

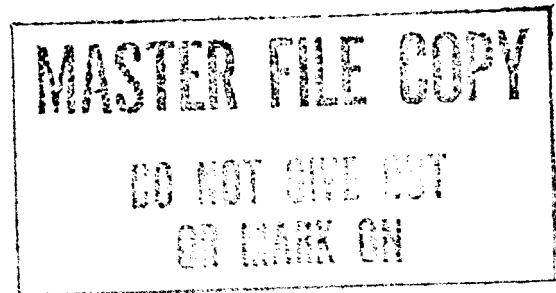


Cuban Involvement in Narcotics and Terrorism



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A Conference Report



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Intelligence**

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Cuban Involvement in Narcotics and Terrorism

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A Conference Report

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
[redacted] Terrorism Branch, Instability and
Insurgency Center, Office of Global Issues, with
substantial contributions by [redacted] National
Intelligence Council, Central Intelligence Agency,
and by the Drug Enforcement Administration.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, International Terrorism Branch,
[redacted]

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The report was coordinated with the National
Intelligence Council and the Directorate of
Operations. [redacted]

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**Cuban Involvement
in Narcotics and Terrorism** [redacted]

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Summary

Information gathered [redacted] through the arrest of known narcotics traffickers indicates that Cuba has facilitated narcotics trafficking in the Caribbean region for at least two years. [redacted] the Castro regime developed a relationship with a key Colombian drug trafficker who, on Cuba's behalf, purchased arms and smuggled them to a Cuban-backed insurgent group in Colombia. In return the trafficker received safe passage for ships carrying marijuana and other drugs through Cuban waters to the United States.

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Given the involvement of senior Cuban officials and at least two Cuban embassies, we believe this activity was approved at the highest levels of the Cuban Government. It almost certainly was not a case of corruption of mid- or low-level Cuban officials.

Despite the potential for profit in drug trafficking, we doubt that Havana's initial motivation was related to its current hard currency problems. The Castro regime's harsh and immediate denunciation of published accounts of its link to the Colombian drug smuggler underscores Havana's acute sensitivity to anything that tarnishes its international image. It also suggests that the Cubans are—as they have been consistently in the past—unwilling to jeopardize plausible deniability by deep involvement in the drug business.

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[redacted] the Cuba-drug trafficker connection is of relatively recent vintage and [redacted] Havana has developed such contacts in an effort to support insurgent groups abroad. By dealing with experienced drug smugglers, Havana availed itself of an established logistic apparatus to move contraband efficiently and secretly. Use of a third party also offered Cuban deniability in the event of disclosure. [redacted]

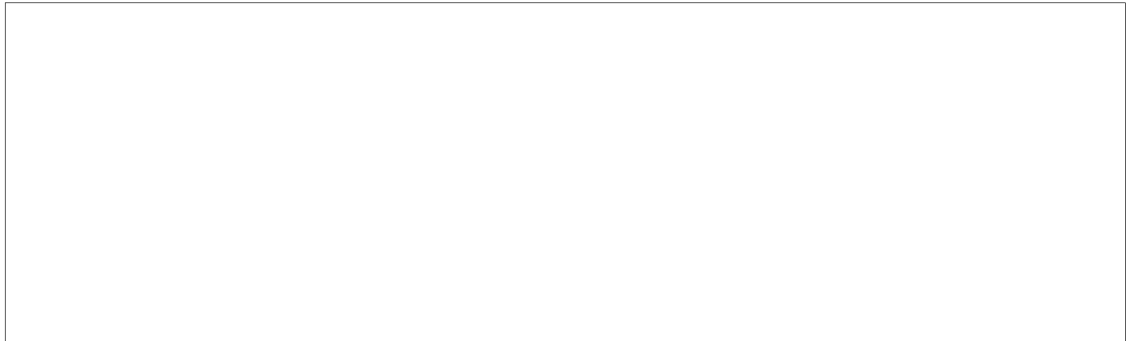
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*Information available as of 12 July 1982
has been used in the preparation of this report.*

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Preface

Information [redacted] since late 1981 links Cuba with known Colombian narcotics traffickers and the illicit movement of arms and ammunition to the April 19 Movement (M-19) terrorist organization in Colombia. The Central Intelligence Agency convened the Conference on Cuban Involvement in Narcotics and Terrorism in April 1982 to examine and assess the information, to formulate judgments regarding Cuban involvement, and to identify information gaps and subsequent operational and analytic requirements. Representatives from the following agencies participated: Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Drug Enforcement Administration, Secret Service, Customs Service, and Coast Guard.

