

# WHITE HOUSE DIGEST

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This edition of the White House Digest focuses on Soviet and Cuban activities in the Caribbean region. In three parts, the information contained herein provides a brief outline of the basic facts about the extent and nature of that activity.

## I. Soviet/Cuban Threat and Buildup in the Caribbean

Since 1978 we have seen an ever increasing Soviet presence in the Caribbean Region. The USSR through its surrogate--Cuba--has been able to establish a permanent presence in the Western Hemisphere.

### The Characteristics of the Soviet/Cuban Build-up: Men, Money, Material

- The Soviet Union maintains and reinforces its presence by:
  - Deploying its long range Bear reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft to the region on a regular basis.
  - Deploying its naval combatants for joint training exercises with Cuba.
  - Providing a Soviet Brigade of approximately 3,000 men stationed near Havana and an additional presence of 2,500 military advisors.
  - Providing Cuba with 8,000 civilian advisors.
  - Maintaining the largest intelligence monitoring/telecommunications facility outside the USSR.
  
- In 1982, the Soviets and Cubans had 50 times as many military advisors in Latin America as did the US. Last year the Soviets increased their military advisors in Cuba by 500.
  
- The USSR has also provided a steady stream of military equipment to Cuba. In 1981 alone, Moscow provided 66,000 metric tons in military assistance valued at \$600 million. Deliveries in 1982 exceeded 1981 by 2,000 metric tons and amounted to over \$1 billion in military assistance in the last two years.

- Cuban armed forces have grown to a size disproportionate for defensive needs:

- Cuba possesses an Army of over 225,000; a Navy of 11,000 and air defense forces of 16,000, not including 500 thousand paramilitary troops.
- Cubans have well over 200 MIG fighter aircraft.
- Castro has about 65,000 Cubans serving overseas: 40,000 military (25,000 troops in Angola, about 12,000 in Ethiopia) and 25,000 civilian technicians.
- Cuba has 2.3% of its population in the regular armed forces, one of every 20 Cubans participates in some security mission.

- Moscow underwrites the activities of its Cuban surrogate at a cost exceeding \$4 billion annually (1/4 of Cuba's GNP) and supports efforts to collect funds, arms, and supplies from the communist bloc for guerrilla activities in Central America and the Caribbean.

- The number of Soviet Bloc academic grants offered annually to Latin American students jumped from 400 in the 1960's to about 7,000 now. In 1979 Moscow admitted to sponsoring 7,000 Cubans for studies in the Soviet Union. Last year 700 Nicaraguans were reported studying there and an additional 300 scholarships were being provided. Scholarships include free room, board, tuition, transportation, medical care and a small stipend.

- About 3,000 Latin American students, including 1,600 Nicaraguans, are studying in Cuba. Cuba has constructed 17 schools for foreigners, each costing about \$2 million to build and about \$600,000 to operate annually.

## II. Spreading Soviet/Cuban Intervention Throughout The Region

- The implication of the Soviet/Cuban buildup is that it provides a platform for spreading subversion and supporting guerrillas throughout the region.

- It was Cuba that acted as the catalyst to organize and unify the far-left groups in El Salvador, assisted in developing military strategy, and encouraged the guerrillas to launch the ill-fated "final" offensive in January 1981. Cuba continues to be vital in training and supporting continuing offensives in El Salvador by funneling weapons and supplies via Nicaragua to rebel forces in El Salvador.

- Castro is actively engaged in converting Nicaragua into another Cuba. There are approximately 5,500 Cuban civilian advisors and about 1,750 Cuban military and security advisors in Nicaragua.

- The Sandinistas themselves have about 75,000 men under arms in their active armed forces, reserves, militia, police and security forces. At its present strength, the Sandinista Army represents the largest military force in the history of Central America. The Sandinistas have built 36 new military garrisons since Somoza's downfall.

- Approximately 70 Nicaraguans were sent to Bulgaria for training as pilots and mechanics. Existing landing strips in Nicaragua are being lengthened and will be able to accommodate the most sophisticated Soviet jet aircraft. MIGs could be flown in quickly from Cuba.

- In Grenada, which has a strategic location in the eastern Caribbean, we are concerned because the Soviets and Cubans are constructing facilities, including an airfield, the eventual use of which is unknown.

- In Suriname, the Cuban Ambassador is a senior intelligence officer who was formerly Chief of the Caribbean Section of the Americas Department of the Cuban Communist Party. The America department is responsible for Cuban covert activities, and is much more important in formulating Cuban policy toward Latin America than is the Cuban Foreign Ministry. The Cuban Ambassador maintains a very close relationship with LTC Desire Bouterse, Suriname's military leader, and has continuous access to key leaders.

