

INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

14 JUL 1976

In reply refer to:
I-23179/76

Clw

*See Melt
See me*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Reduction of Naval Base Guantanamo Ground Defense Force -- INFORMATION MEMORANDUM 17 JUL 1976

(U) On 12 July 1976, the Deputy Coordinator of Cuban Affairs at the Department of State asked for background material on the reduction of the Ground Defense Force (GDF) at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base reported in a San Diego Union article dated 20 June 1976. NSC staff interest on this matter is alleged, and the purpose of this memorandum is to report when, how, and why this decision was made without benefit of Department of State coordination.

~~(S)~~ As a result of CINCLANT recommendations to the JCS from July to August 1975, the Vice Director of the Joint Staff forwarded a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense on 11 September 1975 requesting that a "reduction be considered" for the Guantanamo GDF. The memorandum stated that, subject to SecDef approval, "CINCLANT will be authorized to maintain the GDF at such, levels as he deems appropriate and commensurate with threat and, mission assigned." The reasons urging approval cited "the detente between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, . . . recent steps to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba," and the unlikely threat of overt Cuban action to seize the base. Additionally, the request pointed out that time-phased reinforcement of the Guantanamo GDF was provided for in applicable OPLAN/CONPLANS. The political climate at this time was one of rapprochement between the U.S. and Cuba.

~~(S)~~ On 30 September 1975, Deputy Secretary of Defense Clements approved the request authorizing CINCLANT "to maintain the GDF at a level commensurate with the threat, but not below that necessary to prevent surprise, deter capricious Cuban acts, or to hold a sufficient perimeter until reinforcements can arrive under existing contingency plans." On 30 January 1976, the Vice Director, Joint Staff, advised SecDef, "CINCLANT has reorganized and reduced the GDF to 29 officers and 487 enlisted men vice 43 and 933 respectively." Most of this reduction involves a single Marine company. The tanks and artillery attached to the company remain in Guantanamo and contingency plans exist for the rapid reinsertion of troops in time to meet expected threats. In short, the reduction is inconsequential from a military standpoint.

Classified by Director, OASD/ISA/IA
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED
AND 5 YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON 12-31-84



Cuba
14 JUL 1976



~~SECRET~~

SEC DEF CONTR No. X-2098
C7/93

~~(C)~~ No coordination with Department of State was accomplished on this matter because OSD officials concerned considered the matter to be solely under the purview of the Secretary of Defense.

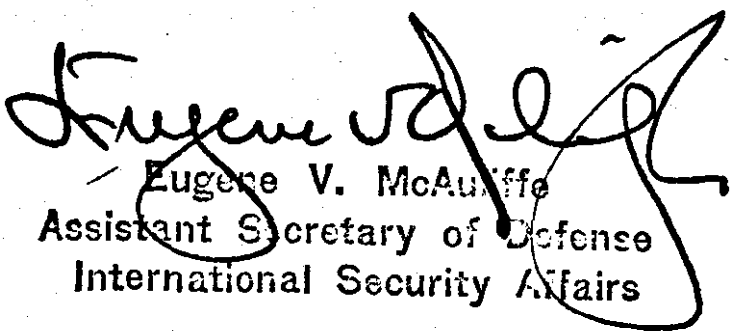
~~(C)~~ Since the height of the Cuban/Angola issue in late March/early April 1976, there has been an unofficial understanding between ISA and the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs at State to effect no change to the status quo at Guantanamo without prior notification.

(U) Copies of the request for a reduction in the GDF, the approval memo, and the memo reporting the reduction to SecDef were provided to the Deputy Coordinator of Cuban Affairs on 13 July 1976. (Tabs A,B,&C)

Coordination:

D i r e c t o r , P l a n n i n g a n d E v a l u a t i o n E. S. Shaw Concur.

