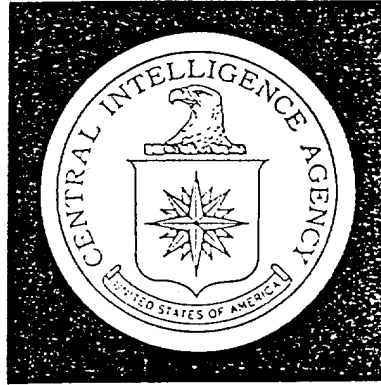


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Cuban Subversive Activities in Latin America: 1959-1968

Special Report
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CUBAN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA: 1959-1968

The essence of the Castro regime's policy on armed rebellion in the hemisphere was established in the early months of the regime's existence and has not materially changed since then. The record shows that "export of the revolution" has been a dominant ambition of Castro's next to maintaining his own firm grip on power at home. Indeed, the Cuban leader is a "compulsive revolutionary"; a man who sees himself as another Simon Bolivar, destined to bring a new "freedom and unity" to Latin America.

Castro has been consistent in this dream, although he has pursued it with varying degrees of intensity since 1959. Moreover, he has shown himself capable of modulating his overt and covert support for revolution in Latin America, depending on his assessment of the factors governing the situation. The evidence is overwhelming that Cuba made special adventuristic efforts in 1967 to establish "other Cubas and Vietnams" in Latin America.

Castro has been singularly unsuccessful, however, in achieving any real breakthroughs in the hemisphere. Despite nine years of effort, no guerrilla group in Latin America constitutes a serious threat to any government today. The demise of the Guevara-led venture in Bolivia proves that even when Cuba puts its "first team" into a country, it will be doomed to failure in the absence of real popular support for the guerrilla cause. On the other hand, while these harassments are minor and containable, they pose expensive challenges to the Latin American governments involved, and force them to tie up resources that are badly needed elsewhere.

Early Years

Castro waged his revolution during 1957 and 1958 as an indigenous Cuban movement. Once he assumed power, however, it

became evident that he had set for himself the goal of "liberating Latin America from US domination." The earliest public manifestations of this revolutionary mission were the

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armed expeditions that set forth from Cuba to such Caribbean countries as Panama, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic during the first eight or nine months of 1959.

In private statements during this period, Castro made it known that he looked upon his success in Cuba as merely the first stage in a continent-wide effort. Former Venezuelan president Romulo Betancourt said that Castro came to Caracas in January 1959--scarcely three weeks after assuming power--to enlist cooperation and financial backing for "the master plan against the gringos."

Castro sounded the keynote for Cuban subversion on 26 July 1960, when he said, "We promise to continue making Cuba the example that can convert the cordillera of the Andes into the Sierra Maestra of the American continent." The following September, he issued his ringing "first declaration of Havana," which unmistakably showed that he looked upon the Cuban revolution as the vanguard of a general Latin American political upheaval.

The Cuban subversive effort gradually became a more carefully organized endeavor far different from the first hastily organized and ill-conceived raids of 1959 and early 1960. By 1961-1962, Cuban support began taking many forms, ranging from inspiration and training to such tangibles as financing and communications support as well as some military

assistance. Mechanisms for conducting subversive operations were established at home and abroad. Radio Havana's international service was inaugurated on May Day 1961, and has beamed an increasing stream of propaganda to the Americas ever since.

During this period, the Cuban agency for foreign espionage and subversion, the General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI), was established within the Ministry of Interior. The DGI benefited from the advice of at least five Soviet intelligence experts from the very beginning. This organization sent over \$1 million in US currency to the Venezuelan insurgents alone between 1961 and 1964, and over US\$200,000 to Marco Antonio Yon Sosa in Guatemala in 1963.

From late 1961 through 1963, the Cuban regime stepped up the tempo of its foreign operations. The most spectacular event during this period was the discovery of a cache of three tons of weapons on a Venezuelan beach in November 1963. The weapons included light automatic rifles and submachine guns definitely identified as among those shipped to Cuba from Belgium in 1959 and 1960. There were also mortars, bazookas, recoilless rifles, and ammunition of US manufacture. The motor of a small boat found near the cache site was one of several Cuba had earlier acquired from Canada.

