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REMOVAL OF THE OFFENSIVE THREAT IN CUBA

Introduction

Though present U. S. measures, if continued, will prevent an unrestrained Soviet buildup in Cuba, they probably cannot stop either limited accretions to the current missile force or efforts to bring weapons already in Cuba to full operational status.

What further actions are required? We have made substantial progress toward one objective of halting the Soviet buildup. However, present measures do not eliminate the missiles now in Cuba.

Elimination is of central importance. The Soviet missiles in Cuba do have military significance, while the political cost of failure to get rid of them would be severe.

Their military significance is that, in a Soviet no-warning attack on U. S. strategic forces, the Cuban missiles already there could reduce by about 30 per cent the number of our surviving vehicles, and by about 40 per cent the number of weapons that we could deliver on Soviet targets.*

The political impact of failure to eliminate the missiles would also be severe. It would be a resounding defeat suffered in an area dominated by U. S. power. Belief of friend, enemy, and neutral will be reduced in U. S. determination and ability to take hard action when needed. Our political leverage will suffer, weakening the U. S. perhaps very dangerously in tests to come.

U. S. Options to Secure Removal

We might:

a. negotiate the removal of the missiles and bombers without further major military initiatives on our part.

b. apply additional pressure to make Cubans and Russians dismantle them.

c. attack them.

We would clearly prefer the Soviets to elect to remove or destroy these weapons without further action or negotiation by us, (perhaps while Kruschev claims they never were there). We should not rule out the possibility that this will be done in the next several days.

* See Annex 1, Cuba and the Strategic Threat for details.

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With solid OAS support, a large majority of the Security Council and strong support in the General Assembly, plus the bargaining leverage of the quarantine, we are in some respects in a good position for a negotiation. Further military pressure may lose us support amongst allies and neutrals and force a reaction from Krushchev we would just as soon avoid.

On the other hand, negotiations are likely to be prolonged over a period during which there would be an erosion of international support for the U. S. position. The Soviets can be expected to dwell on the similarity of missiles in Turkey and Italy and indeed all overseas bases to those we have exposed in Cuba. U. S. agreement to an explicit, or even, tacit, trade-off is likely to present us with quite serious problems with our allies, not so much on the modest military value of Jupiter but on the interest the U. S. would seem to show in trading their security for ours. Moreover, the obstacles would be near prohibitive to launching military attacks against Cuba after an extended negotiation in which the U. S. had agreed to the principle that a trade-off in bases exists, but rejected the Soviet price as too high.

In addition, if we were to show that, despite all our words to the contrary, we accept in fact living for months in 1963 with the Cuban offensive capability, we might considerably raise the Kremlin's estimate that we will in fact not find a 1964 with a "Free City" of Berlin intolerable.

The creation of a nuclear free zone in Latin America provides a simple rationale for the elimination of these weapons. The immediate costs for us would be some troublesome but probably tolerable constraints even if Africa were included. A negotiation along these lines poses obvious hazards for other areas in which we have, or may want to have, major bases most obviously in Europe and the Far East.

We could adopt a combination of stepped up pressure and generalized willingness to negotiate:

a. This is clearly a preferred course more compatible with the initial stance we have adopted than would be a perceptible shift to a conciliatory attitude - which would certainly be widely read to mean that we were getting cold feet.

b. Among forms of pressure which could be exerted, the first and most obvious is to carry out inspection to which we have already committed ourselves Failure at this time to follow through with inspection could rapidly dissipate the momentum we have gained.

c. Another step would be to add jet aircraft fuels to the embargo list. Closing of this loop-hole would signal the possibility that we might stop all POL shipments.

We could sharply increase pressures for withdrawal:

a. The pressure on withdrawal could be increased by the extension of the blockade to include shipment of POL to Cuba. This is not a violent action but it would probably require 3 or 4 months to take full economic and military effect. Eventually it would seriously hurt the Castro Government but it would be even harder on the Cuban people. Its imposition would have an immediate effect and might, in the present circumstances be sufficient. But if not, as it dragged on, it would leave us increasingly vulnerable to political action and give the Soviets time for counter-moves elsewhere. Imposition might be accompanied by moves to relieve the situation of the Cuban people.

b. The pressure could also be increased by mounting progressively more visible and threatening air patrols over Cuba and close naval patrols around its shores. Continuing aerial reconnaissance will presumably be necessary in any case. There would be frequent, sizeable, audible fighter sweeps. We could approach a situation of having continuing air coverage over the entire island. If challenged by the Cuba air defense aircraft and surface-to-air missiles we could reply by selective or widespread attack on the air defense forces and then resume the air patrol. This action might provoke an incident resulting in U. S. air attacks which could be used by us, but might backfire and be politically more than an initial direct attack on the offensive weapons systems themselves.

