

~~SECRET~~
CONTROLLED DISSEM

3 13
NIE 85-63
14 June 1963

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 85-63

(Supersedes NIE 85-2-62 and SNIE 85-3-62;
Supplements SNIE 85-4-62)

Situation and Prospects in Cuba

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD
As indicated overleaf
14 JUNE 1963

DECLASSIFIED

Authority JFK Board #177-10001-10215
By fw NARA Date 6-21-98

~~SECRET~~
CONTROLLED DISSEM

Nº 2

~~SECRET~~

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 85-63

Situation and Prospects in Cuba

~~SECRET~~

COPY LIBRARY

~~SECRET~~

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
CONCLUSIONS	1
DISCUSSION	4
I. CURRENT SITUATION	4
Military Situation	4
Political Stability	7
The Economic Situation	8
Castro and Latin America	10
II. OUTLOOK	11
Shorter Term Prospects	11
Military Prospects	12
Long-Run Political and Economic Prospects	14
Latin American Policies	15
Soviet-Cuban Relations	16
ANNEX: ESTIMATE OF MAJOR SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN CUBA	

~~SECRET~~

COPY LIBRARY

~~SECRET~~

SITUATION AND PROSPECTS IN CUBA

CONCLUSIONS

A. After a period marked by bitterness on Castro's part and by restraint on the part of the Soviets, the two parties now appear to have agreed to emphasize the consolidation of the Castro regime. We believe that the current situation within Cuba favors this consolidation. The mere passage of time tends to favor Castro as Cubans and others become accustomed to the idea that he is here to stay and as his regime gains in experience. It is unlikely that internal political opposition or economic difficulties will cause the regime to collapse. All our evidence points to the complete political predominance of Fidel, whose charismatic appeal continues to be the most important factor in the forward drive of the Cuban revolution. (*Paras. 1, 15, 18, 31-32, 41*)

B. Dependence on the person of Castro is, however, a major vulnerability of the regime. Without leadership and without goals—and these would have to be revolutionary and reformist to appeal to a majority of Cubans—no opposition force is likely to develop the power to challenge Castro, however much equipment or support it might get from the outside. But his death could result in one form of disorder or another ranging from power struggles within the regime's leadership to open civil war. Any successor is likely to be more dependent upon the Soviets than Castro has been because he will lack Castro's ability to command the loyalty of substantial numbers of Cubans. Furthermore, even under the most favorable circumstances, any opposition would have to have the support of a large part of the military before it could hope to overthrow the Communist regime, and would have to take account of the presence of Soviet troops. (*Paras. 15, 42-43*)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

C. On balance, we estimate that there has been little or no reduction in overall military capabilities in Cuba since the end of the missile crisis. The Soviet military picture in Cuba is in transition with a scaling down of their forces becoming apparent. The total Soviet military strength in Cuba is now estimated to be about 12,000 to 13,000, but we cannot exclude the possibility that there could be several thousand more. The Soviets remain in control of the key weapons systems, while training the Cubans to operate some of them. We believe the Soviets have told the Cubans that they intend eventually to turn various weapons systems over to them. This is not to say that all Soviet military personnel will be withdrawn from Cuba; indeed, it is highly likely that the Soviets will maintain a significant presence there. (Paras. 2, 5, 12-14, 35, 37)

D. With respect to the surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, we doubt that the Soviets have specified an exact date for transfer of operational control or would carry out such an agreement if subsequent developments produced new dangers. We believe that the Soviet Government remains acutely aware of the risks involved. (Para. 36)

E. The capabilities of the Cuban Armed Forces have been augmented by increased training, new equipment, and some reorganization. The Cuban ground forces are probably well able to control internal resistance and to repel small-scale external attacks. In the event of US invasion, however, they would have to revert fairly quickly to static defense or guerrilla operations, but only a relatively small proportion of the Cuban military establishment would be likely to carry on prolonged operations of this type. (Paras. 8, 12-14)

F. In our view, it is unlikely that the USSR contemplates an attempt to reintroduce strategic missiles into Cuba. Continued US aerial surveillance remains a major deterrent. We cannot, however, altogether rule out such an attempt. Greatly enhanced Soviet knowledge of US intelligence sources and methods with respect to Cuba would make it possible to adopt improved measures of concealment and deception, during both shipment and deployment, and to avoid providing many of the indicators that US intelligence would be relying on. At some point the So-

~~SECRET~~

viets might attempt to increase their military strength in Cuba by introducing other weapons previously labeled "offensive" by the US. In such cases they would almost certainly recognize the great risk of US counteraction. (*Paras. 38-40*)