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Communist documents seized by the Venezuelan authorities shortly after the discovery of the cache indicated that the equipment was intended for the paramilitary arm of the Venezuelan Communist Party for Plan Caracas--aimed at disrupting the presidential elections in December of that year.

During this period, Cuban-trained guerrillas also tried to initiate operations in southern Peru and in Argentina. Cuban agents in La Paz tried to stimulate Bolivian groups to take up armed action against the Paz Estenssoro government. Finally, Cuban financial assistance was sent to Brazilian subversive elements seeking to establish guerrilla training camps in the state of Goias, as well as to peasant leader Francisco Juliao and then-governor Leonel Brizola. After Cuban Foreign Minister Roa's son, Raul Roa Kouri, was appointed ambassador to Brazil in April 1963, he served as a channel for Cuban funds and guidance to Brazilian subversives. At one point Roa described Brizola as "the Brazilian with the greatest revolutionary potential. Two Cuban couriers were on their way to Brazil with clandestine funds earmarked for Brizola and his associates when President Goulart was overthrown in April 1964.

In short, during this peak period of Cuban subversive efforts, Castro encouraged in an almost haphazard fashion a wide variety of extremist groups in many countries to begin the armed struggle.

At least 1,500 to 2,000 Latin Americans received either guerrilla warfare training or political indoctrination in Cuba between 1961 and 1964.

Disagreement with the
USSR, 1964

By 1964, Castro's indiscriminate subversive efforts had brought him into disagreement with Soviet leaders and into conflict with leaders of most of the principal orthodox Communist parties in Latin America. During a secret meeting in Havana in November 1964, the Soviets helped to work out a secret compromise agreement which called for support to insurgency efforts in a few Latin American countries, but specified that in all cases the local Communist Party should determine whether violent or non-violent means were to be pursued.

As a result of this meeting and setbacks in Venezuela, Panama, and Brazil during 1963 and 1964, Castro muted his revolutionary exhortations for about a year and narrowed his focus to three countries--Venezuela, Guatemala, and Colombia--where bona fide guerrilla bands were in the field and actively engaging government security forces.

The Cubans began chipping away at the edges of the agreement with the Soviets during 1965. At the Tri-Continent Conference in January 1966, Castro issued a more general

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call for insurgency in Latin America. Cuban propaganda returned to the more strident pitch noted in 1963. The operational emphasis, however, in comparison with the earlier years, changed to the selected list of target countries--Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, and Bolivia. Elsewhere, the Cubans sought more general opportunities that would lend themselves to foreign exploitation.

