

Free Cuba News

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Telephone 783-7507 • 617 Albee Building, 1426 G Street, N.W. • Washington 5, D. C.

Editor: Daniel James

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INSIDE CUBA

NEW SOVIET MILITARY COMPLEX IN PINAR DEL RIO

Sources inside Cuba provide facts pointing to the existence of a new Soviet military complex in Cuba's westernmost province, Pinar del Rio, which commands the Florida Straits. The main Soviet installation and the site of Soviet military GHQ is at La Gobernadora hills, near the country's principal naval base of Mariel.

Five large tunnels have been constructed in the La Gobernadora area. They are 105 ft. wide -- permitting two-way traffic -- and have reinforced ceilings 30 ft. high. Two of the tunnels penetrate La Gobernadora hills laterally for a distance of 6 miles, according to a Rebel Army lieutenant who personally toured the tunnels during their construction and has defected.

Guided missiles are secreted in the tunnels, according to reports from the military arm of the Cuban resistance movement. Other sources inside Cuba say that at least one tunnel has been air-conditioned for the storage of nuclear warheads, and that another has been equipped with refrigerating equipment for storing liquid oxygen used for ballistic missiles.

Electrical systems have been installed at the nearby base of Meseta de Anafe, add the latter sources, and are connected with the guided-missile stations at La Gobernadora and the Havana military "horseshoe" (see "Military 'Horseshoe' Around Havana," FCN No. 4, May 25, 1963).

Communications have been established underground between La Gobernadora and these other Soviet military bases in Pinar del Rio: San Julián (airbase containing MIG 21s), San Diego de los Baños, Soroa, Villanueva, Gramma, Finca Suset and Meseta de Anafe. Each base is self-contained, possessing its own electrical plant and food and water supply.

"Pinar del Rio has been converted into one immense Soviet military camp," according to resistance leaders inside Cuba. One clandestine freedom fighter now in the U.S., Gustavo Pernas Calva, states that a Russian military construction-supply complex near Mariel alone extends for almost three miles. "It is visible to any traveller from Havana to Pinar del Rio."

Mariel itself is wholly controlled by the Soviets, states a former member of the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Cuban Navy, Juan Guerra Fernández. Approximately 1,200 Cuban Navy personnel were discharged from the Mariel base recently, reports Fernández, and were replaced by Russians -- an act that completed Russian control of Cuba's chief naval base. The purpose of that control, apparently, is the protection of the great construction-supply center nearby consisting of foundries, a cement plant and an almost-completed thermo electric plant. The foundries turn out iron rods used in reinforced-concrete military construction, while the cement plant produces cement exclusively for the various military bases in the area and operates around the clock. The thermo electric plant, when completed, will reportedly supply power for the entire Pinar del Rio military complex.

Some of the materials used in the construction of the complex were transported to Mariel in free-world ships, according to anti-Castro sources. An escaped Cuban stevedore who worked at Mariel, Jacinto Cruz, says that a total of 30 foreign vessels put in at the port in June alone. He calculates that 20 of them were Greek, 8 Russian, and 2 British.

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LAW PROFESSION IN CUBA VIRTUALLY DEAD

The law profession, which Fidel Castro himself studied, has virtually ceased to exist in Red Cuba. In 1958, the country had 2,340 law offices with 7,200 practicing attorneys in them. Today, only 300 law offices and 500 active lawyers are left. An estimated 2,200 members of the legal profession have fled into exile, while another 3,000 are either in Castro jails, victims of the paredon, or working in the anti-Communist underground. The remainder have, for various reasons, ceased to practice law.

Also a victim of the Communist state is the \$14-million pension fund which Cuban lawyers had contributed to over the years, and which has been seized by the Castro regime. The fund, under a pre-Castro retirement plan, was to have guaranteed each retired lawyer a minimum pension of \$200 a month.

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FORCED LABOR IN ORIENTE

Further evidence of forced labor in Cuba is provided by the following news item carried by Havana's Radio CMQ, and reproduced here in full:

"The Department of Public Order of the Ministry of the Interior, and the Committees of Defense of the Revolution, have undertaken the task of combing the town of Jobabo [Oriente Province] to pick up the bums who do not work, frequent the bars, the billiard parlors, and attend cock fights. Those arrested for these crimes are sent to state farms and to state [sugar cane] plantations to be integrated into production. They are sent away to hard labor for indefinite periods."

