Cuba's Strategy in Latin America: Intelligence Estimates and the Historical Record

Matthew D. Jacobs

Given the opening of archives in Latin America over the last two decades, it is an opportune time to look back at how accurate assessments were and what lessons, if any, can be learned for intelligence professionals today.

Soon after taking power in 1959, Fidel Castro became one of the most difficult adversaries the United States faced, attracting the masses with promises of revolutionary change and directly challenging US interests not only on the island of Cuba, but also throughout Latin America. In February 1962, speaking before almost one million Cubans in downtown Havana's Plaza de *Revolución*, Castro declared, "It is the duty of every revolutionary to make the revolution."[1]

Brian Latell, a former CIA Cuba expert, noted that "Fidel's speeches were broadcast by powerful Radio Havana antennas and were easily heard through much of Latin America…[to] a huge, sympathetic following."[2] Occurring at the height of the Cold War, the prospect of Castro "making the revolution" in the Western Hemisphere was unacceptable for President John Kennedy, who labeled Latin America the "the most dangerous area in the world,"[3] due to the prospect of more Cuban-style revolutions. Very quickly, US policymakers looked to the Intelligence Community (IC) analytic cadre to provide insights on Castro's intentions and capabilities.

This article examines how key IC assessments made during the 1960s on Cuban foreign policy in Latin America compare to what we now know about Havana's regional adventurism from the historical record.[4] It draws on declassified IC publications, the Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project, published oral histories, and documents from Latin American archives, including the Cuban foreign ministry.

The IC provided the White House, policy community, and intelligence leaders a wide range of analytic products on Cuban policy in the Western Hemisphere in the form of special memorandums, National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), and items in the President's Daily Brief (PDB).

Comparing IC judgments to the historical record, we gain a better understanding of how well analysts contemporaneously understood decisionmakers in Havana. Moreover, given the opening of archives in Latin America over the last two decades, from the Andes to the Caribbean, it is an opportune time to look back at how accurate assessments were and what lessons, if any, can be learned for intelligence professionals today.

IC Assessments

Published a little over a year after Castro took power and in the last few months of the Dwight Eisenhower administration, an NIE in June 1960 provided policymakers with several

Collection became quite difficult in the early 1960s as US-Cuban relations soured and Castro cemented his relationship with the Soviet Union.

stark judgments. The IC assessed that Castro "will almost certainly continue his extensive propaganda and proselytizing activities in Latin America, seeking thereby to undermine Western Hemisphere solidarity, to reduce US influence in Latin America, and to replace unfriendly governments with ones more closely oriented to his own."[5]

The IC also estimated there was an "appreciable" chance that more "Castro-like regimes" could take power in Latin America over the next year or so.[6] Historian Piero Gleijeses argued that "fired by the Cubans' example, and by Castro's call to the true revolutionaries to fight, guerillas became active in Venezuela, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, [and] the Dominican Republic."[7]

Causing further alarm for intelligence officials working the Cuba issue was the deteriorating collection environment as US-Cuban relations soured and Castro cemented his relationship with the Soviet Union. By 1961 security cooperation between Moscow and Havana made Cuba one of the most difficult operating environments for intelligence collectors, thanks to KGB assistance to Cuba's *Dirección General de Inteligencia* (General Directorate of Intelligence, DGI, later renamed the Intelligence Directorate).

The Kremlin sent officers to Havana and also provided training in Moscow, teaching Cubans how to recruit sources and implement a strict counterintelligence program on the island. With Soviet assistance, the DGI became a formidable service, providing Havana tools to project influence abroad through covert action and to monitor the activities of Cuban dissidents.[8] Furthermore, when US-Cuban diplomatic relations broke in January 1961, Havana became an even more difficult collection environment.