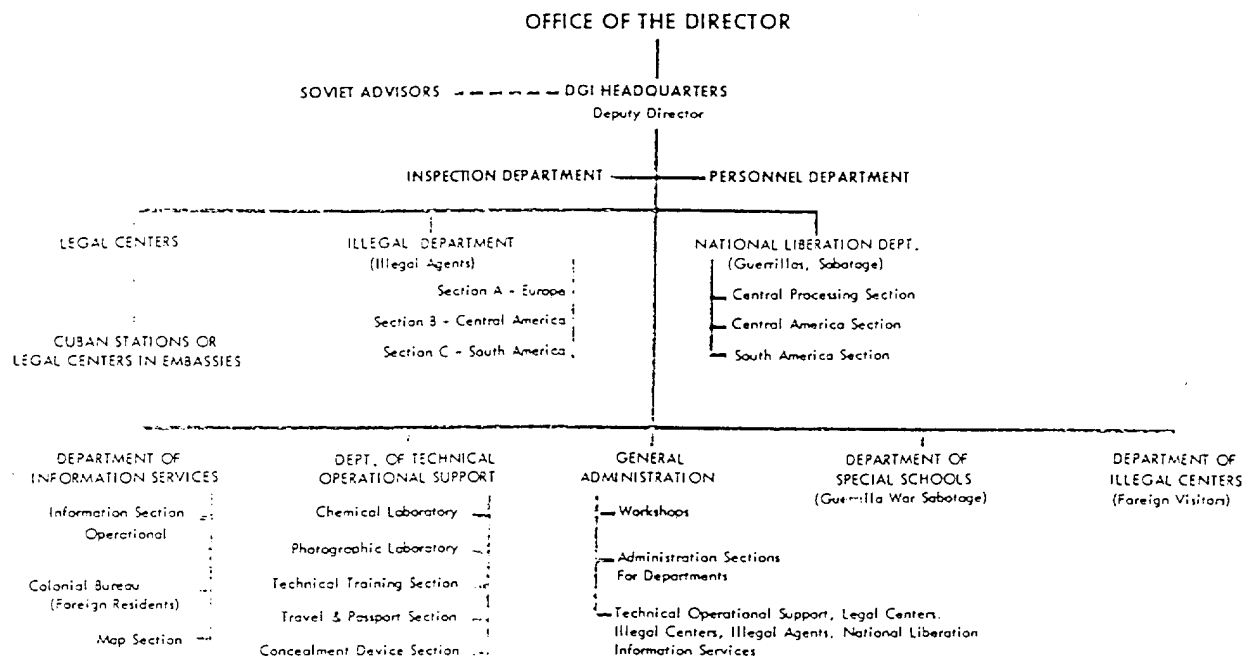
Current Support Mechanisms

Even in those countries where there is no significant insurgency under way, the Cubans have been developing a support mechanism while they wait for a suitable opportunity and ade-

quate assets. Moreover, there is evidence that Castro has created a special 60-man intelligence and commando unit--an arm of the DGI--to promote and support armed clandestine penetrations in various Latin American countries. Cuba's fishing vessels are apparently at the disposal of this unit, which was first identified following its involvement in a landing last May in Venezuela.

The DGI, which manages all of Cuba's espionage and subversive activities, was formed in 1961 following a general reorganization of Cuba's internal security and foreign intelligence services. Its director general is Manuel Pineiro--known as "Red Beard"--who has been closely

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associated with Raul Castro since 1957 and has been working with Cuban foreign intelligence since 1959. Under his leadership and the tutelage of several Soviet advisers, the DGI has been molded into a highly professional intelligence organization along classic Soviet lines.

The DGI is divided into three operational units. These are a department of "legal centers," an "illegal" department, and a department of "national liberation." The department of legal centers conducts operations by handling its agents through Cuban diplomatic missions--in Latin America these exist only in Mexico and Jamaica. The illegal department handles agents stationed permanently in countries with which Cuba does not have diplomatic relations. This is done directly from Havana by a complicated system of communications. The national liberation department is perhaps the largest in the DGI and is responsible for promoting and directing revolutionary activity in Latin America and other areas of the world. These three units are backed by various support elements.

The DGI's methods of selecting, training, and assigning foreign agents reveal a high degree of professionalism. There are two basic categories of these agents: one is a deep-cover clandestine group--recruited, trained, and

subsequently "run" by the illegal department--charged with collecting information as well as penetrating local governments. The second group is recruited and directed by the department of national liberation to guide and support revolutionary activities.

Guerrilla warfare training for the latter group is conducted in national units ranging in size from three to 25. Courses usually last three to six months, although in special cases they may last as long as a year. Training covers all aspects of guerrilla warfare, including weapons handling, explosives, sabotage, demolition, military tactics, combat engineering, and means of countering anti-insurgent activities. At least 2,500 Latin Americans are known to have gone to Cuba for such training since 1961.

This number by no means represents a maximum figure for the guerrilla potential. Many of these trainees, for instance, have in turn trained others when they returned to their home countries. Some, however, probably became disillusioned with the difficulties of initiating armed revolution, and left the field to more enthusiastic Castroites. The only international cooperation among these trainees appears to involve those whose countries are neighbors.

In the last year or so, Havana has demonstrated an improved capability to correspond clandestinely with its agents abroad. This ability has not yet been translated into a

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noticeably more successful subversive effort, at least partly because the Latin American governments have become increasingly aware of the danger. Presumably for the same reason, there has been less evidence of Latin Americans traveling to Cuba for training, and there have been fewer and fewer reports of Cuban efforts to fund Latin American revolutionary groups.

Other support and propaganda mechanisms include Radio Havana, which today is beaming approximately 170 hours a week in Portuguese, Spanish, and even Creole, Quechua, and Guarani to Latin America. It also transmits open code messages to Cuban intelligence agents. Cuba's literature distribution apparatus provides the glossy magazine Cuba, the theoretical monthly Critical Thought, speeches by Cuban leaders in pamphlet form, and the economic review Panorama Latinoamericana. Havana's official press service Prensa Latina has stringers and reporters throughout the world. Its employees function as an intelligence gathering and support mechanism. At the present time, Cuba is also supporting several local Communist newspapers and periodicals--the most recent example being the Uruguayan radical left daily newspaper Epoca.

