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THE COUNSELOR
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

NSC review completed

January 20, 1982

TO: Admiral Inman
Assistant Secretary West
General Gorman
Admiral Nance
Mr. Fontaine

SUBJECT: Floggers in Cuba

Attached is the revised draft incorporating changes agreed to in yesterday's meeting. Please provide comments directly to Bob Blackwill (secure phone #5232) by 2:00 pm this afternoon. We will be distributing this paper to Principals this evening.


Ron Godard

Attachment:
As Stated.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THIRD DRAFT

OSD review completed

Subject: Responding to Floggers in Cuba

Issue

Renewed Soviet shipment of Flogger fighter aircraft to Cuba is a serious act in and of itself. It also is representative of a Cuban military buildup which is increasingly threatening our interests. We must respond on both accounts. This memorandum seeks your approval of a series of political, economic, and military measures which take account of the Flogger issue in the context of our broader strategy to counter Cuban interventionism and to meet the global challenge posed by the Soviets and their proxies.

Background

The arrival of eight Flogger crates is the first shipment since twelve MiG-23 ground attack fighter aircraft (Floggers) were delivered to Cuba in 1978. This recent delivery includes four trainers which may be a precursor to a significant upgrading of Cuba's offensive threat to the region. When Secretary Vance raised the MiG 23 issue with Dobrynin at the time of the 1978 deliveries, the Soviets insisted that the Floggers in Cuba could not carry nuclear weapons and had nothing to do with the 1962 Understandings.

SECRET /SENSITIVE
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SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 2 -

The last Administration responded that if the planes were not nuclear-capable, and if the quantity were limited, it would not regard them as constituting a threat. It added, both in Washington and Moscow, that an increase in the number of ground attack Mig-23s in Cuba would have a seriously adverse effect on US-Soviet relations.

Implications of Renewed Flogger Shipments

Military. The second shipment of Floggers in itself will not significantly enhance Cuban military capabilities. Although this model of aircraft can be quickly equipped to deliver nuclear weapons without detection by the US, we have no evidence that there are nuclear weapons in Cuba or that the Soviets intend to deploy nuclear weapons to Cuba. Considered in this light, we do not now face a crisis resembling the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

If the renewed shipment of Floggers is viewed as part of a continuing process of Cuban military modernization and expansion, however, the military implications are grave and go far beyond the immediate capabilities provided by these new aircraft:

- A Cuban Air Force modernized with multi-mission aircraft such as the Flogger could force us to upgrade substantially air defense capabilities in order to defend targets in the South-eastern United States and Central America, including the Panama

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 3 -

Canal. In addition, Cuba's enhanced anti-ship capability would threaten a substantial portion of US reinforcements which would go to Europe from Gulf coast ports in a NATO contingency.

● De facto US acceptance of additional Flogger deployments could open the door to further Soviet qualitative improvements in Cuban military capabilities (e.g., Foxbat aircraft, modern submarines, amphibious forces).

In sum, this Cuban military buildup already represents a substantial threat to US interests in the area and, if unchecked, would develop into an unacceptable capability to complicate our crisis management across the board. It could also lead to the Cubanization of Central America. Thus, we must take actions to try to reverse Cuba's military modernization, not least because if we eventually have to go to the source, each additional Soviet arms shipment to Cuba will make that definitive action on our part ever more costly in US blood and treasure.

Political. Whether or not it was intended as a direct Soviet challenge, the renewed shipment of Floggers -- after a 40 month hiatus and despite repeated US demarches about the arms buildup in Cuba -- almost certainly was a purposeful, premeditated act which the Soviets took in full recognition of the risks of a US reaction. Indeed, the USSR shipped to

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 4 -

Cuba in 1981 more military equipment than in any year since 1962: inter alia, besides the MiG 23s, some 20 MiG-21s, 4 air transports, 33 T-62 tanks, 30 armored personnel carriers, 16 medium artillery pieces, 100 anti-tank guns, a frigate, 2 torpedo boat hydrofoils, 2 missile attack boats, 3 minesweepers, as well as radars, missiles and guns for a major upgrade in Cuban air defenses. But whatever the Soviet motive in the latest Flogger shipments, the absence of an effective US response could be regarded by Moscow -- and by certain Latin American governments -- as American acquiescence in continuing Soviet augmentation of Cuban power projection capabilities to threaten our fundamental interests in the region. Such miscalculation about US strength and determination also could increase Soviet willingness to take aggressive actions against US interests elsewhere in the world.

1962 US-Soviet Understanding on Cuba. This refers to a series of US-Soviet diplomatic exchanges -- both oral and written -- which occurred in the wake of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. No formal agreement was ever concluded.

