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INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

SEC DEF HAS SEEN  
29 MAR 1976

27 MAR 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Your Appearance on Issues and Answers; the Question of Cuba

The following sets forth the likely areas of questioning on the Cuba problem and suggests the nature of your response. I assume PA is preparing specific Q&A.

Our public posture to date has the following elements:

- Cuba's continued armed intervention abroad is intolerable. The US will not accept it.
- Soviet repetition of its behavior in Angola will have serious consequences for our relations.
- We are considering ways to prevent further Cuban intervention. We have not ruled out any course of action. We will remain purposely ambiguous on this score.
- The situation is not at a crisis stage and permits us to use a variety of non-military methods to try and solve the problem.

Your questioners will probably focus on the following issues:

a. Why is Cuban behavior in Africa so important to the US? Is this concern worth military action?

- Except for an un-named "Senior Defense Official" we have defined this issue as a matter of great importance and basic principle. We have at various times asserted that because of Soviet involvement, fundamental questions about US determination and US-Soviet relations are raised.

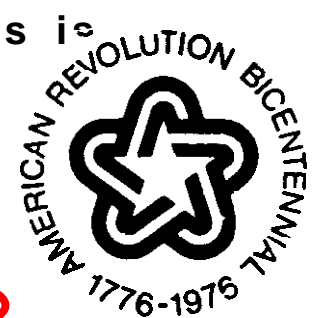
Suggest you avoid the question of gravity and restate the elements of our concern:

- Soviet lack of restraint is deeply disturbing.
- General intervention in the internal affairs of other nations is a threat to peace.

Classified by ASD/ISA  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED  
AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON 31 Dec 84

000-7751

27 MAR 1976



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- We are committed to ending this intervention through peaceful, diplomatic means if possible. Our firm commitment to the above principle and to deterring further Cuban intervention in Southern Africa should not be treated lightly by Cuba or other nations.
- Someone is likely to compare Cuban action to ours in Vietnam. South Vietnam had a functioning government. The country was repeatedly invaded by North Vietnam forces. The Soviets and Cubans have installed a government in Angola; they directed the political process.

b. What is the source of the present problem?

Option A - Emphasize Soviet Role. The Soviets are clearly fishing for advantage in an area far from their interests and are brazenly interfering in the internal affairs of the Southern African states. They supply a considerable amount of arms and material to support the Cubans and terrorist activities. This support is inconsistent with efforts to reduce tensions and could threaten the progress made in that regard between our two countries.

Option B - Emphasize Cuban Role. While Soviet support is evident, the initiative is clearly in Castro's hands. The command and control of Cuban forces rests squarely with Castro. Our efforts will be directed toward this immediate threat to peaceful resolution of problems in Southern Africa. (You might point out that there are some 3,000 Cuban military personnel in other African countries.)

Option C - Emphasize both. Pull back somewhat from our focus on Cuba posture of the past week. Kissinger seemed to do that at SFRC yesterday.

c. How are you handling the moral dilemma? Isn't American action against the Cubans supporting white'racist'regimes?

- Emphasize complexity of issue.
- We are trying to support both objectives, black majority rule in Africa and checking Cuban adventurism.
- We want to maintain an environment conducive to peaceful settlement of internal Southern African issues. Cuban intervention is a threat to this and as such must be stopped. We have consistently supported efforts to establish more representative governments through peaceful means.
- Greater issue also involved here: whether Soviets can show restraint.

d. What types of action are being planned?

- Thrust should be to dampen urgency but leave Cubans and Soviets concerned.



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- We are participating in the contingency planning as DoD always does.
- We always consider a wide range of options.
- We want to be able to respond to the need to deter further intervention on the part of Cuban forces in foreign countries.
  - e. Is our whole effort being undermined by lack of Congressional support?
- No way to deal with this problem without strong Congressional-executive consensus.
- We are informing Congress of the problem and will consult with them on methods of dealing with the problem.
- Answer must be such as *to* counter damage being done by lack of *some* credibility in our rhetoric. Our interest in scaring the Cubans cannot be too far ahead of our support in Congress.
  - f. If Soviets are so intimately involved, why are all your contingency plans and public attention focused on being nasty to the Cubans?
- Finesse issue: Cubans are of course doing the fighting. The Soviets are very much aware of our profound concern.

Overall purpose of your remarks should be to:

- Dampen air of crisis
- Make clear our concern to Cubans and Soviets
- Begin better building of consensus in town.

  
Morton I. Abramowitz  
Deputy Assistant Secretary



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