In addition to the construction of this support mechanism and the growth and improvement of its clandestine

service and propaganda machine, Cuba has been able to bring about limited international cooperation of national movements and parties in some areas. This has helped to create or strengthen infrastructures upon which future revolutionary activities may be built, by making it easier to channel funds, move agents and leaders, transmit communications, and obtain false documents.

Two groups providing such support to the Venezuelan movements were uncovered in Colombia in 1966, and one of the Colombian movements has chosen the Venezuelan border region as its area of guerrilla operations. Thus it can support Venezuelans moving either way across the border, and its members are in position to cross into Venezuela themselves. The Salvadoran Communist Party has provided Salvadoran documentation to Guatemalans for travel to bloc countries, and also provided sanctuary for Guatemalans and Hondurans.

The Current Situation

As is evident, Castro's behavior in advocating and assisting revolution has not always been logical and realistic. He usually has been canny enough, however, to keep his risks low. The form and extent of his efforts, vocal and material, have varied with changing circumstances but his essential theme continues. He insists that revolutionary violence is necessary to bring about any meaningful change in Latin

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America. Moreover, he claims that guerrilla units, when boldly led, can take to the field, sustain themselves there, and precipitate the conditions that will assure their eventual success.

"Che" Guevara's ill-fated efforts in Bolivia and Cuban involvement in the insurgent landing in Venezuela last year are excellent examples of Castro's theories in action. His activities during 1967 and his oft-repeated pledges--as recent as 12 January 1968--to "fulfill his duty of solidarity" with revolutionaries throughout the world, clearly demonstrate his determination to spread his revolution.

Despite his declaration of November 1964 that he would not support would-be insurgent groups which were not under the control of the orthodox pro-Moscow Communists, Castro has continued to give moral, material, and financial support and training to selected groups. Furthermore, he made it clear in speeches during 1967 that he does not feel bound by the 1964 agreement and repeated his persistent thesis that violent revolution is necessary to bring about any meaningful political or social change.

Furthermore, on two occasions he flung accusations of cowardice and betrayal at the orthodox Communist parties in Venezuela and Colombia, which do not give full support to dissident guerrillas. He appeared particularly irked that a Soviet delegation had been trying to improve

relations and expand trade in Colombia and Venezuela. He complained that members of the Communist camp--obviously the Soviet Union--who deal with oligarchies in countries where insurgents are active are betraying the revolutionaries.

His statements during 1967 reflected his intense disillusionment with the urban based pro-Moscow Communist parties in general. This same theme was propounded by his theoretical adviser, Jules Regis Debray, who is now languishing in a Bolivian jail for his role in the insurgency there. Debray's thesis, which merely reflects Castro's and Guevara's own thinking, is that Latin America needs a dynamic, offensive, rural-based guerrilla action in which the basic guerrilla group takes precedence over the urban-based party and, in fact, becomes the "authentic" party.

In his speech in March 1967, Castro keynoted these ideas by stating: "If, in any nation, those who call themselves Communists do not know how to fulfill their duty, we will support those who--even though they do not call themselves Communists--behave like real Communists in the struggle." Again, on 12 January 1968, Castro referred to the Latin American parties by implication when he spoke of some parties being in the "rearguard" of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Significance of LASO

The first Latin American Solidarity Organization conference

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(LASO) closed on 10 August 1967 with a major ideological statement on Cuban foreign policy and a blueprint for solidarity with Latin American guerrillas by Castro. Although he made an effort to pay homage to pro-Soviet Communists by stating that "in some countries violent revolution may not be an immediate, but a future task," he left no doubt that Cuba views "armed struggle" as the only valid course to achieve "national liberation." He also indicated that Cuba was prepared to advance this doctrine.

The conference and Castro's return to a militant foreign policy widened still further the policy differences between Cuba and the pro-Soviet Communist parties, and caused discontent among the Soviets themselves. This challenge to Soviet influence in the Latin American Communist movement and Castro's calculated affronts to Moscow, however, have not prompted the Soviets to retaliate by economic aid cutbacks. On the other hand, the Soviets will probably continue to give private encouragement to their friends in the Communist world to persuade Castro to change his radical policies. They can also be expected to continue efforts to build diplomatic, commercial, and other contacts with Latin America, despite Castro's rantings.