There are two basic elements. First is a US understanding that the Soviets would withdraw and would not reintroduce "offensive weapon systems." Following that understanding, the Soviets withdrew not only their ballistic missiles, but also the IL-28 nuclear-capable bombers (which had a mission similar to that now performed by Flogger).

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 5 -

Second is a Soviet understanding that the US "had no intention of invading Cuba." However, the two conditions upon which our no-invasion pledge rested -- UN supervision of Soviet missile withdrawals and adequate safeguards against their reintroduction -- were never satisfied because of Castro's objections. It can be argued, therefore, that the US is not bound by the no-invasion pledge it made as part of the 1962 Understanding. (Additional background on the 1962 Understanding is attached.)

The Floggers appear to fall into a "gray area" of the 1962 Understanding. On the one hand, the Flogger model can be quickly and covertly converted to carry nuclear weapons (whether or not the specific aircraft delivered to Cuba presently are nuclear configured). The Flogger can also perform in an offensive mode using conventional weapons. On the other hand, the Carter Administration (as the Soviets would be likely to remind us) accepted Soviet assurances that the Floggers in Cuba were not nuclear-capable and were not covered by the 1962 Understanding (although the Carter Administration's 1978 marker on the consequences of additional Flogger deliveries would facilitate a new US demarche on the issue). In any event, continued Soviet modernization of the Cuban Air Force with aircraft such as Flogger seriously undermines the value to the United States of the 1962 Understanding, which has been a principal facet of US policy toward Soviet activities in Cuba.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 6 -

There are three broad options for our treatment of the 1962 Understanding in light of the new Flogger shipment: 1) renounce the Understanding; 2) say nothing about it to the Soviets but take actions indicating we might now consider the Understanding inoperative; and 3) ask the Soviets to clarify their actions, making clear our view that the Flogger shipment seriously erodes the Understanding, and saying (if asked) that our attitude toward the Understanding is under review and will depend upon subsequent Soviet actions. We recommend the third option.

US Objectives

We want to respond to renewed Soviet deliveries of Floggers to Cuba -- and to the broader Cuban military threat they represent -- in a manner which will contribute to our longer-term efforts to counter Cuban intervention in the region and will support our broader strategy of meeting the challenge posed by the Soviets and their proxies. Our response must be clearly distinguishable from the Carter Administration's 1978 acceptance of unverifiable Soviet assurances on Flogger. It should not, however, provoke a US-Soviet confrontation in the Caribbean which would divert attention from Poland and feed Allied suspicions that we were over-reacting to Castro. Finally, an agreement with Moscow which was limited to the

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 7 -

Flogger would be a tangible success, but it would not address the broader problem of an increasingly dangerous Soviet buildup of the Cuban armed forces.

In NSDD-17, you authorized a series of measures to counter the Cuban export of revolution in the hemisphere. The Flogger shipments provide both the need and the opportunity to supplement and accelerate that program, i.e., to use the Flogger shipment to try to begin to reverse the across-the-board Cuban military buildup. In doing so, we can attempt to:

- increase Soviet concerns about US intentions, and Soviet willingness to limit further modernization/expansion of Cuban military capabilities;
- exacerbate Castro's sense of isolation and doubts about the depth of the Soviet security commitment to him;
- increase significantly US pressure on Castro--economically, politically, and militarily--both in the Caribbean and in other areas where there is a Cuban presence, arrest the arms buildup in Cuba, and end Cuban export of revolution; and
- build support at home and in the region for our strategy.

In pursuing these objectives, we must recognize that Castro's reaction will undoubtedly be to ask urgently for even more Soviet military assistance and that Moscow may well give it.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 8 -

Thus, we could be confronted with an even greater challenge as we proceed. But to do nothing would eliminate the possibility (however small) that we can affect Soviet behavior; would embolden both Moscow and Havana; and would make the inevitable day of reckoning that much more costly to us.

Possible Responses

Military and Intelligence. An increased program of intelligence collection and air surveillance (SR-71, U-2, P-3, RC-135 flights) already is underway. Other options include:

- Increasing the readiness of our defense capabilities In the South Eastern United States;
- Initiating a program to increase a sense of threat to Cuba and raise Castro's anxiety level regarding US military preparedness for military actions against the island, to include an invasion. This program is referred to as ELASTIC FENCE and includes communication exercises and increased naval presence in the Caribbean. (For further details see below);
- Deploying tactical fighter aircraft to the Western Caribbean. The Colombian island of San Andres (midway between Colombia and Nicaragua), Howard AFB in Panama, and airbases in Honduras are possible sites;

