

Agency Information

AGENCY : ARMY
RECORD NUMBER : 198-10009-10079
RECORD SERIES : CALIFANO PAPERS
AGENCY FILE NUMBER :

Released under the John
F. Kennedy
Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992
(44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 55355 Date:
11-24-2017

Document Information

ORIGINATOR :
FROM :
TO : SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

TITLE : MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE - APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS: MR.
MCNAMARA VERSUS MR. MCCONE

DATE : 00/00/0000
PAGES : 12

SUBJECTS :
MCCONE, JOHN
MCNAMARA, ROBERT
SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA - FROG MISSILES

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : Secret
RESTRICTIONS : 1B
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 04/21/1998

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : Califano Papers, Box 6, Folder 3. Memo to the Secretary of Defense re: apparent contradictions made
in statements by McNamara and McCone concerning Frog missiles in Cuba.

JFK Ray:ccw
Department of the Army EO 13526
☒ Declassify ☐ Exclude ☐ Exempt
Authority _____
☐ Refer To _____
Review Date 19940615 By 121169 C/M/ho

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Apparent Contradictions: Mr. McNamara versus Mr. McCone

In response to your request, attached are three separate papers addressing the three apparent contradictions concerning FROG missiles, the "static situation," and submarine bases.

Each of these papers presents in sequence the relevant statements or testimony with an indication of source, the facts pertinent to the testimony as provided by DIA, and a brief conclusion. Some statements by Mr. Hughes of DIA have been included since these statements are used as a reference point in your subsequent statements.

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APPARENT FROG MISSILE CONTRADICTION

STATEMENTS:

Mr. McNamara

Mr. Hughes: (Briefing)

This photograph was taken of the LaBoca Pier area (Mariel) on 27 Dec 62. Again our aircraft are sweeping back and forth and observed this Soviet ship moving into the harbor area from out in the ocean sector, at that time, we also observed parked at dockside 10 probable frog missile transporters along with their support equipment. This ship pulled in, this equipment was apparently loaded, and moved away from the LaBoca area. This is one of the first photographs that we have firming up at least the fact that some of the Soviet tactical rocket forces have departed the island.

(p. 34 - Special Cuba Briefing)

Mr. McNamara:

Recently, our reconnaissance has revealed that certain equipment of these Soviet combat forces, namely that associated with the tactical rocket units, has also started to be moved out of the island back to the Soviet Union.

(p. 36 - Special Cuba Briefing)

Mr. McCone

Mr. Kendall:

Mr. McNamara said also, I believe, Mr. McCone, that the frog missiles were being sent back to Russia. There has been no previous mention by anyone that any of these have been shipped out. What is your position on this?

Mr. McCone:

Some six weeks ago, we noted that ten or 12 frog missile launchers were on the dock at Mariel, I believe, and presumably were loaded on a ship. We continued to carry the number of missiles, of frog missiles, and launchers, in Cuba that I mentioned yesterday, which the range is 24 to 32.

Mr. Cline:

That is the missiles themselves.

Mr. McCone:

Those are the missiles themselves.

Mr. Kendall:

Have you ever carried more than that estimate?

Mr. McCone:

I do not believe so, no.
(p. 93-Testimony before Stennis Committee)

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John Scali, ABC:

Mr. Secretary, you said that certain equipment associated with the remaining Soviet forces has started to move out. Can you give us some details on that and what you think it means?

Mr. McNamara:

Yes, I don't wish to over-emphasize this point, I don't wish to mislead you into thinking that there are clear indications that the four Soviet combat forces which I described as having on the order of 1,200 men apiece, roughly 5,000 in total, are at the present time moving out of Cuba. But it is a fact that certain of the equipment formerly assigned to those forces, specifically certain of the rocket equipment has been moved out of Cuba. What this implies for the future, I can't state.

(p. 39, Special Cuba Briefing)

FACTS:

On 6 November 1962 low-level photography revealed five probable frog missile transporters and two probable frog missile launchers at the Remedios Military Camp. On 9 November 1962, a sixth probable transporter was sighted. Based on these figures, plus the existence of four such major Soviet military camps, it was estimated that from 24 to 32 frog missiles were probably in Cuba (assuming 3 or 4 missiles per launcher). Subsequent analysis of all photography to date fails to reveal any

definitive count of frog missiles in Cuba or any indication of outshipment of frog missiles. Therefore, the estimate of between 24 and 32 frog missiles in Cuba remains the best figure. It should be noted that this is an estimate not a count. The estimate is based upon what was seen by photography coupled with knowledge of Soviet organization and practice.