Current Targets

For the past year, therefore, Havana's effort has been to lay

a solid foundation for future revolutionary action, to attempt to unite feuding factions of the extreme left under one leadership, to extol revolutionaries who are willing to take up the fight, regardless of whether they are bona fide Communists, and in Venezuela and Bolivia actually to send in trained Cuban Army officers and central committee members to advise and lead insurgents.

In Bolivia, the Cubans made a real effort to translate their revolutionary theories into practical guerrilla action by sending Ernesto "Che" Guevara and other high Cuban officials to dominate the guerrilla movement and to begin a continent-wide armed movement to start "other Vietnams." The all but complete annihilation of the insurgents by the Bolivian Army, and the death of "Che" Guevara, however, have severely damaged the myth of Cuban guerrilla invincibility and will probably dim the enthusiasm for the time being of some Latin American revolutionaries who have been considering guerrilla activities.

In Venezuela, Cuban funds, training, propaganda support, and some advisers are going to two separate dissident groups, The Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) and Douglas Bravo's group. Last May, Venezuelan guerrillas, escorted by Cuban military personnel, landed near the coastal village of Machurucuto. Four Cubans involved in the landing were later captured by Venezuelan authorities. There are indications

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that other landings took place during 1967, and at least one important landing occurred in July 1966.

Venezuelan guerrillas are now being hard pressed by government forces. In August, their urban terrorist organization was paralyzed by the arrest and capture of a number of its leaders. There is also information indicating that friction has developed between the Cuban and Venezuelan members of the guerrilla groups. The Cubans are not satisfied with the revolutionary enthusiasm of their Venezuelan compatriots, and the Venezuelans resent the "advice" the Cubans are giving them--the same type of friction that developed in Bolivia.

In Guatemala, where Cuba has been giving assistance and guidance to guerrilla and terrorist groups for more than three years, recent army operations against the insurgents and the formation of rightist vigilant groups have played havoc with guerrilla activities. The rebels, however, are regrouping and are still capable of harassing the government. Terrorist attacks on Guatemalan officials on 16 January clearly demonstrate the rebels' tormenting capabilities. Two US officials were also killed during these attacks.

Havana radio quickly publicized the shooting incident and indicated that "Che" Guevara's death was instrumental in uniting the Guatemalan guerrillas. In view of the often repeated Cuban

offer to help active guerrilla groups, the Guatemalan rebels can probably count on more training and financial assistance from Havana.

In Colombia, there was renewed and intensified guerrilla activity during 1967. The Cubans are giving assistance and training to several groups, some of which are remnants of bandit gangs that have operated in the country for years.

The group which has received by far the most Cuban aid is the Army of National Liberation (ELN). Some of its members were recently arrested while trying to slip back into the country carrying small arms, ammunition, and radio transmitters. They reportedly told Colombian intelligence officers that they and a number of other Colombians had just completed a guerrilla warfare course in Cuba and that the weapons had been given to them there. The ELN stepped up its activity with at least two raids in January, including the ambush slaying of three members of an army patrol. Follow-up action by the military resulted in the killing of five ELN guerrillas.

The pro-Soviet Communist Party (PCC) is reportedly trying to convert its guerrilla arm, the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), into inactive "self-defense" groups. This follows a request from the Soviet Union to avoid any incidents that might complicate its newly established diplomatic

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relations with the Colombian Government. It is probable that many FARC guerrillas, rather than lay down their arms, will join forces with the ELN or the newly formed Popular Army of Liberation (EPL).

This new group has established itself in northwestern Colombia, has carried out several isolated attacks and reportedly is making preparations for full-scale guerrilla warfare if the government carries out its threats to move into the area. This group is the guerrilla arm of the pro-Chinese Communist Party of Colombia, but may seek assistance from the Cubans if no other source of aid develops. (See maps following text for location of insurgent groups in Bolivia, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Colombia.)