Yet, even with these challenges the IC produced timely and relevant analysis. A July 1961 NIE, published only three months following the failed Bay of Pigs operation, provided policymakers insights on Havana's current standing and how the revolution might influence political developments in the future. Recognizing the challenge that Castro posed to the existing power structure in Latin America, which greatly benefited ruling elites at the expense of economic and social development, the key assessment read, "

Although the initial impact of the Cuban revolution has been blunted to some extent, the Castro/communist potential inherent in the social dissatisfaction pervading Latin America remains."[9]

The IC based this judgment on reporting indicating that while many leaders in the region "disapprove of the way things are going in Cuba," few were willing to take concrete actions, fearing "demonstrations and riots" by local pro-Castro elements. The NIE provided a blunt conclusion for policymakers: "The Castro regime and the revolutionary approach it exemplifies will continue to exert a strong influence on the process of political, economic, and social change throughout Latin America."[10]

Serving the President

Along with detailed NIEs, policymakers' understanding of Cuban foreign policy in Latin America also benefited from the CIA's analytic flexibility and willingness to provide more concise judgments to support the nation's top intelligence consumer. In the initial months of his presidency, Kennedy regularly received a large stack of CIA papers, Defense Department reports, and State Department cables, but after the Bay of Pigs, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy argued in favor of a more efficient process. One White House aide told CIA officials that what "they wanted was a product that will have everything in it that is worth the president's attention."[11]

In June 1961, CIA began producing the President's Intelligence Check List (PICL, the forerunner of today's PDB). Kennedy's first PICL contained 14 two-sentence pieces, six slightly longer notes, and a few small maps, according to David Priess in his definitive history of the PDB.[12] Initial items in the PICL on Latin America concentrated on Cuba's regional standing, including one item noting that one of Castro's key foreign policy advisers, the Argentine Enersto "Che" Guevara, had been lobbying his home country's president against supporting collective inter-American action against Havana.[13] The PICL also had updates that were similar to assessments in the longer NIEs, particularly on countries considering breaking diplomatic relations with Havana, such as Venezuela, expecting local pro-Castro elements would spark unrest.[14]

Throughout 1962 the president received consistent updates on the ways in which Cuba was

actively promoting revolution in Latin America. Just days apart in November, the Checklist included an item noting that Chilean authorities arrested four members of a pro-Castro group carrying Cuban propaganda and a cache of dynamite, while another entry stated that Venezuela planned to publicly call out "Cuban inspired subversion and sabotage."[15]

Additionally, an NIE published in November 1962 judged that the Castro regime was committed to fomenting revolutions throughout Latin America and was providing support to its allies in the region.[16] Analysts wrote that "thousands of Latin Americans have been brought to Cuba; about 1,200 foreign trainees are believed to be there now" to learn guerrilla warfare and revolutionary techniques.[17] The assessment also highlighted intelligence gaps, noting that while "arms shipments have also been reported…the evidence is unclear as to quantities shipped and the extent of Cuba's role in these transactions."[18]

Given the timing of the NIE's publication, soon after the Cuban Missile Crisis, the IC examined the political fallout for Havana and assessed Castro's acceptance of Soviet missile bases in Cuba damaged his reputation among some non-communist nationalists in Latin America, though his most ardent regional supporters remained committed to the revolution.

One of the key questions many US policymakers had at this time was what countries in Latin America were most susceptible to Cuban subversion? The November 1962 NIE sought to answer that, judging that Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Venezuela and all had communist-inspired elements who would welcome Cuban support.[19] Toward the end of the assessment, the IC provided some alternative analysis on what could change the trajectory of Cuba's willingness to support revolutionary movements.

The Kremlin's assistance to Havana was important for Castro's agenda in Latin America.

One scenario supposed that if the Soviet Union withdrew all of its support, Castro's capabilities to export revolution would be considerably reduced, while a second scenario presumed that if Kremlin increased its support, Castro could use the additional resources for more external operations.[20] The point was clear for readers: the Kremlin's assistance to Havana was important for Castro's agenda in Latin America. Additionally, CIA assessments published in 1962 and 1963 in the PICL also regularly discussed Cuban support for, and training to, revolutionary movements in Latin America.

