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## CUBA

The Castro regime continues to expand its ties with the Sino-Soviet bloc. At least two Cuban delegations are traveling in the bloc on official missions. One, headed by Transport Minister Camacho, held talks with transport officials in East Germany and Czechoslovakia and then went on to the USSR.

Education Minister Armando Hart left Havana in mid-March with a cultural delegation for a 45-day tour of Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, and Communist China. A government-sponsored Cuban ballet troupe is performing in Czechoslovakia following appearances in Communist China, North Korea, and other bloc countries, and in Havana President Dorticos on 16 March inaugurated a pictorial exhibition of Chinese Communist "economic achievements."

The Cuban Navy is to acquire two "destroyers" from the Soviet Union in late April, according to a usually reliable Cuban national, who added that the crews would consist mainly of Soviet nationals until a sufficient number of Cubans were trained to take over. Extensive training would probably be necessary, since Castro has drastically purged the Navy's regular officer corps. Cuba has no destroyers at present, its largest vessels being in the patrol escort class. The Castro government is known to have been seeking to purchase high-speed coast guard craft since July 1959, and the "destroyers" referred to may actually be coastal patrol vessels.

Rumors persist of imminent Cuban action against the US Naval Base at Guantanamo. A 16 March report stated that many Cuban workers at the base are convinced that their government will soon prohibit all Cuban employees from working there. Such a possibility appears remote, however, since the American dollars received by Cuban employees provide Castro with badly needed foreign exchange. [REDACTED] the amount of dollars exchanged for Cuban pesos by the base workers each week reveal the government's continuing interest in this source of exchange.

Government military tribunals will deal harshly with the 381 insurgents who the government claims were captured by its forces in the Sierra Escambray area of central Cuba. The trials are expected to begin shortly in Santa Clara, capital of Las Villas Province. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the capture of six anti-Castro rebels in the Escambray region reveals that government operations are continuing there despite Havana's statement that the Escambray "counterrevolutionaries" have been eliminated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] anti-Castro forces of undisclosed size had landed on the coast of Pinar del Rio Province. One of the revolutionaries, who was described as "coming from Miami," was reported captured, and on 21 March, Cuban officials announced the capture of four Cubans and one American after they had landed in Pinar del Rio Province.

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The announcement on 21 March of the establishment of the anti-Castro "Revolutionary Council," headed by former Premier Jose Miro Cardona, signals the coalescence--at least on an interim basis--of many Cuban exile groups, and their action may presage more vigorous and effective exile activity against Castro.

In the UN General Assembly, Foreign Minister Raul Roa again is pressing for action on Cuba's charges of US "aggression" and predicting an imminent US-backed

invasion of Cuba. Bloc support for the Cuban claims seems assured, and bloc radio transmitters are echoing the Cuban charges.

Most Latin American members give little weight to Cuba's anti-US charges. This fact, along with the death of Cuban permanent UN delegate Bisbe on 20 March, may delay a full airing of the Cuban complaint.