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'PEOPLES COFFEE HARVEST' FEATURES ARMED OVERSEERS

Cuban coffee production, like that of sugar, is expected to reach the lowest level in years, say coffee experts. And for the same reason: peasant unwillingness to work for the Communist regime. The experts predict a harvest of slightly more than 60 million pounds, about 40 million under 1961's, and not enough to meet an internal demand of some 80 million pounds annually.

To meet the problem of a shortage of coffee-bean pickers, the Cuban Government has imposed a quota of urban workers on each province to be dispatched to the main coffee-growing regions in September. A total of 23,000 urban workers -- almost half of them, 11,500, from Havana Province -- will be conscripted and then shipped chiefly to the mountains of Oriente (where the bulk of Cuba's coffee is grown), Las Villas and Pinar del Rio.

Even children are not excluded from what is being officially called the "people's coffee harvest." Thus Education Minister Armando Hart has announced that sixth-graders "who had displayed academic excellence" would be "permitted" to join the "people's coffee harvest."

Government orders prescribe the use of armed Fidelistas as "guides" for the urban workers sent to the coffee regions, beginning in September, including members of the militia and Army as well as such organizations as the Young Communists, Pioneer Youth and Federation of Cuban Women. The harvesters will be organized into groups of 15, to make overseeing them easier, and are required to pick a set quota of coffee beans. The Government has ordered:

"The quota established for each picker -- not less than 25 days, nor more than 45 days -- is set at 110 cans of coffee beans (each can holding 28 lbs.). Once this is fulfilled, the group may leave or remain to surpass its quota, whichever is convenient."

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CASTRO 'FISHING FLEET' HAS MILITARY PURPOSE

Official Cuban sources and anti-Castro informants alike agree that Castro's new "fishing fleet," which he is building with the help of Soviet technicians, has a military purpose that overshadows any previous idea he may have had of enlarging the fish industry.

The August issue of the Cuban Army magazine, Verde Olivo, has published pictures of Lambda-75 fishing craft taking part in Cuban Navy maneuvers. At least one of the Lambda-75's -- mainstay of the "fishing fleet" -- was shown armed with cannon.

The Lambda-75 has a storage capacity of 29.5 tons, and, according to the usually reliable Cuban Student Directorate, is equipped to carry men and arms to other Latin American countries. One Cuban military defector, Lt. Noel Salas, who trained young Latins in sabotage and terrorism at camps in Cuba, has reported that graduates of such camps have been transported in Cuban fishing craft to Honduras and Panama, clandestinely.

A young Cuban who completed a course as a "fishing instructor" only this month has given Free Cuba News additional evidence of the military purpose of Castro's "fishing fleet." The youngster, Juan Francisco Cordovi, took the course at Camp Caribe, near Havana, and scarcely 48 hours afterward he headed the very first Cuban vessel under his command toward Florida with 11 of his friends -- ranging in age from 18 to 24 -- aboard.

In Miami, Cordovi told an FCN correspondent that his training at Camp Caribe, which he entered as a militiaman, was almost wholly military:

"Our instructors were Cuban sergeants who had been taught in the Matanzas School, where they were instructed by Russian officers, the 'big bosses,' as they are called in the camp. They taught us the handling of Russian, Czech and American small arms, combat formation, and everything one would teach a soldier."

Cordovi was also taught marine navigation, since he was to become a fishing instructor, but he learned that that was to equip him to catch fleeing Cuban fishermen and other disgruntled Cubans rather than to catch fish. That, however, boomeranged against Castro. Continues Cordovi:

"In the camp I saw many things that told me the truth about the nature of Communism. And like myself, there were many other militiamen there, who were militiamen because they did not wish to die of hunger. So I bided my time until I graduated and they authorized me to have a ship, and then I fled."

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WATER SHORTAGE GROWING IN CUBA

The Havana radio is beginning to admit that there is a growing water shortage in Cuba, but attributes it "to technical deficiencies and occasional breaks in the water mains" rather than anti-Castro sabotage (see "Anti-Castro Guerrillas Knock Out Water Supply," FCN No. 12, Aug. 17, 1963). Now comes a fresh first-hand report of the effectiveness of the sabotage, from a Havana factory worker named Filiberto Lugo, who says:

"The newspaper Revolución published a story that the water was scarce because they were cleaning the aqueduct. They have been saying this for more than a month. They don't want to tell the people the truth, that three bombs were placed in the aqueduct and there have been many cases of sabotage of the pipes. Now, the pipes pump muddy water twice a week. If they put more bombs there, and there is more sabotage, Havana will be left without water."

