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20 October 1965

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CUBAN SUBVERSION IN LATIN AMERICA

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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OCI No. 2336/65

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
20 October 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Cuban Subversion in Latin America

1. Cuban spokesmen continue to reiterate their determination to aid subversive movements in Latin America. A variety of sources confirm that some aid is being provided, although the level of such material assistance seems to be less than a few years ago.

2. However, Cuba's activities in support of revolution in Latin America seem to be undergoing a change. Ernesto "Che" Guevara's fall from power is symptomatic of this shift. Guevara was Cuba's most doctrinaire spokesman for militant revolutionary tactics. Moreover, at the Havana Conference of 1964, Cuba agreed to funnel its aid only to those subversive movements endorsed by the pro-Moscow Latin American Communist parties. It is still too early to judge the extent to which this commitment is being implemented. For the present, Cuba seems to be following a cautious policy of providing support--largely in the form of propaganda--in those countries where Havana judges indigenous revolutionary movements to have the most chance of success. Castro will probably use this coming January's Tri-Continent Conference in Havana for a summit meeting of Latin American subversive groups to assess the results of the 1964 Havana Conference, what has been accomplished, and what will be required for the future.

3. As recently as 3 October, Fidel Castro reaffirmed that Cuba "is the fatherland of the revolutionaries of this continent." He stated that Cuba has the "responsibility" for aiding the revolutionary movements in the hemisphere, and "we assume the responsibility and the consequences and the risks." Lest there be any question as to Cuban aims he announced that "while there are exploited and colonialized peoples, we shall continue running these risks,

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and we shall continue serenely assuming these responsibilities." In mid-August, another regime spokesman called Cuba's assistance to subversion his country's "international duty."

Propaganda Support

4. Propaganda has been the instrument most heavily used by the Castro regime in its attempts to overturn established governments in Latin America. Cuban broadcasts to Latin America total more than 160 hours a week in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Creole, and the Indian languages of Quechua, Guarani, and Aymara. In the early days of the Castro regime, such broadcasts were primarily devoted to strident calls to immediate armed action. Now the emphasis is more on laying the groundwork for future revolutionary action and on attempts to unite feuding revolutionary organizations. The majority of these broadcasts masquerade as objective commentary on political, economic, and sociological conditions in the various countries of Latin America; they replay statements by revolutionary groups, and feature documentaries designed to show that only the "Cuban way" will solve the problems of Latin America.

5. During the month of July, for example, one third of Havana radio's total international radio service commentaries were devoted to specific Latin American countries. Venezuela received the greatest attention, primarily through the regular three-times-a-week program "Venezuelan Realities."

6. Broadcasts to Haiti are an exception to the general rule. In these, Havana directly incites the Haitians to launch immediate revolutionary action. Haitian Communists long-resident in Cuba broadcast vitriolic commentary on the economic and political deterioration of Haiti and the need for unity among the revolutionary forces. Commenting on the lack of concrete action by Haiti's two Communist parties, a recent broadcast stated, "it is of the utmost necessity that all honest Haitians gather under the banner of the Unified Democratic Front...to make Duvalier pay for his treason and all of his crimes." On the practical side of revolution, Havana radio has been serializing selections on guerrilla warfare tactics

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and broadcasting speeches that were given in Cuba by the representative of the militant Venezuelan Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN).

7. Havana radio broadcasts have had some degree of success, according to both their supporters and their opponents. During the Dominican revolt, several clandestine sources reported that the rebels listened regularly to Radio Havana and were impressed by the speed with which the Cuban network reported on local developments. In Haiti, President Duvalier is making strenuous efforts to outlaw the Cuban lottery; Haitians listen to Radio Havana for the lottery results and absorb a good dose of anti-Duvalier propaganda at the same time. Peruvian President Belaunde has attacked the provocative reporting of the Cuban radio, which the Peruvian Government, [redacted] [redacted] plans to jam with equipment it has yet to purchase. Venezuela is already jamming Radio Havana. In August, a high Honduran official stated that his government has evidence of coded broadcasts from Cuba.