G. The joint Khrushchev-Castro communique held up Cuba as an example for the rest of Latin America, but without endorsing Castro's earlier general incitement to revolution throughout the area. Castro probably still believes that revolution will come only through violence, but the regime's exhortations on the subject have been muted recently. The outlook is for a mixture of tactics. We believe that during the next phase the Soviets and Cubans, seeking to avoid a crisis with the US, will be careful not to engage in flagrant or gross actions which would invite US reprisals or countermeasures. The Soviets will continue with the more traditional efforts at penetration through diplomacy and economic overtures. In general, we believe that situations are unlikely to develop in which Castro could intervene with substantial force without rendering himself vulnerable to US or OAS counteraction. (*Paras. 46-48*)

H. While the Soviets and Cubans have probably resolved their more immediate problems we foresee varying degrees of friction in their future relations, particularly over the long run. They probably have not reached a fundamental reconciliation of their appraisals of the situation in Latin America, and Castro appears to insist on a unique position in the Bloc without submitting to the discipline and control imposed on Soviet Satellites. Nevertheless, Castro has taken a long step toward the Soviet side in the Sino-Soviet controversy. In turn Castro has received a strong boost to his ego; assurances of continued economic support; the commitment of Soviet prestige to the Cuban revolution; and recognition of Cuba's special importance as an example of what the revolutionary struggle can achieve in Latin America. Overall, Soviet and Cuban fortunes have been bound more closely together and their respective freedoms of action have been somewhat narrowed. (*Paras. 49-51*)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

DISCUSSION

I. CURRENT SITUATION

1. Significant policy differences between Castro and the Soviet leaders were apparent during the missile base crisis of October 1962 and for three or four months afterwards. Castro's visit to Moscow indicates that these differences have been submerged, though some basic tensions in the relationship are likely to continue. Various indications accumulating over the last several months suggest that there is now agreement on a common policy aimed primarily at consolidation of the Castro regime. A corollary of this policy is some measure of restraint toward the US to minimize the danger of US intervention. Recognition by both the Soviets and Cubans of the necessity for taking steps to reduce the constant threat of a crisis with the US probably led to the current strategy. Two of its manifestations have been the further withdrawals since February of Soviet personnel from Cuba and the toning down for the moment Castro's inflammatory appeals for violent revolution throughout Latin America.

Military Situation

2. The Soviet military picture is in a state of transition with a scaling down of their forces becoming apparent. The Soviets remain in control of the key weapons systems, while training the Cubans to operate most of them. The limited capabilities of the Cuban Armed Forces are gradually improving as a result of their experience and increased training since last fall and their growing familiarity with Soviet equipment. On balance, we estimate that there has been little or no reduction in overall military capabilities in Cuba since the end of the missile crisis.

3. In the months preceding the October crisis, the Soviet Union accomplished a very substantial buildup of its own military power in Cuba and made sizable deliveries of arms and equipment for the Cuban Armed Forces. As a result of the crisis, the Soviets removed 42 MRBMs and related equipment, IRBM-related equipment, 42 IL-28 jet light bombers and associated personnel, but the rest of the equipment and a substantial Soviet military presence remain. (See Annex, "Estimate of Major Soviet Military Equipment in Cuba.")

4. Identifying Soviet military personnel entering Cuba and estimating their number has been a problem of great difficulty from the start of the buildup in 1962. Their entry was achieved in a manner compatible with the Soviets' desire to hide the arrival of strategic weapons; they wore civilian clothes, in many cases debarked at night at remote ports, and moved quickly to guarded and isolated encampments. To arrive at our estimates of Soviet troops in Cuba, we have used a synthesis of all

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

available evidence, including refugee and in-place sources of varying degrees of reliability. In addition, we have closely measured the passenger and troop capacities of Soviet ships to and from Cuba and have undertaken functional analyses of the Soviet weapons systems in Cuba to determine the personnel required to operate and maintain them. As a result of this examination, the estimate of the number of Soviets assigned to the air defense system, KOMAR boats, cruise missile systems, and MIG fighters was considered to be relatively firm. However, the number derived for ground forces personnel, particularly those at the four armored camps, was based on less firm evidence and could have varied in either direction.

5. *Soviet Forces.* Given these limitations on the evidence, we estimated just prior to the troop withdrawals that began in mid-February 1963, that 17,500 was the most probable figure for Soviet military personnel in Cuba, but did not exclude the possibility that it could have been several thousand more. A careful evaluation of reports indicates that since that time a conservative minimum of 5,000 Soviet personnel have been withdrawn. Most appeared to be military rather than civilian. We have no reliable evidence that more than a few hundred military personnel have arrived in Cuba since mid-February. Those departing since mid-February probably included personnel associated with the armored camps, MIG fighters, and some elements of the air defense system, although we cannot determine with any degree of certainty the number withdrawn from each weapons system or installation. The total Soviet military strength in Cuba is now estimated to be about 12,000 to 13,000, but we cannot exclude the possibility that there could be several thousand more.

