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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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File 0

MEMORANDUM

STATE
DATE: SEP 28 2000

To : The Secretary
From : INR - Roger Hilsman
Subject: Removal of IRBMs from Cuba

We have good evidence that 42 medium range missiles (MRBMs) have been removed from Cuba, the exact number the Soviets claimed were there. We are certain that all of the missiles seen in Cuba and subsequently leaving Cuba as deck cargo were medium range missiles. Intermediate range missiles (IRBMs) have so far been identified. This raises the question whether IRBMs were ever delivered to Cuba and, if so, what happened to them. Our evidence on this point is ambiguous and circumstantial and no satisfactory answer can be provided on the basis of available intelligence. At the same time the IRBM issue is one the US might use in the negotiations with the Soviets in the negotiations in New York. It is also a question that the press may raise at this moment and one for which State and DOD press officers should be prepared.

The facts of the case are as follows:

- a) 40 missile launch pads were identified in Cuba; 24 MRBM and 16 IRBM.
- b) 33 medium range missiles were identified by US intelligence in Cuba before the Soviets began to remove them. 42 were subsequently identified as deck cargo on Soviet ships leaving Cuba.
- c) No IRBMs were ever seen arriving in Cuba, present in Cuba or leaving Cuba.
- d) Some

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d) Some IRBM associated equipment has been seen at the IRBM site at Guanajay; specifically fuel trucks larger than those associated with MRBM sites were identified on 27 October together with what may have been oxidizer trailers. Since we estimated Guanajay would be operational about 15 November, the presence at the site of specific IRBM-associated equipment in late October is not unexpected.

It is not clear why the Soviets told us that 42 missiles were in Cuba and would be removed. This may have been the actual number of MRBMs in Cuba at the time. If so it would indicate either that the Soviets planned to install more than the 24 MRBM pads we identified or, more likely, to provide a refire or back-up missile for each pad. In any case the Soviets never identified the 42 missiles as MRBMs or IREMs.

The question of the IRBMs is more complicated. In moving IRBMs into or out of Cuba the Soviets would have had three alternatives open to them: to ship them as deck cargo; below deck in a vessel with oversize hatches (70 feet or more), or below deck disassembled in an ordinary cargo vessel.

We have no evidence that any missiles were shipped into Cuba as deck cargo and we are equally certain that no IRBMs were shipped out in this way. We know that at least 6 ships with oversize hatches made a total of 12 trips to Cuba between 1 August and 1 October. Thus, the Soviets could easily have shipped IRBMs in these vessels as they apparently did the MRBMs. In 12 trips these ships could have carried well over 100 missiles. Five of these ships were enroute to Cuba when the quarantine was announced and subsequently reversed course before reaching the line; otherwise all of them would have arrived in Cuba prior to the estimated operational date of the first IRBM site.

The third possibility -- that the IREMs could be shipped below deck in an ordinary cargo vessel -- rests on a US intelligence estimate that the Soviet IRBM can be

disassembled

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disassembled into three sections (engine, tankage and guidance) that will fit a 35 or 40 foot standard cargo vessel hatch. We have no evidence that the Soviets have used this method nor are we likely to get any.

Presumptive evidence exists that some IRBMs were in Cuba (the Guanajay site operational date of 15 November, the presence of IRBM fuel trucks at the site on 27 October). This evidence, together with the fact that Soviet ships capable of carrying assembled missiles had made numerous trips to Cuba prior to the quarantine announcement, furnishes a strong argument for pressing the Soviets hard on the verification and inspection issue. The burden of proof that there are none there, in the face of the fact that none came out, rests on the Soviets.

Since the press may at some point raise the same question, guidelines for Department and DOD press officers should be provided. The content of these guidelines would, of course, depend in part on how we propose to deal with the issue with the Soviets.

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