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Insurgent Activity Increasing in Cuba

Skirmishes between government forces and a number of small insurgent bands in eastern Oriente Province are occurring almost daily, according to information reaching authorities of the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay. Base authorities estimate that there are more than a thousand insurgents but believe they lack sufficient arms and equipment. Government forces in the area, mostly militia, are estimated to number between 8,000 and 10,000.

[REDACTED] action had been initiated that day against insurgents near the Las Villas - Matanzas provincial border and that Fidel Castro had traveled to the area, presumably to supervise the operations. [REDACTED] government forces had lost contact with the insurgents by 3 April.

After seven months, guerrillas are still active in the Escambray Mountains of Las Villas Province, although government counteraction since early this year has considerably reduced their numbers and mobility. A guerrilla leader who saw action in this area reported in late March that, while the militiamen sent against the guerrillas were usually effective because of their numerical strength, they are neither well trained nor greatly disposed to fight. He said the government faced the constant threat of defection by the militiamen, but that this was minimized by the immediate arrest or transfer of malcontents. He added that most militia units in the Escambray are commanded by Communist officers of the regular army. A Cuban farmer from this area who recently escaped from Cuba reports that his conversations with militiamen during the past several months had convinced him that many of them are awaiting a good opportunity to defect.

Comment by Cuban media on the US "White Paper" issued on 3 April has been violent, and the official newspaper Revolucion described it as "a product worthy of the imperialist sewer in which the peoples of America will fling the garbage where they will one day fling imperialism itself."

[REDACTED]

