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5 January 1983

SOVIET BLOC AND CUBAN ACTIVITY IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this briefing is to provide you with a comprehensive review of Soviet and Cuban efforts to increase their strength and influence in Central America and the Caribbean over the past few years. Some of the details may already be familiar to you, but we hope this overview will help put them into a clearer perspective.

BACKGROUND

By way of background, both the Soviet Union and Cuba began to see new opportunities to extend their influence in the region in mid-1979, when the Sandinistas suddenly came to power in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas made little secret of their anti-Americanism, their intention to eventually convert Nicaragua to a Marxist state, and their support for the spread of revolution throughout the region. Although many of the Sandinistas were little known in Moscow, the core of the leadership had close ties

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[redacted]

to Havana, and Cuban aid had been instrumental in bringing them to power.

As early as 1978, Fidel Castro saw the chance that the Sandinista revolt against Somoza could succeed, and he was subsequently responsible for unifying its three main factions into a broad front group able to attract considerable popular and international support. During the final offensive push, Cuba-- helping plan Sandinista military strategy--provided [redacted] weaponry, trained and transported combatants to join the battle, and even sent [redacted] military advisers to accompany the Sandinistas into Managua.

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Cuba thus saw Nicaragua as an important foothold in the American continent and the key to spreading subversion and insurrection further north, where conditions in El Salvador and Guatemala were considered especially ripe for revolution. At the first anniversary celebration of the Sandinista victory in Managua in July 1980, Fidel Castro noted prophetically that Central America was like a volcano ready to explode.

Meanwhile, the Soviets began to increasingly embrace the Cuban view that revolution could succeed in the area if adequately guided and supported. In a March 1980 article, a Soviet political theorist noted that a political-military front group like the Sandinistas' could replace the orthodox Communist parties as the revolutionary vanguard. But while the Soviet Union agreed with Cuban goals, it saw the need to move cautiously and covertly for fear of provoking a strong US reaction. There

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is little doubt, however, about the increased Soviet and Cuban harmony of interests and cooperation in the region over the past few years.

- Since early 1980, Moscow has provided or assisted in the provision of large amounts of military supplies not only to Cuba and Nicaragua, but also to Salvadoran insurgent forces and other Central American subversive groups.
- Moscow has used its close relationship and influence with Algeria, Ethiopia, Vietnam, and the PLO, among others, to obtain additional support for the revolutionaries.
- The Soviets also have been aiding Cuban efforts to spread subversion through the formation of broad revolutionary front groups designed to attract increased popular and international support while using them for Moscow's own interests.
- In addition, the Soviet Union has undertaken a massive propoganda and disinformation campaign, using all its Bloc and international assets, in an attempt to influence public opinion against US policy in Central America.
- Finally, the Soviets have assisted Salvadoran insurgent efforts to obtain international recognition and support from a variety of international organizations, including the UN, the OAS, the Non-aligned Movement, and the Socialist International.

THE CUBAN MILITARY BUILDUP

Soviet military aid to Cuba since 1980 has reached levels not seen since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis (see chart # 1). The major purpose behind the buildup, as Castro himself has openly admitted in a recent speech on the anniversary of the founding of the Cuban Revolutionary Army, is to build up Cuban defenses for the inevitable US reaction to Havana's "alleged" support for regional insurgencies. As a result of this aid, Cuba now has a massive armed force of some 220,000 to 260,000 regular and reserve troops, including one of the largest and best equipped air forces in Latin America.

The Soviet aid has included:

- Enough small arms to equip a newly raised territorial militia of over 500,000 people.
- New MI-24 attack helicopters and additional MIG-21 and MIG-23 jet fighters to strengthen the Cuban Air Force
- New SA-6 and additional SA-2 surface-to-air missiles to improve Cuban air defenses.
- A new frigate and two amphibious landing craft, along with an additional submarine and more missile patrol boats, to strengthen the Cuban Navy.
- More tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery for the Cuban ground forces.

This table summarizes the major weapons deliveries since 1980 as well as current equipment inventories (see table # 1).

[REDACTED]

In addition to improving Cuba's defensive capability, the arms deliveries have improved Cuban capabilities to project its military power throughout the Caribbean Basin.

- The MIG-23s have sufficient combat radius to reach key targets in the Caribbean from Cuban bases (see map).
- The Cubans have two quick reaction forces with a total of 2,200 troops capable of being airlifted anywhere in the region on short notice.
- The two new amphibious landing craft can each carry 180 troops or six armored vehicles to areas with limited port facilities [REDACTED]

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The Cubans are proud of their improved armed forces, and they did not hesitate to show off their firepower to impress foreign visitors [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

There is every likelihood that this Cuban military buildup will continue.

- At the same anniversary celebration, Castro stated that he had obtained in two years the great majority of weapons originally scheduled for five, but added that he could get still more weapons from Moscow if necessary.
- Castro added that the Cuban armed forces were also paying special attention to improving their contingents in Angola and

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Ethiopia, as well as their military missions in other countries.

-- This table illustrates our current estimates of Cuban military and civilian advisory personnel overseas (see table # 2).

-- In addition to some 40,000 troops in Africa, the most important Cuban military mission is the 1,500 to 2,000 advisers in Nicaragua.

NICARAGUA

After the Sandinista takeover in July 1979, the Cubans moved quickly to help the junta consolidate its power base, reduce domestic opposition, and build a military force which is now the largest in the region. Cuban advisers began arriving in Managua even before the Somoza downfall was complete.

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By

early 1980, Soviet Bloc weapons began arriving in large quantities, and Nicaraguan personnel were leaving for military training in Cuba and Eastern Europe.

Like the Cubans, the Sandinistas have publicly maintained that their arms buildup is purely for defensive purposes. But also like the Cubans, they expect that their covert support for regional revolutionaries will inevitably produce a strong reaction, particularly from their northern neighbors. Since early 1982, the defense buildup also has been motivated by increasing anti-Sandinista insurgent activity along the Honduran border and the alleged fear of a US-backed invasion.

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[REDACTED]

We now estimate that the Sandinistas can call on an armed force of some 75,000 men, including regular forces and reserve and militia units. This force clearly overshadows that of Honduras, with only 15,000 men, and Costa Rica, which has no armed forces. To house this force, Nicaragua has continued to construct new military installations, completing nearly 40 since 1979.

Early in 1982, the Intelligence Community provided a photographic briefing that illustrated this buildup. We would like to show you additional photographs that demonstrate how the buildup has continued.

-- In mid-1982, the Sandinistas completed a new garrison for their Soviet T-54/55 tank battalion just outside of Managua [REDACTED]

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-- They also completed two new infantry battalion garrisons near Managua [REDACTED]

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-- In addition, they have begun work on another major installation south of the capital [REDACTED]

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All of the installations have a common layout similar to Cuban garrisons, and there is little doubt that they are being designed and constructed with Cuban assistance.

-- It is interesting to note that Cuban 1st Vice-President Raul Castro visited Nicaragua in mid-1982 with a high level military delegation, ostensibly to offer aid for flood damage.