6. We believe that there has been a reduction in the Soviet personnel at the four armored camps. Some Cuban military personnel are present and undergoing training at all four of the camps, and a reliable report presents good evidence that one has been evacuated by the Soviets and partially occupied by the Cubans. However, the equipment remains at all the camps.

7. Four full shiploads of military equipment have been identified coming into Cuba since the crisis as against some 100 which arrived between July and October 1962. In addition, other ships have carried material which might be used by the military. This includes the shipment of six helicopters, commercial explosives, parts for IL-14 aircraft, and large quantities of trucks and other vehicles. In sum, the recent shipments appear to have been resupply deliveries composed of munitions, vehicles, replacement parts, and maintenance equipment.

8. *Cuban Forces and Capabilities.* The numerical strength of the Cuban ground forces has been estimated at 175,000, of whom some 75,000 are in the standing army and 100,000 in the ready reserve. In addition there are some 100,000 home-guard militiamen, of little combat signifi-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

cance but useful as a police reserve. The capabilities of the standing army and ready reserve have been enhanced by new equipment, and by further training and experience including the mobilization during the missile crisis. A few divisions may now be capable of tactical operations, although the battalion combat team remains generally the basic tactical unit. The Cuban ground forces are probably well able to control internal resistance and to repel small-scale external attacks. Their ability for defense against invasion has been enhanced by the organization of an armored brigade and 11 combined arms "anti-invasion shock defense" battalions. Cuban capabilities are still severely limited by lack of training and experience in combined operations and by their general lack of organic transport and logistic support. In the event of US invasion they would have to revert fairly quickly to static defense or guerilla operations, but only a relatively small proportion of the Cuban military establishment would be likely to carry on prolonged operations of this type.

9. The Cuban Navy is estimated to number 4,000-5,000 men. Its capabilities have been enhanced by the provision of Soviet equipment, principally motor torpedo boats and submarine chasers, and by increased training in its use, but remain limited essentially to coastal defense and to operations in shipping lanes adjacent to Cuba. The KOMAR missile boats and coastal defense missiles remain under Soviet control.

10. In the field of air defense the Cuban Air Force, with 3,000 men, has a small but increasing role. The most important air defense equipment, the SA-2s, and MIG-21s, is still Soviet controlled. The Cubans operate a jet fighter force composed of more than 60 MIG-15, 17/19s and a considerable quantity of antiaircraft artillery.

11. Cuban capabilities for military operations overseas remain severely limited by shortage of the requisite airlift or sealift. The Cubans could probably not undertake an overseas operation on a scale larger than one battalion. For political as well as military reasons, the Castro regime is most unlikely to undertake military operations of this nature. However, Cuba has sufficient resources for paramilitary operations in the Caribbean area to upset a situation in precarious balance.

12. *Training of Cubans.* The reduction in Soviet military personnel in Cuba since February has been accompanied by increasing indications of Cubans training in the operation of Soviet equipment and systems, which suggests that the Soviets plan a turnover of part or all of these systems to the Cubans.

13. Cuban pilots are flying the MIG-21 aircraft, which are equipped with air-to-air missiles, and some will soon be able to fly them operationally. One class of 22 pilots began training in March 1963, and a second of about the same size is scheduled to begin in September; Cubans are also almost certainly being trained in ground control and maintenance.

~~SECRET~~

The Cuban Air Force could man the MIG-21 system by mid-1964. The Soviets are also carrying out a sizable training program for the Cubans in the operation of KOMAR boats and cruise missiles. Cubans are being trained at a number of sites in the operation and maintenance of Soviet ground equipment.

14. We believe that Cubans are also being trained on the surface-to-air missile (SAM) system and may soon begin to operate some equipment at a few sites on a routine basis. In view of the complexity of the system, it would require approximately another year of training before the Cubans could take over the bulk of the maintenance work. Even after Cubans learn to operate the system, the Soviets will probably have to provide training and technical assistance for some time.

Political Stability

15. All our evidence points to the complete political predominance of Fidel. To an important extent the forward drive of the Cuban revolution depends on Castro's charismatic appeal. His personal indispensability has enabled him to surmount both a challenge from old-line Communists in Cuba and a crisis in his relations with Moscow. It has also enabled him to absorb some economic setbacks without serious risk to his regime. While no serious challenge to his power and control seems likely to emerge for some time, the regime's dependence on his person continues to be a major vulnerability.

