

# DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ESTIMATE



ASSESSMENT OF INCREASED  
CONVENTIONAL MILITARY CAPABILITIES  
OF CUBAN AND SOVIET UNITS IN CUBA

NO JCS OBJECTION TO  
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ASSESSMENT OF INCREASED CONVENTIONAL MILITARY CAPABILITIES  
OF CUBAN AND SOVIET UNITS IN CUBA

THE PROBLEM

To assess the increased conventional military capabilities of Cuban forces and Soviet units in Cuba.

SUMMARY

1. The introduction of massive quantities of Soviet ground, naval and air equipment during the military buildup in Cuba has substantially enhanced the conventional combat capabilities of the Cuban Armed Forces. In addition, Soviet technicians, advisors, and ground and air elements in Cuba have significantly contributed to establishment of a much stronger military posture\* and to development of Soviet/Cuban capabilities for defense of the island and for maintenance of internal security.

2. US contingency plans with respect to Cuba have been reviewed by the Joint Staff and CINCLANT in the light of the military buildup and recent intelligence. It has been concluded that, despite the very substantial increase in Cuban combat capability, CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62, in a non-nuclear environment and when preceded by CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62, is considered a valid workable plan.

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\*See Annex A for detailed evaluation of probable Soviet ground combat forces in Cuba and Annex B for comparison of selected Soviet weapons in Cuba in late 1961 with current inventories.

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3. Although strategic missiles have been withdrawn from Cuba, the Castro regime has emerged with a formidable military capability as a result of the influx of other modern weaponry and accelerated readiness training that accompanied the buildup. Castro retains an impressive array of sophisticated weapons provided to his forces by the Soviets, tabulated in Annex B.

4. During the past year, there has been substantial increase in both the quantity and quality of heavy ground force equipment in Cuba. Quantitatively, there are now three times as many tanks and assault guns as in late 1961; seven times as much medium artillery (122-mm and 152-mm); three times as many light artillery and antitank guns (57-mm, 76-mm, and 85-mm); three times as many mortars (82-mm and 120-mm); and three times as many motor transport vehicles. Qualitatively, heavier and more modern types of equipment have been introduced into the inventory: T-54 medium tanks, SU-100 assault guns, truck mounted multiple rocket launchers, and amphibious personnel carriers. As a result, the firepower and mobility of the ground forces in Cuba has increased markedly. Along with the equipment buildup, training activities have been intensified, thus significantly improving the capabilities of Cuban personnel to utilize the Soviet equipment.

5. The Cuban Navy has been augmented by 16 P-6 PT boats; 6 patrol craft; and 12 KOMAR guided missile boats, each equipped

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with two short-range cruise type missiles and largely manned by Soviets. Naval capabilities for coastal security have been significantly enhanced.

6. The Cuban air capability has also increased materially. There are now three times as many jet fighters and helicopters and about twice the number of transports as a year ago. The Cubans will seek to retain the 42 IL-28's estimated to be in Cuba. Accompanying these numerical increases, the qualitative improvement of Cuban air units has been even more significant. The added jet fighters are mostly of the supersonic MIG-19 and MIG-21 types. Air-to-air missiles have been provided for the MIG-21's. A fully integrated air defense missile system, now manned by Soviet personnel and comprising 24 SA-2 sites, each with six launchers and associated modern radars, has been established. At the present time, Soviet Bloc personnel are believed to be flying the MIG-21's and are generously diffused in other Cuban air units as instructors.

7. The probable introduction into Cuba of Soviet combat forces was intended not only to defend their sensitive installations against invasion but also to secure them against "counter-revolutionary" activity. Their presence would also provide the Soviets a potent source of influence on the internal Cuban scene. Retention of these units in Cuba, after the withdrawal of strategic missiles, would indicate that Moscow has not fully

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abandoned the concept of developing Cuba as a potential strategic Soviet military base.

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~~SECRET~~ANNEX ASOVIET GROUND FORCES IN CUBA

Analysis of recent photographic coverage of four major military camps in Cuba suggests that they contain highly mobile composite Soviet Army ground combat forces of reduced regimental size, with a possible nuclear capability. These units had earlier been equated to four reinforced medium tank battalions, a FROG artillery rocket battalion, and a SNAPPER antitank missile unit, with a total estimated strength of about 1,200 men. It is estimated now that these composite groupings contain a total of about 4,000 troops. The presence of Soviet Army units in such strength would reflect the extent of Moscow's determination to create and maintain a strategic base in Cuba. With the removal of the missile bases, ground combat units might also be withdrawn, although no preparations for their departure have been noted.