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[REDACTED]

-- It was subsequently announced that 2,000 Cuban construction workers were being sent to Nicaragua, and since then we have detected a spurt in military construction activity.

The Cubans have also constructed a major strategic road between Puerto Cabezas and the interior [REDACTED]

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-- The road facilitates the movement of troops and military supplies to the troubled northeast border area.

New weaponry for the armed forces also continued to arrive during 1982.

-- In February, a Soviet ship delivered about 270 military trucks to the port of Corinto [REDACTED] bringing the total Soviet Bloc truck inventory in Nicaragua to over 800.

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-- In April, an Algerian merchant ship delivered four Soviet heavy tank ferries, one small patrol boat, and 12 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers. These had previously been delivered to Algeria by Soviet ships and stored on the docks [REDACTED]

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-- The tank ferries provide the Sandinista Army with an offensive water crossing capability, while the BM-21s give them a mass firepower weapon unmatched in the region.

Then in November, a Bulgarian ship delivered another 25 T-54/55 tanks [REDACTED] The delivery followed a visit by Sandinista junta leader Daniel Ortega to Moscow earlier in the

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[redacted]

year, and the Soviets may have decided to use a Bulgarian connection to provide the weaponry.

-- In early December 1982, we discovered that eight new 122mm howitzers had also been delivered, supplementing 12 152mm guns delivered in 1981.



In addition to the Soviets, [redacted]

[redacted] as many as 500 East Germans, Bulgarians, Czechoslovakians, Hungarians, Palestinians, and Vietnamese are in Nicaragua.

-- Many are active in military as well as civilian aid projects.

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-- The East Germans are providing technical and security experts. The Bulgarians and Poles are providing pilot training

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-- The Vietnamese are providing arms aid and presumably counterinsurgency advise.

Libya also became a regular source of arms to Nicaragua in 1982.

-- In May, a Libyan C-130 delivered four small Italian trainer aircraft to Managua. These are useful in a counterinsurgency role.

-- Since then, they also have delivered three or four Polish-built MI-2 light helicopters These supplement two French Alouettes and an additional Soviet MI-8 helicopter which also arrived last year.

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[Redacted]

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Meanwhile, construction activity continues at various Nicaraguan airfields to upgrade their capability to support jet fighter operations.

-- Improvements are underway at Sandino, Puerto Cabezas, and Montelimar airfields

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-- New runways are under construction at Bluefields on the east coast, at La Rosita in the northeast, and at Punto Huete just north of Managua

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[Redacted] 25X1

[Redacted]

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We still expect Cuba to deliver MIG-21s to Nicaragua when the proper moment arrives--perhaps when they can be justified by a Honduran threat.

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This map shows the combat radius of MIG-21s from various Nicaraguan airfields. (see map)

-- As you can see, the aircraft have enough range to reach key targets throughout the region.

In addition to the military buildup, the Sandinistas have continued their efforts to consolidate their political control and weaken their domestic opposition.

-- Supreme political power remains in the hands of the nine member National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), who are all Marxist-Leninists.

-- The FSLN is the only political party permitted to operate freely, and it dominates the quasi-legislative Council of State.

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[REDACTED]

-- Mass organizations have been established for the purpose of popular mobilization and indoctrination. These include, in addition to the militia, neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committees, labor unions, and youth organizations.

-- The Sandinistas have exploited the great expansion of health care and education, in which the Cubans play a dominant role, for propaganda purposes and for political indoctrination.

Political repression has been particularly severe since March 1982, when a state of emergency was declared.

-- The independent news media have been heavily censored.

-- Opposition political organizations are prohibited from assembling.

-- Labor unions are prohibited from striking.

-- Opposition political leaders have been arrested or driven into exile.

The Catholic Church, particularly the Archbishop of Managua, has come under attack because of opposition to regime policies.

-- Sandinista mobs have interfered with Church functions.

-- Members of the clergy have been detained by the security forces, and one was roughed up by Sandinista supporters.

-- The regime has tried to dictate the educational curriculum in Catholic schools.

-- The "popular church," composed of Catholics sympathetic to the regime, has been encouraged by the Sandinistas as

[redacted]

part of their intention to undermine the traditional church hierarchy.

-- Members of the clergy in government, including foreign Minister D'Escoto, have ignored the Archbishop's expressed desire that they leave their government posts.

Meanwhile, the Sandinistas have begun to move toward the promised elections in 1985, by which they hope to legitimize the regime and consolidate their control.

-- While Managua has made great efforts to convince the international community that the effort will be a democratic one, the Sandinistas make little attempt to conceal the fact that they do not intend to relinquish power.

Before we leave Nicaragua, I would like to discuss briefly what the Sandinistas are doing to the population along the Honduran border.

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[redacted]

in early 1982 the Sandinistas forcibly removed the entire Miskito population from border villages in Zelaya Department, placing some 8,000 in government camps and driving over 10,000 refugees into Honduras [redacted]

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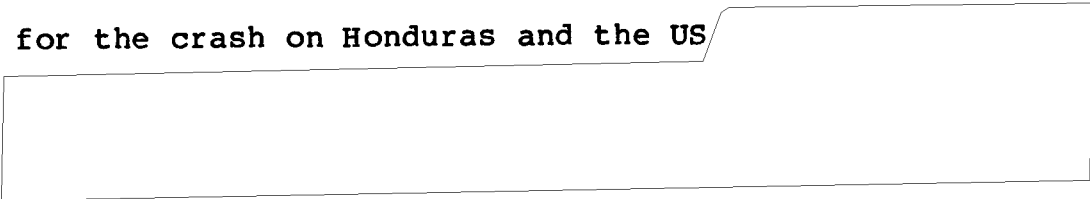


The crash of a heavily loaded Soviet MI-8 helicopter in Jinotega Department in December 1982, which killed 75 Indian children, revealed the fact that a similar forced evacuation was underway in that area.

--  Havana and Managua have tried to place the blame for the crash on Honduras and the US

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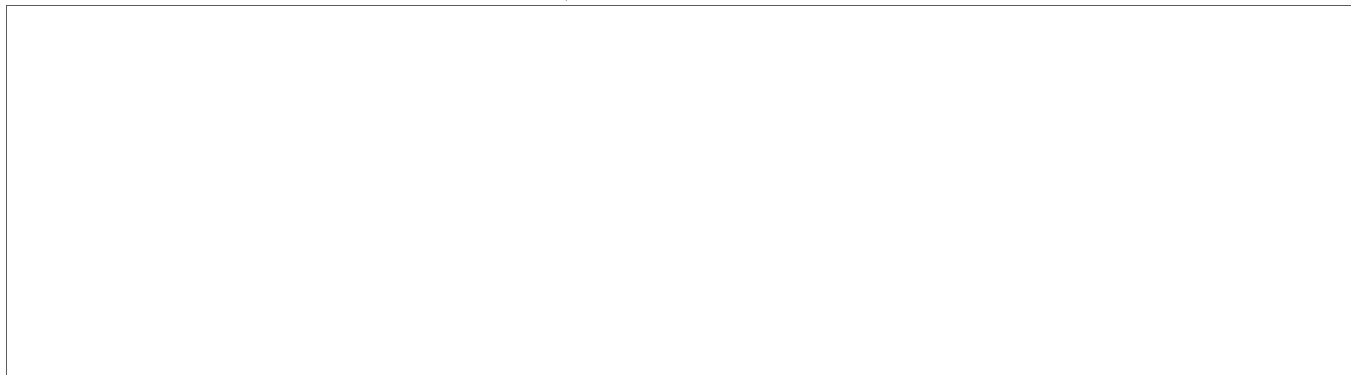


-- Nicaraguan Interior Minister Borge admitted in a late December 1982 press interview that repression of the Miskito Indians was a necessary action resulting from previous regime "blunders."

