

March 19, 1963
**Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 19
March 1963**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115697>

Summary:

Boissevain writes of the continued presence of Russian military and economic advisors in Cuba, which are causes for concern. The ongoing question is for how long they will remain in Cuba and when do they leave. Boissevain says that last week approximately 1,000 advisors left the country, but with some note of resistance. However, the departure for them is a great relief for the average Cuban and Russian alike.

Credits:

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551/119 Havana, 19 March 1963.

CUBA:

Russians.

The presence in Cuba of a large number of military and economic experts from the S[oviet].U[nion]. has aroused a good deal of controversy. Their number, their task, the fact that their presence could result in the outbreak of a world war and so forth. Dr. Castro too has used the Russians for demagogic effect for instance when during the recent crisis he painted them as heroes who would either triumph or perish together with the Cuban people as if the poor Russians had a choice!

Currently the "question brûlante" is if and at what pace they are disappearing from Cuba. I do not know what has happened during my absence traveling on duty but am certain that during last weekend a thousand of them left the country. I personally saw a series of open trucks, stuffed with blond Slavs drive toward the harbor and a friendly embassy with a chancellery on the sea shore has been able to follow the embarkation and ... photograph it.

Of course rumors and unverifiable tips have been plenty: it was said that Russians were taken away in the harbor in cuffs; supposedly Cubans had clashed with Russians inland and killed some.

For the average Cuban their departure is a relief and probably for most Russians likewise.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.