

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

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18 DEC 1984

The Honorable William Schneider, Jr.  
Under Secretary of State for  
Security Assistance, Science  
and Technology  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Bill:

Thank you very much for your letter of 10 December. I am glad that you found the paper on Cuba and COCOM useful. Our analysts have reviewed the proposed downgraded version and have made only a few modifications. A copy of the revised version is enclosed. Again, thank you for your interest and please contact me if you have any additional requirements on this subject.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

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Robert M. Gates  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

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### Designation of Cuba as a Proscribed Destination

The United States recommends that Cuba be designated a proscribed destination because it is an extension of Soviet military power.

#### Background

Under Castro, Cuba has been turned into a garrison state possessing a military force which has been significantly modernized over the last ten years. This modernization has included more sophisticated training--including some joint exercises with Soviet units--and significant improvements in equipment. In the last four years, the level of Soviet military equipment deliveries to Cuba has been the highest since the Cuban missile crisis. This modern equipment has included MIG-23's, a long-range IL-76 jet transport aircraft and other transports, improved missile-armed patrol boats, and Polnocny class landing ships. As a result of the improvements to date, Cuba has by far the largest, best-equipped and most capable armed force in the Caribbean, barring that of the United States.

We have every reason to believe that these deliveries of sophisticated Soviet military equipment will continue, concentrating on heavy weapons and transportation assets. These will most likely include more submarines and amphibious landing ships and better interceptors, perhaps including the MIG-25. We also expect the Cubans to receive two or three additional IL-76 heavy jet transports.

Further, Cuba has developed the ability independently to deploy overseas and support a force of up to 10,000 soldiers. This is a clearly offensive capability which none of Cuba's Latin American neighbors can match, and which is a threat to them.

Nothing in the last decade has shown more clearly the degree of Cuban willingness to support Soviet political-military objectives than Cuba's program of stationing significant numbers of its military forces abroad. As many as 40,000 Cuban soldiers are now deployed overseas, mostly in Africa, far from the traditional areas of Cuba's regional interests. Through these deployments, Cuba has put at the disposal of the Soviets a trained military force which the Soviets can plausibly deny they control.

The Soviet Union's military relationship with Cuba differs from its treatment of both its Warsaw Pact allies and its other Third World client states. For example, in Ethiopia in the 1970s, the Soviets themselves assumed control over Cuban combat operations in the Ogaden. Also, in contrast to all other recipients of Soviet military assistance anywhere, Cuba is not required to pay for the military equipment it receives. However, it is obvious that the Soviets are not motivated by altruism in their upgrading of Cuba's military forces, and that their

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"payment" comes in the form of the uses to which they can put Cuban forces and Cuban facilities.

The Soviets make substantial use of military bases in Cuba. In this way, the Soviets have greatly improved their collection of intelligence about the U.S., have extended the amount of time Soviet surface warships can stay on station in the Caribbean, and have been able to conduct naval air reconnaissance over the North Atlantic and the west coast of Africa.

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In 1972, Cuba entered CEMA, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, but its integration into that Soviet-dominated economic organization has accelerated in recent years. This increased integration into CEMA has resulted primarily from Soviet efforts to redistribute the increasing cost of providing economic assistance to Cuba.

Traditionally, the Soviet Union has delegated to Cuba through CEMA the role of producing agricultural products and raw materials. At the Moscow CEMA Summit in June 1984, member countries agreed again to cooperate in the production of microprocessors and advanced technologies and production processes.

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Besides CEMA, the Soviets exercise control over Cuban economic policy through the operation of the Cuban-Soviet Commission of Economic, Scientific and Technical Collaboration, formed in 1970. Recently, the two countries concluded a long-term economic cooperation accord for the period 1986-2000. One of the priority areas identified in that accord is electronics, including work related to computer display equipment.

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The fact that Cuba is not proscribed is an anomaly. It is no less in the pocket of the Soviets than Bulgaria, or Viet Nam and Mongolia (the only other two non-Warsaw Pact members of CEMA). Cuba is a much more willing and active helper of the Soviets than, for example, Romania. That Cuba is not proscribed is probably an historical accident, since Castro took power after the initial formulation of the proscribed destinations list.

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