EL SALVADOR

Bolstered by the continued growth of the Nicaraguan armed forces, the Cubans and Sandinistas have continued their covert support of the Salvadoran insurgency. The insurgent command center has remained in Managua despite US protests

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Meanwhile, the Soviets and Cubans have continued their efforts to promote the Salvadoran Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). The FDR is designed to unite Marxist revolutionaries with more moderate leftist groups and thereby attract increased popular and international support. The FDR is dominated by the radicals, however, and through them Moscow and Havana hope to subvert the revolution for their own purposes.

- The FDR, which includes the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCES), was established in Havana in April 1980 at Soviet and Cuban direction.
- The insurgent military front, or FMLN, which also includes the PCES, was set up in Havana in 1980 at Castro's urging.



-- It was PCES leader Shafik Handal who traveled to Moscow in June 1980 to get Soviet support in obtaining weapons and other aid.

The trip resulted in promises of weapons, training, or financial assistance from Vietnam, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Ethiopia.



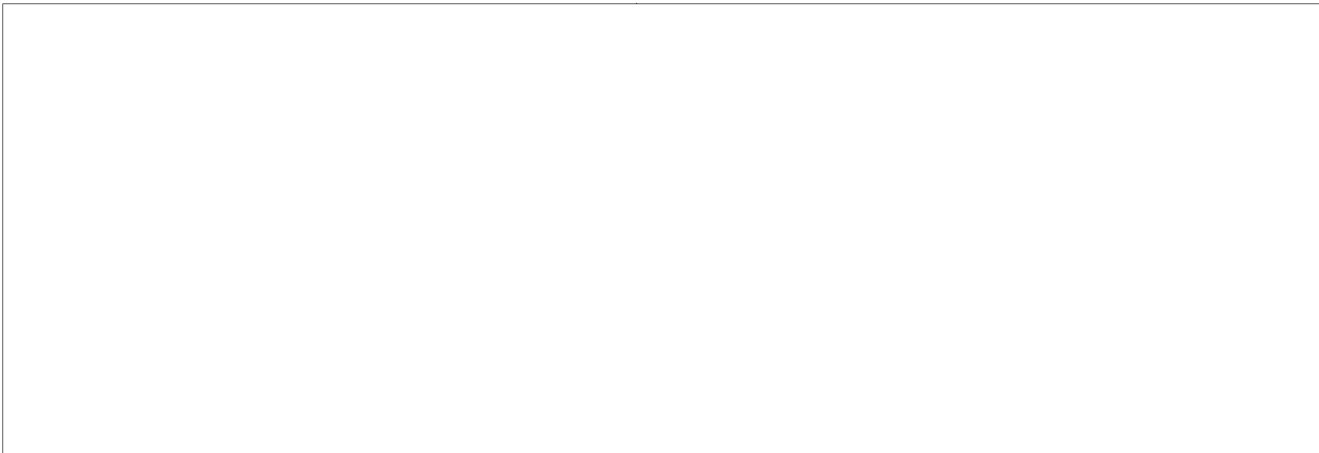
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Since then, while generally supporting the entire revolutionary front, Moscow has given the PCES influence much greater than its numbers would warrant by funneling much of the assistance to the insurgents through it.



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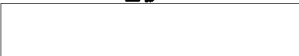
-- The ultimate intention is to ensure that Soviet- and Cuban- dominated factions of the revolutionary alliance are in the best position to influence it should it succeed.



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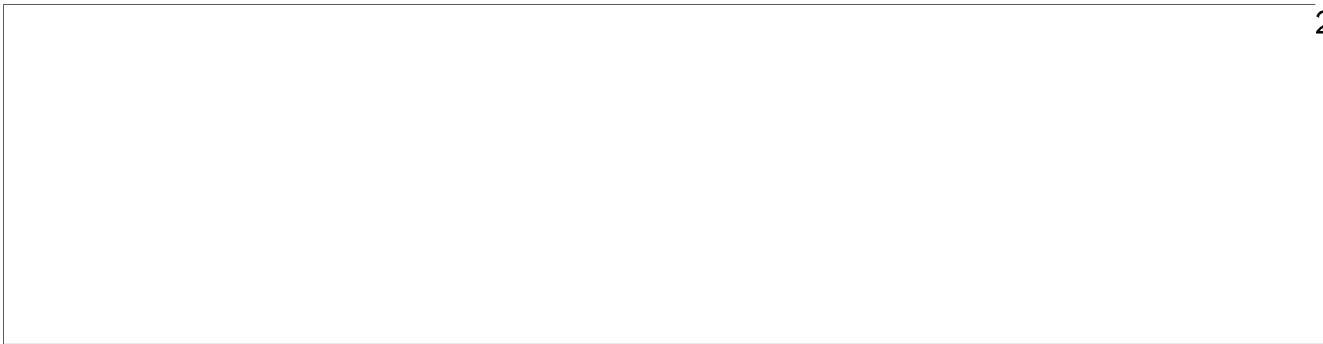


