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NSC BRIEFING

17 December 1958

CUBA

- I. Concentration of army troops and equipment in Santiago indicates government preparing a new offensive in Oriente Province.
  - A. Santiago reinforced with some 1500 troops and a number of light tanks.
  - B. The army has dropped leaflets urging the civilians to evacuate areas where land and air attacks are to be directed against the rebels.
- II. Despite special preparations and superior equipment, a new army offensive would probably not succeed.
  - A. Demoralization in armed forces spreading.
    1. Officers close to the chief of staff are now reported to see little hope of defeating rebels.
    2. Some senior as well as junior officers are suspected of wavering loyalty.
    3. Neither officers nor men have confidence in the high command, and resent luxury and safety general staff enjoys in Havana.
  - B. The rebels have a psychological advantage.
    1. They have taken every major town between Santiago and Guantanamo City, and government seems concerned that they may actually attack Santiago.
    2. Rebels are adequately supplied and have acquired a limited capability to interfere with Cuban Navy operations.

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