Training

8. It is on training of Latin American subversives and limited financial support of their movements that Cuba rests much of its hope for revolutionary success. The experience of the Dominican Republic --where a small group of Cuban-trained extremists was able to lead the rebels in the worst of the fighting-- has probably convinced Havana of the merit of continuing to train subversives from a variety of countries so as to be ready for targets of opportunity. Cuba's organ for intelligence and subversion, the General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI), maintains installations for training Latin American subversives in the specifics of revolutionary warfare and providing them with ideological orientation. Two weeks ago the DGI's director, Manuel Pineiro, was named to the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee and to its select three-man foreign affairs committee, an act which affirms the priority Cuba places on the activities of his organization.

9. Reliable estimates of the nationality and numbers of trainees are difficult to obtain because of

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the devious routes most of them use to travel to Cuba and because of the efficiency of the DGI in providing false documentation. However, clandestine sources provide some specifics on such travel by Latin Americans. [redacted] was informed [redacted]

[redacted] that the party planned to send 60 men to Cuba in early August for special training in guerrilla tactics and Communist doctrine. Another group of 15 to 20 men who had been undergoing training in Cuba was expected to return to Guatemala during July. A number of Panamanians are expected to leave for guerrilla warfare training in Cuba in the near future; several earlier trainees recently returned to Cuba for a refresher course.

10. [redacted] reports that since early 1965 the People's Progressive Party (PPP) of British Guiana--the party of ousted premier and Castro-supporter Cheddi Jagan--has emphasized the reorganization and expansion of its long-term political education program. On 1 September, Jagan's wife reportedly told an organizer of the PPP that she was making arrangements for a nine-month "political science" course to be held in Cuba. Two PPP "scholarship students" who returned to British Guiana in September informed police that the obligatory military training they had received in Cuba had included making four types of bombs, including Molotov cocktails.*

11. Although Jamaica is not one of Cuba's priority targets in the hemisphere, a report of June 1965 indicates that Cuba intends to train about 200 Jamaicans during the next few years. These Jamaicans are then to become leaders and instructors for the pro-Castro elements in Jamaica. The Cuban Consul in Jamaica, although not directly involved in the arrangements, reportedly has given assurances that the group would receive guerrilla warfare training if it could get to Cuba.

*An additional 25 Guianese are scheduled to leave soon for guerrilla warfare training in Cuba.

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12. Although sufficient documentation is not available, it is believed that Cuba continues to train unspecified numbers of representatives from other Latin American revolutionary groups. It should be noted, however, that very few Colombians and no known Peruvians are receiving guerrilla warfare training in Cuba at the present time, despite the fact that these two countries are at the top of Cuba's subversion list.

13. Cuba's only known large shipment of weapons to a Latin American subversive group was a three-ton cache seized by Venezuelan authorities in November 1963. This experience apparently convinced Castro that weapons procurement is a problem to be solved by the internal subversive forces, not by Cuba. In a speech on 28 May, Castro said, "In reality, the people's weapons are in the hands of their enemies. ...When we learned to take weapons from the enemy, we had learned to wage the revolution." This appears to confirm the statement of a defector from the DGI that because of the exposure of arms shipments to Venezuela it is now Cuban policy to reject all Latin American requests for assistance other than for funds and some training.

The Havana Conference and Afterwards

14. The most significant recent change in Cuba's support of subversion in the hemisphere occurred at the Havana Conference of Latin American Communist Parties held in November 1964. At that time, Cuba and the Latin American representatives agreed to limit their support to those revolutionary movements officially endorsed by the pro-Moscow Communist Party of the respective country. The attending parties pledged themselves to increase their support of such groups and to attempt to unify revolutionary movements in the hemisphere.