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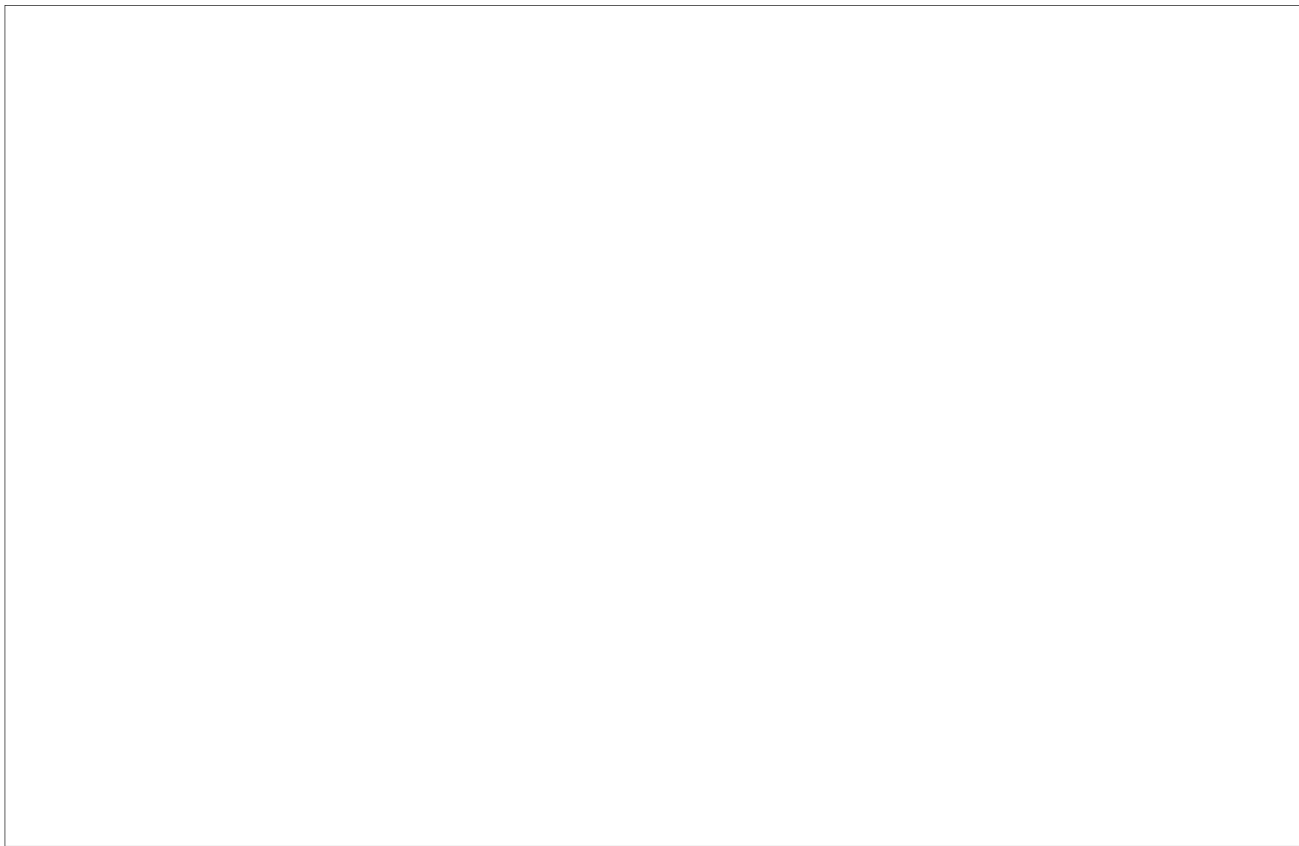
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GUATEMALA

Turning briefly to Guatemala, the Cubans and Nicaraguans also continue to be active in supporting the leftist insurgency in that country. With Soviet support, they have increased their efforts to form a viable insurgent alliance which they can ultimately control for their own purposes.



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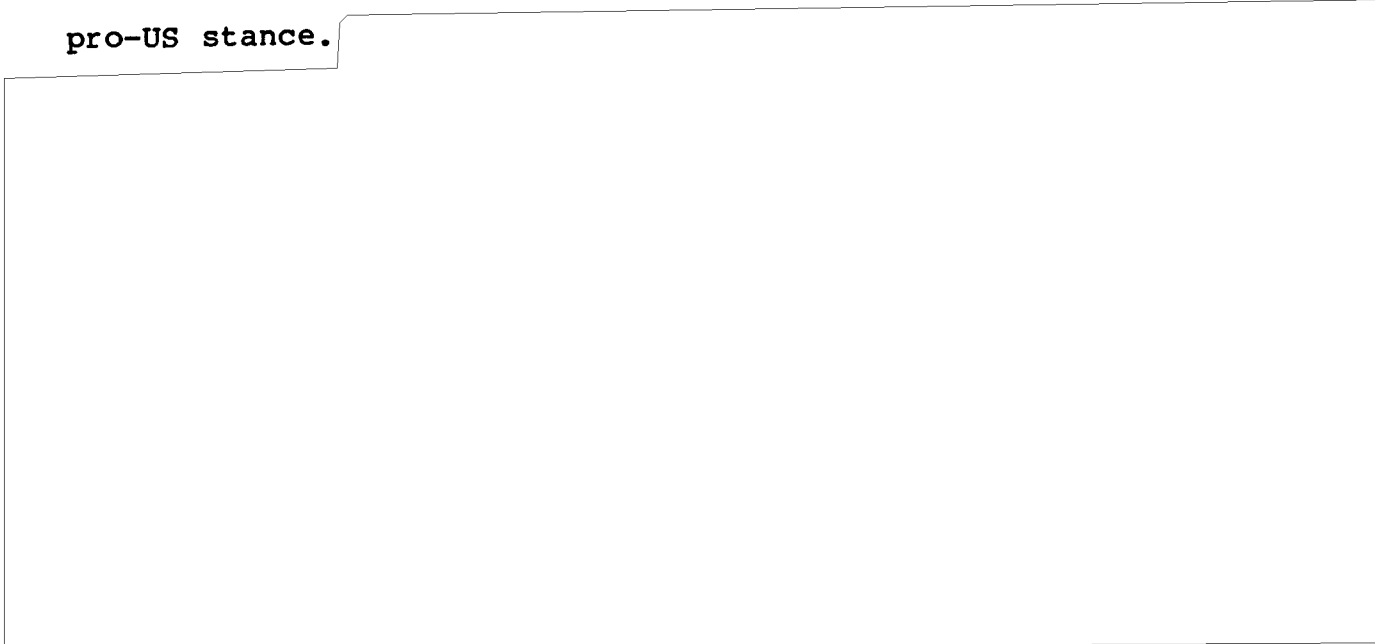
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HONDURAS

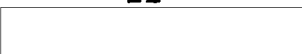
In Honduras, we have already touched on the close links between the Salvadoran insurgents and Honduran radical leftist groups, as well as their desire to step up terrorism in an effort to intimidate the Suazo government and force it to modify its pro-US stance.



