

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



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**CHRONO**

OEXA 83-1221/B

Office of External Affairs

27 May 1983

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BTA,  
5/27/83*

Mr. Robert Simmons, Staff Director  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Rob:

At the hearing on collection in Central America on 25 May, Senator Goldwater asked for some information on the Cuban involvement in Central America. The attached is in response to that request.

*no records  
copy in  
BTA folder*

Regards,



Burton L. Hutchings  
Chief, Legislative Liaison Division

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Enclosure

Distribution:  
Original - Addressee  
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26 May 1983

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Cuban Presence in Central America

1. Cuba's diplomatic and consular ties with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador were severed in 1960-61, and Cuba has not had an official presence in these countries since that time. Although we occasionally get reports of a handful of Cuban military or para-military personnel serving as advisers with guerrilla groups in Central America, we have had none recently and believe there is currently no Cuban presence, official or unofficial, in any of these three countries.

2. Cuba has had no official presence in Costa Rica since consular ties were cut in May 1981 (diplomatic relations were broken in 1961). The Castro regime, however, does have a quasi-official presence in San Jose in the form of a small branch office of Prensa Latina, the Cuban government news agency that

[redacted] The office probably has only a few Cubans, perhaps only one, and several local employees.

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3. We estimate that there are some 7,000 to 8,000 Cubans currently in Nicaragua of which:

- 1,500 to 2,000 are military and security personnel serving the Nicaraguan security establishment as advisors and trainers;
- 2,000 are teachers for primary and secondary schools;
- 2,000 are construction workers involved in road building, housing construction, and work on various military facilities;

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SECRET

-- and 1,500 to 2,000 are involved in a variety of fields such as public health, communications, agriculture, political organization, and propaganda.

Cuba, of course, also has a diplomatic and consular mission in Managua as well as a Prensa Latina office.

4. We know of no Cuban combat units in Central America. The Cuban Interior Ministry has some personnel of its Special Troops serving with Nicaraguan units in the field trying to suppress the anti-Sandinista guerrillas. The Special Troops are patterned after our own Green Berets, are skilled in the use of a variety of weapons and in hand-to-hand combat, and are generally employed in small teams instructing and advising foreign military and paramilitary units. In Cuba, they are also used as Swat Teams when disgruntled Cubans take over foreign diplomatic missions in Havana.

This memorandum is classified SECRET  
 in its entirety.

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