15. Implementation of this policy involves a sharp departure from past Cuban practice. Formerly, Cuba devoted much of its support to revolutionary groups which were competitors of the regular Communist parties. Cuba's adoption of the new policy may partially be the result of its disillusionment over the failure of these organizations, its recognition

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than the Yon Sosa group, be accepted as the official Guatemalan representative to the preparatory meeting for the "Tri-Continent" Conference. This conference opens in Havana on 3 January. Thus the FAR is apparently Havana's choice for Guatemalan representation at the Conference. Representatives of the Communist and radical states of Asia and Africa, as well as delegates from revolutionary movements in these two areas and Latin America will be brought together at the conference to discuss problems of imperialism and colonialism, and ways to coordinate their revolutionary movements. An observer at the Cairo meeting commented that only the Guatemalan representative seemed to be really in "Castro's pocket."

19. In Peru, Cuba is continuing its propaganda support of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). In the past, the MIR received considerable material assistance from the Cubans--although this is no longer so. Its leader, Luis de la Puente Uceda, has visited Cuba several times and is reportedly on good terms with Castro. In an interview printed by a Lima newspaper on 3 May, de la Puente was quoted as saying, "I have chosen the path of action. Our people's only way to liberation is armed rebellion..." This statement was followed up in June, when the MIR began its long-delayed guerrilla operations with attacks near Huancayo in Peru's central zone. The action has been applauded in Cuban propaganda media. On 27 September, the Union of Peruvians in Cuba (one of several such national groups parroting the Cuban line) issued a manifesto stating, "under the conditions prevailing in Peru, there is no other way to eliminate all the ills that afflict our people than the path blazed by the MIR guerrillas. ...we...proclaim our wholehearted support to the guerrillas." Formal Cuban support for this position was contained in a July article in the Cuban daily Hoy which declared, "The Peruvian masses have learned where the only solution to their ills rests, and for that reason they are looking today toward the mountains, the jungles, and the guerrillas." Since August, the pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese wings of the PCP have taken increased cognizance of the guerrillas and condemned the government's counterinsurgency activities. They have not openly endorsed the MIR, however. At present, it seems unlikely that either faction will support

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the MIR with acts of violence. The pro-Soviet PCP faction may yet decide to seek the best of both worlds by giving partial support to the insurrectional movements while continuing its current activities in the political sphere.

20. It is believed that as of April, the Cuban Government had cut off financial support to leftist Peronist groups in Argentina and promised to channel its support through the official Communist Party of Argentina.

21. Venezuela and Colombia--two of Havana's most emphasized targets in the hemisphere--fall into separate categories. Cuba has always strongly supported the Venezuelan Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), over which the Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV) exercises a dominant influence. The PCV, beset by internal problems, is making attempts to justify more emphasis on political action, although not giving up the support of paramilitary activities. The extent of Cuba's current material support of the FALN is unknown but the propaganda support is continuing at a high level. Cuba maintains an official office for a FALN representative in Havana and approved having a FALN delegation at the Cairo preparatory meeting for the Tri-Continent Conference.

22. In Colombia, it is even difficult to speak of an official Communist party; on 30 May the party split into two factions, each professing to be "authoritative." The original Colombian Communist Party (PCC), by far the larger, has been generally content to follow a pacifist, political role, with the exception of the defense of the so-called "enclaves" of Marquetalia and Riochiquita. The rival faction, the Colombian Communist Party--Marxist Leninist (PCC-ML) is more violence oriented but there is no evidence of its having received any support from Cuba. Before the Havana Conference, Cuba supported an independent insurgent force, the Army of National Liberation (ELN), with money and training. However, this aid appears to have been terminated. The ELN, in fact, may soon disband as an entity; its remnants may be absorbed by the PCC-ML.