The conference considered the problem in three main parts: evidence of Cuban involvement in narcotics, terrorism, and illicit arms movement in the Caribbean region; Cuban policy, attitudes, and motivations regarding this activity; and US policy interests. This Conference Report presents the evidence and findings of the first two parts of the conference.

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**Cuban Involvement
in Narcotics and Terrorism** [Redacted]

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The Guillot and Crump Cases

Since 1978 the US Government has been exploring Cuban links to narcotics traffic in the Caribbean, particularly that originating in Colombia. During the period of 1980-82, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) obtained several reports of varying reliability that indicate Cuban ties to drug smugglers.

[Redacted]

The first concrete evidence of Cuban involvement in narcotics trafficking, as well as of a Cuban narcotics-terrorism-gun running nexus, was gained from the arrests of Colombian narcotics traffickers Jaime Guillot Lara in Mexico City (November 1981) and Juan Lazaro "Johnny" Crump in Miami (January 1982). Information provided by the two men complemented earlier reports from DEA informants and other sources in the Caribbean region.

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At this juncture, Guillot appears to have been the key to the connection. Guillot is a native Colombian from Santa Marta, the capital of Magdalena Department on the North Coast, a major smuggling region on the Caribbean side of Colombia. He is a career smuggler who has trafficked in cocaine, marijuana, and quaaludes since at least 1976, according to more than 75 DEA case files.

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[Redacted]

According to Crump, the Cubans gave him permission in 1980 to refuel in Cuba aircraft used for smuggling.

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[Redacted]

Guillot began his trafficking activities under official Cuban protection during the summer of 1980. Under Guillot's agreement with Cuban officials, his motherships traveled from Colombia to Cuban waters where they awaited feeder boats from Florida and the Bahamas. When the smaller boats arrived, the mothership moved into international waters, unloaded the narcotics, and then returned to Cuban safe haven. Crump has indicated that during 1980-81 Guillot's vessels made almost monthly shipments to the United States using Cuban safe havens.

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On at least one occasion,

[Redacted]

Ravelo intervened on Guillot's behalf and obtained the release of a mothership detained by the Cubans. The ship went on to deliver 5 million quaaludes to Miami.

[Redacted]

Guillot's motherships were granted refueling rights and used waters near the Cuban Coast Guard base on the North Coast across from Andros Island.

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The Terrorism-Narcotics-Gun Running Nexus

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[Redacted]

in exchange for facilitating narcotics shipments to the United States, Guillot paid the Cubans in hard currency and used his vessels and smuggling network to move arms into Colombia.

