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## Intelligence slipped on Cuba-

### -but where's the crisis?

WASHINGTON — The rumpus over the "discovery" of Soviet combat troops in Cuba reveals more about the failings of human nature than the world Communist plot. This is an overblown story that will have to spend itself.

President Carter is caught in a bind. He must keep the Senate on a steady course for ratification of SALT II, while reassuring senators that the U.S. intelligence apparatus is functioning well enough to spot dozing troops in Cuba and missiles in the Soviet Union as well.

So 2,000 to 3,000 Soviet troops are in Cuba and might have been there for a decade or longer. So what else do you expect on this surrogate island? The Soviets regard Cuba as a prize. They pay for it dearly by purchasing sugar at inflated prices from the Cubans and selling them oil below world market prices.

In return, the Soviets derive these advantages; among others: Seeing Cuban troops do Soviet work in Africa; listening to Castro regularly flail Uncle Sam for the Third World's enjoyment; having access to a nice, warm island, where Communist officials [from satellite countries, too] can come for holiday, and where Soviet military personnel can show Cubans how to make mischief militarily. All this is 90 miles from the United States, on an island that was

once considered for statehood after being administered by an American governor.

The United States botched the Cuban situation 20 years ago, and the chances are that we must live with our mistake for a long time. The Beard is not yet an old man.

In the old days — from the first Nixon term back — the U.S. intelligence community monitored Cuba like a distrustful wife checking on her husband. But somewhere along the line the scrutiny slipped a little.

As Sen. Sam Nunn of the Armed Services Committee sees it, no satisfactory explanation has yet been given as to why our intelligence agencies didn't spot the Soviet troops until recently. He feels there aren't enough intelligence analysts at work, and wonders why CIA Director Stansfield Turner refused to take funds to hire 500 new intelligence analysts next year, as authorized by Congress. The 500 will work for the Defense Intelligence Agency instead.

If our intelligence slipped a bit, anxious candidates will make certain everybody knows about it. When Henry Kissinger was secretary of state, he cut Congress off from receiving many intelligence estimates because some congressional eager beavers promptly leaked what Henry sent, making his administration look bad. The good-guy Cartermen decided to resume sending such classified material, and lo, what happens? Leaks from Democrats that reflect on the Democratic administration.

For some American politicians, Cuba

is like the local bordello that the mayor must rediscover every election season, raid, and close down.

Some politicians like to run against Cuba the way old Irish-American pols used to run against the king of England. But what do the thumpers propose doing to get the Soviets out of Cuba — offer them a nicer time in Miami?

No, it's more important, as Sam Nunn points out, to find out what the role of the Soviet troops is. If they are there as living Communist symbols to inspire the Cubans to carry out more Soviet missions in Africa or even on the Arabian peninsula, then maybe we had better get tough with the Soviets in some special way.

Sam Nunn laments the decline of the quality of American intelligence and the lessening of human intelligence activities by U.S. agents around the world.

He has this to say about colleagues who leak classified information for political gain:

"I hope the senators who were so energetic in getting this information out give the President some flexibility in dealing with the Soviets and Cubans, both by increasing the defense budget and by restoring our intelligence capability."

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