The President of the Cuban Civil Engineers in Exile, Antonio Tella, says of the water shortage:

"There are three important technical causes widely recognized in Cuba: lack of equipment, lack of competent personnel, and lack of fuel. And one non-technical cause:

sabotage of the equipment, which is already old and worn out."

Another exiled Cuban engineer, Jorge Fernández Valle, who built Havana's largest aqueduct, agrees with Tella and adds:

"The machinery is worn out in the aqueducts supplying water to Havana and all of so-called Greater Havana. Water must be force-pumped into Havana more than 90% of the time. The pumping requires an adequate fuel supply. And the machinery uses fuel oil and was made in the U.S.A., making it very difficult for Castro to get indispensable replacement parts."

The above facts, particularly the obsolescence of equipment, make sabotage relatively easier to perform and relatively more effective than it would normally be, agree exile sources.

Havana's daily water consumption used to be in the vicinity of 150 million gallons. But today, say hydraulic technicians and engineers who have worked in the city's water system, Havana citizens get only 50 million gallons during the rainy season and much less during the dry. The loss of about 100 million gallons is resulting in big queues that are said to be a common sight in the capital.

Other parts of Cuba are in similar straits. The Camagüey water system, for example, is virtually at a standstill: it pumps water only two hours a day, one hour in the morning and a second hour at night.

The water shortage is having a disturbing effect on the people's health, according to many reports coming out of Cuba. "Each glass of water drunk is a glass of bacilli that enter the body," says Engineer Fernández Valle of Havana's water, which is now drawn from the Almendares River and is not potable. As a result, gastroenteritis and typhoid fever are taking their toll in many communities, particularly among the children.

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SABOTEURS HIT PAPER INDUSTRY

A flurry of sabotage activity in August has apparently seriously hurt Castro's paper industry, as well as the water supply (see above, "Water Shortage Growing in Cuba") and agricultural production. On August 22, for example, Radio Progreso reported that a "big" fire had broken out in a warehouse, in the Havana suburb of Luyanó, where paper supplies are stored. The broadcast acknowledged that "great quantities of paper and 250 barrels of ink were destroyed."

Although Radio Progreso did not attribute the Luyanó fire to sabotage, it is a fact that Cuba's Communist government is concerned over what it calls "sabotage by incendiarism" and is taking extraordinary measures to curb it. Thus the Ministry of Interior recently announced:

"Voluntary fire brigades have been formed in each office and shop, in the sugar mills, and in the canefields, to fight sabotage by incendiarism."

On August 23, one day after Radio Progreso's report on the Luyanó fire, saboteurs did enough damage to the Puentes Grandes paper plant, also in Havana, to seriously affect operations there. It was the third of a series of sabotage acts that have reduced sharply the plant's output. A score of Cubans who arrived in Miami two days later reported that some two dozen plant employees suspected of the sabotage were arrested by G-2.

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NEWS BRIEFS

● Two Chinese Cubans, Julio Chong and Lu Chang, have recently reached Miami with the report that an estimated 300 members of the Chinese colony in Cuba have been caught trying to escape and thereafter were shot. Only three weeks ago, they state, eight were captured on the high seas by Government patrols and given that treatment. The pair believe that the 19 escapees kidnaped by Castro patrol boats at Anguila Key, on August 13, have met the same fate.

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● A total of 5,048 Cubans had to leave Cuba clandestinely from June 1961 through July 1963. They came to Florida in 752 boats ranging from 12 to 60 feet in length, many of them fishing vessels built in Cuban yards. Some were even made of concrete and measured 80 meet. Of the total number of escapees, 692 were children.

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● Absenteeism is so much an object of official concern in Cuba that Government organs now discuss it quite openly. Thus Radio Progreso announced, on August 27, that the Ministry of Justice had completed a study of absenteeism among its own employees covering the previous six months, and had found only 25 guilty of "unjustified absenteeism." But another 272 had been "exempted" from work on various occasions, 200 were unpunctual, and 277 had taken vacations. No figures were given on the number who had actually worked full time during the 6-month period.