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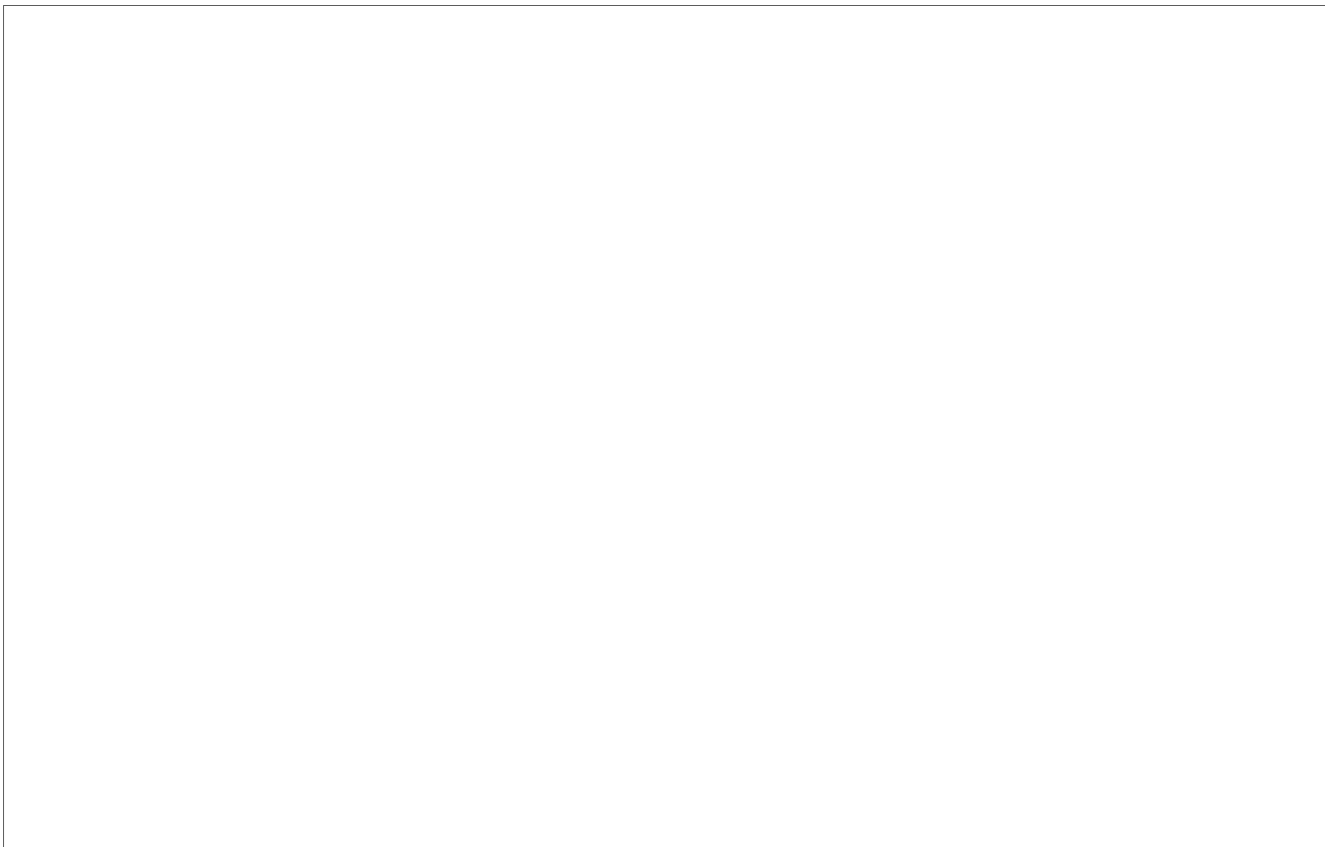
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Nonetheless, the Honduran leftists have generally failed to coalesce into a radical alliance, and Salvadoran and Guatemala insurgent groups have taken a leading role in fomenting terrorist incidents.



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-- The recent kidnapping of Honduran President Suazo's daughter in Guatemala apparently was the work of a Guatemalan guerrilla faction.



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COSTA RICA

The Cubans and Nicaraguans also have been active in spreading subversion to Costa Rica. This process has accelerated over the past year because they are especially upset with the pro-US policies of President Monge.

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Nicaragua has stepped up its terrorist actions in Costa Rica, leading to increased tensions between the two countries.

- The Sandinistas have denied complicity in the 3 July 1982 bombing of the Honduran airlines office in San Jose, despite the confession of the captured perpetrator.
- The terrorist stated the action was part of a general Nicaraguan plan which included sabotage, kidnappings, bank robberies, and other terrorist acts designed to discredit Costa Rica internationally.

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GRENADA

In addition to Central America, the Soviets and Cubans have been active in supporting leftist radicals in other countries in the region. Grenada has become the major focal point of their activities in the eastern Caribbean ever since Prime Minister Bishop seized power in March 1979.

-- Bishop has openly alluded to his willingness to allow Soviet and Cuban military use of a huge new airport being constructed at Point Salines with Cuban assistance

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-- The runway is already capable of handling MIG-21 and MIG-23 jet fighters, as well as AN-26 transports (see map).

-- Cuba could therefore use Grenada as a staging area for rapid deployment of troops to support leftist regimes in the region.

The Cubans have also constructed a military base on the island near the new airport.

-- The installation can house an infantry battalion, and we have recently seen Soviet BTR-60 armored personnel carriers there

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In addition to this military aid, Bishop visited the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Bulgaria in 1982, presumably to secure more economic and security assistance.

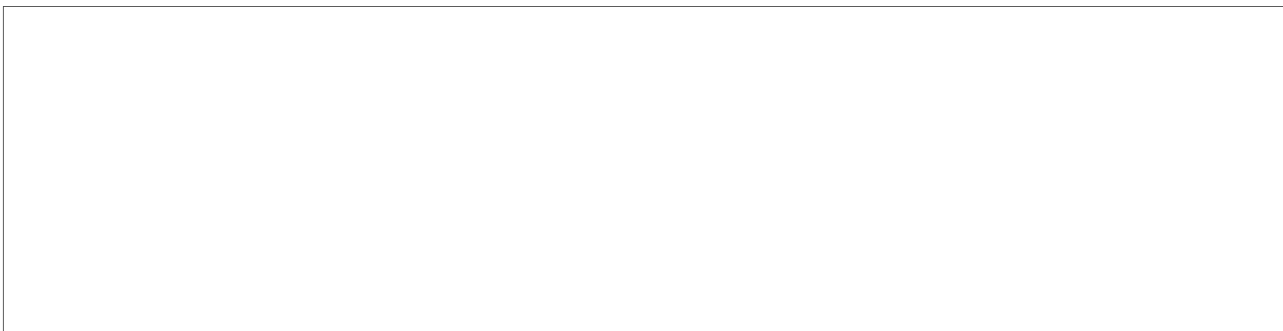
-- Libya has also been active in Grenada, and now has an embassy there.



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SURINAME

Another trouble spot in the eastern Caribbean is Suriname, where leftist Army Commander Bouterse recently suppressed all political opposition. Bouterse has tried to keep secret his ties to Cuba, but there is little doubt that Cuban influence in Suriname will continue to increase.



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Bouterse has also formed a new People's Militia, presumably based on the Cuban model, and has secured Cuban training for his bodyguards.



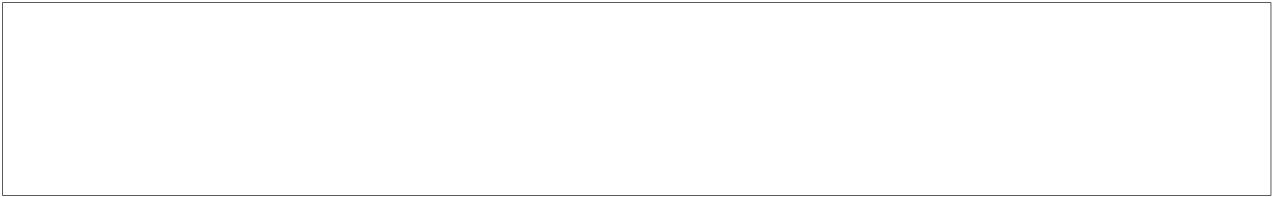
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SOVIET AND CUBAN PROPAGANDA AND COVERT ACTIONS

Now let us turn to Soviet and Cuban propaganda actions. Beginning in early 1980, the Soviet Union, assisted by Cuba, launched a massive propaganda and disinformation campaign designed to complement its subversive activities in Central America. Initially at least, the campaign focused on US policy toward El Salvador, although the campaign also dealt to a lesser degree with US involvement in Guatemala and Honduras.