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<p>Guillot's hard currency payments to the Cubans apparently totaled several hundred thousand dollars per shipment. [redacted] the Cubans charged \$10 per pound of marijuana for safe haven transit and that Guillot paid \$200,000 for one shipment in 1981. Crump has reported that the Cubans charged Guillot \$500,000 to \$800,000 per trip and that, because some of Guillot's shipments were seized by US authorities, which deprived Guillot of payments, Guillot owed the Cubans about \$8 million.</p>	<p>Bassols regarding a cocaine deal and further procurement of arms for M-19. Crump indicated that, at this time, he was under Cuban instructions to procure arms in Miami for shipment by Guillot.</p>	25X1
[redacted]	<p>Presumably concerned that Colombian authorities were aware of his activities because of earlier seizures of his arms-laden ships off the Colombian coast, Guillot, [redacted] met with two Cuban military officers at the Nicaraguan Embassy in Mexico City on 24 November. The Cubans reportedly provided Guillot with a large sum of money for living expenses and obtaining Mexican documentation and legal assistance.</p>	25X1
<p>According to Guillot, his involvement in gun running to terrorists on behalf of Cuba began in January 1981. Under instructions from M-19 terrorist group member Ivan Ospina, Guillot met with M-19 leader Jaime Bateman and Cuban diplomat Bassols in Panama to arrange for Guillot's receipt of an arms shipment for M-19. Guillot revealed to DEA authorities that he had known Bateman since childhood and had been associated with Ospina since the late 1970s, when Guillot served as an M-19 courier. Bateman told Guillot that he had been chosen for the mission because of his familiarity with the Guajira region of Colombia, where the arms were to be transported, and because of his participation in an arms purchase for the M-19 during the fall of 1980.</p>	<p>[redacted] the Cubans offered Guillot political asylum at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City, should he need sanctuary.</p>	25X1
<p>[redacted] Bassols provided Guillot \$1 million in the fall of 1981 to purchase arms in the United States for the M-19. Guillot confessed to Mexican authorities that on 16 October he traveled to the Colombian port of Dibulla, where his boat Zar de Honduras had arrived with part of the arms cargo. The arms had been transferred to the Zar from the Karina off the coast of Panama. From Dibulla the arms were trucked to a clandestine airstrip, where they were guarded by M-19 members until 14 November. Then the M-19, using a hijacked Aeropesca cargo aircraft, transported them to the Orteguzza River in the Colombian Department of Caqueta. On the same day, the Colombian Navy sank the Karina, with the remaining arms on board, off the west coast of Colombia. On 25 November the Zar was seized.</p>	<p>On 25 November Mexican authorities arrested Guillot on immigration charges.</p>	25X1
[redacted]	[redacted]	25X1
<p>[redacted] Guillot met with Bateman in Managua, Nicaragua, in early November, and then traveled to Mexico City, where he met with</p>	<p>[redacted] Crump was arrested in Miami in January 1982 on an immigration charge.</p>	25X1
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<p>Following Guillot's arrest, Colombian authorities requested that Mexico extradite him to Colombia. Mexico rejected the request on the grounds that it did not meet Mexican legal standards. A subsequent request has been submitted and is being processed through the Mexican courts.</p>	<p>Cuban Involvement in Terrorism Cuba, in addition to serving as the role model for insurgent groups in Latin America, has provided guidance and encouragement to revolutionaries throughout the world, as well as political and paramilitary training in Cuba.</p>	25X1
<p>[redacted] Havana has given logistic support and training for both the M-19 and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Colombia's two predominant terrorist groups. Cuba also serves as sanctuary for Colombian insurgents.</p>	[redacted]	25X1
[redacted]	[redacted]	25X1

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The strongest Cuban-Colombian connection has been with the M-19—a predominantly Marxist-Leninist, urban-based group, numbering 1,000 to 1,500—whose goal is to overthrow the elected government of Colombia. The leader of the M-19, Jaime Bateman, has publicly admitted receiving training in Cuba and the Soviet Union, [redacted] other M-19 members have been trained in Cuba as well as in Libya. [redacted]

capitalist decadence. Domestic enforcement has been vigorous and has stressed repression rather than rehabilitation. Cuban authorities have traditionally cracked down hard on smugglers who strayed into Cuban territory. Most aircraft and ships seeking safe haven have been searched thoroughly, and, in some cases, their crews have been jailed simply on suspicion of transporting illegal cargoes. [redacted]

Although the M-19 gained fame from a number of daring urban operations over the last 10 years, it has enjoyed only limited success recently. When some 165 Cuban-trained M-19 insurgents landed in northern Colombia in February and March 1981, they were intercepted by Colombian military forces and most were captured or killed. Other M-19 operations in Caqueta Department in southern Colombia also were countered by the government. More than 100 insurgents, some Cuban trained, surrendered to the military forces, and substantial amounts of arms and supplies were seized last October. M-19 activity along the Pacific Coast has increased since January, reportedly because of the small-scale infiltrations of Cuban-trained insurgents. [redacted]

We do not know who in the Cuban Government controlled the Guillot operation or whether similar arrangements have been made with other traffickers. Given the level of Guillot's Cuban contacts and the political implications of the arrangements, the operation was almost certainly approved at the highest levels of the Havana government. If the Guillot affair were simply a case of corruption by local or midlevel security officials in Cuba, it is unlikely that the Cuban Embassies in Bogota and Mexico City and officers from the America Department of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee would have been involved. Moreover, senior Cuban officials receive ample material benefits from the state, and Cuba offers few expensive attractions that would absorb such enormous proceeds. [redacted]