Prospects

Cuba has given ample notice that it intends to continue its propaganda, training, and financial support to selected revolutionary groups--especially those in Colombia, Guatemala, and Venezuela. Given Castro's goal of

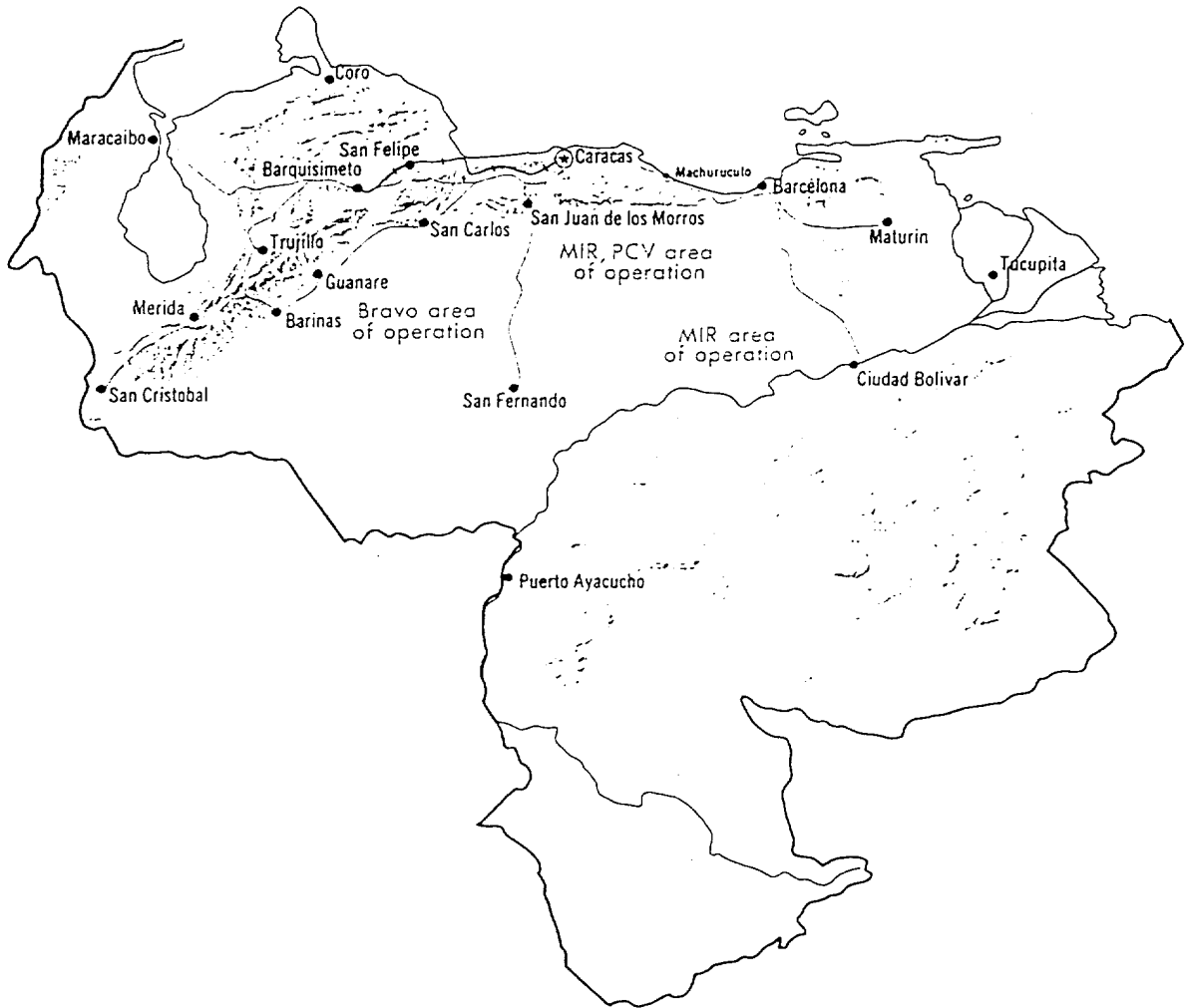
developing and exploiting opportunities for further armed violence, plus the vulnerabilities that exist in many Latin American countries, new outbreaks of Castro-sponsored rural-oriented violence in Latin America can be expected. Such ventures will have little chance of success, however, unless they exploit genuinely popular antigovernment causes and develop a broad peasant base and a charismatic indigenous leader. Guevara's defeat in Bolivia shows that despite Cuba's mechanism for sponsoring guerrilla groups and Castro's willingness to infiltrate key Cuban Army officers into selected countries, these efforts will at best produce only minor harassments of the central governments for the foreseeable future. The danger increases, however, in those countries where political and economic development has been marginal, and where a threat of a split in the usual guarantors of stability--i.e., the military or oligarchy--is a growing possibility. Should this occur, what had been minor disturbances in the countryside could suddenly mushroom into a political force out of proportion to its numbers. ~~(SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)~~