We could take out the weapons:

a. A selective air attack against fixed sites and bomber bases would be highly effective but effective attacks against mobile missiles would depend upon our capability to locate them precisely and in a timely manner. If more vigorous steps are taken in Cuba to conceal missiles, repeated attacks would be needed. Such selective attacks, even if prolonged, could be conducted so as to minimize population losses. While a serious military threat to SAC would be eliminated by this option, a residual threat to a few cities might remain.*

b. A deliberate elimination of selective missile sites might be accomplished by the use of helicopter borne troops or paratroops in an announced operation. Even if the ground aspects of such operations were to become extensive and protracted, they might still, in fact and atmosphere, be kept within the bounds of a sanitizing operation or expedition for the purpose of removing certain hardware radically and speedily.

The Question of Objectives beyond Removal of Hardware:

a. In contrast to operations aiming at the removal of hardware, however extensive and protracted, we might have the objective of liberation: over-overthrowing Castro, instituting military government; overseeing the transition

* See Annex 2. Considerations Bearing on Forceable Removal of Offensive Systems in Cuba

to a new acceptable regime. For reasons often cited it may be expedient not to yield to the temptation to have even a large and long expedition spill over into this.

b. However, it must be recognized that if military options short of invasion fail to assure removal of the offensive missile threat without exorbitant political cost, then the question of invasion will become pressing.

Political Considerations relating to Operations requiring use of Force in Cuba:

a. How should we best present a course of military pressure against Cuba designed to enforce the dismantling of the Soviet offensive capability on the island? Our themes should be very few; very simple; very assertive; balancing hardness and moderation.

Hardness

I. We are determined at all cost to ensure tha rapid removal of the capability in question.

II. If those who have caused and abetted the introduction of Soviet offensive weapons into Cuba, recovering a sense of what is in the interest of the Cuban people, decide to bend all their efforts to dismantle, we will allow them the technically necessary time to do so.

III. If not, we'll do the job ourselves. The key point is that there can be no delay in starting this process.

Moderation

I. We should not imply that our immediate concern is Cuban communism, as such; we are - this is the impression we should convey - not engaged in a crusade against Castro, but in a safety campaign for the Hemisphere as a whole, in fulfillment of our public commitment now deliberately challenged by Khrushchev. This approach may best reduce unfavorable reactions among allies and neutrals.

II. We should continue to emphasize that our immediate quarrel is not with the Cuban people, nor even with the Cuban leaders, although they have betrayed the Cuban revolution and placed their nation under the domination of a foreign state. Our military action should be consistent with our statements.

III With respect to our face to the Soviets, it would seem best to avoid too much "moderation," though our actions should certainly be limited to those necessary to ensure, if possible, the desired Soviet/Cuban response

While it is desirable to leave Khrushchev with opportunity - both technically and politically - to withdraw his forces rather than to face a showdown, it would not be appropriate to be so magnanimous in allowing him to "save face" - e g , by negotiating generous trades - that he could claim, or worse, believe, that he had actually gained a victory, or bettered his position as a result of the overall exchange If our interest were only to remove an IRBM threat from the U. S , we might indeed be willing to pay some price in trade; but such a development might have a disastrous effect on our other security objective, perhaps even more important - namely, to convince Khrushchev that such maneuvers and threats are totally unprofitable.

In short, we must be clear as to the range of U. S security interests that are at stake here We must judge responses not only by their effect on the deployment of missiles in Cuba, but even more by their effect on the dangerous mis-estimates that seem to have seized the Russian leaders We must ask what is it we want Khrushchev to learn from this experience? To allow the developments in a long series of negotiations to teach Khrushchev that he could significantly improve his own position by acts in defiance of our firmest commitments would be gravely to compound the danger posed by his recent state of mind.

b. Some considerations pertinent to the political environment following action should also be noted

I We shall be bearing a part - large or medium - of the Soviets' Budapest burden of six autumns ago

II. However, the unfavorable reactions aroused are unlikely to lead to actions reducing our power-position at the time and unlikely to endure.

c. Supposing that in a less favorable case the "taking-out" requires an air campaign and possibly associated ground action (from selective air-drops to full-scale invasion) lasting several weeks or longer, while the Soviet Union does not choose to retaliate by major violence?

I Political damage to us could be severe, increasing the possibility of non-violent hostile actions by neutrals and defections among allies. (A "quarantine the aggressor" movement might develop)

d. In any cases where reciprocal Soviet violent moves take place and the use of violence appears more evenly distributed, the morally-tinged political reactions described above would be superseded by rather different attitudes concerned with fear of escalation.