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 9 -

- Devoting 25 million dollars in the DoD budget to improve selected airfields and ports in the Western Caribbean;
- Accelerating the timetable for beginning Radio Marti broadcasts; and
- Refining our contingency planning toward the Caribbean Basin. We have the capability to commence deployment operations in short order should you decide to do so. For operations against Cuba, plans have been prepared for the conduct of an oil quarantine and/or neutralization of Cuba's offensive military power. Due to the large number of forces involved, operations against Cuba would begin within ten days of alert. Military planning toward Nicaragua ranges from evacuation of US citizens to air and sea quarantine to blockade. Air strike operations against the possible introduction of Cuban combat aircraft or additional heavy weapons are also included in the plans. Full-scale operations against Nicaragua would commence within eight days of notification.

Diplomatic. Walt Stoessel already has made a demarche to Dobrynin. Amb. Hartman will be following up in Moscow in the context of a presentation of our concerns about Cuba and Central America.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 10 -

We would also press the Soviets for a clarification of the 1962 Understanding which would encompass dual-capable weapons systems such as Flogger, making clear that in any event continuation of the Soviet military modernization of Cuban armed forces must be arrested. If we pursue this course, we would reject any Soviet efforts to raise issues which would restrain our actions against Castro by making clear that our demarches did not signal any willingness to reopen the 1962 Understanding for renegotiation or to enter into any negotiation concerning US or Soviet arms transfers. We can use the same opportunity to put the Soviets on notice about the consequences of shipping MiGs to Nicaragua.

Finally, we could consider a number of diplomatic and legislative measures to increase the pressure on Castro.

These might include:

- Closing the Cuban Interest Section at an appropriate time;
- Making an all out effort to repeal the Clark Amendment;
- Increasing assistance to Somalia (DoD has just budgeted \$30 million for military construction in Somalia);
- Curtailing the activities of Cuban representatives at the UN; and
- Initiating visible consultations with countries in the region about the deteriorating security environment and

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 11 -

about cooperative measures to improve the prospects for peace and stability in the area.

Security and Economic Assistance. The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) is a comprehensive strategy for countering Cuban intervention by improving economic conditions in the region. A budget supplemental to fund the CBI is now being prepared. We also are planning major security assistance increases for El Salvador and Honduras. A \$50 million grant security assistance supplemental for the Caribbean also may be desirable.

Economic Sanctions. We can further increase the pressure on the Cuban economy by blacklisting ships which call in Cuban ports, curtailing tourism, and other measures to improve the effectiveness of the embargo. We also can decrease Nicaragua's access to trade and credit. A separate interagency study has addressed Cuban economic vulnerability. This effort is being accelerated.

Implementation Strategy

We want to select and move forward with individual responses in an integrated political, military and economic fashion and on a schedule which will steadily increase the pressure on the Soviets and Cubans (short of provoking a crisis which diverts attention from Poland), and will build support for our longer-term program to counter Castro. The near-term

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 12 -

actions we choose, therefore, should increase our leverage over the Soviets and the Cubans and put us in a better position--diplomatically, militarily, and politically--to take more forceful actions in the event that our concerns are not satisfied.

Timetable. During January, you could use your State of the Union address to describe our concerns about Cuban activities in the context of describing the challenges posed by the Soviets and their proxies around the globe. In that address, you can announce the CBI, the \$300 million supplemental for emergency economic assistance to the region, the \$50 million grant security assistance supplemental, and steps for accelerating the start of broadcasts by Radio Marti. As a separate but related action, we will shortly forward to you a request to use your Section 506(a) authority to increase security assistance for El Salvador and Honduras.

During their meeting next week, Secretary Haig can make a demarche to Gromyko about the Floggers in the context of our determination to address the continuing Soviet modernization and expansion of Cuban power projection capabilities. Secretary Haig can press for Soviet clarification of the 1962 Understanding to encompass offensive systems such as Flogger, and hint that the US may have no alternative but to reconsider its position on the Understanding -- and the no-invasion pledge -- if the Soviets do not satisfy our concern about the erosion of

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 13 -

the limits it contains. He also could warn about the consequences if MiGs are delivered to Nicaragua and indicate that we intend to continue to discuss the Cuba problem in diplomatic channels.

If you so decide, we could rapidly implement ELASTIC FENCE, as noted above, a program designed to increase Castro's apprehension and uncertainty regarding the possibility of US military operations against Cuba. The program capitalizes on previously scheduled military training exercises using a wide range of comparatively low-cost actions. Selected examples include:

- linking RDF Southwest Asia exercises and designated forces to US Forces Caribbean Command at Key West;
- orientation visits of key personnel from designated military units to Guantanamo;
- immediate exercises by USAF and USN forces in response to selective Cuban exercises;
- logistic surveys of Gulf ports and potential staging areas;
- unconventional warfare forces communications nets in the Caribbean; and
- a visit by Strategic Air Command's (SAC) B-52 strike force liaison team to the US military command in Panama.