Kennedy received regular updates that leaders in Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Venezuela believed Havana was engaging in subversive activities and seeking to undermine their governments.[21] At the end of 1962, analysts judged that Cuban spokesmen "are now beginning to talk more openly than before the [missile] crisis of Cuban support for insurrectionist movements in the rest of Latin America," citing Guevara as an example. The PICL also noted in early 1963 that Cuba increased the budget for a front organization covering the expenses of Latin Americans brought to Havana for training and in the summer of that year, analysts wrote that Guevara had a plan for subversion in at least five Latin American countries.[22]

What do the Archives Tell Us?

In many instances, the historical record available supports the analytic judgments made by the IC. Documents from Havana's Foreign Ministry archive demonstrate that Cuban leaders gave particular attention to better understanding the prospects for revolution in Latin America. In February 1960, Cuban policymakers in Havana received a report from their embassy in Guatemala City with a list of more than 20 individuals, including a well-known columnist and economist, characterized as "friendly."[23]

Reports from Cuban representatives in Caracas portrayed the guerilla forces within Venezuela as a "great power" and if guided correctly, could play a decisive role in blunting U.S. designs on the region.[24] In Honduras, Castro regime officials reported home that while some students, writers, and other intellectuals favored Cuba, Havana still had a lot of work to do in order to gain support from critical groups such as peasants, urban workers, and women.[25] Cuban officials received word from Costa Rica that any leftist opposition had little chance of victory as *figueristas* (those aligned with former pro-democracy President Jose Figueres) had a tight grip on power.[26] The Foreign Ministry also received similar reports on the situation in Nicaragua, where the security forces of the Somoza dictatorship were described as formidable and that Cuba needed to "keep in mind that the struggle will be long…refrain

Havana's spies supported Mao Zedong's view that revolutions needed to be exported through armed struggle.

from attempting decisive action at an untimely period."[27]

Scholars who have also conducted work in foreign archives have documented how the Castro government made increasing Havana's influence in Latin America a top foreign policy priority. Jonathan Brown's 2017 book, *Cuba's Revolutionary Worlds*, which relied not only on research in Cuban archives but also Mexico and the former East Germany, found that Mexican officials concluded that the DGI took the lead in "foreign operations including the collection of information and promotion of revolutionary subversive activities."[28] East German diplomats believed that "those following the Chinese position are to be found in the Cuban intelligence services," suggesting that Havana's spies supported Mao Zedong's view that revolutions needed to be exported through armed struggle.

Cuba's Training Program and the Archival Record

On specific issues, such as Castro's efforts to bring Latin Americans to Havana for training, documents from Cuba's foreign ministry and Colombia's national archive also support IC assessments. Cuban diplomats based in Guatemala noted in 1961 that the several members of a pro-Cuba group traveled to Havana and received training in guerilla warfare.[29] The number of individuals making the trip from Colombia for training increased to the point that officials in Bogota began producing classified reports through the *Ministerio de Guerra* (Ministry of War) that included detailed background information on each individual.[30]

Moreover, scholar Hal Brands, who conducted research in numerous Latin American archives, found that Castro "regularly welcomed insurgent leaders to Havana" and that Havana provided funding to revolutionary groups throughout the region.[31] Some of the best evidence supporting analytic judgments on Cuba's support for subversion comes directly from Manuel Piñeiro, Castro's top intelligence officer who led Cuban covert actions in Latin America. Known as *barbarroja* for his red beard, Piñeiro was Deputy Minister of the Interior and helped create the DGI.

Mexican academic and former Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Castañeda, observed that Piñeiro personified the armed revolutionary struggle "in Latin America and played a key role in building what became one of the most successful security agencies ever constructed."[32] Cuban historian Luis Suárez Salazar repeatedly attempted to get Piñeiro on record discussing his role in the Cuban Revolution, only to be told by the spy chief that "the time is not ripe for talking about that yet," or "another comrade should tell you that part."