16. Castro is still suspicious of the leaders of the prerevolutionary Communist Party (PSP) and of their relations with Moscow. However, they appear to have accommodated themselves to his leadership and some occupy important positions. In present circumstances, it is unlikely that the "old" Communists will attempt to challenge Castro, as they did in early 1962, or that Moscow will want them to. It is more likely that they will work for more power in the apparatus of the new party (PURS) which is coming into being. Castro seems alert to this possibility and the selection of members of the new party appears to reflect some effort to prevent domination by the old PSP leaders. The completion of this party organization might provide Castro with another means of control and an important instrument for political indoctrination and exhortation of the populace. But over the longer run the existence of a stable and organized party apparatus could reduce the indispensability both to the Cuban regime and to the Soviets of Castro's personal leadership.

17. Popular attitudes will be a factor affecting the stability of the regime. We have no way of measuring these reliably, but we believe that an important minority of the Cuban people now gives positive support to Castro, and that the majority passively accepts his regime. Resistance continues, but it is on a small scale and is ineffective against the regime's security forces. It cannot be either excluded or predicted that larger numbers of people will eventually be willing to take the risks of

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

joining or surreptitiously supporting an opposition struggle. The fact that Cuba is now Communist should not lead to the conclusion that security measures there will be as effective as in other Communist States. Should resistance assume a larger magnitude, it might cause disagreement and factionalism within the regime. Ultimately this could lead in turn to a disruption of the security apparatus and the defection of armed elements. In this way, and probably only in this way, a breakdown or significant change in the regime might be brought about. At present, such developments seem unlikely.

The Economic Situation

18. The Cuban economy declined sharply during 1960-1962, and there is almost certain to be some further decline in output during 1963. Nevertheless, the Cuban economic situation is not a critical source of weakness for the Castro regime and is unlikely to become one.

19. The decline in Cuban production has been partially offset by the substantial volume of economic assistance from the Bloc, particularly the USSR. During 1962, the Bloc extended an estimated \$200 million in balance of payments assistance. In addition, the Bloc provided some developmental equipment on credit. Goods delivered on these terms probably accounted for one-third of total Cuban imports. As a result of Bloc assistance, Cuban imports rose substantially in 1962, in spite of a sizable decline in export earnings. Whatever the level of Cuban export earnings in 1963, Bloc assistance probably will permit the maintenance of essential imports—foodstuffs, fuels, industrial materials, and machine parts—at about the 1962 level. Meanwhile the political effects of economic decline have been mitigated by the radical change in the pattern of distribution of available consumer goods and services.

20. Cuba's production of sugar has declined in 1963 and its volume of exports probably will be more than one-third below that of 1962. On the other hand, the impact of reduced supplies will be largely, and perhaps more than completely, offset by the sharp rise of world sugar prices to the highest levels in many years. The 1963 sugar crop amounts to a little less than four million metric tons. This compares with a 1962 crop of 4.8 million metric tons and crops averaging well in excess of five million tons in the pre-Castro years. Cuba has already contracted to ship about 1.0 to 1.2 million tons to the Free World this year; the larger figure would be only 240,000 tons less than in 1962. We cannot predict how much foreign currency this will produce, however, because prices may vary greatly depending on the date and terms of the sales, some of which were made before the sharp rise in prices. Nevertheless Cuba's earnings in the Free World will be greater than last year's.

21. The Soviets agreed during the Castro visit that they would pay six cents a pound instead of the four cent price which they paid last year and which had been the contract price for this year's shipments. In

~~SECRET~~

order that Cuba could fulfill contracts it has been concluding since the end of 1962 with Free World countries, the Soviets agreed to Cuba's diverting one million tons of sugar from the USSR trade agreement quota. These seeming concessions put a better face on Soviet-Cuban relationships so far as the Cuban people are concerned. The new terms had been sought by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez on a mission to Moscow in late 1962 and their announcement during Castro's visit seemed largely intended to give Castro something to take home plus providing a camouflage for Cuba's economic deterioration.

22. The Soviets have thus removed a major irritant in the Soviet-Cuban relationship caused by the great rise in world sugar prices. They did this at a reasonable cost. In fact, the two cent differential will go to pay part of Cuba's accrued debt to the Soviets, so that the granting of a higher price represents only a juggling of barter and credit accounts and will not reduce Cuba's need for continued large Soviet balance of payments support this year.

23. In spite of Bloc economic assistance, total personal consumption in Cuba has fallen sharply since 1958-1959, perhaps by as much as one-fifth, although this decline in personal consumption under Castro is partly accounted for by the emigration and impoverishment of the former wealthy and middle classes. Rationing and other distributional controls have fostered a more even distribution of the declining totals of goods and services.