23. There are only tenuous indications that another aspect of last year's Havana Conference--the

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promotion of unity among revolutionary forces in the hemisphere--is being accomplished. A source of proven reliability has reported that a Latin American Communist "politburo" has been established to coordinate the implementation of the agreements reached at Havana. This "politburo" reportedly held its first meeting in Havana this spring. Another source, [redacted]

[redacted] reports that the Communist parties of Central America have formed the Military Revolutionary Front of Central America to coordinate Communist military movements in their area. The political bureau of this organization is reportedly composed of the secretaries-general of the five Communist parties. This select group was planning to hold its first meeting in August. Both of these unity efforts appear to be still in the first stages of organization.

Outlook

24. The shift in emphasis in Cuban propaganda and Havana's assumption of the responsibilities and drawbacks inherent in the decisions of the Havana Conference reflect Cuba's increasing awareness of the realities in Latin America. In 1959, Castro was convinced that his revolution would spark similar revolutionary movements in the rest of Latin America. He backed up this conviction by blatant incitements to immediate revolution and by aiding small-scale invasions of Panama, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. However, the luster of Castro's revolution has been dimmed by Cuba's performance in the domestic field and the failure of its hemispheric goals. In the last two years, Castro's hopes have been rebuffed in Venezuela, British Guiana, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic, as well as in the failure of any of the continent's militant subversive groups to overturn a government. These have all served to convince Castro that his "inevitable" revolution is not imminent. In addition, Castro now seems confident that his own regime can continue to exist without like regimes elsewhere in the hemisphere.

25. Thus, while Castro is still willing and able to aid subversive movements, he has shifted emphasis. He now is concentrating on those countries

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29. Two coming meetings may reveal whether Cuba intends to maintain its new policies toward subversion in Latin America. A clandestine source reported that representatives of Cuba, the Latin American Communist parties, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are scheduled to hold extensive discussions ~~concerning~~ ~~the~~ ~~possibility~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~PCP~~. The Cuban delegate to the congress is Lionel Soto, a member of the newly-named Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and the director of the regime's Schools of Revolutionary Instruction.

30. An equally significant meeting of Latin American representatives will reportedly take place after the Tri-Continent Conference in Havana next January. This conference will provide another opportunity for a summit conference of Latin American Communist Parties. In addition, the identities of the participating revolutionary groups may give a hint as to Cuba's willingness to abide by the decisions of the Havana Conference. At the preparatory conference in Cairo, Cuba accepted a delegate from the Guatemalan Communist party's new militant arm, the FAR, rather than the long-time Cuban-supported movement of Yon Sosa. This decision--as well as the general question of what other Latin American movements were to be invited--aroused controversy among other participants. reports that these differences of opinion over who should be accredited to the Havana Conference led to the decision that each Latin American leftist group will have to agree upon the composition of a single delegation from his country. Then Cuba, as the sponsor of the meeting, will have the final say on who will receive official invitations. This arrangement gives Castro a great deal of leeway in designating those whom he considers the most representative of the sometimes conflicting and antagonistic revolutionary movements in several Latin American countries. If Havana is indeed serious about living up to the commitments it made last November, this meeting would provide an excellent opportunity to assess the results of the past year and to plan strategy to carry out more effectively the decisions of the Havana meeting.

31. This shift in Cuban policy toward subversion does not, in itself, mean a lessening of the potential

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subversive threat against established governments in Latin America. Moreover, hundreds of anti-government extremists in a number of countries, feeling that their grievances continue to grow, are moving ahead with organizational efforts and plans to step up violent activities. The total Cuban support effort will probably be smaller, but more of the aid may well be channeled to those who can use it effectively. Cuban-trained militants already make up the hard core of numerous Latin American extremist and Communist groups. Cuba also has given ample notice that it intends to continue its propaganda and some training and financial support to revolutionary movements. The only change is in regard to means and priorities, not ends. As long as exploitable situations exist in the hemisphere, Cuba is on record as being willing and able to contribute toward the establishment of "more Cubas" in Latin America. It seems increasingly apparent, however, that Cuba is unwilling to run great risks to provide material assistance to anti-government groups in Latin America. Castro's more cautious subversion policy means that now, more than ever, the burden of carrying out revolutions rests with the local revolutionaries themselves.