In 1997, however, Piñeiro agreed to sit for an interview and discuss his relationship with Che Guevara, one of Castro's key foreign policy advisers.[33] He recalled that his work with Guevara really began in 1961 when he was "responsible for dealing with revolutionary and political leaders of other Third World countries who came to learn from the experience of the Cuban Revolution."[34] He also recounted late night meetings with Guevara and visitors from around Latin America in Havana for training. Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, Peruvians, Colombians, Brazilians, Dominicans, Haitians, Chileans, and Venezuelans, all gathered at one time or another for meetings. Guevara sipped mate, Argentina's national drink, and smoked a cigar as discussions ensued on the prospects for revolution in their respective nations, always with a map of the country under discussion on top of the table at Guevara's request.[35]

IC Reassessments in the Late 1960s

One of the most important elements to quality analysis is maintaining the ability to recognize that a targets intent or capabilities can change. While analysis on Cuban foreign policy in Latin America in the early part of the 1960s consistently judged that a strong revolutionary fervor permeated Cuban decision making, estimates published in the mid to late part of the decade often assessed that Castro's calculus for spreading the revolution, and willingness to support subversion, in Latin America had changed.

An NIE from February 1966 judged that "Fidel Castro has been greatly disappointed by the meager results of seven years of effort… He appears to have abandoned his expectation of an early general revolution in Latin America."[36] Titled "Insurgency in Latin America," the estimate focused on intelligence reporting outlining discord between Castro and communist party leaders in Latin America, who believed that

Havana's support for subversion was a direct intervention in their local affairs. Analysts further concluded that "the growth of Latin American insurgencies has been hindered by the disunity of extremist groups, the want of willing martyrs, and the failure to attract much popular support."[37]

The NIE also provided policymakers an understanding of how Cuba fit into the Sino-Soviet split, as analysts wrote that Moscow wanted to lessen Beijing's influence in Latin America and to ensure that Castro stayed on the Kremlin's side.[38] The crux of the split was that Mao's China supported revolutionary violence in Latin America as a means for political change while the Soviets proposed a more cautious route focused on taking power through established electoral processes.

President Lyndon Johnson's White House began receiving analytic updates on Cuba's involvement in the rift as early as summer 1964, when a PDB entry noted that Guevara's support for the Chinese position put him in direct conflict with Raul Castro, who was advocating the Soviet line.[39]

Guevara's support for the Chinese position put him in direct conflict with Raul Castro, who was advocating the Soviet line.

A PDB from October of that year mentioned a conference in Havana, where heads of Latin American communist parties and representatives from Moscow met to agree on a "common policy on the Sino-Soviet rift."[40] That conference became a key element of the February 1966 NIE, because during that meeting Cuba agreed to only support insurgencies in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, and Honduras, where they already were occurring at various levels, and Haiti and Paraguay, where right-wing dictators held power.

In 1967, the CIA's Office of National Estimates published an update to the February 1966 NIE, providing further information on the revolutionary environment in Latin America. The special memorandum judged that "insurgencies in Latin America have retrogressed over the past year and their prospects for the coming year are not bright. Fidel Castro continues his efforts to stimulate revolution, but the Soviets, as well as most Communist leaders in the area, seem increasingly skeptical about the efficacy of this approach."[41] Insurgencies in Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, and Venezuela were assessed to have achieved only little progress over the previous year. The special memorandum also judged that while Castro and Guevara had hoped to replicate what happened in Cuba, their own revolution had gained the support of the middle class due to the lack of a communist label at its outset. Many of the movements supported by Havana were immediately cast as communist-backed, given Castro's close alliance with Moscow.[42]

President Johnson convening his national security team in 1967, including Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms, for a "Tuesday lunch," where a broad range of foreign policy issues were discussed on a weekly basis. (Photo Lyndon Johnson Library).

