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TS No. 186421/63

23 November 1963

DCI BRIEFING NOTES -- CUBA

- I. The Castro regime has spared no effort to tighten its grip on Cuba, using the standard instruments of Communist control.**
 - A. In recent weeks the regime has stepped up its efforts to destroy the remnants of the middle class.**
 - 1. The confiscation of all remaining private farms larger than 167 acres was decreed on 4 October.**
 - a. Owners of smaller farms are being pushed toward collectivization.**
 - 2. It was in the context of one of Castro's attacks on the "parasites" (his term for members of the middle class) that he announced last July the impending establishment of obligatory military service.**
 - a. The military service law, which is to go into effect on 1 December, provides for unarmed labor battalions for the "rehabilitation" of non-sympathizers.**
 - 3. Labor is being subjected to increasingly stringent controls such as work norms and extended workweeks, in an effort to raise**

raising productivity.

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II. Despite such totalitarian controls, trends since Castro's return from the USSR last June have been unfavorable to his interests.

- A. As indicated in our SNIE-85-3 of 15 November 1963, prospects for significant economic improvement, at least over the next few years, were becoming dim even before the hurricane struck in early October.
- B. Living conditions remain drab for the majority of the people a growing apathy and hopelessness among the people.
- C. The sporadic exile raids against Cuban targets have added to Castro's frustrations and have given heart to his domestic opponents.
- D. Finally, it is apparent that the Soviet Union has made clear to the Cuban leaders that there is a limit to the economic support which the Communist bloc is willing to give Cuba.
1. While we have not detected any decline in Soviet economic assistance, Castro has stressed publicly that Soviet assistance "cannot go on forever" and that Cubans must work harder.

III. Open resistance against the regime is still scattered and relatively ineffective.

- A. ~~But there has been an apparent recent increase in~~ incidents of industrial sabotage in various towns

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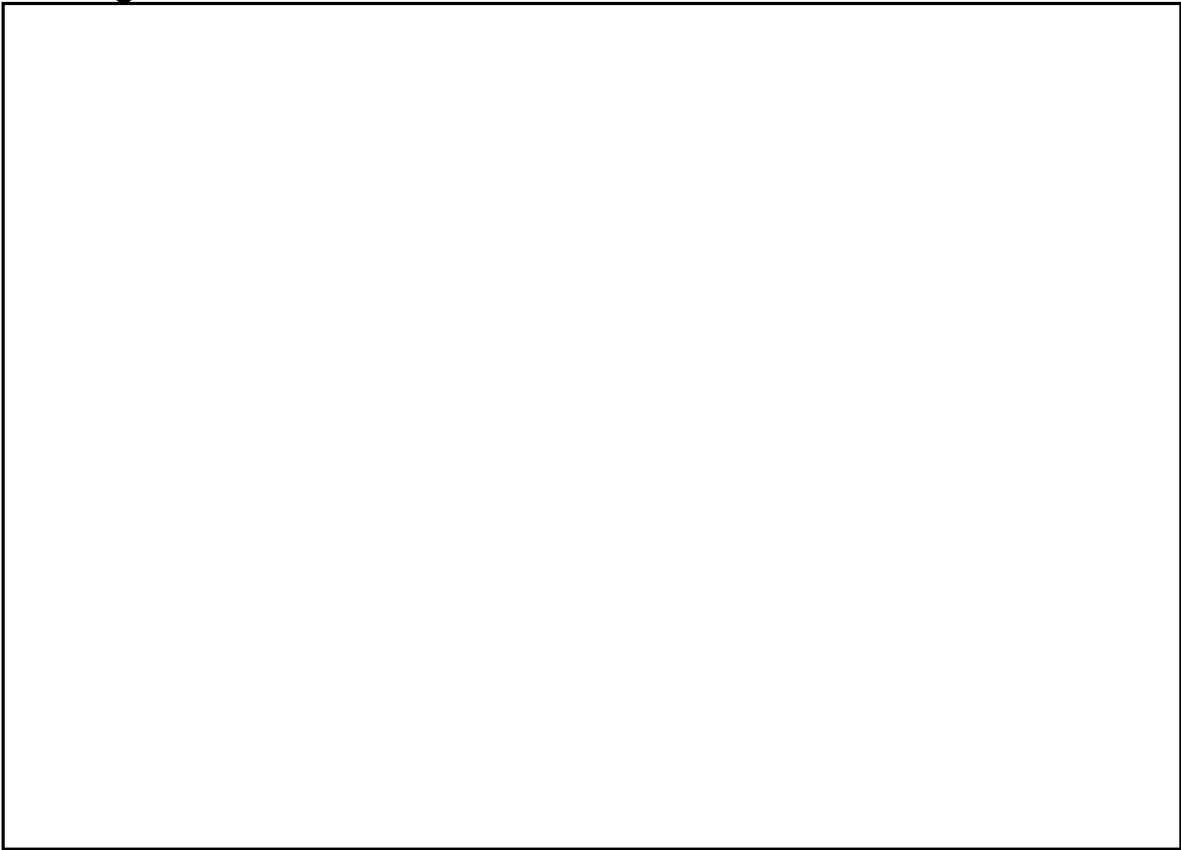
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and cities, particularly in western Cuba.