All four of these camps evidently have been established since the beginning of the Soviet buildup in July, and they have certain similarities. While most of their facilities are of a temporary character, construction of permanent buildings similar to those at the missile sites has started at some of the camps. Modern, sophisticated equipment, including types not known to have been released to any non-Soviet units, has

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been identified at each of these camps. At one--Santiago de las Vegas--Soviet Army emblems, including the "Guards" unit badge, the armored insignia, and the Red Army Star, have been prominently displayed on the ground.

The disposition of these units also reflects their probable Soviet identity; all are in areas which contained sensitive military installations of prime interest to the Soviets. Three are near the former offensive missile bases, and the fourth is adjacent to the strategically significant airfield at Holguin in eastern Cuba.

Since there are some differences in the types and quantities of equipment identified at these camps, the exact composition and strength of the units has not been established. The pattern, however, appears to be that of a composite, heavily armed grouping consisting of a medium tank battalion, an armored reconnaissance company, an armored infantry unit of company or possibly battalion strength, a multiple rocket launcher battery, a nuclear-capable FROG artillery rocket battalion with two launchers, a SNAPPER antitank missile battery, an antiaircraft unit, and an engineer (sapper) unit. At least one of the groupments (Holguin) also includes a mortar company with 10 pieces and a 57-mm antitank platoon. A formation of this composition would comprise about 1,000 troops.

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Although this structure does not equate exactly with any known Soviet Army formation, the Soviets are known to have been developing regimental task forces in their efforts to adapt to modern warfare. Changes toward this end have been noted in the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, where training in recent years has emphasized the employment of a reinforced regimental formation specially designed to conduct independent operations. Combat division headquarters have been used as field commands to co-ordinate and support widely dispersed regimental groupings. The composition and disposition of the Soviet units in Cuba suggests this concept.

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~~SECRET~~ANNEX BINVENTORY OF SELECTED WEAPONS IN CUBA IN LATE 1961  
COMPARED WITH CURRENT ESTIMATES

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
	<u>1961</u>	<u>Current</u>
<u>Armored Vehicles</u>		
JS-2 Heavy Tanks	21	40
T-34 Medium Tanks	104	185 - 210
T-54 Medium Tanks	--	95 - 120
SU-100 Assault Guns	50	75
Armored Personnel Carriers, BTR-152	--	40
Armored Personnel Carriers, BTR-50 (Amphib)	--	40
WHD Amphib 4x4 w/dart-like rockets	--	18 - 29
ZIL-485 Amphibious Vehicles	--	30
K-61 (Tracked Amphibians)	--	30
<u>Artillery</u>		
152-mm Gun-howitzers	--	180
122-mm guns	24	120
122-mm howitzers	52	120
85-mm guns	72	300
76-mm guns	120	200
57-mm antitank guns	72	300
57-mm antiaircraft guns	--	120
37-mm antiaircraft guns	90	120
30-mm twin antiaircraft guns	--	90

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<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
	<u>1961</u>	<u>Current</u>
<u>Mortars and Machine Guns</u>		
160-mm	--	Some
120-mm	72	180
82-mm	200	600
14.5-mm quad AA machine gun	--	100
12.7-mm quad AA machine gun	--	350
<u>Transport Vehicles</u>		
Prime movers, trucks, jeeps	2,400	7,500 - 10,000
<u>Naval Vessels</u>		
<u>Patrol craft Kronstadt-class sub-chasers</u>	--	6
<u>Motor Torpedo Boats (P-6)</u>	--	16
<u>PGMG (KOMAR guided missile boats, 2 missiles each)</u>	--	12
<u>Jet Fighters</u>		
MIG-15/17/19	35	62
MIG-21	--	39
<u>Jet Light Bombers</u>		
Beagle (IL-28)	--	42*
<u>Transports</u>		
IL-14	--	14 - 16
AN-2 (Utility)	10	15
<u>Helicopters</u>		
MI-4 (HOUND)	12	44
MI-1 (HARE)	11	26

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<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
	<u>1961</u>	<u>Current</u>
<u>Prop Trainers</u>		
Zlin-326	--	12
<u>Guided Missiles</u>		
Air Defense (SA-2)	--	500
Coast Defense (Cruise type, 35 n.m.)	--	40
<u>Unguided Missiles</u>		
Short-range Tactical FROG	--	8 - 20
<u>Radars</u>		
TOKEN	--	15
KNIFE REST	--	15 - 20
SPOON REST	--	30 - 40
FRUIT SET	--	24
FIRE CAN	--	20
BAR LOCK	--	15
FLAT FACE	--	15
WHIFF	--	Unknown
ROCK CAKE	--	Unknown

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