The authors, utilizing Castro's own public speeches, noted that while he "has been continuing his verbal efforts to stimulate revolutions and has provided some additional aid and training, this has neither given major new impetus to already active insurgencies, nor caused any new one to take the field."[43] More to the point, "Soviet policy in Latin America appears to reflect increasing doubts about the efficacy of armed struggle as a revolutionary tactic in most Latin American countries."[44]

CIA analysts reiterated some of these key assessments in the PDB

Castro's embrace of military leaders like Torrijos and Velasco signaled a recognition that political change did not have to come as the result of a leftist revolution.

on 8 March, writing that while "Castro will almost certainly persist in encouraging and training foreign insurgents. . . . Poor prospects in Latin America, however, are already causing him to increase his attention to Africa, where opportunities are greater and risks fewer."[45]

Death of the "Heroic Guerilla"

In fall 1967, Johnson received a memorandum from National Security Advisor Walt Rostow informing him that the "Bolivians got Che Guevara…the Bolivian unit engaged is the one we have been training for some time."[46] Guevara, whose role in promoting subversion and revolution throughout Latin America was regularly discussed in NIEs and PDBs throughout the 1960s, was executed after being captured while leading a failed insurgency in Bolivia. His death further signaled Cuba's inability to replicate its revolution in the region. Analysts judged in a late October 1967 PDB that reactions to Guevara's death in Latin America "reinforce our view that Guevara's fate was the sharpest psychological blow ever suffered by Castro's guerilla warfare program in the hemisphere."[47]

The final NIE of the 1960s, published in March 1969, titled "The Potential for Revolution in Latin America," made the overall judgment that "because discontent has not yet become organized or critical among the populace generally, and because existing radical organizations lack strong and appealing leadership, the prospect for successful revolution through violence within this period does not seem strong in any country."[48] CIA analysts further judged that "insurgency movements supported by Castro remained in only three countries, Colombia, Guatemala, and Venezuela and had attracted "little sympathy among the populace."[49]

The assessment did not discount that sudden political change could take in the region, "only the factors and forces likely to bring them about will probably be some years in developing."[50] The NIE clearly stated that "existing communist parties [and] Castroist parties…will not play the central role" in bringing about revolutionary change.[51] Rather, the analysts wrote, "Castro-style insurgency maybe part of the broader revolutionary pattern in a few countries, but we do not believe that it will develop either the potency of the appeal to play a leading revolutionary role in the areas as whole."[52] To support these assessments, analysts looked at the example of Guevara's Bolivia expedition, which they judged failed, in part, by the lack of support he received from local communist party members. In fact, according to the NIE, Castro lacked working relationships with many regional communist leaders and also provided "irregular financial support" to insurgent movements.

Did a Cuban Shift Occur?

The historical record largely supports the IC analysis that by the mid-to-late 1960s Cuban foreign policy in Latin American underwent a shift. Tanya Harmer, who conducted research in the former Soviet bloc, Chile, and Cuba, including interviewing former Cuban diplomats and intelligence officials, argues that Che's death initiated a time period of reflection amongst officials in Havana. In her view, "quite simply, the conclusion reached was that Havana's regional approach to date had not worked and that Cuba's position in the Americas was in crisis."[53]

Moreover, one of the key Cuban officials responsible for providing support to insurgent groups in Latin America, Manuel Piñeiro, told Cuban intelligence officers in the early 1970s that "the prospects for Latin American liberation now appear to be medium-or long-term. We must prepare ourselves to wait – to wait as long as necessary: 10, 15, 20, 25, or even 30 years."[54]

Cuban archives also demonstrate that Fidel Castro began to accept different paths to political change and did not precondition his support on an individual's commitment to leftist or socialist revolution. A notable example came in Panama, where Castro embraced General Omar Torrijos, who took power following a military coup but at that same time, promoted land reform and improvements to healthcare and education access for Panamanians. Torrijos also took on the US over ownership of the Panama Canal, stating that "I don't want to go into history, I want to go into the Canal Zone."[55]

A diplomatic cable from Cuba's Foreign Ministry indicates that Havana-Panama City relations developed during the late 1960s and early 1970s, with Torrijos relaying to Castro that he considered Cuba

an important an ally and visiting the island in the mid-1970s for an official visit.[56] Additionally, Castro almost immediately sought a relationship with Peru's military general Juan Velasco after he took power in 1968 through a coup, identifying the dictator as "man of the left" for the military government's willingness to nationalize certain economic sectors and focus on social development.[57] Castro's embrace of military leaders like Torrijos and Velasco definitely signaled a recognition that political change did not have to come as the result of a leftist revolution.

