

Castro Hits Turner's 'Big Lie'

Cuba's President says Carter was deceived

Mounting evidence is coming out in the public domain that Admiral Stansfield Turner deliberately misled the President of the United States and several committees of Congress on the issue of alleged Cuban involvement in Africa.

FOREIGN POLICY

Behind Turner stands National Security Council director Zbigniew Brzezinski whose credibility is equally at risk in the issue. Cuban President Fidel Castro said as much in no uncertain terms in an extraordinary interview that he gave to two U.S. congressmen this week.

Speaking to Rep. Beilenson (D-Cal) and Rep. Steven Solarz (D-NY), Castro said "The lie told against Cuba is not a half lie. It is an absolute total and complete lie. It is not a small lie, it is a big lie. It is not a negligible lie, it is an important lie."

Upon returning to the U.S. after his interview with Castro, Solarz told a news conference that "Castro made a very compelling case" that there was no Cuban involvement in the Shaba province invasion. The two congressmen told the press that they are making a report to the House International Relations Committee, and they have requested an interview with Carter.

President Castro was very explicit in identifying Brzezinski and took great pains to separate President Carter from responsibility as the author of the lies: "It was a manufactured lie — manufactured in Brzezinski's office. I think Mr. Carter has been confused and deceived, but I do not think Mr. Carter has resorted to this himself."

While Castro has been careful to sever Carter from Turner and Brzezinski, the NSC, the CIA chief and the *Washington Post* among others have consistently identified Carter and the Presidency with their views. Carter has been led to reiterate the view that the Cubans were involved, with the result that he and the White House are now faced with a yawning credibility gap in Congress.

Congress Skeptical of Turner "Evidence"

Castro's statements have been more than corroborated by the reactions of Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee who heard Turner's original testimony last week. Sen. Sparkman, the committee chairman, characterized the evidence as "circumstantial in nature and not conclusive."

Even more skeptical was the House International Relations Committee. Fourteen members of that body

signed a letter that was delivered to President Carter and made public June 12. The signers, who ran the gamut from conservative Larry Winn (R-Kan) to extreme liberal James Bingham (D-NY), expressed their concern over "what appears to be a change in U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union." The congressmen specifically queried the geopolitical games of Brzezinski: "we do not understand the meaning or intent of recent strong statements by the Director of the National Security Council with respect to the Soviet Union. . . Is this to suggest a relationship between the SALT talks and the Soviet involvement in Africa. . . ?"

Put Turner in the Hot Seat

The most urgent need is to recall Admiral Turner for further testimony before Congress. While the House Committee's request that Secretary Vance appear to clarify the congressmen's questions has been granted by the White House, and he will testify at the beginning of the coming week, renewed questioning of Turner in the light of the latest developments offers Congress the best avenue of getting to the bottom of the dispute. This will confront Turner with the following difficult choice: either to stick by his original evaluation without a shred of additional plausible evidence to back him up — and be totally discredited — or to backpeddle, and open the way to expose Brzezinski's central role in the whole stinking affair.

Careful gridding of public statements and press accounts make it clear that Brzezinski played a key role in the attempted hoax. The invasion of Shaba province began on May 11-12. Over the course of the next several days there was continuous communication between the U.S. and Cuban governments to try to contain the dangerous effects of the action. President Castro told Mr. Solarz that he received a positive message from a high Administration official, presumably Secretary Vance, asking Castro's help in ending the fighting. On May 17 Castro called in the U.S. representative in Cuba, Lyle Lane, and told him that Cuba had nothing to do with the invasion and in fact had tried to prevent it. The next day, Castro told Solarz, the U.S. mission to the United Nations acknowledged Castro's assurances.

Suddenly on May 19 the entire picture of cooperation between Cuba and the U.S. changed to one of hostility and accusation. The single event that caused this rupture was the briefing given by David Aaron of the National Security Council based on the intelligence evaluation provided by Stansfield Turner. For the first time it was claimed that the Administration possessed the evidence to prove Cuban involvement in the Zaire invasion.