24. There are, nevertheless, many among the lower classes who are worse off than during the pre-Castro period; organized labor in particular has lost much of the wage differentials and other substantial benefits previously obtained. Workers and peasants generally probably are disappointed that the economic improvements expected under Castro have not materialized. Disappointments or increased hardships in regard to personal consumption are somewhat assuaged by the feeling of heightened social status and *dignidad* promoted by Castro's social reforms and effective tattoo of propaganda. Nevertheless, considerable economic discontent in Cuba is reflected in worker apathy, absenteeism, and non-cooperation. These traits have traditionally been manifested by Cuban workers, however; and there has been little evidence so far of more dramatic forms of antiregime activity because of economic discontent.

25. Apathy and noncooperation, nevertheless, do impede Castro's efforts toward economic recovery. So far, Castro has relied on exhortation and on reward for outstanding workers as means of increasing worker effort, but with relatively little success. Should Castro turn to harsh administrative measures to get the Cubans to work harder—and initial steps toward the introduction of work norms have already been taken—there very likely would be an exacerbation of the problem of worker discontent.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Castro and Latin America

26. Those Latin Americans, Communists and non-Communists, who are committed to violent revolution continue to look to Castro for help, particularly from his training program in Cuba (1,000-1,500 Latin Americans received Communist indoctrination or training in guerrilla warfare in 1962) and his large-scale dissemination of printed and broadcast propaganda. At this time, pro-Castro revolutionaries are persistently active and aggressive only in Venezuela, Castro's priority target for revolution in Latin America. On balance, the revolutionaries have lost ground in recent months in their efforts to weaken the Betancourt government through terrorism and sabotage. There is strong sentiment among old-line leaders of the Communist Party of Venezuela for putting more emphasis on recruitment of peasant support and on guerrilla tactics in rural areas as the best means of promoting a successful revolution over the long term. Extremist elements, however, still are committed to a campaign of drastic action to provoke the military into ousting the Betancourt government. In several other countries there have been preparations for violent activity, and in Peru and Ecuador some incidents of violence by pro-Castro revolutionaries.

27. The sense of urgency created throughout Latin America by the missile base crisis has faded, but a considerable residue remains, especially in Central America. Soviet military intrusion into the Western Hemisphere, Soviet exploitation of the Cuban revolution for its own strategic purposes, and Castro's subordination to the USSR were all made strikingly clear to governments as well as to politically-conscious elements of the population. The strength and appeal of Castro/Communist forces have been weakened, and the state of readiness to combat the extremist threat remains high among those Latin American Governments which see themselves faced by direct subversive attacks.

28. In virtually every country of Latin America Castro's prestige, which had begun to decline well before the missile crisis, remains low. His image has been most seriously damaged in the eyes of non-Communists, particularly among labor groups and leftist-intellectuals and politicians who had sympathized with his anti-US position. In the immediate post crisis period, discussion among some of the revolutionary left tended to shift to the need for indigenous, nationalist revolutions, and away from alliance with Moscow-oriented Communists and *fidelistas*. Among the public at large, many who formerly had been passive were converted by the crisis to hostility toward Castro. Moreover, the crisis caused moderate center and conservative groups, by and large already anti-Castro, to be more aware than before of the fundamental aims of the USSR in this hemisphere and of the threat posed by Cuba as an operational base for the Soviets.

29. Among the small countries of Central America the crisis heightened pressures for a definite solution to the Cuban problem. They have

~~SECRET~~

intensified their efforts to control and combat subversive activities. In addition, the Mexican Government is beginning to cooperate in efforts to control the movement of Latin Americans to and from Cuba through Mexico. On the other hand, in most of South America, popular antagonism toward Castro for conniving in the introduction of Soviet strategic power in the hemisphere has subsided more quickly and their governments tend now to regard the affair as ended by the US show of resolve.

30. There have been indications of disapproval of Castro's policies on the part of those Latin American Communist parties which follow a more gradual and less violent approach to revolution. Castro has in the past shown himself ready to collaborate with any group, Communist or not, willing to resort to violence and in so doing to circumvent some of the regular Communist parties or to work with dissident elements within them. Some of the regular parties, particularly in Brazil and Chile, strongly resent such tactics. Developments in recent months suggest that Castro, at least for the moment, has accepted a less violent position.