Conclusions

a The U S now has the advantage of momentum with support expressed by much of the free world This momentum and support will very likely be sharply reduced during the next week or ten days If we do not convey our determination to have the Cuban capability rapidly eliminated, the following train of events may be set in motion:

I The Soviet estimate of our determination will be reduced
II. Hence Soviet incentives to deter us will be increased.
III. They may engage in several actions - verbal or other - designed to do that.

iv. If we then move after all, it will be more difficult for them to acquiesce.

b. Unless there is some good evidence that the weapons are being removed, we should plan on further actions to accomplish this. Forceful actions during the next few days, limited to Cuba, will not be seen by the Soviets as seriously threatening their vital interests. Instead, this will be considered by the Soviet leaders as part of the same major action announced by the President on Monday night. On the other hand, any use of force later may give the impression of being a further aggression, all the more disturbing as the world had welcomed the crisis having abated

c. A reasonable argument can be presented for the necessity of speedy US Soviet/Cuban response: We mean to fulfill our commitment to prevent the establishment of a significant offe[illegible] e threat to Nations of the Western Hemisphere. We do not intend to withdraw from that commitment to a position which would force us to negotiate over the withdrawal of an established, fully operational ~~course~~ or to take action to remove such a force in the face of nuclear threats against ourselves or third parties. We cannot allow temporizing tactics by the Soviets or Cubans which permit the existing missile force on Cuba to reach full operational status

d. Of the immediate actions to be taken to reinforce our position for any subsequent choice of options, including negotiation, the more promising immediate ones to be carried out within the next few days seem to be:

I Unequivocal enforcement of the quarantine and carrying out of inspection without discrimination

II. Addition of jet fuels to the list of prohibited offensive items.

III. A step-up in air activity for both political and reconnaissance reasons.

iv Reiteration by the United States that unless there is in the near future clear and incontrovertible evidence of the destruction or removal of offensive weapons from Cuba, the U. S. will take necessary action to secure removal of these systems

removal of these systems

ANNEX 1 - Cuba and the Strategic Threat

Strategic considerations require that an evaluation be made of the additional threat to U.S. general war forces posed by the continued presence of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba. Current intelligence estimates state that by the end of 1962 the Soviets will have the following number of ready ICBM launchers:

Class	Launchers	Basing
SS-6	6 - 10	Fixed, soft
SS-7	75 - 90	Fixed, soft
SS-8	5 - 10	Fixed, hardened

Conclusive evidence now exists that the Soviets have deployed 36 MRBM and IRBM launchers to Cuba, and it is estimated that 4 additional IRBM launchers will soon be emplaced -- giving a total as shown below:

Class	Launchers	Basing
MRBM (SS-4)	24	Mobile
IRBM (SS-5)	16	Fixed, soft

If we assume the high ICBM threat of 110 missiles, the total number of missiles aimed at the U.S. increases by nearly 40 per cent with the addition of the Cuban sites.

In its present alert condition, the SAC bomber force is located on 86 bases. Of these, 34 are within range of the Cuban MRBM's. With the exception of a portion of the Northwestern U.S., all remaining strategic bases could be reached by IRBM's launched from Cuba. However, the number of IRBM's currently in place is limited.

What would be the consequences of a Soviet first strike ICBM attack without and with current Cuban missile capabilities? The following table shows U.S. strategic capabilities in peacetime and the consequences of a Soviet no-warning attack.

Surviving U.S. Strategic Capabilities
Soviet no-warning attack, 1962

	Peacetime U.S. Capabilities		Results of Soviet Attack without Cuba*		Results of Soviet Attack with Cuba*	
	Vehicles	Weapons	Vehicles	Weapons	Vehicles	Weapons
ICBM	[redacted]					
POLARIS						
B-52						
B-47,B-58						

* U.S. forces are assumed to be dispersed and on DEFCON III. Although bombers and missiles are on alert, they receive no usable warning. Under current conditions, this assumption is almost certainly valid for bombers attacked by the Cuban missiles, to the extent that the IRBM/MRBM can be closely salvoed.

[redacted]

ANNEX 2 - Considerations Bearing on Forcible Removal of Weapons Systems in Cuba

The U.S. has a number of choices with regard to removal of the offensive systems based in Cuba. These include the use of air strikes alone or in conjunction with invasion operations which could range in size from envelopment to seize all of the Havana area to full scale invasion at both ends of the island; the U.S. might negotiate from the position of a blockade which could become much tighter.

a. The actual military problem of destroying or disabling these weapons will become much more difficult if enough time passes. The missiles on fixed sites over time can be protected to some degree. They can be defended with anti-aircraft artillery and possibly, in time, with surface-to-air missiles with a capability to engage low flying aircraft in addition to the high altitude missiles and air defense aircraft. But at present their radars are ineffective against the planned low level attack, no warning would be received, the defensive missiles would be essentially inoperative. Today, an air attack against these fixed sites would not have to be very large. But in time, a fairly large scale air effort might be required to achieve a high assurance of success.

