

DDI/SOVA

19 February 1982

MEMORANDUM: Comments on NIC Memorandum "SS-20s and Cuba"

1. There is no evidence that SS-20 missiles have been or are being modified for tropical use.

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2. The other evidence cited in the memorandum is not related to SS-20s or any other missiles.

3. The Soviets are currently exercising other policy options to upset US INF plans. Some of these look promising to them now, and if they appeared less so in the future, other countermeasures entailing far less risk are available to them. They fully recognize that placing SS-20s in Cuba would invite US actions against a client they could not protect.

4. This NIC memorandum could perhaps be debated internally within CIA or the intelligence community, but it is clearly not suitable for presentation by the DCI before the National Security Council.

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**THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

**National Intelligence Council**

DDI #1339-82


17 February 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT : SS-20s and Cuba

As a first step in evaluating the thesis propounded in the attachment, I am soliciting your views. Unless dissuaded by your reactions, my next step will be to propose it as a Watch Committee agenda item and thereby initiate interagency deliberations.

  
Henry S. Rowen

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16 February 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, NIC

FROM

SUBJECT : SS-20s and Cuba

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1. Thesis.

I believe that the Soviets are positioning themselves to be able to deploy SS-20s to Cuba on short notice. The primary purposes of such a move, should they decide upon it, would be to prevent US INF deployment in Western Europe and to weaken the Atlantic alliance.

2. Supporting Evidence:

- A. SS-20s. They have been or are being modified for tropical climates, i.e., for deployment outside the USSR.
- B. Political Preparation: In discussions (most recently on ABC TV, Sunday, 14 February) Soviet representatives have been arguing that the 1962 Cuban missile crisis was resolved by having the USSR withdraw its missiles in exchange for a withdrawal of US IRBMs from Europe [redacted]
- C. Military Developments in Cuba: Over the last year the Soviets have upgraded their military representative to a 3-star general (vice 2 stars) [redacted] they have also increased their military deliveries to the Cuban forces, and given particular emphasis to Cuban air defense capabilities (*inter alia* by the delivery of SA-6 and additional MIG-23s, which improve the Cuban air defense capability no matter what their primary mission is.

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3. Analysis of Evidence.

The evidence does not point to a definite decision but suggests a pattern of actions designed to create the deployment capability. The modification of the SS-20 speaks for itself while the Soviet presentation of the alleged 1962 missile deal provides justification for reintroducing Soviet missiles into Cuba if the US proceeds with INF modernization. In Cuba, Soviet command and communications changes cannot be directly linked to SS-20 plans but would appear desirable if those missiles were to be deployed. The upgrading of Cuban military capabilities could be designed for three main purposes: (1) Improve Castro's sense of security and thus willingness to provide a deployment base for SS-20s; (2) Improve Cuban air defense capabilities and thus make any US air attack against missile bases (as was

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considered in 1962) all the more costly and less certain of success -- particularly against mobile missiles; (3) Have Castro satisfied with Soviet military support so that he does not have to be mollified post facto (as was the case in 1962) if a Soviet-US deal were to result in non-deployment or withdrawal.

4. Soviet Purpose.

In contrast with 1962, the Soviets do not have to search for a quick expedient in order to close their missile gap. While the deployment of missiles to Cuba would improve their current capability somewhat, I believe its primary purpose would be to support Soviet political and military ends in Europe. Deployment would create a political outcry in the States and face the administration with unpalatable choices: (1) Take military action in much less favorable circumstances than in 1962, risking both escalation and increased European fear of US adventurism; (2) accept a new deal which would make explicit the linkage between non-deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba in exchange for non-deployment of US missiles to Europe; such a deal would preserve the current Soviet military advantage in Europe. More important, it would be used to demonstrate to the West Europeans that US INF modernization plans were really intended to serve US (not European) strategic purposes and could be jettisoned unilaterally and at the expense of the allies in the US search for its own security -- i.e., widen the wedge between the US and Europe; or (3) Acquiesce, demonstrating both the US loss of power since 1962 and inability to match rhetoric with action, thereby doing incalculable damage to the US global geostrategic position.

5. Conclusion.

To repeat, I do not see SS-20 deployments as imminent but do believe that the Soviets are creating the military capability and the political justification for it. Such a move -- while associated with substantial risk -- would become more attractive to the Soviets if they were unable to stop INF modernization in some other way and if they saw NATO coming closer to a final decision point. Should the Soviets choose to move, warning time could be very small since previous military preparations would have been made and since SS-20s are not as easy to detect as the larger missiles of 1962. The implications of such a Soviet action would be so grave that I strongly recommend that: (1) my analysis be examined for its logic and (2) if that initial examination warrants, it be brought to the attention of policymakers for further consideration and development of a US counterstrategy.

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