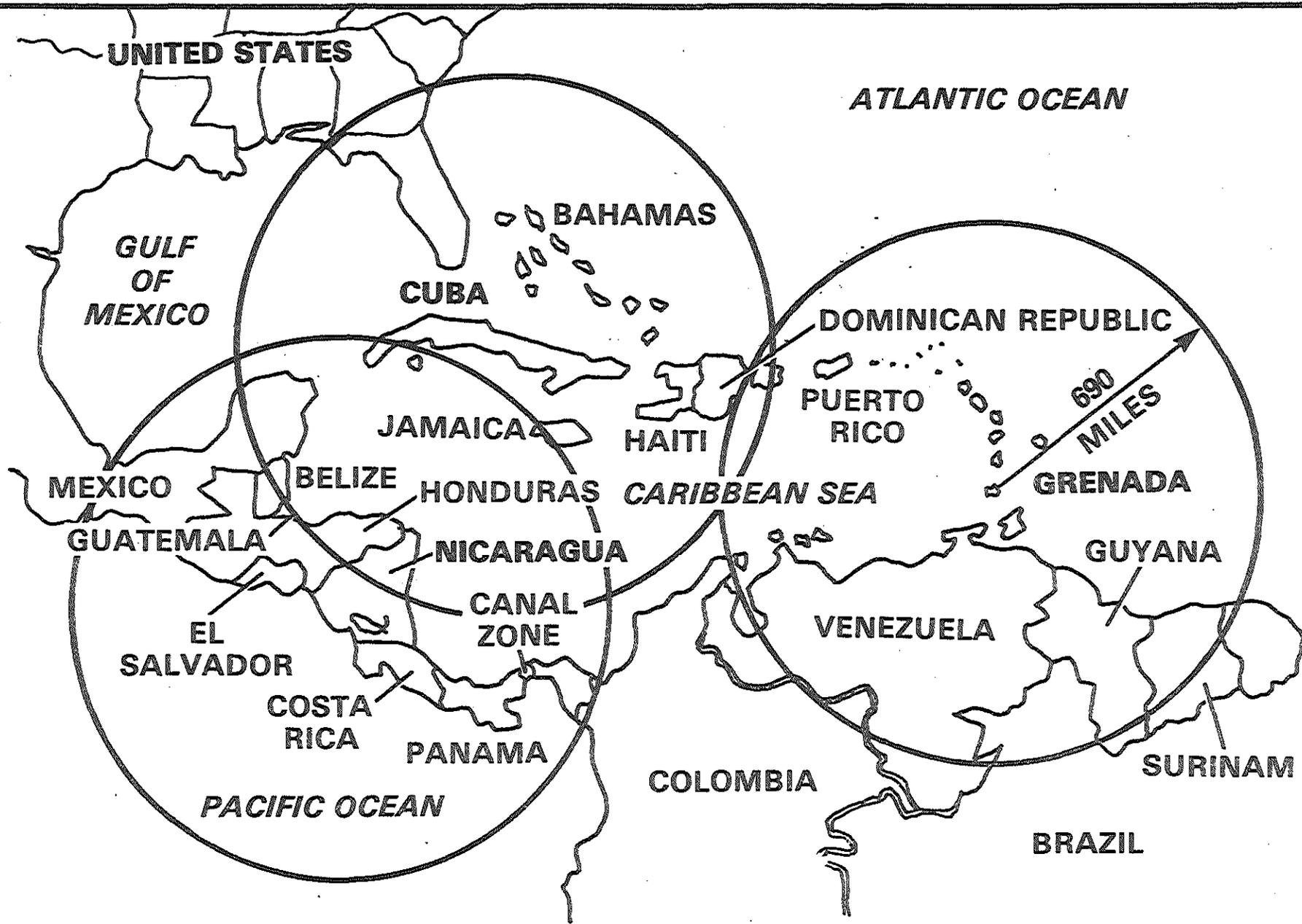
# SOVIET MILITARY DELIVERIES TO CUBA



III. The Threat Posed by Soviet Expansionism

- Such communist expansion could lead to an extensive and permanent Soviet presence and an increased Soviet strategic capability in the region. This would create significant military consequences for the US:
- It could place hostile forces and weapons systems within striking distance of targets in the US.
- It could provide bases for use in covert operations against the US and our neighbors.
- It could provide for prepositioning of Soviet equipment, supplies and ammunition in our hemisphere.
- It could allow the Soviet Pacific and Atlantic fleets to operate near our shores without having to return to the USSR for maintenance.
- It could threaten our Caribbean Sea Lines of Communication through which a large volume of our goods pass; thus endangering the economic well-being of our nation.
- And finally, it could cause the US to divert scarce resources in manpower and materiel from other areas of the world to protect an area previously considered militarily secure.

# RADIUS OF ACTION FOR MIG AIRCRAFT STATIONED IN CUBA, NICARAGUA AND GRENADA



# SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO LATIN AMERICA (\$ IN MILLIONS)

MILLIONS OF  
U.S. DOLLARS

1000  
(1B)

600

500

400

300

200

100

0

1962

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

YEAR

USSR

U.S.