On 28 December 1962 high-level photography revealed ten probable frog missile transporters on the dock at Mariel. No frog missiles or frog missile launchers were detected. A Soviet merchant ship was simultaneously photographed approaching the dock at Mariel on which these transporters were detected. Photography on 29 December 1962 revealed no frog missile transporters or associated equipment on the dock at Mariel but the merchant ship had not departed. Whether the transporters were loaded aboard this vessel and placed in the hold or whether the merchant vessel unloaded additional frog missiles which were transported by the ten transporters to some other location in Cuba, we do not know. The presumption by CIA and the Watch Committee was that the transporters were loaded aboard the ship. (Based upon arrangement of transporters.)

CONCLUSIONS:

The estimate of 24 to 32 frog missiles was made on 9 November 1962 and remains unchanged.

Mr. Kendall refers to Frog Missiles being shipped out, Mr. McCone refers to Frog Missile Launchers presumably loaded on a ship, and Mr. McNamara refers to Equipment Associated with Tactical Rocket Units started to be moved out. CIA and the Watch Committee presume that the Frog Missile Transporters were loaded aboard ship.

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APPARENT STATIC SITUATION CONTRADICTION

STATEMENTS:

Mr. McNamara

Mr. Hughes:

...Along with this equipment removed from Cuba, we estimated that 5,000 Soviet soldiers and technicians have also departed the island. Remaining in Cuba, therefore, are the defensive weapons systems shown here at their deployed locations, along with the approximately 17,000 Soviet troops and technicians.

(p. 32 - Special Cuba Briefing, 6 Feb 63)

Mr. McNamara:

In summary, then, ladies and gentlemen, we have recorded the entry of Soviet offensive weapons systems into Cuba and we have reported the introduction into Cuba of a substantial quantity of Soviet military personnel and Soviet military equipment, defensive arms. Soviet military personnel on the island, including technicians increased, we believe, to a total of approximately 22,000 by roughly the 1st of November. That total, as Mr. Hughes reported to you,

Mr. McCone

Mr. Kendall:

Mr. McNamara also indicated that he considered Cuba to be a lessening military threat since military people and equipment are being moved out. I think this is a direct quote, "There appears to be some continuing movement out." This is contrary to the information at least I have. My information is that after the missiles and the IL-28s were moved out, with the reduction that you have indicated to 5,000 personnel there has only been a rotation of people home and a continuing movement in of the supplies and spare parts and backup ammunition for such things as SA-2. Will you comment on that?

Mr. McCone:

Yes, sir, we observed the withdrawal of what appears to be about 5,000 men at the time that the MREMs and the IREMs

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has been reduced by the Disembarkation, removal of about 5,000 men from Cuba and their shipment to the Soviet Union, leaving a total of about 17,000 Soviet military personnel including technicians in Cuba today.

(p. 35 - Special Cuba Briefing, 6 Feb 63)

Question: (Unidentified - Believed to be

Ann Bordone, Northern Virginia Sun)

Mr. Secretary, I gather from what you say that in recent weeks Cuba has become less of a military threat to the United States than it was at the time right after the crisis, after the missiles and the bombers were removed, less of a threat in the sense of, I think you said, 5,000 Russians had returned to the homeland.

It is a lessening threat to the United States, from what I gather.

Secretary McNamara:

Cuba is a lessening military threat to the extent that the military personnel of the Soviet Union and their equipment are being removed. As you point out, 5,000 Soviet military personnel have moved out in the last eight or nine weeks, and there appears to be some continuing movement out. What the future holds, I can't say.

(p. 50 - Special Cuba Briefing, 6 Feb 63)

and the bombers were removed. It is assumed that this personnel are the ones that were in charge of these units and responsible for them, and also possible some collateral support and security forces in connection with those particular weapons systems,

The removal of the troops occurred almost concurrently with the removal of the equipment.

Now, since then we have observed what we feel is a relatively static situation with, as I said yesterday, with some rotation. We are continually getting intercepts, one as recently as yesterday, speaking of going home, but we interpret this from our observation as rotational rather than a withdrawal.

Senator Stennis:

If counsel would yield just there, Mr. McNamara, that very point there, about the Secretary saying it was a lessening, here are his exact words as quoted here in the morning paper, "A lessening military threat." We have a rule in the courtroom that we won't call on one witness to pass on the

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validity of another witness' testimony, that is for the judge or the jury to decide, and particularly we wouldn't want you to have to pass on Mr. McNamara's testimony.

But how could there be such a difference in your testimony? Do you have access to the same facts?

Mr. McCone:

Yes.

Senator Stennis:

Yourself?

Mr. McCone:

Yes, we have access to the same facts. It is a matter of judgement.

Senator Stennis:

A matter of judgement only?

Mr. McCone:

I have expressed by views and I think, Mr. Chairman, you will have to ask Mr. McNamara how he reached his conclusions.

Senator Stennis:

It is highly commendable that you did and I was avoiding any personal conflict between you.

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Mr. McCone:

None what so ever.