During the same time period, you could give a major foreign policy speech focusing on the situation in the Caribbean and

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 14 -

Central America. Depending on the circumstances, you could use the occasion to announce additional economic sanctions against Cuba, defensive military measures (e.g., reinforcement of Guantanamo, orders to challenge Cuban/Soviet military aircraft approaching US airspace), and/or political progress in Central America (e.g., Central American Regional Grouping, security consultations with selected regional governments on cooperative measures to deal with the changing security environment).

The choice of, and schedule for, specific subsequent actions (e.g., accelerated timetable for CVBG exercises, deployment of aircraft to Honduras, further diplomatic exchanges with the Soviets, reconsideration of the 1962 Understanding) would depend on developments over the coming weeks and months. All, however, would be part of our longer-term regional strategy.

Congressional Strategy. As we did with respect to Libya, Congressional briefings in the near-term should be confined to the leadership and to the chairmen and ranking minority members of appropriate committees. They should describe the Flogger problem and the broader challenge posed by Cuba's military buildup, outline our objectives and broad approach in general terms, and describe the kinds of near-term measures and NSDD-17 initiatives we are taking. We should be particularly circumspect about discussing the prospect of any diplomatic

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 15 -

exchanges with the Soviets regarding the 1962 Understanding. The presentations also will have to be made in such a way as to avoid any impression that we were conducting consultations under the War Powers Act.

Public Affairs. We want to increase public awareness of the situation in the region and public support for the measures we will be taking in response. At the same time, we want to avoid raising unrealistic expectations or stimulating a sense of crisis, either of which could force our hand before we were ready and jeopardize our broader objectives.

Our public posture leading up to your State of the Union address therefore should be low-key. We should acknowledge the second shipment of Floggers to Cuba, state that we consider this development to be serious, and say that we have raised our concerns with the Soviets at a high level (making clear these are diplomatic exchanges and not negotiations). We should avoid raising the 1962 Understanding, but should say if asked, that the Floggers may touch on that undertaking.

As noted above, by February, the time should be ripe for a speech by you which would lay out our integrated approach to the region. Such a speech would give a major boost to our efforts to sensitize the Congress and the American people, as well as the international community, to the danger that Moscow and Havana, working together, represent.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 16 -

Recommendation

That you approve the general approach described above.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Additionally, that in the context of this approach you approve:

- The announcement of the economic and security assistance supplemental and other measures in your State of the Union address.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

- The continuation of a stepped up program of increased air surveillance over and around Cuba.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

- A demarche by Secretary Haig to Gromyko in Geneva next week.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

- Operation ELASTIC FENCE to increase a sense of direct threat to Castro.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

- An approach to the Colombians on deploying US aircraft to bases on their territory, and an approach to the Hondurans on preparing for possible deployments to their facilities.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

- A refinement of contingency plans concerning going to the Cuban source and to respond to delivery of MiGs to Nicaragua.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 17 -

- The Congressional consultation strategy described above.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

- The initial public affairs strategy described above.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

- The concept of a major foreign policy speech in February describing additional diplomatic, economic, and military measures we are taking in the region.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

Annex:

Background on the 1962 Understanding

The 1962 Understanding, as embodied in the exchange of letters between Kennedy and Khrushchev, was never formalized because Castro refused to permit verification that offensive weapons would not be reintroduced into Cuba. Kennedy made clear to the Soviets that a formal US non-invasion commitment would, in addition, have to be conditioned on responsible Cuban behavior. When he announced the lifting of the naval quarantine (November 20, 1962), Kennedy stated:

"As for our part, if all offensive weapons are removed from Cuba and kept out of the Hemisphere in the future, under adequate verification and safeguards, and if Cuba is not used for the export of aggressive Communist purposes, there will be peace in the Caribbean."

Indications that the Soviets were building submarine facilities at Cienfuegos led to a subsequent series of diplomatic exchanges in 1970 and 1971 which broadened the 1962 Understanding to include a ban on "servicing in or from Cuba of nuclear submarines and submarines carrying offensive weapons."

In expressing US concern over Soviet naval activities at the Cuban port of Cienfuegos in 1970, Kissinger called attention on the record to Kennedy's November 20, 1962 statement, noting "this, of course, remains the policy of this Government."

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 2 -

To our knowledge, the Carter Administration did not make a definitive public statement regarding the 1962 Understanding.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

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