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29 October 1963

BRIEFING FOR SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SOVIET FORCES IN CUBA

- I. More than two thirds of the Soviet military personnel who were in Cuba at the time of the missile crisis a year ago now have been withdrawn.
 - A. We estimate that at least 13,000--and probably closer to 16,000--have left Cuba. Most of these have been withdrawn since mid-February.
 - B. We continue to find no verifiable evidence that more than a few hundred military personnel have arrived since last October.
 - C. We believe that 5,000 to 7,000 Soviets remain in Cuba.
 1. The Soviets still control and operate the surface-to-air missile system. Altogether there may be 3,000 to 4,000 Soviets in the air defense system.
 2. Most of the remainder are advisers and technicians, training Cubans, and supervising the use and maintenance of the equipment the Soviets have turned over to Castro.

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3. No identifiable Soviet ground combat units remain on the island.

II. All the Soviet weapons introduced into Cuba during the military buildup in the summer of 1962 have been withdrawn or turned over to the Cubans, with the exception of the surface-to-air missile system, and perhaps the cruise missiles and the FROGs. (Free Rocket Over Ground)

A. This adds up to a continuing Soviet effort to improve Castro's independent military capabilities, putting him in shape to deal with internal dissidence and any threats from outside short of full-scale invasion.

1. Cubans have taken over the 42 MIG-21 fighters, and 12 KOMAR-class guided missile boats, and the more than 100 T-54 heavy tanks from the former Soviet armored camps.
2. They received six more fast torpedo patrol boats last summer, particularly useful for dealing with hit-and-run commando raids.

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- B. By the middle of next year, the Cubans probably will be trained to operate all the remaining Soviet weapons, including the surface-to-air missiles.
1. Enough Cubans to operate the whole SAM missile system are completing their classroom training now. They are to begin six months of operational field training in November.
 2. Cubans began training with the coastal defense cruise missiles some months ago. There are some indications that this weapon system may already have been transferred to Cuban control.
 3. The FROG tactical rockets have been moved from the former Soviet armored camps at Artemisa and Remedios to the camp at Santiago de las Vegas.
 - (a) This could be preparation either for training Cuban crews, or for shipping the FROGs back to the USSR--we don't know.
- C. Some communications and radar equipment has been shipped back to the USSR.

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1. In particular, some of the most modern radar equipment at the SAM sites has been sent home and replaced by an older model--another sign that the Soviets plan to turn the system over to the Cubans.
2. We have seen no evidence of the return of any combat weapons to the USSR since the strategic missiles and bombers were pulled out a year ago.

III. Only seven shiploads of general military supplies and equipment have been delivered from the USSR to Cuba since the October crisis.

- A. This compares with 125 shiploads during the three-month military buildup in the summer of 1962.
- B. The volume is about what would be expected for maintenance and resupply.
- C. We have seen no types of weapons or equipment that were not present a year ago, except for some helicopters and these P-4 torpedo boats.

IV. As Cuban proficiency increases, there will probably be further withdrawals of Soviet personnel.

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- A. Some Soviet SAM personnel might leave to make room for Cubans beginning their operational field training next month.
- B. Additional naval personnel--possibly from the coastal defense cruise missile system--are scheduled to leave this week.
- C. Ultimately there may be nothing left but a Soviet military assistance and technical advisory establishment.

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