Senator Stennis:

I say I was avoiding the interference in the record or even in the Committee but this is a matter of judgement and you certainly don't see any lessening of the military strength after the withdrawal of the 5,000.

(pp. 93-95, Testimony Stennis Committee)

FACTS:

Since the departure of the last contingent of the IL-28 bombers and the personnel accompanying them, we have observed no significant change in Soviet military forces in Cuba. There have been some small shipments of military-associated transport and a number of large crates which could contain additional coastal defense cruise missiles arriving in Cuba. However, there have been no major changes in the personnel situation. Mr. McCone's statement that, "We are continually getting intercepts, one as recently as yesterday, speaking of going home, but we interpret this from our observation as rotational rather than a withdrawal," is confirmed as essentially the interpretation of the Intelligence community. On this basis we would consider the present situation as one of neither build-up nor reduction but rather static.

Regarding Mr. McNamara's statement concerning, "A lessening military threat," from the standpoint of offensive capabilities against the United States as currently known and estimated by the Intelligence community, this would be a correct statement, with the removal of the offensive MRBMs and the IL-28 bombers, the military threat of Cuba vis-a-vis the United States is less than it was prior to this action on the part of the Soviet Union. However, there is no definitive evidence to show that this is

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a continuing movement but rather that it has been completed.

CONCLUSIONS:

The statement concerning "A lessening military threat" in the context of offensive capabilities against the United States as currently known and estimated is a correct statement. (Less than prior to the removal of the MRBMs and IL-28 bombers.)

There is no definitive evidence to show that this is a continuing movement but rather that the movement has been completed.

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APPARENT SUBMARINE BASE CONTRADICTION

STATEMENTS:

Mr. McNamara

Question: (Unidentified Source)

Mr. Secretary, are there any sea-based offensive weapons of the Polaris type or others operating in and around Cuba?

Secretary McNamara:

No, and I think perhaps what you have in mind is that there are recurring rumors that the Soviets have established submarine bases on the shores of Cuba, bases which might presumably be used for submarines carrying missiles. We have no evidence whatsoever that such bases have been established. As a matter of fact, we have positive evidence that they have not been.

(p. 44 - Special Cuba Briefing, 6 Feb 63)

Mr. McCone

Mr. McCone:

We know of no submarines in the vicinity of Cuba at the present time. In October there were four submarines that we had under surveillance that were west of the Azores, and a mother ship in the vicinity of the Azores which we likewise had under surveillance.

They are building a harbor under the cover of a fishing trawler harbor. I have no doubt but what they will install in Cuba facilities for the maintenance of submarines.

The Soviet nuclear submarine fleet and its missile launching fleet is growing, as you know, and it would be very convenient for them to have a place to operate out of.

The Soviet communications link between Moscow and the Havana consists of two links which have been installed since the 20th of October. One appears to support the Soviet Naval operations and the other links the Soviet minister of defense with

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the commander of the Soviet forces
in Cuba.

These are very ominous and important
developments, in my opinion.

(From the Inclosure to Memorandum to
the President from Mr. McCone dtd
7 Feb 63 which lists Mr. McCone's
public and private statements.)

Mr. Kendall:

Now, on the question of submarine
base capability in Cuba, Mr. McNamara
was quite emphatic that there was none
and, as I recall, it was your judgement
that the developments of such bases
was either in being or very probably
for the future.

Can you verify your position on that?

Mr. McCone:

Yes, I think my position was that
there appears to be under construction
a marine base the announced purpose of
which was to service fishing trawlers and
similar ships but I had no doubt but
what it would and could serve as a sub-
marine servicing base; that the existence
of such a base would be highly desirable.

However, we cannot say absolutely
that that particular base is to be a

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submarine base.

(p. 101 - Testimony Stennis Committee)

FACTS:

The joint Moscow-Havana announcement of the signing of an agreement to construct "a fishing port" capable of handling a large number of fishing trawlers and the facilities for processing the catch caused considerable apprehension and speculation within the intelligence community as to the real purpose of this port. It was speculated that such a facility could be used as a base for servicing Soviet submarines at sea, we have no evidence that this is the intended purpose of the fishing port. Mr. McCone's statement that, "there appears to be under construction a marine base," is an unfortunate choice of words in that our information indicates that construction is due to begin in February 1963 and therefore the base could at best be only in the initial stages of construction. We have no evidence that work has actually started on this construction. At the present time we are unable to determine whether or not the fishing port could be used as a submarine base. At the request of DIA the Navy has undertaken a study to determine the suitability for using this fishing port or any other facility in Cuba as a submarine base. This study should be completed within the next week.

CONCLUSION:

There is no evidence that construction has started.

There is no evidence that the fishing port will be used as a submarine base.

We have not been able to determine whether the fishing port site could be used as a submarine base. (Study has been undertaken.)

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