

CUBA

CONFIDENTIAL

GR 200

CONFIDENTIAL

FM UKMIS NEW YORK 102156Z SEPT 79

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1006 OF 10 SEPTEMBER

INFO PRIORITY HAVANA, MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON.

*Prime Minister*

*Paul - 11/5*

*[Signature]*

SOVIET TROOPS IN CUBA

1. WHEN I CALLED ON THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL TODAY TO PRESENT MY CREDENTIALS, DR WALDHEIM SAID THAT DR CASTRO HAD COME TO SEE HIM IN HAVANA LAST WEEK TO TALK ABOUT THIS QUESTION. CASTRO HAD SAID THAT THE 3,000 SOVIET TROOPS HAD BEEN IN CUBA FOR 17 YEARS, EVER SINCE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SOVIET MISSLES AFTER THE 1962 CRISIS. HE COULD ASSURE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL THAT THEY WERE NOT A COMBAT FORCE AND THAT THEY WERE OF ONLY SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE TO CUBA. THEIR FUNCTION WAS TO TRAIN CUBAN FORCES AND TO MONITOR UNITED STATES RADIO INSTALLATIONS. HE HAD ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT THE AMERICANS KNEW OF THEIR PRESENCE AND HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THEY WERE MAKING A FUSS NOW.

2. WALDHEIM HAD FORMED THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT CASTRO WANTED HIM TO PASS THE ABOVE TO THE US GOVERNMENT AND HE HAD ACCORDINGLY SPOKEN TO MR VANCE. VANCE HAD CONFIRMED THAT THE AMERICANS KNEW OF THE PRESENCE OF THE SOVIET TROOPS, BUT SAID THAT THEY HAD ONLY RECENTLY DISCOVERED THAT THEY WERE A COMBAT (UNDERLINED) BRIGADE.

[COPIES SENT TO NO10 DOWNING ST]

PARSONS

DEPTL DISTN

EESD

NAMD

M and CD

DEF-D

UND

NEWS-D

CABINET OFFICE

CONFIDENTIAL