B. Labor unrest erupted into a rare demonstration of open resistance early last month when construction workers in Havana province staged a near revolt over regime efforts to move them to lower paying jobs.

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IV.



Castro's subversive efforts in the hemisphere have in recent weeks taken on an increased urgency.

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- A. Castro seems to feel the need of some dramatic new victory to restore the momentum of his revolution and there are strong indications that he thinks of revolutionary action elsewhere in Latin America in this context.
- B. The large cache of weapons of Cuban origin discovered in Venezuela on 1 November attests to the increased urgency of the Cuban effort and the fact that the Cubans are now taking risks of detection which they have tried to avoid in the past. (See Annex for details)
1. The arms cache--about three tons worth-- provides the most solid evidence of major Cuban support for Latin American subversives that has come to light in recent years.
 2. There is incontrovertible proof that at least some of the arms came from Cuba.

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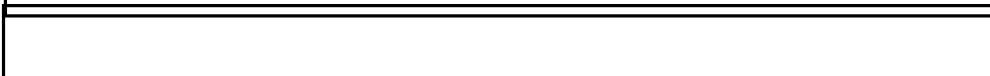
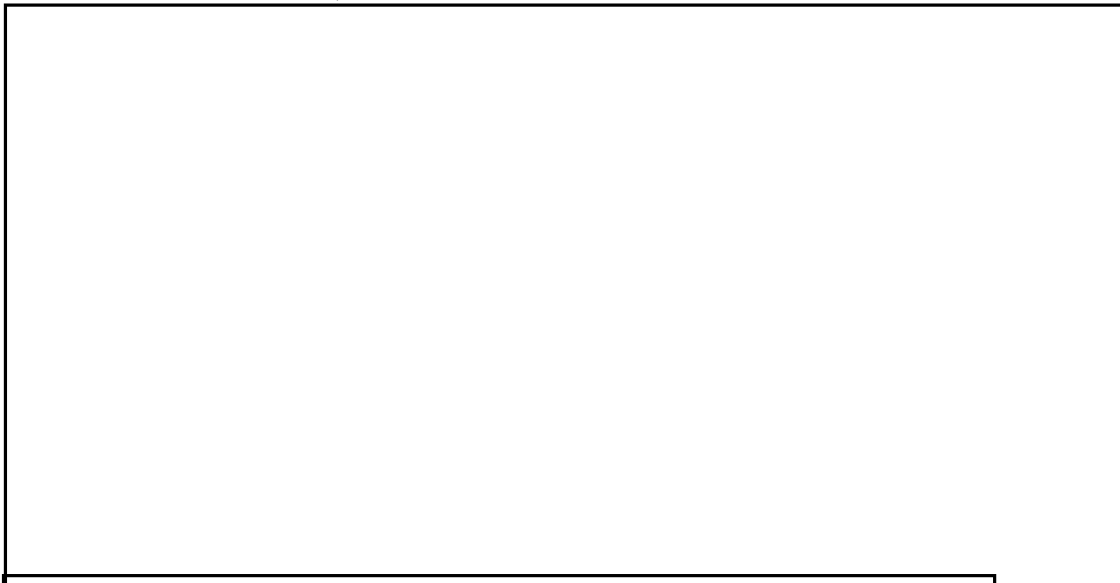
- V. Castro is not proving to be the docile Soviet puppet which Khrushchev may have expected after the unprecedented attentions accorded Castro in the USSR last spring.

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A. Castro's refusal to sign the test ban treaty has been a source of embarrassment to the Soviets who are evidently concerned over Chinese Communist influence in Cuba.

1. The ^{apparent} effort of the Chinese to upstage the Soviet Union in granting Cuba hurricane ~~apparent~~ competition between the Soviet Union and Communist disaster aid, token though it was, attests to the importance which the Chinese Communists attribute to Cuba in the Sino-Soviet dispute.
2. Cuba's opening of its embassy in Albania earlier this month suggests a Cuban effort to play Moscow off against Peiping.



still opposes Moscow-oriented Communists,

whether they be Cubans or Soviets, and hopes

that Cuba will be able to increase its

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"ideological freedom" from the USSR.

a. While Castro seems temperamentally more attuned to the Chinese line he is also aware of his economic and military dependence on the Soviet Union.

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2. he believes he is successfully curtailing the power and influence of pre-revolutionary Communists in Cuba as he develops his own form of Communism.
3. In organizing his new political machine, the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS), Castro is dropping many of the pre-revolutionary Communists who had been influential in the political organization that is being replaced by the PURS.
4. The PURS, composed of some 30,000 members of the "revolutionary elite", is being developed along standard Communist lines, but its membership is being carefully selected for loyalty to Castro.

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VI. The Soviet military forces in Cuba have been greatly reduced since the missile crisis, and are now primarily engaged in training Cubans to maintain and operate Soviet equipment.

A. We estimate that 15-18,000 Soviet military personnel have been withdrawn since the crisis, leaving about 4-7,000 in Cuba.

B. Most of the Soviet equipment remaining in Cuba after the withdrawal of the strategic missiles and jet bombers has been turned over to the Cubans.



C. As Cuban proficiency in handling Soviet equipment increases, further withdrawals of Soviet personnel will probably take place.

D. The regular Cuban armed forces are well-equipped, but inexperienced.

1. We estimate that they number less than 100,000.

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