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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. McCone'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 BEARING 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 Mr. 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 Moscow 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 MRBMs and IRBMs 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 plummets - 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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