IC analysts were also correct to note the importance of the Sino-Soviet split and its influence on Cuban foreign policy. Numerous historical studies support IC assessments on Cuba being an element of the rift. Jeremy Friedman's book, *Shadow Cold War*, focused on the competition between China and Russia for allies in the Third World and highlighted that by the early 1960s Cuba became even more important to the Kremlin as Moscow lost favor with North Vietnamese communists in Hanoi, who believed that Beijing was a more stalwart ally for nations in the Third World.[58]

While continually seeking to keep Castro in the Soviet camp, Moscow grew increasingly tired by the late 1960s of Cuban support to revolutionary movements in Latin America, seeing it as counterproductive as they worked for *détente* with the United States. In fact, the Kremlin strongly objected to Che's mission to Bolivia and even curtailed economic support to Havana in 1967. Castro's dependency on Soviet aid became obvious, as the Cuban economy took a significant hit.

Moscow grew increasingly tired by the late 1960s of Cuban support to revolutionary movements in Latin America.

When Cuba publicly supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to crush a popular uprising a year later, Moscow restored economic support in return.[59] One Soviet diplomat recalled that "it [was] vital for us that Cuba doesn't slide gradually into the Chinese camp. We have to hold on to Castro tight, and we can only do it with economic aid. This the Chinese cannot give."[60]

Interestingly, the November 1962 NIE previously judged that the Kremlin's decreasing support to Cuba might limit Castro's willingness, and ability to devote resources, to supporting revolutionary movements in Latin America. Ultimately, Jonathan Brown viewed the Sino-Soviet dispute as a critical episode of the Cuban Revolution, dedicating an entire chapter in his book on how Havana navigated the competition.

Conclusion

During his confirmation hearing to be the Director of National Intelligence in 2010, James Clapper stated, "Normally, the best that intelligence can do is to reduce uncertainty for decisionmakers—whether in the White House, the Congress, the Embassy, or the fox hole—but rarely can intelligence eliminate such uncertainty."[61]

Collectively, the products produced on Cuban foreign policy in Latin America in the 1960s demonstrated the IC's ability to quickly shift resources and mindset as the challenge posed by Havana was new, given that Cuba had been squarely in the US camp throughout the 1950s. Additionally, given the intelligence gaps that existed on Cuba, a byproduct of the vast capabilities of Castro's security services, providing analytic assessments on Havana's foreign policy in Latin America added additional challenges. Yet policymakers in both the Kennedy and Johnson White Houses received consistent, timely, and judging from archival records fairly accurate assessments that reduced the uncertainty key decisionmakers had about Havana's foreign policy toward Latin America.

Additionally, the IC's coverage of Cuban foreign policy in Latin America during the 1960s offers some lessons for today. First, the president and their key advisers will always be keenly interested in better understanding the intent and capabilities of allies and adversaries, making leadership analysis critically important. For the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, gaining a better sense of decisions being made in Havana was paramount, just as US leaders today continue to prioritize gaining advantage by understanding internal deliberation processes in numerous capitals around the world.

Maintaining consistency in analytic lines across different product types remains an essential part of good tradecraft and one of the ways to maintain credibility with intelligence consumers. From NIEs to special memorandums to PDBs, the words chosen to make an argument should strive for clarity and consistency. The broad range of products published during the 1960s on Cuba did a very good job on this front.

Analysts did not shy away from providing policymakers with their best understanding on how Havana viewed the prospects for revolution in Latin America

This does not mean analysts should not highlight shifts or changes; on the contrary, recognizing when an adversary such as Cuba has a different approach on a particular issue is vitally important. In fact, while consistency in written products is essential for a reader to understand bottom lines on key issues, it also helps better position an intelligence consumer to recognize analytic shifts when new judgments are made.

