

hav851 yy lft

0740:financial times (attn philip marvin)

by lionel martin

havana, oct 30 -- havana was the site for the 39th top-level meeting (oct 29-31) of the council for mutual economic assistance, commonly known as +comecont+.

it was the first time the venue for such an event was outside eastern europe. cuba was chosen because as kuba it was next in line in the cyrillic alphabet. but the choice of havana symbolised the growing integration of this caribbean island nation, only 90 miles from american shores, into the communist blocs economic system.

cuban president fidel castro was at the airport to give bear-hugs to such communist dignitaries as nikolai tikhanov, president of the council of ministers of the ussr and other leaders from eastern europe, vietnam and mongolia.

dr. castro inaugurated the sessions in the modern palace of conventions with a speech that was more political than economic. he made clear that cuba would not relinquish its ties with the soviet union but at the same time he said his government would like to find solutions to its differences with the united states based on mutual respect.

--more/Lem

1984

original
~~duplicate~~

WR
318

hav852 yy Lft

0750:financial times (attn philip marvin) 2havana

if cuba refuses to renounce its ties with the soviet union and other comecon nation, one of the reasons is economic. the growth of the island-nation's interdependence with comecon has been dramatic. in 1972 its trade with comecon nations amounted to 1.4 thousand million dollars and by 1982 it had reached 8.6 thousand million, 68 percent of which was a result of cuban-soviet trade.

(i have converted pesos to dollars using the current rate of 1 peso equals .90 us cents)

while the economic links with the soviet bloc zoomed, commercial ties with the west, although still vital for the island's economy, have plummeted. in 1982 free market trade amounted to only 3 thousand million dollars out of a total 11.6 thousand million dollars in international commerce.

ties with the comecon bloc have permitted cuba to renovate and bolster its transport, electric powerm nickel production, and citrus industry. in these spheres alone, cuba will recieve more than one thousand million dollar in financing during the present decade at low interest rates, generally between 2 and 4 percent.

==more/lem

*Mercedes Benz
Henry Ruiz*

hav853 yy lft

0755:financial times (attn philip marvin (3 havana)

despite rock bottom world market sugar prices, the guarantee of an east-european buyer has spurred the island into a huge sugar expansion program. by 1990, cuba expects to increase its annual crude sugar production to 11 or 12 million tonnes as compared with about 8 million now.

cuba also expects to become one of the world's important producers of nickel. a highlight of the comecon meeting was a trip by delegates to the mountains of eastern cuba, not far from where fidel castro waged his guerrilla war, to witness the inauguration of the first production line of the punta gorda nickel combine built with soviet aid and to see the initial construction stage of a second nickel processing plant to be built with comecon aid.

for cuba, ties with the comecon nation, and especially with the soviet union, have not only ensured the development of its economic infrastructure in a time of low sugar prices, but it has guaranteed the establishment of a modern defense forces.

==more/lem

hav854 yy Lft

0800:financial times (attn philip marvin (4havana)

fidel castro made reference to the increased defense capabilities of cuba in his inaugural speech to the comecon conference. all cuba weapons are provided by the soviet union.

dr. castro has frequently said that soviet aid has been a paramount element in the consolidation of the cuban revolution. high cuban officials say that without that aid, cuba would have inevitably been bankrupted by rising world oil prices and economically strangled by world inflation, low sugar prices and the continuing u.s. economic embargo.

=Lem/

nnnnnnnnnn