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During the past three years, all three parties have engaged in various overt and covert activities designed to influence public opinion in Western Europe, Latin America, Canada, and the US. These activities or mechanisms include the following:

- overt propaganda,
- overt diplomatic activities to gain recognition for the insurgents in international organizations,
- fabrication of forgeries,
- use of front groups,
- covert placement of media items, and
- staging of demonstrations and protests on El Salvador.

Soviet propaganda themes have been aimed at discrediting US policy in El Salvador, and widespread use has been made of forgeries and disinformation to substantiate the message. For example:

- A bogus NSC dissent paper on El Salvador and Central America was used in the fall of 1980 to charge that the United States was intervening covertly in El Salvador.

[REDACTED]

-- A January 1981 article in Izvestiya explained that the US was preparing to implement a military plan which "provides for physical elimination of many thousands of Salvadorans."

Moscow also employed its large international front groups such as the World Peace Council and the World Federation of Trade Unions in support of the propaganda campaign.

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[REDACTED]

Meanwhile, the Salvadoran insurgent directorate, with the support of Havana and Moscow, has directed the establishment of Solidarity Committees throughout Europe, in Canada and even in Australia and New Zealand. These serve as propaganda outlets and conduits for aid contributions.

-- These committees have also helped plan, in conjunction with Communist parties and local leftist groups, many of the demonstrations that have taken place throughout

Europe, Latin America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in support of the Salvadoran revolutionaries.

-- The pattern of dates and places of the demonstrations, such as the world-wide ones held to protest the 28 March 1982 Salvadoran elections, shows that they were the result of a well-coordinated effort.

Captured documents also indicate that the Salvadoran insurgent directorate intends to seek recognition of its political front in international organizations.

-- The organizations specifically targetted for a diplomatic effort are the United Nations, the OAS, the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe.

-- The greatest success the insurgents have had so far in achieving recognition is the French-Mexican declaration of September 1981. However, the declaration was subsequently repudiated throughout the Western Hemisphere as interference in Salvadoran internal affairs.

SUMMARY

I know this has been a long briefing, but I hope it has been a useful one. The Soviets and Cubans are exploiting opportunities presented by existing political unrest and economic hardship to spread revolution and subversion throughout the



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Caribbean Basin. They are using Nicaragua as their primary base, and are attempting to reverse the trend toward democratic government by almost all the countries of the region.



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Chart No. 1

SOVIET DELIVERIES OF MILITARY GOODS TO CUBA

Selected Years

YEAR	Identified Military Deliveries		Military-Associated Deliveries	
	SHIPS		SHIPS	
1962	125		--	
1965	5		--	
1970	8		--	
1975	8		--	
1976	13		--	
1977	10		--	
1978	12		--	
1979	12		--	
1980	14		--	
1981	24		21	
1982**	11		43	

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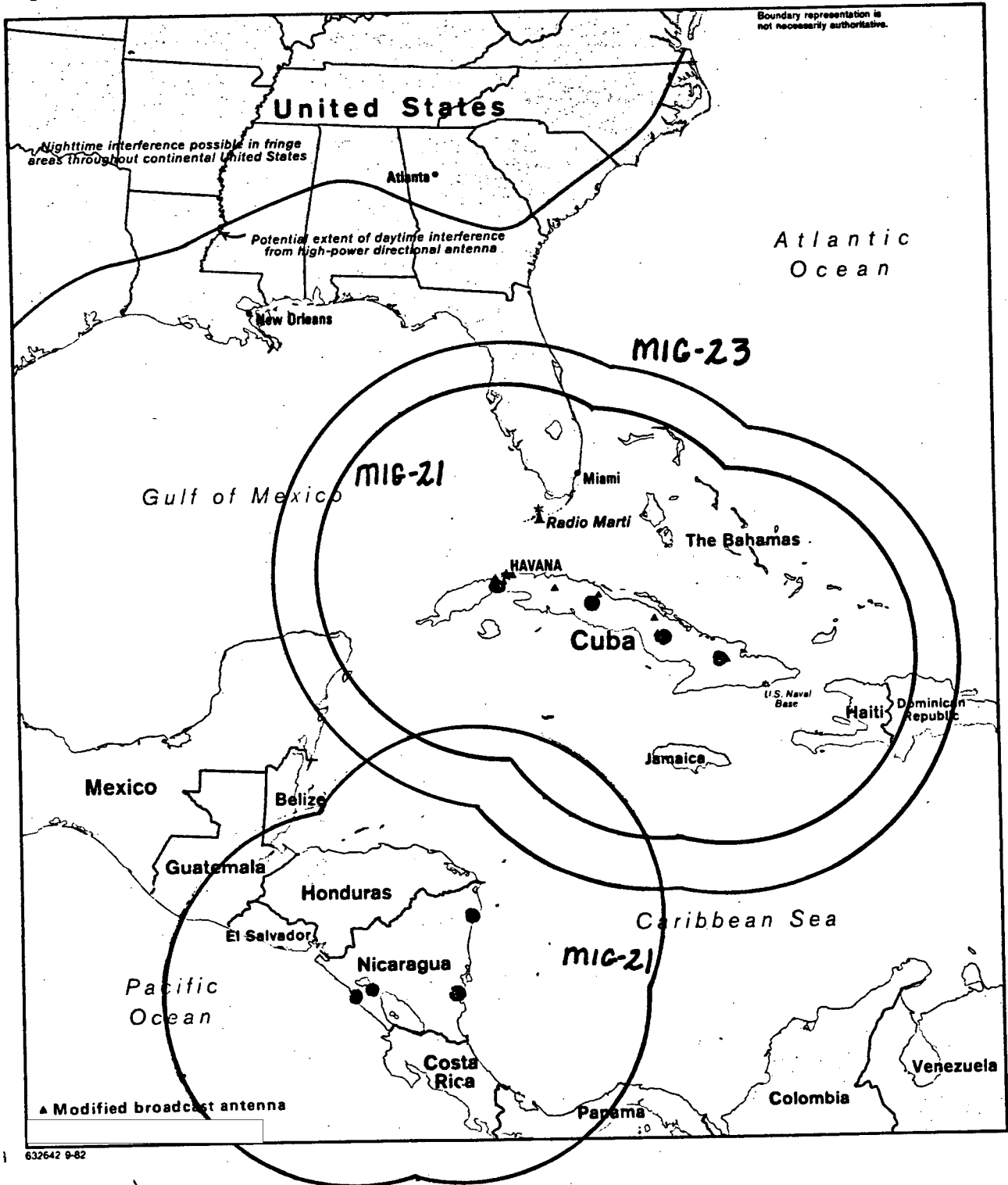
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** January through October only.



