

May 15, 1969

Note regarding the Intelligence Situation in Cuba

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Summary:

This 1969 Polish intelligence document details the restrictive surveillance environment in Cuba, particularly on personnel of socialist embassies. It describes widespread monitoring of embassy staff by Cuban counterintelligence, including designated "guardians" who closely observe foreigners' social interactions. Additionally, it reports severe rationing, limited public social spaces, and restricted freedom of movement for diplomatic staff, who face barriers to interacting freely with locals due to fear of government retribution. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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NOTE
regarding the intelligence situation in Cuba.

Despite some improvement in relations between Cuba and the socialist countries that has been noted since January 1969, which I wrote about in the note sent with letter No. 1/69, the personnel of socialist institutions are still under heavy surveillance.

It can be stated with full certainty that all Cuban personnel employed at the Polish People's Republic Embassy cooperate with Cuban counterintelligence organs. Some, such as the driver Bienvenido Dominguez, do not hide it at all. Others are more discreet, but it can be noticed when they are given food products from time to time.

A Cuban will not take them when another Cuban sees them, he will take them when he is alone and none of the Cuban staff sees it. When I ask him why they are so afraid, each one of them states that they are afraid because they will be reported to the police.

As you know in Cuba and Havana all restaurants, bars, cafes, clubs and other entertainment venues remain closed.

Only on Saturday evenings and Sundays are some establishments open, but to get into them you have to stand in line for several hours a few days before, get your day and number, and on the appointed day wait a few more hours to be let in. These establishments are like canteens. Only in these establishments can you get something to eat without coupons.

All manufactured goods and food, including soda water and cigarettes, are rationed. The allocations are very modest. For example, 2 packs of cigarettes per week, 2 bottles of soft drinks per week per person. Money has no value for a Cuban.

Because of this, social life among Cubans came to a standstill.

Due to the lack of any premises, the only possible place to meet a Cuban is your own apartment, but even this is very difficult. On the one hand, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, which exist in almost every building, are on guard.

Members of these committees have the right to check the identity of every foreigner they meet in the building. Foreigners living in these buildings cannot maintain any social relations, even with their neighbors, apart from the doorman who comes on official business, no other neighbor will accept an invitation from a foreigner to visit him in the apartment.

Cuban counterintelligence employs the tactic of surrounding each Embassy employee living outside the Embassy premises with several people who work with them and act as

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friends who are often intrusive. These people, despite being reminded to notify by phone of their intention to visit, always come without warning. They are not discouraged even by the fact that sometimes they are not allowed into the apartment, they do not take offense and come the next day or after a few days without warning.

My such guardians were Roberto Rodriguez, a former counterintelligence employee, now allegedly an employee of the fishing fleet, and Manuel Yillapol, former secretary of the hunters' association, now an employee of the sports association.

When I sometimes invited a teacher from the school my son attended, or a Cuban I met by chance, to my apartment, and after entertaining him, each one eagerly promised to come again, he did so only until he was met in my apartment by a "guardian" who joined the conversation to find out who he was and what the purpose of his visit was.

When I met these people after some time and invited them to my home, they would explain that they were too busy, didn't have time, or were going to work in the field. They were simply afraid to visit me again.

Other employees have similar situations.

These guardians always find time, are always ready to accompany us on trips outside Havana (sometimes they lurk in front of the house to intrusively join in with our company) on hunting trips, fishing trips, etc. They are always able to organize such a

trip, and even try to provide a means of transport if there is none.

After discovering the espionage activities conducted by the former press adviser of the Mexican Embassy in Havana - Carrillo, the Cuban authorities further restricted the freedom of activity of the employees of the Embassies, including the employees of the Embassies of the socialist countries. Direct contacts with editorial offices, radio stations, journalists, sending propaganda and information materials directly to recipients were prohibited. All this can currently only take place through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Roberto Rodriguez, whom we treated as the "spokesman of Cuban counterintelligence", once told us (me and St. Jarzabek) that, according to Cuban counterintelligence, 90% of the press attachés of the socialist embassies collaborate directly or indirectly with the CIA.

According to my observations, specialists in Cuba, of whom there are about 70 from Poland, have greater freedom of movement, contact with Cubans, and being in their company. They work in various fields and are scattered throughout Cuba.

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