The known missile launchers are vulnerable to air attack but could become less so if the Castro government is given added time to prepare additional sites so that missiles might be moved from one presurveyed site to another. In this case, if the missiles were moved at night and on a random basis armed reconnaissance aircraft in large numbers would be needed and it is uncertain that a high percentage of the moveable missiles would be destroyed. It would be necessary to continue this armed reconnaissance effort, and it might take several weeks to eliminate most or all of the missiles.

Further, it is by no means certain that the number already observed represents the total number of mobile missiles that may have arrived in Cuba, although the margin of error on missiles is probably small. The fact that those missiles observed were moved into place with no effective effort to conceal their deployment might indicate that movement into operational positions began only after a number considered adequate to achieve the Soviet purpose had already arrived in Cuba.

b. There are air surveillance and strike plans which can place large scale air strikes against a military target complex of several hundred targets or strike categories of targets on a selective basis, for example, an attack might be limited mostly to the MRBM's and IRBM's and the SAM's defending them. The weapons used would probably be machine gun fire, napalm, rockets, and general purpose bombs. This would focus the attack on the Soviet offensive bases and [illegible] comparatively

few Cubans. The air strike plan can be executed [redacted] Aircrews are trained and have up-to-date target folders. Air strike priorities include [redacted].

c. Short of air attack on these sites, it would be possible to mount progressively stronger air patrols over Cuba. This could mount to an air control operation with large scale, visible domination of the air over Cuba. If attacked by SAM's, we would respond by attacking the defense missile site; possibly an attack on all air defense might be conducted.

d. The elimination of the offensive missile might also be managed through paratroop attack or helicopter attack, initially on selected bases or against all known sites at once.

e. CINCLANT has plans for a [redacted]

f. Full scale invasion plans and the forces to implement them are in being. In this case [redacted] The requirement for subsequent operations would depend upon the attitude and reaction of the Cuban people, possible Army defections and the effect of the air strikes on the Cuban army fighting capability. Mopping up operations would be likely to continue for at least one month after the initial attacks. However, once the main effort is completed, large portions of the forces should return to the U.S. for reconstitution of the Marine and Army divisions to regain the U.S. strategic posture.

Both invasion plans entail [redacted] The latter however is much surer of chance of military success. In both cases the known Soviet offensive systems could be seized or destroyed unless employed or disabled by the Soviets.

Even a tight blockade would not bring a major change in the capabilities of the offensive systems now deployed in Cuba within one year.

From a military point of view the US has gained some lead time by the present U.S. force build-up. This has permitted the attainment of a high state of military readiness and movement of major deployments toward the Southeastern U.S. On the other hand, delay permits the Castro forces to achieve an optimum military defensive posture and most serious of all, gives additional time to complete work toward operational status of missiles and aircraft and reduce their vulnerability. In general, it appears that delay will be more advantageous to Castro than that of the U.S. The rapid gathering of forces followed by a long period of waiting and inaction lowers force morale and after a time could become a psychological problem.

The Strategic Air Command force is now at its peak posture, with an increased airborne alert. A maximum number of strike aircraft are on ground alert at home stations; the remainder of the bomber force is on ground alert at a large number of dispersal bases. The ICBM force is ready and the Polaris submarine force is in position. Additionally, US nuclear forces overseas are at a very high state of readiness. The present peak posture can be held without degrading the effectiveness of the total nuclear capability for about a month. At the end of this period, the manned bomber force would go off alert in increments and be pulled back into peak posture as rapidly as possible. [redacted]

The strategic force high readiness posture is undoubtedly known at this time by the Soviet leadership. Dispersal of aircraft and an increased airborne alert should appear to them as prudent military measures to reduce the vulnerability of the force as well as to insure a better retaliatory posture. If the U.S. were intending a pre-emptive attack, it would be much easier and quicker to launch the strike force from its home bases. Further, the Strategic Air Command has conducted similar precautionary maneuvers in the past so that the present actions are not novel or different. It is important that the Soviet leadership not be misled into thinking that the US is about to launch a strategic attack. However, the force has already peaked to maximum readiness and the Soviets probably know this; therefore, it is unlikely that the conclusion can be reached that a pre-emptive strike is imminent, although they must be aware, through their intelligence net, that the force is ready to retaliate quickly.

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