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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

2 May 1983

SR-71 Mission Over Cuba

Summary

An SR-71 overflight of Cuba, the first such mission since 1980, was successfully completed [redacted] The mission was flown to determine if any preparations were being made to install Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba following veiled threats by Soviet officials that the USSR might take such action once the US began practical preparations for deploying intermediate range nuclear missiles in Europe. Cloud-free imagery of approximately 95 percent of the Cuban landmass was obtained, and no activity related to the installation of strategic offensive weapons was detected.

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[redacted] the Cuban Government waited seven days before issuing a public protest. [redacted]

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Mission Highlights

Photo interpreters have been examining the acquired SR-71 imagery for more than one week and have now completed the preliminary search. They reported no evidence of new Soviet offensive weapons, and observed no unusual activity at any of the former SS-4 and SS-5 sites dismantled by the Soviets in 1962.

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Cuba-Caribbean Branch, Office of African and Latin American Analysis. Comments or queries may be directed to Chief, Cuba-Caribbean Branch ALA/MCD [redacted]

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Although there has been some upgrading of existing Cuban air defense installations and support facilities, no additional surface-to-air missile sites were discovered and there were no indications that more sophisticated Soviet air defense weapons are about to be introduced. [redacted]

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Construction activity was noted at the facilities of the Soviet armored brigade in Cuba, where new apartment buildings and vehicle sheds are being built. The ammunition storage facility at the brigade's main garrison has been razed and a new hardened bunker complex is under construction there. Troop rotation was in progress, as evidenced by bus convoys seen loading at the brigade's headquarters, and later arriving at the dock where a Soviet passenger ship was berthed in Havana harbor. [redacted]

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The most significant development noted among Cuban forces was a large bunkered complex being built in the Havana suburb of Managua, near the garrison of Cuba's only armored division. Six large arched-roof bunkers and some 32 small rectangular bunkers are in the mid-stages of construction. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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Other items of interest from the mission include confirmation that Cuban ground forces have SA-9 air defense missiles and D-30 122-mm howitzers; evidence of continued improvements at several airfields throughout the island; discovery of a second highway landing strip; and the first sighting of both of Cuba's new Polonocny landing craft conducting exercises at sea. [redacted]

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Cuban Reactions

[Large redacted area]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

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[REDACTED]

Cuban officials remained silent about the overflight for a full week. They published an account of the mission in the official party newspaper Granma on April 26 and announced that they had made an "energetic protest" to the US Government for its "shameless provocation." Their statement tied the mission to US military maneuvers in the Caribbean and to President Reagan's scheduled speech before Congress on Central America. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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ALA/MCD/CC [redacted] (2 May 1983)

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