This was the coup carried out by the NSC behind the backs of the State Department, the UN Mission, and

Congress. The alleged evidence on which this abrupt shift was based has never been made public, was denied to the relevant foreign relations committees of Congress, and claims based upon it have been greeted with widespread skepticism both here and abroad. Indeed, the government of West Germany, in an official reply to a parliamentary question on this very issue, declared that no evidence existed to show Cuban involvement in the invasion.

Turner's role in this coup is explicit. The CIA representative at the May 19 White House meeting claimed that his agency had the evidence to prove that the "Cubans have recently insurgents," even though President Castro publicly and privately has emphatically stated that the Cubans broke off relations with the Katangese in 1976, to the point of denying them medical supplies.

In subsequent testimony Turner has attempted to embellish claims of Cuban links to the Katangese with alleged eyewitness accounts, maps that purport to show Cuban training grounds for the rebels, and even hints of the existence of aerial photos. But in the words of Senator McGovern, "none of this would stand up in court."

Turner's only response is to claim that intelligence evidence does not have to meet the requirements of the rules of evidence.

Despite the clear evidence of the perfidious role of his CIA chief and his NSC Director, President Carter still foolishly inflicts upon himself responsibility for those lies. Therefore the relevant Senate and House committees will have to expose two glaring features of this critical situation.

The first is Turner's role, and the second is Brzezinski's in charging into this mess and turning it into an East-West confrontation of global proportions. The role of these two men will demonstrate the breakdown of availability to the White House of political intelligence evaluation that adequately reflects the national interest.

The mandate for a searching investigation by Congress into this situation exists, as evidenced by the communication of the American Committee of East-West Accord signed by 60 prominent Americans. The Committee delivered their warning of the threat to detente and SALT to Brzezinski personally. But the White House did not learn of their communication until it had appeared in Pravda several days later.

— Stephen Pepper

Castro: Brzezinski Lied To Carter On Cuba

Cuban President Fidel Castro this week denounced as lies U.S. Administration allegations that his government aided last month's rebel invasion of Zaire's Shaba province. The Cuban head of state offered to meet with President Carter to clear the air on this issue. Below are excerpts from a New York Times News Service interview with Castro by reporter Jon Nordheimer, which was printed in the June 10 edition of the Chicago Tribune:

Havana-President Fidel Castro charged Tuesday that President Carter has been "manipulated and deceived" by elements in his own Administration concerning last month's invasion of Zaire's Shaba province by Katangan troops. He blamed Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's advisor on national security.

He said he would be willing to meet with Carter to sort out the tangled circumstances behind the invasion and the allegations that flowed from it.

Castro denied with great passion charges that Cuba had supplied the Katangan rebels and trained them before the invasion last month, and said that it has been the policy of his government to avoid "encouragement" of the Katangans since the cessation of the civil war in Angola in early 1976.

"It is not a half-lie," he said with regard to the charges in Washington that Cubans were involved in the Shaba invasion. "It is an absolute, total, complete lie."

He was careful to avoid suggesting that Carter personally had taken a hand in producing what he called a "gross fabrication" about the Cuban role in Africa.

"It was a manufactured lie — manufactured in Brzezinski's office," Castro said. "I think Mr. Carter has

been confused and deceived, but I do not think Mr. Carter has deliberately resorted to this himself."

"Without doubt," Castro said, "People in his administration want to manufacture their own Gulf of Tonkin in order to intervene in Africa."

He said that before Washington charged that Cuban troops were involved in the Shaba incident, he had supplied the United States Government with information about rumors that Katangan Rebels were preparing to invade Shaba. He added that this was "the first time in my career" that he had given Washington such information.

He also gave this account of his exchanges with Washington in mid May:

"Between the 11th and 12th of May, the first news was released of the Shaba events," he said. "Between the 12th and 15th of May, two statements were released by the U.S. Government that contained the truth saying there was no evidence Cubans were involved in this operation.

"On the 15th, through the U.S. interests sections here, we received a message coming from officials of the U.S. Government on the highest level. In our opinion that was the message on Africa that was constructive and positive."

... His original message had been conveyed to Cyrus Vance who in turn gave it to Carter.

Within hours, the Cuban leader charged, the content of his messages to Washington had been leaked to the American press.

"Not all of it was leaked," he said, "but part of it that