BOLIVIA: Area of Guerrilla Activity



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VENEZUELA: Areas of Guerrilla Activity

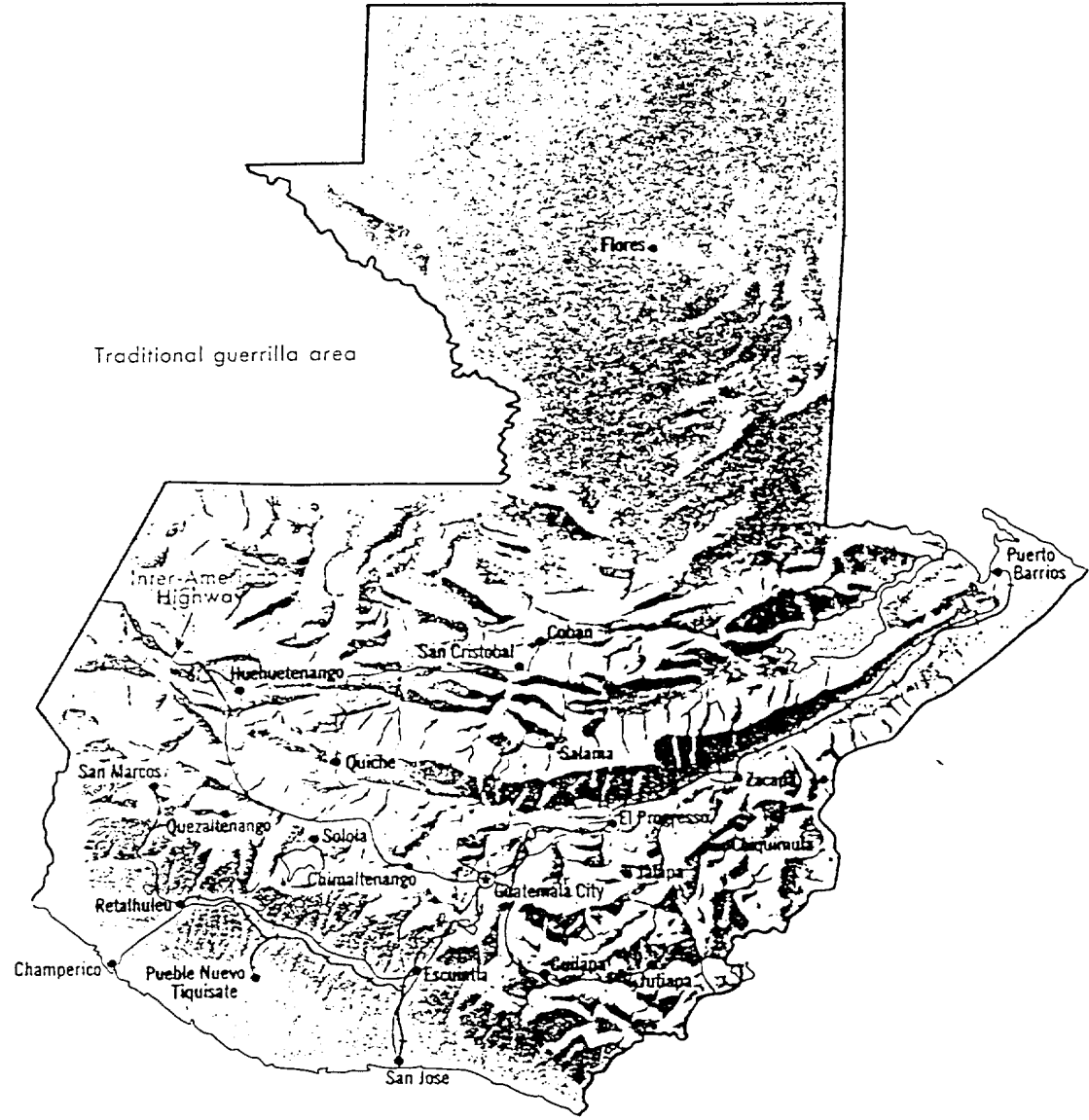


Bravo group-40/50

MIR-125

