

Many Soviet Bases Reported in Cuba

By Theodore A. Ediger

MIAMI — (CNS) — The mystery of widespread Soviet activity in Cuba remains unsolved, but detailed, circumstantial reports in refugee circles here say only a part of it revolves around Cienfuegos.

The Cienfuegos installation, whatever it amounts to, is only one link in a network of military facilities built in Cuba with Soviet help,

whether or not for actual Soviet use.

Cuban exile intelligence sources have been reporting such activity for years, and actually called the shot on base, recently the subject of a U.S.-Soviet diplomatic exchange, before the international smoke went up.

Deep Bay

Waters are deep and ideal for submarines in Cienfuegos

Bay, 50 miles from the Bay of Pigs invasion site of the 1961 exile force.

The busy south Cuba seaport, population 75,000, nestles at the upper edge of Cienfuegos Bay. Near the bay entrance is Cayo Alcatraz where the sub base was reported under construction.

Even deeper waters surround beautiful Cayo Largo—Long Key—island in the Caribbean Sea some 50

miles southwest of Cayo Alcatraz. Submarines could glide in there undetected by U-2 planes.

Home Taken

Refugees report that Soviet military personnel has been active at Cayo Largo for years. Big mysterious buildings have gone up there, they say, piers have been built.

Cuban residents are reported evacuated from both Cayo Largo and Cayo Alcatraz.

A 37-year-old refugee who had been a truck foreman for Cuba's public works department reported that the Alcatraz home of a wealthy Cuban was taken over by a Soviet official.

Floodlights were installed at Cayo Alcatraz, refugees reported, to permit around-the-clock work on the base. Refugees say Soviet sailors in white and light-blue uniforms were being transported by bus to the Key from Cienfuegos city.

Cienfuegos itself is a tropical city with wide, straight streets and beautiful parks. It adjoins a fertile countryside which formerly abounded in production of sugar, coffee, rice, tobacco, mangoes, avocados, henequen.

Caves Enlarged

Cuban Radio reported recently that a six-lane highway is nearing completion between Cienfuegos and Havana, 90 miles to the northwest. This is an indication of the importance Cienfuegos has attained, when you consider that Cuba's principal thoroughfare, the Central Highway linking the two biggest cities, Havana and Santiago, is only two and three lanes wide.

A smaller highway leads from Cienfuegos to the Escambray Mountains a short distance away. Many caves in these mountains reportedly have been converted into secret military installations.

Much of Cuba, in fact, is pretty hollow. There are both natural and man-made caves ranging from Pinar del Rio province in the west to Oriente in the east. Refugees say the Soviets currently are using "mountain perforators" to make caves near Holguin in Oriente. They say the caves are being used for secret airstrips.

There is a popular Cuban joke: "Don't lean on that mountain, it may collapse."

For years Manolo Reyes, an exile television commentator with sources in the Cuban underground testified before the House subcommittee on inter-American affairs recently.

"There is a permanent Soviet naval squadron in the Caribbean right now," he said. "Apparently one of the ships in that squadron is a modern submarine."