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16 November 1982

NOTE FOR: DCI

THROUGH: FROM: NIO/LA 

SUBJECT: Topic for the Meeting with Judge Clark, 17 November 1982

1. As John McMahon has probably told you, we completed the Interagency Intelligence Assessment on hostile Cuban activities as requested by the NSC. A copy of the three-page Summary is attached, and essentially concludes that:

- There is no prospect for genuine accommodation with Cuba in the next two years.
- Cuban subversive and military operations in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East are extensive, dangerous and have not slowed during the last two years.
- The Cubans can be expected to do more in all three areas against the United States during the next two years, with Latin America being the priority for expanded Cuban operations.

This is the considered judgment of the Intelligence Assessment as provided by the National Foreign Intelligence Board.

2. In my view, there are two important questions not being asked in the NSC Review: Is the current US strategy and the sum of activities adequate to meet the threat posed by the extreme left in the region from Panama to the US border? And specifically, concerning Nicaragua, is the current strategy of interdiction/harassment and a negotiated end to the Nicaraguan export of subversion adequate?

3. In my view, the answer to both questions is "No." Given the intelligence we have on Cuban/Nicaraguan actions to date, I judge that the current strategy in Central America will most likely fail to defeat the extreme left in El Salvador and Guatemala and that Nicaragua will counter the current strategy by (a) either militarily crushing the anti-Sandinistas (albeit in ways they do not present an occasion of war) or (b) by negotiating a false agreement to end its export of subversion which would be adhered to only until the anti-Sandinistas have been demoralized and/or disbanded.

4. I hope we can discuss these issues and I think the question of the adequacy of our basic strategy in Central America is worth raising in the context of the NSC Cuba Review.

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9 November 1982

CUBAN ACTIONS INIMICAL TO US INTERESTS: SUMMARYThe likelihood of an accommodation with Castro in the next two years

The Castro regime is engaged in a broad range of activities designed to promote radical change and undermine US influence worldwide. From the Cuban perspective, the US is, and always will be, the principal threat. We believe these actions will continue as long as Fidel Castro and his guerrilla veterans remain in power. Only the intensity varies, determined by the conditions in each country and Cuba's ability to exploit them. Six former US presidents tried to negotiate Cuba into accommodation; all failed and the available intelligence information suggests that there is virtually no prospect for a genuine accommodation with Cuba on major issues in the next two years. This, despite the fact that a modus vivendi may continue on some secondary but potentially troublesome issues like air piracy.

PART 1: Current Cuban international activities hostile to the US

In overview, Cuba has active subversive and military operations in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East while also using diplomacy, propaganda, and covert action for anti-US purposes world-wide.

In Latin America and the Caribbean

- Cuba is directly supporting active insurgencies in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia and is laying the groundwork in Honduras, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Chile. Hundreds of Latin American terrorists and guerrillas have been trained in Cuba in recent years.
- Havana is heavily engaged in the consolidation of power in Nicaragua and Grenada.
- Where guerrilla strategies are presently non-productive, Havana is relying on a mixture of diplomacy, propaganda, and non-violent covert action to undercut US influence.

In Africa:

- Cuba now has over 40,000 military and civilian personnel propping up Angola and Ethiopia and working in more than a dozen other countries. Other African targets of Cuban-assisted subversive groups are South Africa, Namibia, Zaire, and Morocco.

In the Middle East:

- Cuba has aligned itself closely with the PLO and the radical Arab States (Libya and South Yemen).

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In Europe:

- Cuba uses political and economic tactics to create and exploit differences between Washington and its allies.

PART 2: Possible additional Cuban activities hostile to US interests in 1983-84

During the coming 12-18 months, these activities will continue and in certain areas, will expand. The very nature of the Castro regime precludes anything but an adversary relationship between Havana and Washington. Latin America will continue to be a priority target.

- Subversion will continue apace, especially in Central America, but also in Colombia and Chile.
- Cuba will try to encourage and take advantage of the leftist drift in Suriname and Bolivia.
- Concern over change in Panama's orientation could cause Havana to begin supporting subversive efforts there.
- If the Sandinistas are seriously threatened from without, Havana would almost certainly send additional combat forces unless deterred by the credible threat of US military forces.
- It is not certain, however, that Cuba's promotion of subversion will steadily increase in all cases. Under certain circumstances, Castro could be willing to reduce his revolutionary profile temporarily if convinced it would advance his overall goal of diminishing US influence in the hemisphere.
- Cuba can be expected to promote strongly the creation of a regional organization that excludes the US.
- Cuba will probably retaliate strongly with jamming of US domestic radio and counterbroadcasts if Radio Marti goes on the air (Castro might also threaten another Mariel-type exodus of refugees to the US).

In Africa, Havana will maintain its military support for Angola and Ethiopia:

- Cuba's reluctance to withdraw troops from Angola, as long as the stability of the Marxist-Leninist government is in doubt, will hinder a Namibian settlement.
- A military threat to Mozambique from South Africa could bring an increased Cuban military presence there.

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Elsewhere, Cuba is likely to:

- Continue its cooperation with the PLO, Libya, and other radical Arab states.
- Expand its efforts to create or exacerbate tensions between the US and its European allies.

PART 3: The military threat posed by Cuban and Soviet military-related assets in Cuba.

Cuba has over 250,000 persons in its armed forces, and an air force with more than 250 MIG fighters.

- Cuba serves as a base for Soviet intelligence gathering and propaganda activities in the Western Hemisphere.

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- In the event of war between the US and the USSR, Cuba could serve as a recovery and turn around base for Soviet air and naval units attacking the US.

- During a major world war, the US Naval Base at Guantanamo would be vulnerable to Cuba's increasing military capabilities. A more serious potential threat is Cuban capability to harass or interfere with sea and air routes in the Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico/Straits of Florida areas. This would be of particular concern because of the amount of US commerce -- particularly oil -- that passes through this region and when unhampered transit from southern US ports and through Caribbean sea lanes would be required, such as for US reinforcement of NATO.

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