The record shows analysts regularly used open-source information in NIEs and PDBs. While much of the intelligence community's value rests in its ability to collect and analyze secret information, open-source material can provide valuable insights. Fidel Castro's penchant for lengthy public speeches, often discussing his views on adversaries and the prospects for revolution around the world, offered a window into his mindset. Analysts correctly took Castro's speeches seriously and incorporated his public pronouncements into their finished products.

Lastly, analyzing a hard target, a country where collection is severely limited, should not preclude key judgments from being made. Analysts and their managers can be, at times, hesitant to make direct assessments when collection is limited, producing watered down assessments that are limited in their impact. Despite the difficulty of collecting intelligence on Cuba, analysts did not shy away from providing policymakers with their best understanding on how Havana viewed the prospects for revolution in Latin America and what kind of support it was willing to provide to certain groups and countries. On Cuba during the 1960s, analysts told policymakers what they knew and also more importantly, were clear about what gaps existed and what the IC did not know.

Given that the US continues to face national security threats from hard targets, namely China, Russia, North Korean, and Iran, it has never been more important for analysts to remain willing to provide clear judgments, but also the necessary context and gaps when appropriate. As more records become available related to Cuban foreign policy during the Cold War, particularly from the Ministry of Interior in Havana where key decisions were made, a more complete history may be able to be told regarding assessments and their accuracy. Even so, with the documentary record available today, a compelling argument can be made that the IC provided policymakers with timely, credible, and relevant analysis.

❖ ❖ ❖

The author: Matthew Jacobs works in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and is a currently serving on the President's Daily Briefing staff.

Endnotes

1. Fidel Castro, "Second Declaration of Havana, February 4, 1962," available from Internet History Sourcebooks, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1962castro.asp.
2. Brian Latell, *After Fidel: The Inside Story of Castro's Regime and Cuba's Next Leader* (St. Martin's Publishing, 2014), 3.
3. Stephen Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 7.
4. This paper does not examine the historical record on Intelligence Community judgments or involvement during the Cuban Missile Crisis, which have been the focus of numerous studies. For more on that topic, refer to I*ntelligence and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by James Blight and David Welch (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998).
5. NIE, "The Situation in Cuba," June 14, 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–1960, Cuba vol. VI, eds. John P. Glennon and Ronald D. Landa (Government Printing Office, 1991), document 531.
6. Ibid.
7. Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 22; Gleijeses, *The Cuban Drumbeat, Castro's Worldview: Cuban Foreign Policy in a Hostile World* (Seagull Books, 2009), Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa*, 1976–1991 (University of North Carolina Press, 2013).
8. "Cuban Subversive Activities in Latin America: Special Weekly Report, 1959–1968," CIA Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/.
9. NIE, "Latin American Reactions to Developments in and with Respect to Cuba, July 18, 1961," in *Revolution and Subversion in Latin America: Selected US Intelligence Community Estimative Products, 1947–1987*, 39.
10. Ibid, 45.
11. David Priess, *The President's Book of Secrets: The Untold Story of Intelligence Briefings to America's Presidents from Kennedy to Obama* (PublicAffairs, 2016), 21.
12. Ibid, 22.
13. PDB, August 11, 1961, CIA Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/presidents-daily-brief.
14. Ibid, November 11, 1961.
15. Ibid, November 4, 1962; November 7, 1962.
16. Special NIE, "Castro's Subversive Capabilities in Latin America," November 9, 1962, in *Revolution and Subversion*
17. Ibid, 57.
18. Ibid, 57–58.
19. Ibid, 63–64.
20. Ibid, 61–62.
21. President's Daily Brief, January 27, 1962; June 22, 1962; November 26, 1962; November 4, 1962, CIA Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/presidents-daily-brief.
22. Ibid.
23. "Memorandum, Asunto: Intelectuales Guatemaltecos," 29 de Febrero 1960, A. Latina, Guatemala, 1917–1962, Patrimonio Ordinario 1, Archivo de Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba, hereafter cited as MINREX.
24. "Estado del Movimiento de Solidaridad," 6 de Septiembre 1962, America Latina, Venezuela, 1959–1969, MINREX.
25. "Informe Semanal de Honduras, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba," Del 26 de Febrero al 4 de Marzo 1962, A. Latina, Honduras, 1937–1984, Ordinario 1, MINREX.
26. "Costa Rica, Sintesis: Economic-Politica," 11 de Enero 1962, A. Latina, Costa Rica, Ordinario, 1962-1979, MINREX; "Costa Rica y su Vinculacion al Imperialismo-Comparacion entre los Goberieno de Mario Echandi y Francisco Orlich, 17 de Diciembre 1962, A. Latina, Costa Rica, Ordinario, 1962–1979, MINREX.
27. "Analisis de las Particularidades Nicaraguaenses y Estrategia General para la Luch Guerrillera, del Frente Revolucionario Sandino," November 1960, América Latina, Nicaragua, 1905–1963, Ordinario, MINREX.
28. Jonathan Brown, Cuba's Revolutionary World (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2017), 197.
29. "Informe Semanal de Guatemala, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba," Del 20 al 25 de Febrero 1961, A. Latina, Guatemala, 1917–1962, Patrimonio Ordinario 1, MINREX.
30. "Personalidad de los Colombianos que Intentaban Viajar a Cuba," 1962, Ministerio de Gobierno, Despacho Ministro, Caja 34, Carpeta 292, Archivo General de la Nación de Colombia, hereafter referred to as AGNCOL.
31. Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 42.
32. Jorge Castaneda quoted in Larry Rohter, "Manuel Pineiro, Spymaster For Castro, Is Dead at 63," March 13, 1998, *New York Times*.
33. Manuel Piñeiro and Luis Suárez Salazar, *Che Guevara and the Latin American Revolution* (Ocean Press, 2006), 3.
34. Ibid, 19.
35. Ibid, 20–21.
36. NIE, "Insurgency in Latin America," February 17, 1966, in *Revolution and Subversion*, 184.

