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By Paul Scott

Washington, July 23: This week's visit of Soviet warships to Cuba is an integral part of Moscow's bold new forward strategy of positioning military forces in strategic areas of the world.

Under a secret agreement reached in 1968 with Premier Fidel Castro, the Russians obtained naval and air base rights in Cuba in exchange for a step-up of Soviet military and economic aid.

That's the dark heart of a report that Orlando Castro Hidalgo, a high-level Cuban intelligence officer who defected to the U.S. recently, has furnished American intelligence authorities.

Castro Hidalgo, no relation to the Cuban Premier, defected to the West from his post in the Cuban Embassy in Paris after Castro's secret police began an investigation of his and his wife's background.

One of the most important Cubans to defect in recent years, Castro Hidalgo has been a veritable gold mine of information on the behind-the-scenes working relation between the Communist leaders of Russia and Cuba.

In sharp contrast to the stories now being circulated here that Castro is souring on Russia, Castro Hidalgo has warned that the Cuban dictator is helping the Kremlin tighten its hold on the strategic Caribbean island.

Under the secret 1968 Soviet-Cuban accord, the Russians began sending additional technicians to Cuba to beef-up their force of 8,000 Soviet advisers, who stayed on after the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Main mission of the new army of Soviet technicians, Castro Hidalgo says, is to prepare and maintain naval and air bases for the Russian missile-firing ships, submarines, and planes which soon will be stationed on the strategic island.

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This new information confirms American naval intelligence reports that the Kremlin has decided to use Cuba as part of an advance network of military bases now being established around the world.

THE OUTWARD PUSH -- Long before the dramatic appearance of the Soviet fleet in Cuba this week, the Russians established new bases along the shores of the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and elsewhere around Africa.

The construction of shipyards at Bassra in Iraq and at Alexandria, Egypt, has extended the reach of Soviet sea and air power to the Suez Canal and Persian Gulf. This network is now being extended into Algeria.

With an eye to securing military control of the Indian Ocean, Moscow, has begun acquiring a foothold south of the Suez Canal in Yemen and Somalia. Additional bases are now being sought in India, Cambodia, and North Vietnam.

The Soviet master-plan, according to documents Castro Hidalgo has turned over to the U.S., calls for a link up of these Soviet bases to protect Russian forces operating in any part of the world, including Latin and Central America.

The acquisition of these bases, including the ones in Cuba, is part of Moscow's grand design to encircle Western Europe and the U.S. with permanent and floating bases in order to cut off the U.S. militarily and politically from its European NATO allies, forcing the withdrawal of American troops from the continent.

This outward movement of Soviet military power, according to Castro Hidalgo, will see an increase in both the militancy of national-liberation wars and movements and in direct strategic Soviet support for them in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

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Unless the U.S. works out comprehensive plans to deter this new Kremlin strategy, the anticipated result could be far-reaching Soviet hegemony over a substantial portion of the world's territory and population, U.S. intelligence officials warn.

INTELLIGENCE NETWORK -- Castro Hidalgo also furnished American officials with documents showing that Castro's intelligence service and secret police have been taken over by the Russians.

Known as General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), the Cuban spy and espionage service has received large amounts of money from Russia to extend its operations in Canada, Mexico, and at the United Nations headquarters in New York and Geneva.

This Soviet take over of Cuban intelligence operations is particularly significant in that the DGI is understood to have taken on many of the diplomatic activities formerly handled by the Cuban foreign service office.

Castro Hidalgo, a DGI operator in Paris, has furnished full details of how Cuban agents trained in Havana and Moscow during the past three years were infiltrated into the U.S. to make contact with militant student and negro organizations.

A number of these agents were sent to the U.S. as correspondents of Prensa Latina, the Cuban news service, to cover the United Nations. The government-owned news service is now run by the DGI and is used both by Moscow and Havana as an intelligence gathering organization throughout the world.

CARIBBEAN FLASHES -- Col. Francisco Caamano Deno, the leader of the unsuccessful 1965 Dominican Republic revolution, is now in Cuba. He arrived there after Che Guevara, the communist guerrilla leader, was gunned down in Bolivia in October, 1967. So far, the efforts of Castro to build Deno up as another Guevara haven't gotten off the ground.....If Panama's military has

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its way, Dr. Arnulfo Arias will never again serve as President. The nation's small but efficient National Guard deposed Dr. Arias last October -- only 10 days after he assumed the presidency. Army officials say the Harvard-educated physician will not be permitted to run for office of presidency again because of his communist ties.....The Bahamas may become the next independent nation in the Western Hemisphere. Lying off the east coast of Florida, the Atlantic Ocean island chain has a new Constitution which grants full internal self-government to the 2,700 islands and keys that make up the chain. Under the new Constitution, the Bahamas have a Commonwealth status with Great Britain retaining foreign affairs and defense responsibilities. Bahamian Prime Minister Lynden O. Pindling, leader of the islands' first black government, says: "This Constitution is probably the last before the people of the Commonwealth decide to go on to full nationhood." His target date for this move is 1973..Mexico's high-yield wheat varieties have turned the nation into a major exporter of the grain for the first time in 20 years. The famous high-production Mexican wheat is now being used in grain-deficient India and Pakistan, where it is brightening the agricultural outlook beyond anything dreamed of only a few years ago.....The Dominican Republic could become the first non-Commonwealth member of CARIFTA -- the tiny, but increasingly important Caribbean Free Trade Association. Its admission into CARIFTA, now composed entirely of English speaking islands, is now under consideration by the new group.

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