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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

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National Intelligence Council

[Redacted]

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25 January 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Chairman, National Intelligence Council *[Signature]*

FROM: John Horton
National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT: Cubans in Nicaragua: New Estimate

1. Spurred by the comments you made to the Latin American "Junta" on 16 January, Intelligence Community analysts were convened on 24 January to reassess the validity of our estimate of Cuban civilian and military personnel in Nicaragua. The Intelligence Community had been carrying an estimate of 7,000 to 8,000 Cubans, of whom 1,500 to 2,000 were military and security personnel, but as we noted on 16 January there was growing uncertainty as to the accuracy of this figure. [Redacted]

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2. As a result of our deliberations, the Intelligence Community now estimates that there are 7,000 to 10,000 Cubans in Nicaragua of whom, 2,500 to 3,500 are military and security personnel. These new figures are based largely on a draft study recently completed by DIA (see attached table). Although we still lack any hard evidence to back up these figures, the Intelligence Collection Community appears to be sufficiently mobilized on this issue, and we do not believe that additional tasking would produce any useful information on the subject. [Redacted]

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3. We increased our estimate of Cuban military and security personnel mostly on the grounds that the significant expansion of Nicaragua's military structure over the past year and the arrival of more sophisticated military equipment would require more Cuban advisory personnel in Nicaragua. Other factors suggesting that the Cuban military presence has grown are the heightened level of flight activity between Cuba and Nicaragua since last September; reports last year that Cuban reservists and militia members were being called up and receiving training prior to deployment overseas--possibly to Nicaragua; and a report [Redacted] that a large group of officers

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in the Cuban Territorial Militias were to go to Nicaragua to advise the Sandinistas in the formation of their militia. Considering the size of Nicaragua's regular, reserve, and militia forces and its need for assistance in training such a large force as well as in organizing an effective counterinsurgency effort, it is possible that the number of military advisers may exceed 3,500, but better evidence is needed to justify raising our estimate further. [redacted]

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4. The range in our estimate of Cuban civilians in Nicaragua was expanded from 5,500-6,000 to 4,500-6,500 largely because of uncertainty as to how many teachers will return to Nicaragua in February. Sandinista leader Tomas Borge told Senator Kasten in December that 1,200 of the 2,000 Cuban teachers in Nicaragua who left last November would not return, but other reporting suggests that more than 800 will do so. On the other hand, we have good information that the number of Cuban medical personnel has increased [redacted]

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5. More important, we believe that there has been a shift in the type of civilian advisers now serving in Nicaragua. It appears that dependents, women, and older civilians have been evacuated, and most--if not all--civilian advisers now being assigned to Nicaragua must have a certificate indicating they have had some type of military training or are members of the reserves or militia. While their fighting skills would be lower than those found in the regular armed forces, most civilian advisers probably would have access to weapons and could assume military or paramilitary duties in the event of an emergency. [redacted]

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6. With your concurrence, we plan to distribute the above findings in memorandum format to key members of the Latin American intelligence and policy communities and to request that DDI/ALA draft a short NID feature on the same subject. [redacted]

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J. Horton
John Horton

Attachment:
Cubans in Nicaragua, January 1984

APPROVED:

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31 JAN 1984

Director of Central Intelligence

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