

Cuba Is Getting Advanced Soviet Fighters, Missiles, Causing Concern at White House

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WASHINGTON—The U.S. has discovered that in recent shipments from the Soviet Union Cuba has received a new, more-sophisticated jet fighter and more-advanced missiles, administration officials said.

Cuba has begun receiving the MIG-23 Flogger B, the primary air-to-air tactical fighter in the Soviet air force, the officials said. This version of the MIG-23, rarely sent outside Warsaw Pact countries, is more advanced than the standard export models Cuba received earlier.

The new planes are accompanied by highly maneuverable Apex air-to-air missiles, which are more sophisticated than the Atoll missiles Cuba received previously, officials said. The new MIGs also have limited "look-down" radar capability, which enables planes to see below them and to look farther over the horizon than less-advanced radar systems.

The new Apex missiles have greater range and are more mobile than past Cuban missiles, officials said. But analysts also noted that the new air equipment Cuba has received is basically defensive rather than offensive in nature. Also, the advanced version of the MIG-23 has been exported to Syria recently, officials said.

Reagan administration officials are con-

cerned about the discoveries for two reasons. First, the new equipment would give Cuba greater ability to knock out U.S. or other enemy jets in air battles. And second, the arrivals indicate that, despite the Reagan administration's protests and public denunciations, Cuba isn't scaling back its military buildup.

Cuba received its first batch of MIG-23s, a shipment of 12, during the Carter administration. But those were the standard Flogger E export version of the planes, officials said. The Reagan administration detected more than a year ago that Cuba had begun receiving more MIG-23s and that the shipments have continued periodically over recent months, according to U.S. analysts. They currently think Cuba has about 40 MIG-23s.

Only recently, though, have U.S. intelligence officials confirmed that some of the new MIGs are the B model and that they have the new missiles and radar capability. Officials wouldn't say how many of the more-advanced jets are in Cuba.

Sign of Tension

On a related matter, the U.S. has detected a sign of tension between Cuba and Angola, a Soviet-supported state backed by Cuban troops. The Central Intelligence Agency has reported that some 2,000 Angolan students studying in Cuba are being sent home in the wake of a "riot" last month at the Isle of Youth, a facility where Cuba educates youth from countries with which it is friendly.

The riot apparently caused five deaths, U.S. officials said. They aren't sure whether the deaths were of Cubans or Angolans, nor are they certain what caused the uprising.

But the development could be significant because the U.S. has been trying to persuade Angola to separate itself from Cuba and to send home some 20,000 Cuban troops stationed in Angola. Departure of the Cuban troops would make it easier for the U.S. and its Western allies to arrange for the independence of Namibia, a bordering territory controlled by South Africa.

South Africa has said it is reluctant to grant independence to Namibia while Cuban troops are still stationed in Angola, for fear the troops would spread Cuban influence into Namibia. But the U.S. hasn't seen any signs that Angola is about to ask the troops to leave, officials said.

Unhappiness With Angola

But the U.S. has seen other signs that the Soviets are unhappy with Angola for expanding ties to the West and for falling to bow closely enough to Soviet policies.

The new Soviet air equipment is troublesome to U.S. officials because it is another sign that Cuba has been receiving additional, more-sophisticated equipment. The Reagan administration has previously charged that in recent months Cuba has received new Foxtrot submarines and a Soviet Kent-class frigate.

Cuba has previously received MIG-23 Flogger Fs, ground attack planes and MIG-23 Flogger Cs, training planes.

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