Prepared by: Cdr J.L. May
X7-9302/OASD/ISA/IA


Eugene V. McAuliffe
Assistant Secretary of Defense
International Security Affairs

Attachments

- Tab A: JCS Memo for the SECDEF, subj: Naval Base Guantanamo Ground Defense Force dated 11 September 1975
- Tab B: DEPSECDEF Memo for the Chairman, JCS, subj: Naval Base Guantanamo Ground Defense Force dated 30 September 1975
- Tab C: JCS Memo for the SECDEF, subj: Naval Base Guantanamo Ground Defense Force dated 30 January 1976



~~SECRET~~

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301



JCSM-357-75
11 September 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Naval Base **Guantanamo** Ground Defense Force (U)

Ch 320

1. ~~(S)~~ Reference a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, 6 June 1973, subject as above, which authorized restructuring and reduction of the Guantanamo Ground Defense Force (GDF) and which directed that any future changes in the GDF level be submitted for approval by the Deputy **Secretary** of Defense.
2. ~~(S)~~ CINCLANT recently recommended* that the number of personnel assigned to the Guantanamo **GDF**, which is composed of the Special Mission **Force** and personnel assigned from Naval Base, Guantanamo, and the Marine Barracks, Guantanamo, not be fixed at a designated level and that a reduction be considered. This recommendation was based in part on changed politico-military considerations. The present policy of detente between the United States and the **Soviet** Union, as well as recent steps taken to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba, places the threat of overt action by Premier Fidel Castro to seize the Naval Base; Guantanamo, in a different context. These conditions did not exist in 1973 when the GDF personnel strength was established. **CINCLANT's** request is also based partly on purely military considerations in that CINCLANT OPLAN 2325 and **CONPLAN 2348** (recently revised) provide for a time-phased reinforcement of the Guantanamo GDF.
3. ~~(S)~~ The current estimate of the threat, the reinforcement plans now in effect, and recommendations by CINCLANT indicate that the total **GDF** should not be held to a specified minimum but maintained at a level deemed appropriate by CINCLANT.

Classified by Director, J-5
**SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWN-GRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS**
DECLASSIFIED ON December 31, 1983

Copy 47 of 25 Copies each
of 2 pages series "A"

~~SECRET~~

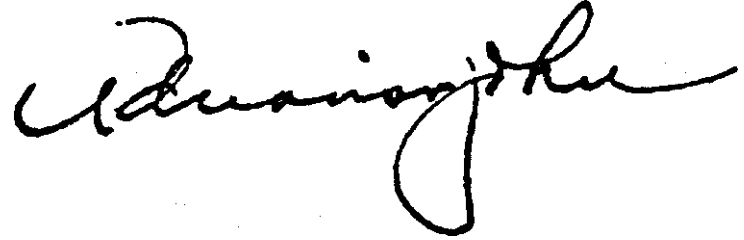
Sec Def Cont Nr. X-2689
T-2509075



~~SECRET~~

(S) Subject to your approval, CINCLANT will be authorized to maintain the GDF at such levels as he deems appropriate and commensurate with threat and mission assigned.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



ADRIAN ST JOHN
Maj'or General, USA
Vice Director
Joint Staff

Reference:

* CINCLANT msg to JCS, 231733Z Jul 75, JCS IN 65409

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~~SECRET~~



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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

30 SEP 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Naval Base Guantanamo Ground Defense Force (U)

(S) I have reviewed your proposal of September 11, 1975, to give continuing authority to CINCLANT to restructure and adjust the **Guantanamo** Defense Force to a level he **considers** adequate to defend Guantsnamo Naval Base until reinforcements can be provided. You may authorize **CINCLANT** to maintain the Ground Defense Force at a level commensurate with the threat, but not below that necessary to prevent surprise, deter capricious Cuban acts, or to hold a sufficient perimeter until reinforcements can arrive under existing contingency plans. The Secretary of Defense should be informed of **significant changes in the Defense Force** level.

H. P. Clement
Deputy

Classified by ASD(PA&E)
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS

DECLASSIFIED ON December 31, 1983



B

~~SECRET~~



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

MJCS-24-76
30 January 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Naval Base Guantanamo Ground Defense Force, (U)

1. (S) Reference a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 30 September 1975, subject as above, which authorized CINCLANT to maintain the Ground Defense Force (GDF) at levels necessary to meet specific missions and, requested that the Secretary of Defense be advised of significant changes in the Defense Force level.
2. (S) CINCLANT has reorganized and reduced the GDF to 29 officers and 487 enlisted men vice 43 and 933 respectively.
3. (S) The restructured GDF is capable of defending the Naval Base Guantanamo until reinforced by forces assigned in current CINCLANT contingency plans..

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Signed

ADRIAN ST JOHN
Major General, USA
Vice Director, Joint Staff

CLASSIFIED BY DJS
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT
TWO YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31, 1984



~~SECRET~~
4-20529/6320