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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Fidel Castro's Expanding Role as a Broker  
Between the Communist and Third Worlds

Fidel Castro stands out as a protean and commanding figure among the Soviet-style communist party leaders gathered in Moscow this week. Bearded, and in the khaki-green attire of the guerrilla movement that he led to victory 17 years ago, his credentials are currently as good with the heads of third world governments and revolutionary groups as they are with his more stolid communist counterparts. While in Moscow, and later in Eastern Europe, Castro will seek to exploit these unique bona fides to win support for his increasingly assertive and global foreign policy.

Unlike the four visits Castro made to the USSR in earlier years when he was cast in the role of an underprivileged client seeking Soviet beneficence, he will consult with Soviet leaders this time from a position of greater strength. The Cuban Revolution is more secure and successful than ever before, (although still dependent on massive Soviet aid) and he is at the peak of his power and prestige. Decisive Cuban victories with the Popular Movement in Angola underscore for many the wisdom of his audacious decision to project Cuban military power 8,000 miles across the Atlantic.

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While these and other solid Cuban accomplishments undoubtedly impress the leaders of the other communist parties, Castro's credibility with them is probably better enhanced by important steps he has taken recently to accept Soviet orthodoxy. The first congress of the Cuban Communist Party last December was a final step in the pervasive institutionalization of the Revolution along lines recommended by Moscow. In recent weeks, moreover, Havana has abandoned ten years of silence in the Sino-Soviet dispute by loosing a vicious propaganda barrage against Peking.

Castro's remarkable success in simultaneously augmenting his credibility as a communist and third world leader will better enable him to carry out the more expansive foreign policy he is now embarked on. He aspires not only to continue enhancing his dual credentials in the communist and third worlds, but to act as a bridge between them. He seems genuinely to believe that in this manner he can help to forge a greater convergence of interests between the two, and once again become a major player on the world stage.

Castro is encouraged to pursue this ambitious design because he believes that the international balance of power has shifted during the last few years. The US failure in Southeast Asia, Watergate, revelations about and investigations of the US intelligence community, and other developments have persuaded him that "imperialism" is in eclipse and that communist and third world forces have gained the upper hand. Cuban successes in Angola have strongly reinforced that view.

Castro also is encouraged by the increasing compatibility of Cuban and Soviet objectives and methods in the third world, and by Moscow's apparent satisfaction that his efforts there work to its advantage as well as his. The economic, technical,

and security assistance that Cuban advisers provide the governments of several countries, including Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zambia, contributes to the fulfillment of both Cuban and Soviet objectives. Castro may even believe that he helped to persuade the Soviet leaders to more actively support third world causes. This heightened degree of mutual trust has resulted in increased Soviet willingness to delegate to the Cubans immediate responsibility for advancing the objectives of both countries in certain Caribbean and African countries.

#### Cuba's Future Role in Africa

All of these factors strongly impel Castro to capitalize on Cuban successes in Angola by continuing to perform as a major power broker in Africa. At least 12,000 seasoned Cuban troops are believed to be in Angola even now after the fighting has all but ended. Castro may be keeping them there primarily as a reminder to the white minority governments of southern Africa that he is irrevocably committed to support wars of national liberation in the area.

The extent of the support Cuba eventually will provide to guerrilla movements in southern Africa will depend largely on how much of a commitment Castro can win from the Soviets. His ambitions for that part of the world undoubtedly will be one of the central topics in his discussions with Soviet leaders during his stay in Moscow. The presence in his entourage of Osmani Cienfuegos, Cuba's senior troubleshooter in Africa and the Middle East, and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the regime's top foreign policy official, seem to emphasize the priority that Castro places on his African pursuits.

Castro will probably seek Soviet backing to begin providing material support and training to the faction of the African National Council that supports Joshua Nkomo in his efforts to negotiate a settlement with the Smith government in Rhodesia. Moscow has long aided Nkomo, and may agree to funnel arms and money through the Cubans. If there is any truth in reports that Cuban military personnel and Soviet military equipment have been sent to Mozambique from Angola, then such a decision may already have been made. Cuban efforts will be hampered, however, by the poor organization and small size of the group, and by the fact that Peking supports another faction of the Council that is stronger and more active than Nkomo's.

Initially, therefore, the Cubans are likely to confine their efforts in behalf of the Rhodesian guerrillas to training and organizational areas while seeking to build up the group's capability. A small number of Cuban advisers could be expected to engage in guerrilla operations, but it is not likely that regular Cuban troops will become involved without strong endorsements from Moscow and major African nations.

Cuba is also likely to provide training and material support to the South West African People's Organization in concert with the expected efforts of the Angolan Popular Movement to support insurgency in Namibia, even if an accommodation is reached with Pretoria. The levels and types of Cuban assistance would depend here, as in Rhodesia, on a variety of external factors. In balance, it seems unlikely that in the next few months Cuban personnel will become involved other than as advisers with guerrilla units.

Cuban efforts in support of the Katangan secessionists who oppose the Mobutu government in Zaire also are possible, but restraints that extend

well beyond those discussed in the above cases apply here. Despite his antipathy for Mobutu,--against whom Che Guevara fought a guerrilla action in 1965--Castro would support a struggle against a legitimate black African government only in the extremely unlikely event that its opponents enjoyed the overwhelming support of other black nations.

In the longer term, Cuba also can be expected to expend considerable and growing energy--both diplomatic and subversive--against white minority rule in South Africa. The possibilities for Cuban meddling are more limited there than elsewhere in southern Africa, but Havana may endeavor to establish and support a guerrilla force--perhaps from bases in Mozambique--in the hopes of generating support in the international arena for more direct involvement. Despite the triumphant mood that Castro and most of his military commanders are in following their success in Angola, however, few of them have illusions about how much more difficult and costly a conventional war with South Africa would be.

During the remainder of the year and beyond, the Castro regime can be expected to perform in Africa in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the European colonial powers of the last century. A growing number of Cuban guerrilla advisers are likely to be assigned with African liberation groups, diverse Cuban aid programs probably will be expanded, and large numbers of Cuban advisers will work in Angola to help pattern a system modeled on Cuba's.

Unless the Neto government strongly objects, moreover, a Cuban military contingent of at least several thousand is likely to remain indefinitely in Angola both as a defensive force and to unsettle nearby white minority governments. In concert with these efforts, Cuban officials and the media will concentrate on a theme that Castro broached late last year: "Cuba is not just a Latin American country, but also a Latin African country. African blood flows abundantly in our veins."