:
Reports from the British and Canadian Embassies on
Recent Events in Cuba

References: NSAM No. 213
Memorandum from Deputy Secretary of Defense to
Mr. Bundy, Special Assistant to the President,
dated 10 Jan 63
Memorandum from Secretary of Army to Mr. Cottrell
Chairman, Interdepartmental Committee on Cuba,
dated 11 Jan 63

The attached copies of significant correspondence prepared by
the British and Canadian Embassies in Cuba are forwarded to you
as a matter of interest.

J. D. Alger
J. D. ALGER
Major General, GS
Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff
for Military Operations

NO JCS OBJECTION TO
DECLASSIFICATION: DATE 28 AUG 1988
REQUIRES CONCURRENCE
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BRITISH LEGACY

HAVANA

August 30, 1963

Dear Department,

We enclose a miscellany report for the period to August 23.

2. We are sending copies to Sutherland in Washington, to Information Sections in Mexico City and Caracas and to Information Research Department and P.O.R.D.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY.

American Department,
FOREIGN OFFICE.

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CONFIDENTIALPolitical Views of a Farmer

A farmer in the area north of the Escambray mountains (the chief centre of counter-revolutionary bands) recently said that the general feeling amongst farmers in the area was that the Castro Government was worse than the others, but all they wanted was to be left in peace to look after their farms and provide for their families. The area was very quiet; usually nothing was heard of the rebels in the hills. If they became too obvious the militia sent in "about ten thousand men" to clear them all out. He (the farmer) would not give sanctuary to a counter-revolutionary although he sympathized with them, but nor would he give a lift to a Russian.

Coffee Picking

On August 9 the press published target figures, set by the Trades Union Confederation, for volunteer coffee pickers for each province, as follows:

Elmar del Rio	1,500
Havana	11,500
Matanzas	1,500
Las Villas	2,000
Camaguey	500
Oriente	6,000

These figures may give some indication of the incidence of under-employment. That for Oriente is surprisingly high but may perhaps include what is left of the original coffee labour force. Camaguey, which had considerable labour problems during the sugar harvest, has an even smaller quota than we would have expected. Havana is to produce as many volunteers as all the other provinces combined.

Despite Fidel Castro's personal intervention (not made public) earlier this year to prevent students being taken from their studies to perform "voluntary" agricultural work, coffee picking is already proving a grand exception. All mass organisation, including the Union of Young Communists and the Federation of University Students are announced as supporting the voluntary labour campaign. Special examinations are being arranged in December for those who are now going off to pick coffee and who need to pass in "non-basic subjects. These are described as domestic science, music and the visual arts, but there is no indication that "volunteers" will be limited to students of these subjects; indeed plenty of teachers are going off too. Children as young as 14 are encouraged to go to Oriente, and although we are told that arrangements will be made this year for their parents to remain in touch with them, one recalls numerous complaints last season that these arrangements were not working properly. More details can be found on page 5 of HOY for August 28, including the claim that coffee picking is "a way of moulding a firm and strong character for the men of the future". HOY of August 29 corrects an earlier report that workers going to Oriente had to go without food on the journey for 7 hours: the figure should have been 37. In many faculties the academic year has not recovered from the confusion into which it was thrown by the demands of military service and various harvests throughout last winter. It looks as if confusion will be further confounded.

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Amplification

An editorial in the Washington Post for July 25 stated that Felix Bryant (see Havana Personalities Report for 1962 No. 37) who in the preceding week had been appointed a major general in the Cuban Army. So far as we know, there is no truth in this, but if anyone has confirmation of it we should be most interested.

Maritime check on small boats

At the month's end a new chief was appointed to the "Department of Control of Ports and Coasts" in the Ministry of the Interior. He is said to be introducing a system whereby no private boat can leave its mooring without special authorization for each trip and each passenger by name. An announcement that a new census of all fishermen, whether co-operative members, individuals or even part-time fishermen, is to begin on September 1, may also be due to his zeal. In late July most of the Government owned pleasure cruisers at the beach resort of Varadero were brought to Havana, where it is alleged that none of them are being equipped as motor boats, complete with machine-gun turret at the stern.

Gastroenteritis

El Mundo of August 28 quotes a report from Miami according to which an organization of Cubans in exile is claiming that more than 4,000 children died of gastroenteritis in Cuba during the first seven months of 1963. We have previously noticed some reluctance in official announcements to reveal the true state of affairs and it is worth noticing that, instead of giving the statistics which would refute what is probably an exaggerated claim, the newspaper merely pointed on the next of the statement which referred to "clouds of flies, cockroaches and rats", commenting that the aislados were wrong and that all the cockroaches and rats had fled to the United States.

Food for Sport

In the province of Pinar del Rio, not far from Havana, is a lagoon named "La Macanita", developed before the Revolution by a wealthy Cuban doctor as a duck-shooter's paradise. To encourage the duck to return after the Sunday slaughter it was a rule of the owner that 700 lbs of rice be spread on the water every Sunday morning. The lagoon is now Government-owned and is reserved for the pleasure of ministers, Army commanders and the like. The Sunday-feeding rule is strictly maintained and the equivalent of a week's ration for 140 average Cuban families goes on the water every week. (This report is hearsay, but probably correct.)

The Bus Driver before and after the Revolution

A recent Ministry of Transport poster contrasts in two pictures the relations of the Havana bus driver with his passengers before and after the Revolution. The captions

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