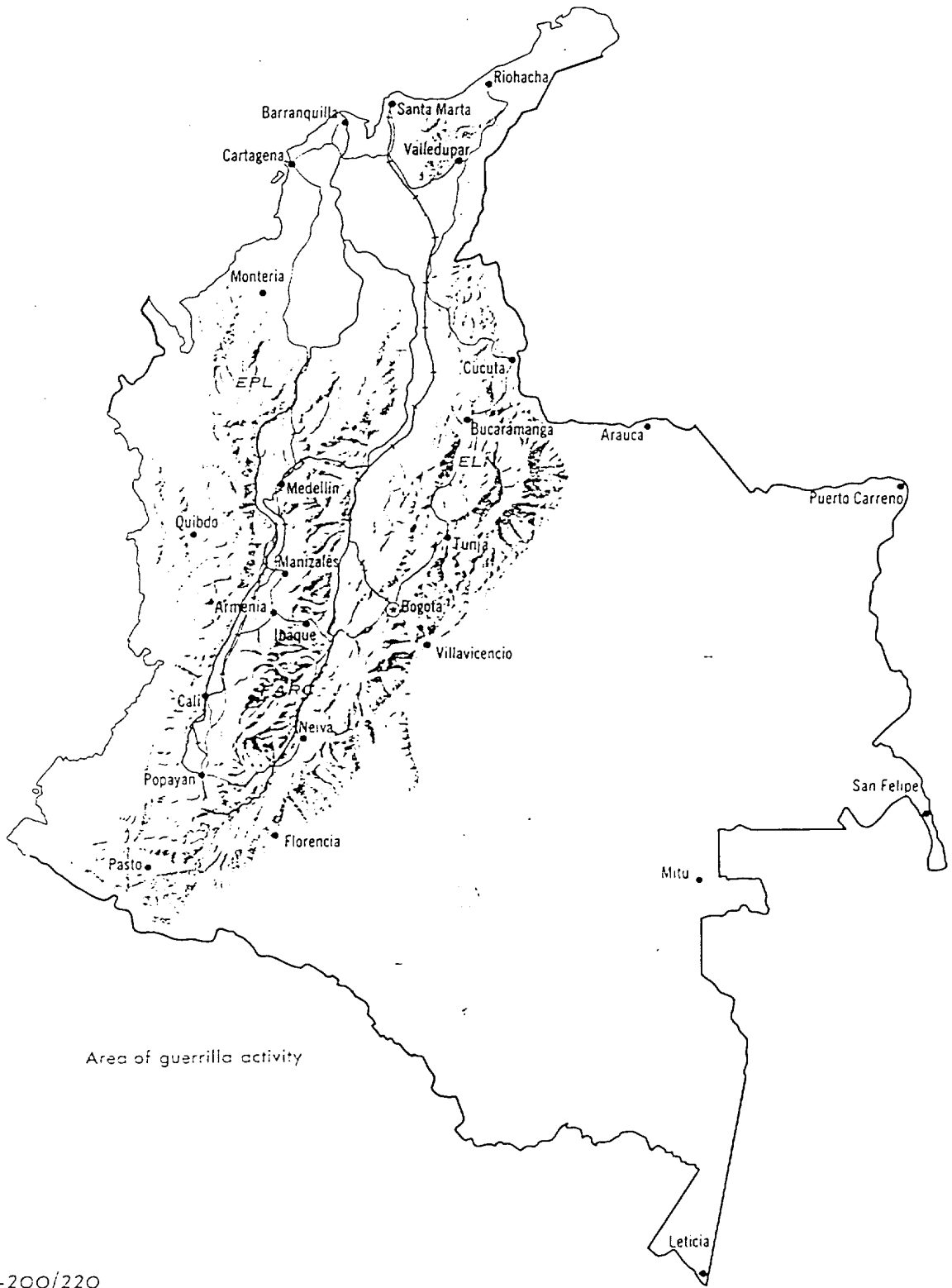
PCV-20/30

GUATEMALA: Area of Guerrilla Activity



13 Nov. 30 (Yon Sosa)
FAR 200 (Cesar Montes)

COLOMBIA: Areas of Guerrilla Activity



ELN-200/220
 FARC-250/300