37. Ibid, 179.
38. Ibid, 184.
39. President's Daily Brief, July 14, 1964, CIA Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/presidents-daily-brief.
40. Ibid, October 27, 1964.
41. Special Memorandum, "Latin American Insurgencies Revisited," February 17, 1967, in *Revolution and Subversion*, 203.
42. Ibid, 212.
43. Ibid, 204.
44. Ibid, 205.
45. PDB, March 8, 1967, CIA Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/presidents-daily-brief.
46. Memorandum from National Security Advisor Walt Rostow to President Lyndon Johnson, October 9, 1967, National Security Archive, available from https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/documents/che-guevara-cia-mountains-bolivia/22.pdf
47. PDB, October 23, 1967, CIA Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/presidents-daily-brief.
48. NIE, "The Potential for Revolution in Latin America" March 20, 1969, in *Revolution and Subversion*, 221.
49. Ibid, 222.
50. Ibid, 230.
51. Ibid, 231.
52. Ibid, 226.
53. Tanya Harmer, "Two, Three, Many Revolutions? Cuba and the Prospects for Revolutionary Change in Latin America, 1967–1975," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 45 (February 2013), 68.
54. Ibid, 79.
55. Noel Maurer and Carlos Yu, *The Big Ditch: How America Took, Built, Ran, and Ultimately Gave Away the Panama Canal* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 255.
56. "Despacho de Ministro, Embajada de Cuba en Japon," 17 de Agosto 1971, America Lat., Panama, 1903-1976, Ordinario, MINREX.
57. Harmer, 72–73.
58. Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015).
59. Brown, *Cuba's Revolutionary Worlds*, 100–101.
60. Ibid, 101.
61. "Statement of Lieutenant General James Clapper, Jr., USAF (Ret,), Director of National Intelligence Designate," available from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-111shrg63996/html/CHRG-111shrg63996.htm

❖ ❖ ❖