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CUBAN CONTINGENCIES

SUMMARY

This study considers possible US reactions to a further Cuban-Soviet, Angola-type intervention. It discusses:

1. Those political-economic, non-military actions which might be taken now or over the next few months to dissuade Castro from further intervention by isolating and exerting pressure on him;
2. Intermediate actions to be taken prior to an actual further intervention which foreshadow possible further application of military force and which are intended to give more credence to our warnings; and,
3. A set of possible military options predicated on the assumption that deterrent actions have been unsuccessful and that the Cubans have already taken or are in the process of taking an interventionist action.

Our basic objective is to prevent the creation of a pattern of international conduct in which Cuba and the USSR arrogate to themselves the right to intervene with combat forces in local or regional conflicts. We are already engaging in such an effort through public warnings, signals to the USSR, changes in our African policy and some measures designed to isolate Castro.

If this is not successful, we will have to decide between two broad courses: actions intended to make the Soviets and Cubans pay a political price over the longer term, or actions intended to terminate the Cuban action including measures involving application of differing levels of force.

It is difficult to determine in advance a precise threshold which would determine our response to a Cuban provocation. It would obviously be lower in a US territory like Puerto Rico or in this hemisphere than elsewhere. Furthermore, intervention may be a gradual matter beginning with advisers and progressing to training, shipment of arms, and actual combat forces. The situation which the US confronts may, therefore, be ambiguous and involve a flow of Bloc supplies with Cuban personnel support.

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There are four categories in which the courses of action available to us can be placed.

1. The first relates to political and economic measures affecting Cuba. Some are immediate and unilateral actions like confining their diplomats to a radius of 25 miles from New York City, [redacted]

[redacted] and reinstating special broadcasts to Cuba. Economically, we can try to persuade Western European nations to terminate aid programs, encourage Argentina, Spain, Japan and others to limit credits and attempt to restrict the trade of friendly countries with Cuba. Supplementary measures involve Cuba and other countries and should be keyed to some further Cuban move. They include sending a message to Castro and raising the issue in the UN, the OAS, NATO, and EC 9.

2. The second category of action relates to the Soviet Union. It is easier to bring pressure on Cuba, as the closer and weaker partner in a tightly interwoven relationship, than on the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, any action taken against Cuba will inevitably affect US-Soviet relations. Furthermore, Cuba could not undertake further intervention without Soviet willingness to run high risks of crises with the US. Therefore, if we believe that we can achieve our objective more effectively by broadening our pressure, we can begin such measures as postponing low substantive exchanges and delaying the opening of Consulates in Kiev and New York. Then we could cease licensing computers. More severe long-term actions would include delaying additional grain purchases, renouncing some of the bilateral agreements, and breaking off SALT and MBFR negotiations.

3. The third category relates to preventive actions involving disposition of military forces in the Caribbean, [redacted]

[redacted] Such actions include [redacted] reinforcing Guantanamo, jamming of Cuban communications and navigation aids, [redacted]

[redacted] increasing force presence in the Caribbean and reorganizing our force posture there to establish a command in Puerto Rico and reopen bases there and at Key West. Such force adjustments would not degrade other commitments. It is intended to demonstrate the seriousness of our purpose.

4. Finally, there are a series of military actions on a graduated scale of seriousness which involve the possibility of hostilities and would be considered acts of war. In all cases, a preliminary decision would have to be taken whether to evacuate some 4,000 dependents and non-essential employees from Guantanamo and reinforce the 500-man defense force there in view of the great vulnerability of the base to attack from Cuban forces.

All four options contain the possibility of engagement of Soviet naval or air personnel and none would have an immediate and direct impact upon Cuban support for its military intervention force overseas. Military requirements would involve a large part of the force allocated to CINCLANT (2 carrier task forces) and the US would be hard pressed to confront the Soviets or other opposing forces militarily elsewhere in the world while engaging in such operations.

The lowest level of application of force would be a series of blockade-type actions ranging from a quarantine of war materiel entering or leaving Cuba, to a quarantine of all POL entering Cuba and finally to a total blockade of all material except food and medical supplies. Since 95% of Cuba's trade moves on foreign ships, two-thirds of which are Soviet, we would quickly be brought into confrontation with them.

It is estimated that Cuba has a two-month POL reserve and that it could extend this to as much as six months by applying measures of severe austerity. A concurrent air quarantine/blockade would have to be considered. There are seven civilian airlines serving Cuba, three of which are free world, flying about six flights a day. Neither the Soviets nor the Cubans have the capability of maintaining an effective oil airlift and only about 5% of Cuba's total imports could be supplied by airlift.

Another possibility would be the mining of Cuba's ports through naval and air implacement. This would probably result in from 50 to 60 ships being imprisoned in Cuban ports. Air superiority would be required prior to minelaying. This would involve probable engagement of Cuban and possibly Soviet air defenses. Interdiction of some airfields would also be required.

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The last measure contemplated would be a punitive airstrike to destroy selected high-value Cuban military targets. All targets are located within defended areas. Some US losses could be expected as well as engagement of Soviet personnel. All military actions would have to be accompanied by a series of complementary political measures involving Congress, our allies in Europe and Latin America, the UN, and the Soviet Union.

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