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Optimum Combat Radii of MIG-23s and MIG-21s



● MIG Base (Cuba) or Potential Base (Nicaragua)

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TABLE 1

SOVIET MILITARY DELIVERIES TO CUBA:
SELECTED WEAPONS

<u>Ground</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>Current Total</u>
T-54/55/62 Medium Tanks	30	10	--	315
BTR-60/BMP Armored Vehicles	50	35	--	215
57/100mm Anti-tank Guns	50	115	--	440
122/152mm SP Field Artillery	--	10	--	10
<u>Air/Air Defense</u>				
MIG-21 Fighters	20	25	35	235
MIG-23 Fighters	--	5	20	40
AN-26 Transports	--	5	--	25
MI-24 Attack Helicopters	--	--	12	12
SA-2 SAMs	--	45	--	745
SA-6 SAMs	--	20	--	20
SA-9 SAMs	--	--	3	3
<u>Navy</u>				
Koni-class Frigate	--	1	--	1
F-class Submarines	1	--	--	2
OSA-11 Missile Attack Boats	--	2	4	13
Polnocny Medium Landing Ships	--	--	2	2

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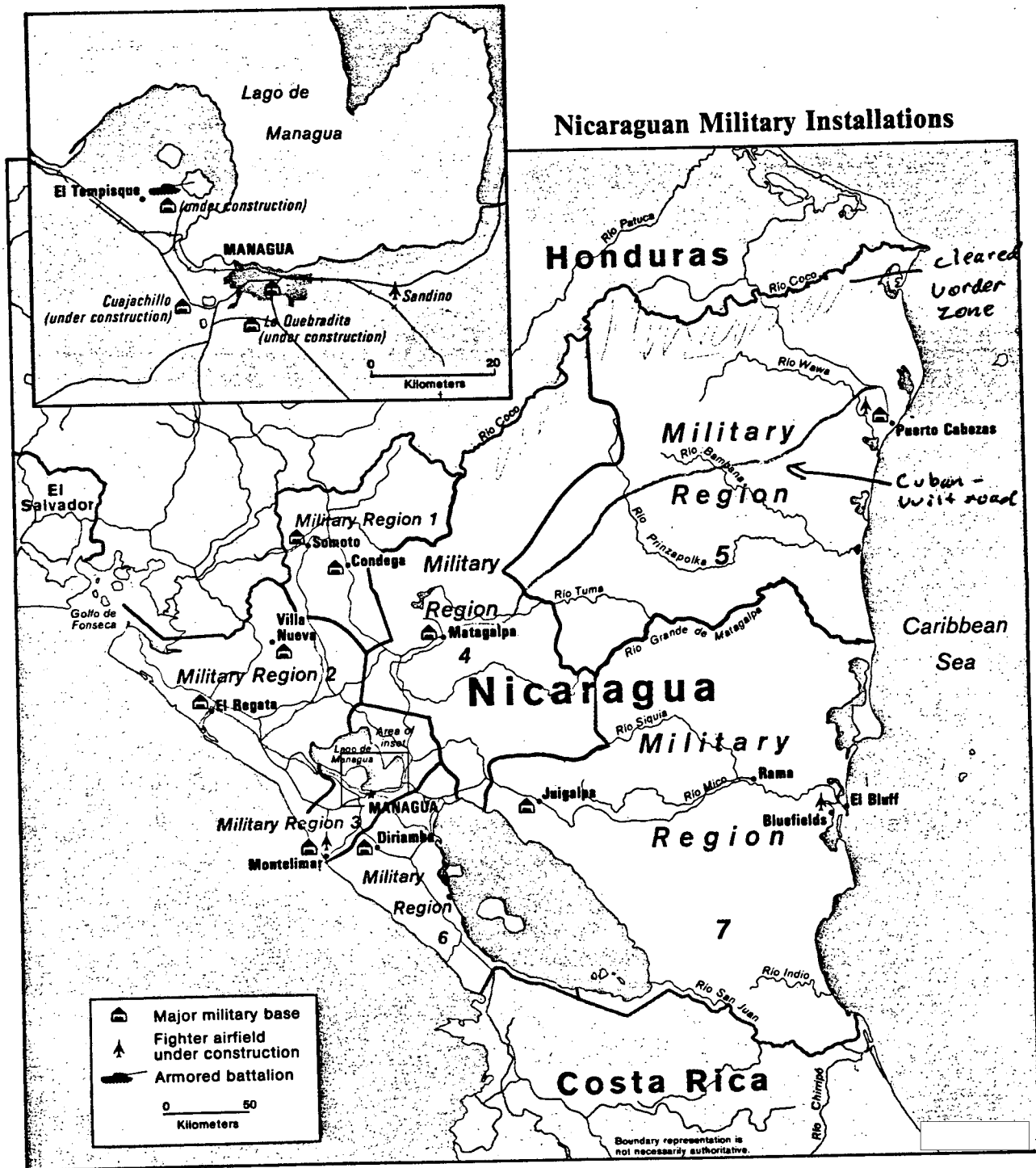
TABLE 2

SELECTED CUBAN PRESENCE OVERSEAS

<u>Country</u>	<u>Military</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Total</u>
Angola	25,000-30,000	4,500	29,500-34,500
Ethiopia	11,000	1,000	12,000
Mozambique	1,000	1,000	2,000
Congo	500	100-200	600-700
Libya	--	3,200	3,200
South Yemen	500	150	650
Nicaragua	1,500-2,000	3,500-4,000*	5,000-6,000*
Grenada	10-15	600	610-615