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● Cuban peasants arriving in the U.S. speak of continuing peasant unrest on their island. One of them, Hipólito González, relates, for example, that on July 30 a peasant band attacked an entire collective farm at Cabaiguan, in the foothills of the Escambray Mountains of Las Villas, where he comes from. The attackers killed the manager of the farm as well as several Government informers. Such events, adds González, have so demoralized Castro forces in the area that they are reluctant to move about at night.

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INSIDE LATIN AMERICA

CUBAN 'PLAN M' OPERATING IN VENEZUELA

Documents seized by Venezuelan Government agents from the headquarters of the Communist terrorist "Armed Forces of National Liberation" (FALN), in Caracas, reveal that the latter's campaign of terror and guerrilla warfare follows a "Plan M" originally drafted in Cuba. The opening sentence of one of the documents, addressed to the FALN, reads in part:

"The Popular Socialist Republic of Cuba, through intermediaries, has offered the following material in unknown condition...."

Then follows a list of the "material" offered by Cuba: 900 FAL (FN54) cal. 7 mm. rifles, 10 tons of 7 mm. bullets for the FALs, 500 pistols Amet Skoda cal. 9 mm. Parabellum, 500,000 cal. 30 bullets for MI carbines, rifles with 7 mm. Mauser bullets in unspecified quantity, and portable radio telephones.

"Plan M" contains minutely detailed instructions for carrying out guerrilla warfare in the mountainous areas of the Department (State) of Falcón, and the areas of Maracay and Miranda, as well as actions to be conducted in metropolitan Caracas. The plan also calls for the mass rescue of Communist prisoners in Venezuelan jails, and the destruction of the Venezuelan armed forces. It declares:

"This time we cannot fail. The policy of extermination is the one we must follow. The Red cry must come from the different points already selected throughout the country, to sow confusion in Government ranks and destroy utterly the Army...."

The plan frankly calls for the assassination of leading anti-Communists, and singles out Catholic priests, ordering the "Kidnaping and disappearance of the priests that most effectively campaign against Communism. Those who must be eliminated must be made to appear as the victims of accidents."

No sooner was "Plan M" discovered than fresh events confirmed the reality of its existence. A spate of new FALN bombings broke out, chiefly in Caracas but also in the provinces. And, reminiscent of the Castro terror against Batista, a Cuban Communist imported by the FALN masterminded the kidnaping of the Argentine soccer star, Alfredo di Stefano. It was a direct copy of the kidnaping, in 1958, of another famed Argentine sportsman, the racing driver Juan Fangio, by Castro terrorists. In both instances, the kidnapings were coldbloodedly designed for publicity purposes. Will the rest of the Cuban pattern work itself out in Venezuela?

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REPORT DETAILS GUIANA ARMS SHIPMENTS TO LATIN REDS

A detailed report on arms shipments to Latin American Reds via British Guiana, confirming the story published by Free Cuba News on August 17 (see FCN No. 12,

"Special Report -- British Guiana"), has been released by the Cuban Student Directorate in Exile. (The Student Directorate maintains a network of correspondents throughout Latin America, and its information is considered by U.S. officials to be usually reliable.) The report discloses:

"United States-manufactured arms from Cuba are transshipped through British Guiana to small airports located in various Latin American countries. These airports are specially built to handle illicit arms traffic.

"Arms used by Communist agitators in Bolivia and Perú are sent through British Guiana to four centers. Three are located in Brazil, and one in Argentina. The Brazilian areas utilized to receive and forward arms are small airports located near the towns of Cobija, on the northern border with Bolivia, and Corumba, located somewhat more to the east on the Bolivian-Brazilian Madre de Dios River. The northern Argentine town of Tartagal, also on the Bolivian border, is the Argentine center through which arms and other materials are sent into Bolivia and Perú."

The Student Directorate report states that the arms from British Guiana move on to Bolivia and Perú by rail, highway and river, and describes in detail the different routes used. Here is a description of one route:

"Shipments destined for Bolivia go up the Bolivian river, Madre de Dios, to the Bolivian border town of Puerto Heath. From there, the shipments go to Inambari and Puerto Maldonado, both border towns in the jungle area of Perú."

Student Directorate representatives in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Perú were able to obtain the names of Communist agents who operate the way stations leading from British Guiana. They report that among the agents in La Paz, the Bolivian capital, are members of the Cuban Government.



CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR A FREE CUBA
1426 G St. N. W.
Washington 5, D. C.



The Honorable Robert Dole
Representative
House Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C.