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The FARC, the oldest and largest of Colombia's terrorist groups, has maintained links to the Central Executive Committee of the Colombian Communist Party since the 1960s, [redacted] Membership is estimated at between 1,500 and 2,000. FARC leader Pedro Antonio Marin has links to Cuba, Libya, and the Soviet Union. [redacted]

Because much of the evidence of Cuban involvement comes from apprehended traffickers, we have no direct information regarding Cuban motivations. However, several possible motivations were examined at the conference. [redacted]

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The Cubans, [redacted] have encouraged Colombian guerrilla groups to unify their activities and work toward a joint plan of action, but M-19 and FARC leaders apparently have not overcome traditional differences in operations and goals. [redacted]

Plausible Denial. Use of established contraband facilities to transport arms to insurgent and terrorist organizations allows the Cubans to support revolution while maintaining plausible denial. [redacted]

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Cuban Policy and Motivations Regarding Narcotics Trafficking

The Guillot case represents the first solid evidence we have obtained of Cuban Government involvement in narcotics trafficking. The Castro government has traditionally taken a puritanical stance on narcotics use, viewing it as symptomatic of moral weakness and

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The Cubans have an interest in being able to deny their part in such operations. In the case of Colombia, Havana maintains diplomatic relations with Bogota, and the Cubans probably felt compelled to deny that they had transported the arms seized in the capture of the M-19 guerrillas in 1981 by the Colombian Army. Havana also flatly denied knowledge of Guillot's activity when allegations of the Cuba-Guillot connection appeared in the *Miami Herald* in early 1982.

[redacted]

Finances and Leverage. Given the volume of narcotics transiting the area surrounding Cuba and the fees reportedly charged Guillot, DEA estimates that such arrangements could generate as much as \$100 million annually. While such an amount would do little to mitigate Cuba's serious economic problems, it could fund insurgents' purchases of munitions and equipment for Latin American insurgents. [redacted]

Some conference participants also suggest that revenues could be used to create slush funds for intelligence or large-scale covert insurgency and terrorist operations, although we do not have specific evidence that Havana has such plans. [redacted]

A less likely motivation is that, by increasing the flow of narcotics to the United States and thereby increasing US enforcement problems, Havana could offer to reduce the flow as a bargaining chip in bilateral negotiations with the United States. To exploit this, however, Cuba would have to acknowledge involvement with narcotics traffickers and gun runners, a concession that Havana might view as too costly. [redacted]

[redacted]

If substantial added revenues and leverage on Washington are, in fact, motivating Havana, Cuba would have to maintain such arrangements over an extended period. A decision to increase support to insurgents in Latin America while facing a hard currency squeeze at home could encourage other Guillot-type arrangements. [redacted]

Aftermath

The Cubans have not yet been markedly damaged by the Guillot case.² Following US revelations of Cuban links to Guillot, the Cuban Government publicly announced its termination of the agreement with the United States to cooperate in apprehending traffickers in and around Cuban-claimed waters. The arrangement had provided for exchanges of information on such matters as search and rescue, illicit trafficking, and navigational hazards. According to the US Coast Guard, however, such cooperation had in effect ended in 1980 during the Mariel refugee exodus. The Cubans may believe that termination of this arrangement will make US enforcement efforts more difficult and enhance prospects for Guillot-type operations.

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[redacted]

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We have no evidence as to the impact of Guillot's arrest on other Cuban M-19 arms smuggling deals. However, M-19 is doing badly in Colombia and may require fresh infusions of supplies, munitions, and trained manpower. M-19 failed to sabotage Colombian elections as it had publicly promised. Terrorist incidents throughout Colombia were down in April and May from the highs in March. In light of M-19's weakened condition, the Colombian Government in June terminated the state of siege, which had provided special counterterrorist powers to the military since 1975. [redacted]

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² On 12 March 1982, Assistant Secretary Enders delivered the most comprehensive public statement by the United States on such Cuban activities to a Congressional committee. [redacted]

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