* Does not include 2,000 teachers on leave in Cuba

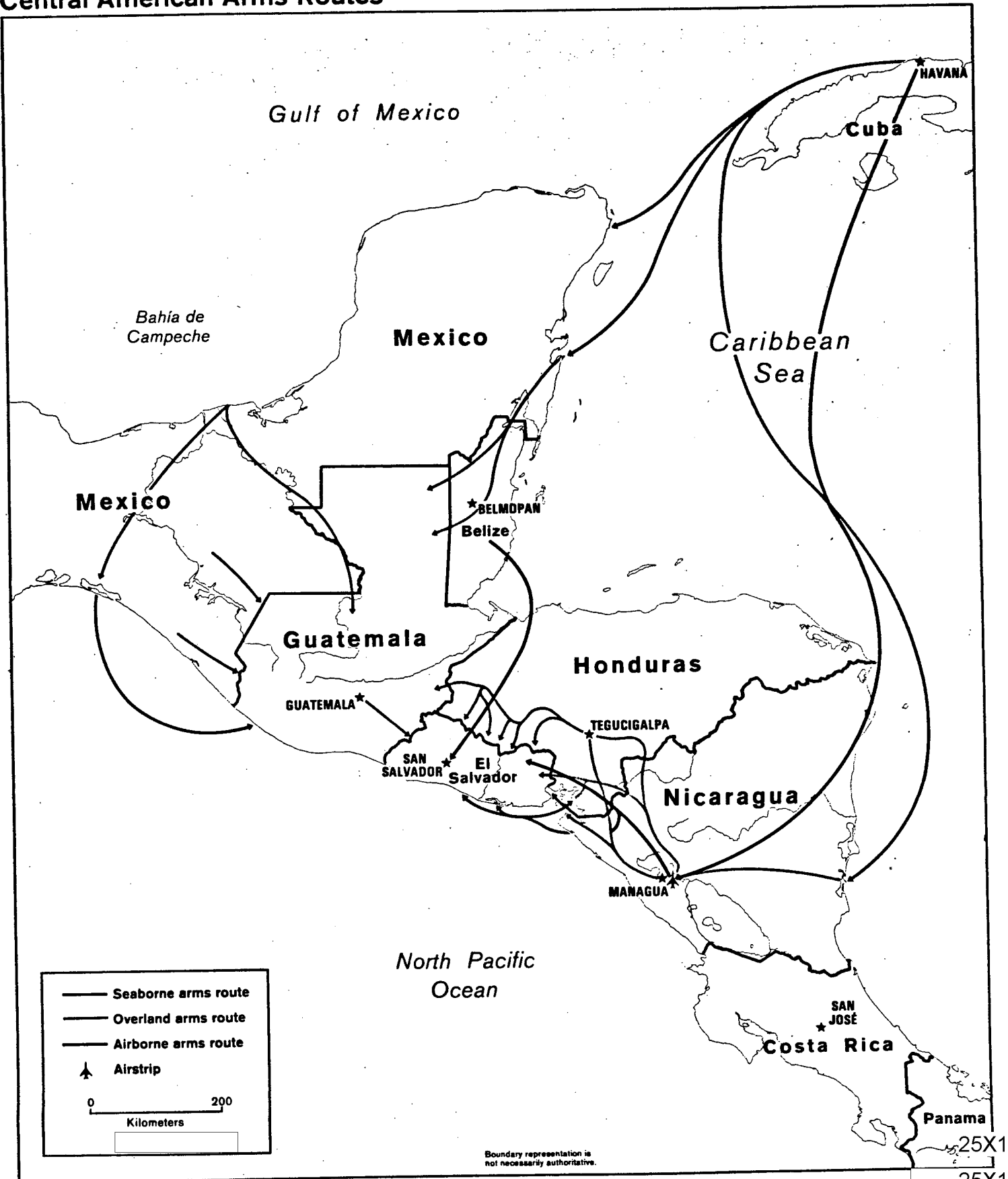




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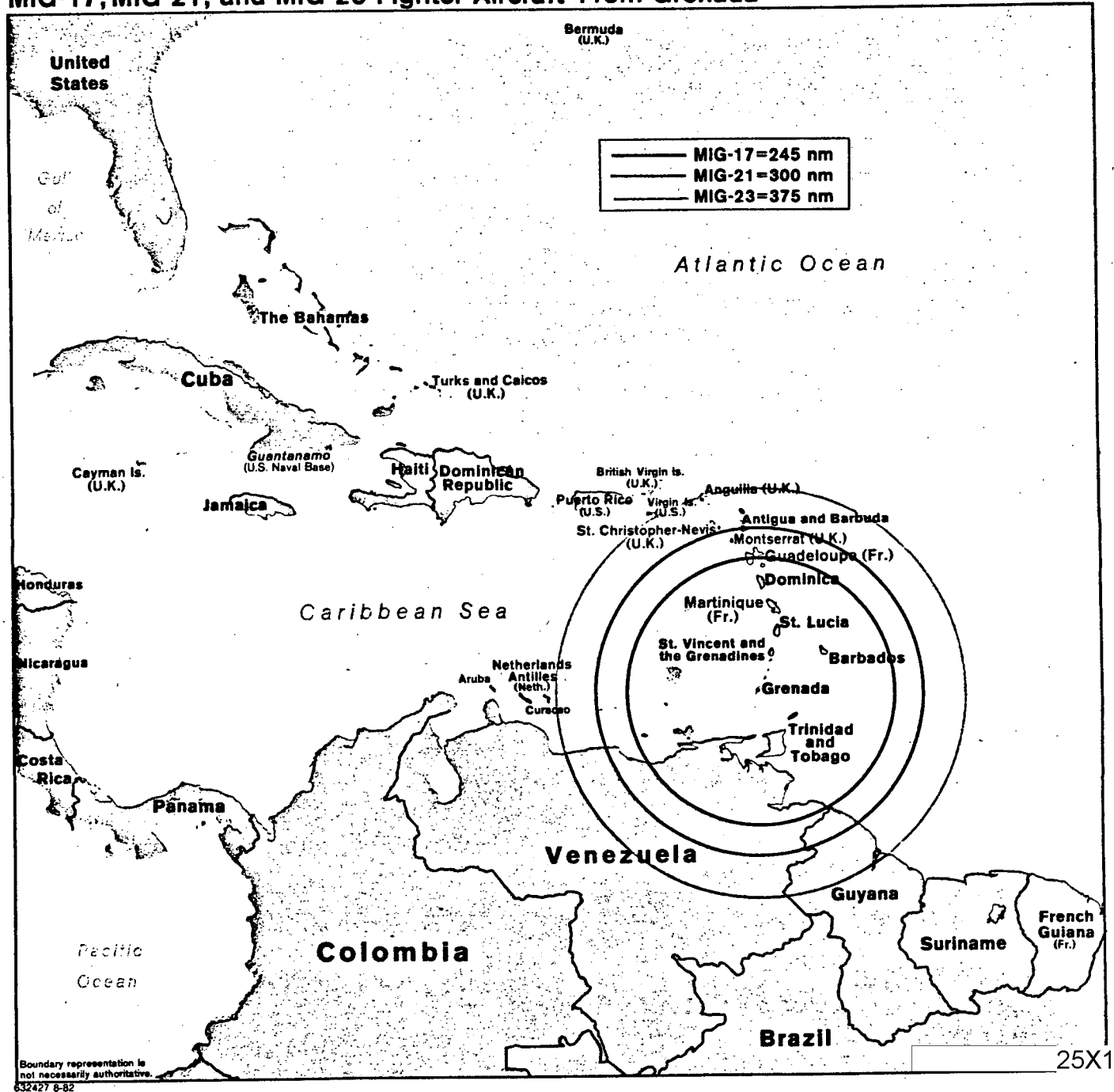
Central American Arms Routes



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Optimum High-Altitude Combat Radii of Cuban MIG-17, MIG-21, and MIG-23 Fighter Aircraft From Grenada



DISTRIBUTION:

Orig. Cy #1 - DCI - 7E12
2 - DDCI - 7E12
3 - ED/DCI - 7E12
4 - SA/DCI/IA - 7E12
5 - DDI - 7E44
6 - ADDI - 7E44
7 - NIO/LA - 7E48
8 - NIC/AG - 2E49
9 - C/DDO/IAD
10 - C/DDO/LA
11-12 - D/ALA
14 - C/MCD
14 - DC/MCD
15 - C/CA
16 - C/CC
17-23 - CA ANALYSTS
24 - DIVISION FILE
25 - BRANCH FILE

DDI/ALA [redacted] (5 Jan 83)

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