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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS
IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL
AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Letter dated 26 February 1990 from the Permanent Representative
of Panama to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to
the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached documents, which have been received from the Ministry of the Interior and Justice of Panama with instructions to forward them to the Commission.

These documents confirm the participation of President Fidel Castro of Cuba in the violation of the human rights of the Panamanian people and even his own people. They draw attention to military and logistical support extended to the State terrorism conducted by the Noriega régime, and to the inhuman dealings in visas for Cuban citizens wishing to emigrate to the United States of America.

I would kindly request you to have these documents circulated as official documents under agenda item 12.

(Signed) Osvaldo Velásquez
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

ANNEX I

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND JUSTICE

Military and logistical support given by President Fidel Castro of Cuba to General Noriega of Panama

February, 1990

Weapons

From 1987 onwards, the Noriega régime became increasingly dependent on Cuba for munitions and military training. Large weapons shipments took place on board both Cuban and Panamanian aircraft. In 1989, Cuban weapons shipments were also channelled through Nicaragua. Panamanian crews have provided numerous reports of these arms shipments from Cuba.

In 1988, Castro agreed to provide Noriega with weapons and ammunition to enable him to arm both the governmental paramilitary groups and the Defence Forces. The first shipment on board the FAP 777 aircraft, which arrived in the province of Chiriquí, was received by Lt. Col. Luis del Cid, of the now-defunct Defence Forces. The following shipment, also intended for Chiriquí, was diverted to Tocumen international airport due to mechanical problems.

Investigations by this Ministry have confirmed that the following weapons were received from Cuba:

2,000 AK47 rifles, mostly of Chinese or North Korean manufacture;

50 82mm mortars;

200 RPG7 rocket-launchers, made in the Soviet Union;

200 RPG2 rocket-launchers, made in China;

70 mm guns, type and quantity unknown;

5,000 anti-personnel mines;

5,000 anti-tank mines;

300 light machine-guns;

100 heavy machine-guns;

10,000 hand grenades.

Large quantities of ammunition were also supplied. Sixteen trips in two Panamanian Air Force 727-700 aircraft were necessary to transport the weapons from Cuba.

Training of the "Dignity Battalions" (paramilitary groups)

In early September 1988, 25 to 30 members of a number of Panamanian "Dignity Battalion" units travelled to Cuba to receive training in terrorist tactics. The group returned from Cuba to Tocumen international airport on 2 December 1989 on board a Cuban Airlines flight. The training received in Cuba included physical conditioning, basic military skills, small-unit tactics and large amounts of propaganda.

Liaison with officers of the Defence Forces

Officers of the Defence Forces travelled frequently to Cuba to deal with matters relating to the Defence Forces and the Panamanian State. For example, Major Francisco Porras, Director of the Defence Forces Military Training Institute in Río Hato, returned from Cuba on 15 July 1989 with equipment sent by the Cuban Government to Noriega.

Political counselling

As an example of the Cuban Government's interference in internal Panamanian affairs, in early June 1989, during an official visit to Cuba by Minister and Acting President Mr. Manuel Solís Palma, Castro met a group of Defence Forces officers who had accompanied Solís Palma to Cuba and they spoke about the nature and use of the Panamanian "Dignity Battalions". Castro had realized that the "Dignity Battalions" had projected a negative image during the 10 May attack against the opposition candidates, and recommended a programme to counteract their bad reputation within the country.

Assistance with regard to propaganda and the media

On 17 April 1989, Mr. Luis Baez, a journalist in the service of the Cuban Government, and three communications teachers from the University of Havana arrived in Panama City for the purpose of counselling in news coverage and matters relevant to relations between Panama and the United States.

Mr. Baez had been instructed to advise Major Edgardo López, a public relations officer of the Defence Forces, on how to conduct himself during press conferences relating to the 7 May elections. The teachers' job was to advise the media controlled by the Panamanian Government (radio, television and press) on the broadcasting and handling of press releases. Three other Cuban journalists and the Central American correspondent of Prensa Latina arrived in Panama on 28 April to help Mr. Baez carry out this project.

ANNEX 2

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND JUSTICE

Department of Migration

Panama, February 1990

ENTRIES AND DEPARTURES OF CUBAN CITIZENS VIA TOCUMEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Year	Entries	Departures
1985	8 131	6 941
1986	10 308	7 183
1987	5 980	6 773
1988	6 337	3 867
1989	11 931	3 779
TOTAL	42 687	28 543

Difference: 14 144

(According to estimates by this Department, at an estimated cost of \$US 5,000 to \$US 10,000 per visa, this traffic has unlawfully yielded approximately \$US 85 million for its beneficiaries).