II. OUTLOOK

Shorter Term Prospects

31. We believe that Castro and the Soviets are probably convinced that time can be made to work in Cuba's favor, providing the US is not presented with a pretext for direct intervention or drastic measures such as some form of quarantine. The Soviets have probably argued that the Cubans should concentrate on the solution of important domestic problems in order to consolidate the regime, demonstrate that a Communist revolution cannot be reversed by the US, and prepare for future breakthroughs in Latin America. In short, the USSR and Cuba probably intend to play for time, avoid provocations likely to lead to US intervention, withhold unnecessary concessions, and repair the damage to their prestige. Each will continue to employ flexible tactics in Latin America varied according to the political situation in particular countries. We expect that both the Soviets and Castro will adopt aggressive tactics whenever presented with tempting opportunities, and their appreciation of what constitutes a tempting opportunity will probably differ as time passes.

32. If we assume no major circumstantial changes, such as Castro's death, a blowup of Castro-Soviet relations, or decisive intervention by the US, we would expect the Castro regime to be more firmly established a year hence than it is today. We believe it unlikely that economic difficulties or internal political opposition will cause the collapse of the regime. The mere passage of time tends to favor Castro as Cubans and others become accustomed to the idea that he and the Revolution are here to stay and as his regime gains in experience.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

33. A decision to avoid major crises with the US would not mean compliance with US wishes or lack of response to provocation. There is a wide range of unpredictable contingencies. US overflights, which are galling in view of Castro's preoccupation with demonstrating Cuban sovereignty, could produce an incident. Account must be taken of the possibility of a clash with the US over the question of the continued Soviet military presence in Cuba. A revolutionary eruption in Latin America might break the present pattern of restraint in Soviet and Cuban behavior. The present Soviet and Cuban emphasis on consolidation may be diverted by other new opportunities for aggressive actions. There will also remain the possibility of a breakdown of Soviet relations with Castro that could lead to internal conflict within Cuba, or an attempt on Castro's part to carry out an aggressive policy on his own.

34. There have been fragmentary indications of an interest on Castro's part in an improvement in relations with the US. We believe that he has probably considered this as one of a variety of alternatives. Its appeal to Castro, as to the Soviets, probably lies in the hope of lifting the US embargo and otherwise normalizing Cuban contacts with other Latin American countries. They may also feel that a limited rapprochement would reduce the danger of US intervention and permit greater freedom for the consolidation of the Communist regime in Cuba. At present we doubt that either the Cubans or the Soviets have much hope for an adjustment of Cuban-US relations, but it is an option that for their own purposes they will wish to keep open.

Military Prospects

35. We believe the Soviets have told the Cubans that they intend eventually to turn various weapons systems over to them. This is not to say that all Soviet military personnel will be withdrawn from Cuba; indeed, it is highly likely that the Soviets will maintain a significant presence there.

36. With respect to the SAM system, we doubt that the Soviets have specified an exact date for transfer of operational control or would carry out such an agreement if subsequent developments produced new dangers. We believe that the Soviet Government remains acutely aware of the risk involved. The Soviets are probably apprehensive that Cubans might be tempted to shoot down a US overflight if Castro had control of the SAMs. The Soviets cannot rely merely on Castro's assurances not to do so and it is likely that they would make serious efforts to resolve the question of US overflights before giving the Cubans complete operational control of the SAMs. It is possible that they will announce in advance an intended turnover to Cuba and use the interim period to seek a termination of overflights either through some agreement with the US or some dramatic action at the UN, claiming that the reduction of Soviet forces has removed any pretext for US surveillance. They might

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

also hope that the passage of time and the possibility of an eventually calmer atmosphere might cause the US to desist from overflights. It is also possible that the Soviets may come to regard the risks involved in a turnover of the system as preferable to the political cost of either withdrawing the system or trying to keep it indefinitely under their own command.

37. The turnover of other weapons systems now under Soviet control would greatly increase Castro's independent military capabilities. The 42 MIG-21 aircraft, which are armed with air-to-air missiles, would increase the total number of jet fighters in Cuban hands to nearly two-thirds. These fighters also have a theoretical capability to intercept a US high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft. In practice, however, a successful interception would require a great amount of skill and luck. Although Cuban pilots, and probably ground controllers and maintenance personnel, are receiving training from the Soviets, the operational effectiveness of these aircraft will be reduced for a time by the relative inexperience of these personnel.

38. In our view, it is unlikely that the USSR contemplates an attempt to reintroduce strategic weapons in Cuba. Continued US aerial surveillance would still be a major deterrent even if it were discontinued as a daily routine. We believe that the Soviets could have no solid assurance that they could deploy major weapons into Cuba without detection. We have no evidence that Khrushchev has reappraised the risks of US counteraction to such a venture, and we think that his experience of last October has considerably reduced the chances of a second dangerous misjudgment.

39. However, we cannot altogether rule out an attempt by the Soviets to reintroduce strategic missiles. Despite increased US alertness to the possibility of reintroduction, the chances of detection might be less than those during the original operation. Greatly enhanced Soviet knowledge of US intelligence sources and methods would make it possible for them to adopt improved measures of concealment and deception during both shipment and deployment, and to avoid providing many of the indicators that US intelligence would be relying upon.

40. At some point the Soviets might attempt to increase their military strength in Cuba by introducing other weapons previously labeled "offensive" by the US. They might calculate that under certain circumstances the introduction of submarines might be effected in a way not to confront the US with such a clear and unmistakable challenge as produced the strong reaction of last October. They might also consider it possible to introduce a limited number of light bombers as replacements for obsolete B-26s in the Cuban inventory on the grounds that they were needed for patrol against raiders. But in such cases they would almost certainly recognize the great risk of US counteraction.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Long-Run Political and Economic Prospects

41. We believe that the current situation favors the further consolidation of Castro's Communist regime in Cuba. Security forces will probably continue to be highly effective. Internal resistance forces are likely to suffer cumulative attrition. Resistance fighters lost by capture, death, or flight are unlikely to be effectively replaced. As time passes with Castro and the Communists in power, the hope that they can be overthrown becomes dimmer. Exile raids, sabotage, dropping of equipment and supplies can improve the morale of those Cubans who are opposed to the regime, but are unlikely of themselves to produce an uprising capable of overthrowing it.

42. However, despite the odds against it, the possibility of a significant uprising should not be excluded from consideration. If something should happen to damage Castro's ability to command the loyalty of the Cuban people, for example, as a result of ill-judged measures to discipline workers, the situation could get out of control. In such circumstances a leader or a group with an appealing program might appear and succeed in rallying forces of opposition. Without leadership and without goals—and these would have to be revolutionary and reformist to appeal to a majority of Cubans—no opposition force is likely to develop the power to challenge Castro, however much equipment or support it might get from the outside. Furthermore, even under the most favorable circumstances, any opposition would have to have the support of a large part of the military before it could hope to overthrow the Communist regime, and would have to take account of the presence of Soviet troops.

43. If Fidel Castro were to die, members and supporters of the regime, including the armed forces and security forces, would probably rally together to maintain the revolution and to defend it against any US intervention. After a short time, however, such solidarity would be likely to weaken. We do not believe that Raul Castro, the designated successor, could hold his brother's position without a struggle for power with other personalities and groups in the regime. It is unclear who would win in such a struggle. On balance we feel that the successor would probably be one of the top leaders of the regime; he would probably be more dependent upon the Soviets than Castro, because he would lack Castro's special claim to indispensability—his power to command the loyalty of substantial numbers of the Cuban people. It is also possible that the struggle for power would lead to a chaotic civil war in which the whole present political pattern in Cuba would be changed.

44. We believe that economic recovery in Cuba will be slow; it will take at least several years before the 1958 level of production is regained. There has been little noticeable improvement so far in the key areas of economic organization, managerial efficiency, and worker incentives—notable weaknesses in Bloc countries generally. Also, the Soviet Union

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

probably considers assistance to Cuba in the form of balance of payments credits as an emergency measure, and it is likely that any recovery in Cuban production will be partly counterbalanced by reductions in such credits.

45. On the other hand, the Soviet Union probably is prepared to provide developmental assistance to Cuba for a prolonged period. The Soviets apparently have backed away from some of the more ambitious industrial projects talked of previously, such as a large steel plant and a petroleum refinery; but a number of more modest industrial projects are moving ahead, as are projects for expanding agricultural production and for mineral exploration. Considering Cuba's favorable balance between resources and population, and assuming some improvements in efficiency, and continued Bloc aid, Cuba could in time regain its position as one of the leading Latin American countries in per capita gross national product.

Latin American Policies

46. Many areas in Latin America are vulnerable to revolutionary upheavals because popular aspirations for social programs are not being met. Castro still hopes to convince dissatisfied Latin Americans that the Cuban revolution is a model for them to follow. The joint Khrushchev-Castro communique held up Cuba as an example for the rest of Latin America, but without endorsing Castro's earlier general incitement to revolution throughout the area. Castro probably still believes that revolution will come only through violence, but the regime's exhortations on the subject have been muted recently. In part, this is because of Castro's disillusionment with the lack of revolutionary fervor among Latin American Communists, with the notable exception of Venezuela. More important, he probably feels that he has no choice but to bide his time and build up subversive assets for the future. Such a position has probably been strongly urged by Moscow and leading Latin American Communists (e.g., Prestes in Brazil) who fear Castro will upset their own strategies. The tenor of the joint communique of 23 May would suggest that Castro has accepted, at least for the present, a more cautious and flexible line with respect to revolution in Latin America.

47. The outlook is for a mixture of tactics. We believe that during the next phase the Soviets and Cubans, seeking to avoid a crisis with the US, will be careful not to engage in flagrant or gross actions which would invite US reprisals or countermeasures. The Soviets will continue with the more traditional efforts at penetration through diplomacy and economic overtures, with Brazil as the principal target. Subversive training and support will, of course, continue in Cuba. Castro probably still has high hopes for the ultimate success of armed revolution in Venezuela, especially after the end of Betancourt's term in 1964. However, the Soviets still have predominant influence among Latin American Commu-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

nists and do not contemplate turning over their controls to Castro. Nevertheless, they have given Castro a certain weight by describing him as the forerunner of Communist advance in Latin America, and therefore his views may tend to be more influential with other Latin American Communists.

48. In general, we believe that situations are unlikely to develop in which Castro could intervene with substantial force without rendering himself vulnerable to US or OAS counteraction. He would probably prefer to concentrate on rendering clandestine support to local insurgents. The danger will remain, however, that a few aircraft or guns supplied by Cuba might determine the outcome in a contest between insurgents and an established government.

Soviet-Cuban Relations

49. While we believe that the Soviets and Cubans have come to grips with some of their problems and have probably resolved the more immediate ones, the Cuban situation is clouded by many uncertainties and Soviet-Cuban relations are far from permanently stabilized. Among these uncertainties is the question of US policy. The impact of the Cuban revolution in Latin America has lost much of its force, if only temporarily, because Castro has appeared as a pawn in the struggle between the Great Powers. The Soviets are apparently convinced that this setback can be overcome provided the crisis with the US can be controlled. They probably believe that they possess still some degree of deterrence against direct action by the US to overthrow Castro and that in any case the political inhibition against such a course remains strong. They probably calculate that avoidance of provocation will deprive the US of a pretext for direct action. In addition, they recognize that the US effort to isolate and harass Castro will continue to contain certain dangers, but they probably hope to limit these by careful handling of any incidents, arguing that his interest as well as theirs will be best served by gradual consolidation of his regime.

50. Castro, while in the USSR, showed a willingness to accept the Soviet line of peaceful coexistence and to recognize the Soviet Union's leadership of the Communist movement. On the other hand, some of the more sensitive points of dispute between the Chinese and the Soviets (e.g., Yugoslavia and the charges of dogmatism versus revisionism) were not mentioned in the communique of 23 May. Nevertheless, Castro did take a long step toward the Soviet side in the Sino-Soviet controversy. In turn Castro has received from the Soviets a strong boost to his own ego; assurances of continued economic support; the commitment of Soviet prestige to the Cuban revolution as well as the generalized pledge to give Cuba "the necessary aid" in the event of a US attack; and recognition of Cuba's special importance as an example of what the revolutionary struggle can achieve in Latin America. Overall, Soviet and

~~SECRET~~

ANNEX

ESTIMATE OF MAJOR SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN CUBA

Tanks

T-54 tanks and self-propelled guns at the four Soviet Camps and Torrens ^a	200
Tanks and self-propelled guns in Cuban hands	400-500
Field Artillery and AT Guns	1,300
AAA Guns	700
FROG Rockets ^a	30
Military Vehicles	20,000
SAM Sites ^a	24
SAM (SA-2 Guideline) Missiles ^a	500
Cruise-Missile Sites ^a	4
Cruise-Missiles ^a	150
Air Defense Radars ^a	200
Jet Fighters	
MIG-15/17 (FAGOT/FRESCO)	55
MIG-19 (FARMER)	11
MIG-21 (FISHBED) ^a	42
Helicopters	100
KOMAR Cruise-Missile Boats ^a	12
Kronstadt Subchasers	6
Motor Torpedo Boats (P-6)	16

^a Equipment now under Soviet control.

~~SECRET~~

COPY LIBRARY

~~SECRET~~

Cuban fortunes have been bound more closely together and their respective freedoms of action have been somewhat narrowed.

51. We do foresee, however, varying degrees of friction in Soviet-Cuban relations, particularly over the long run. Castro wants all the benefits of Soviet economic and military aid but insists upon a unique position in the Bloc without submitting to the discipline and control imposed on Soviet Satellites. Despite the harmonious tone of the joint communique, the partners probably have not reached a fundamental reconciliation of their appraisals of the situation in Latin America. As time passes and new conditions develop, they will probably again find themselves in disagreement over the proper course of action to follow. The future level of Soviet economic aid to Cuba is also likely to become a bone of contention between the two countries. For the present, however, we believe that both the Soviets and the Cubans hope to stabilize the situation and gird for a long-term effort in Latin America.

~~SECRET~~