

*Cuba: (Information available as of 0430 EST) Fidel Castro's forces, supported by air, tanks, and artillery, are hitting hard against the anti-Castro fighters in southern Las Villas Province, and the next day or two will be critical ones. [According to a report from one observer, Soviet-type MIG aircraft were used against the anti-Castro landing forces.]

There is still no information of a general Cuban uprising, upon which anti-Castro forces that landed in Cuba on 17 April presumably had counted for assistance. The Castro government continues to maintain silence on the situation in the battle area. The regime is, however, stepping up its moves to arrest actual or potential anti-Castro elements, and [REDACTED] ordered units in Las Villas and Camaguey provinces to "search churches, convents, and religious colleges in an orderly manner," arresting all "counterrevolutionaries." On 18 April the Cuban national radio network reported the arrest in Havana of the Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop of Havana Province, long one of the church's most outspoken critics of the Castro government. Another 18 April broadcast stated that Castro's ex-Minister of Agriculture Humberto Sori Marin, who allegedly was involved in an assassination plot against Fidel Castro, was wounded and captured by government forces. No

Many Latin American political leaders are sympathetic to the anti-Castro cause, and there have been several anti-Castro demonstrations in Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia. This anti-Castro sentiment is probably reflected in the comment by a Peruvian Foreign Ministry official, who said he was "privately delighted" with the action against Castro. An "anti-Communist guerrilla legion" reportedly was being formed in Guatemala on 18 April; an announcement claimed the organization had 400 men ready to "help in the fight against the Communist regime in Cuba."

On balance, however, pro-Castro and pro-Communist groups in Latin America have been more articulate, though almost always

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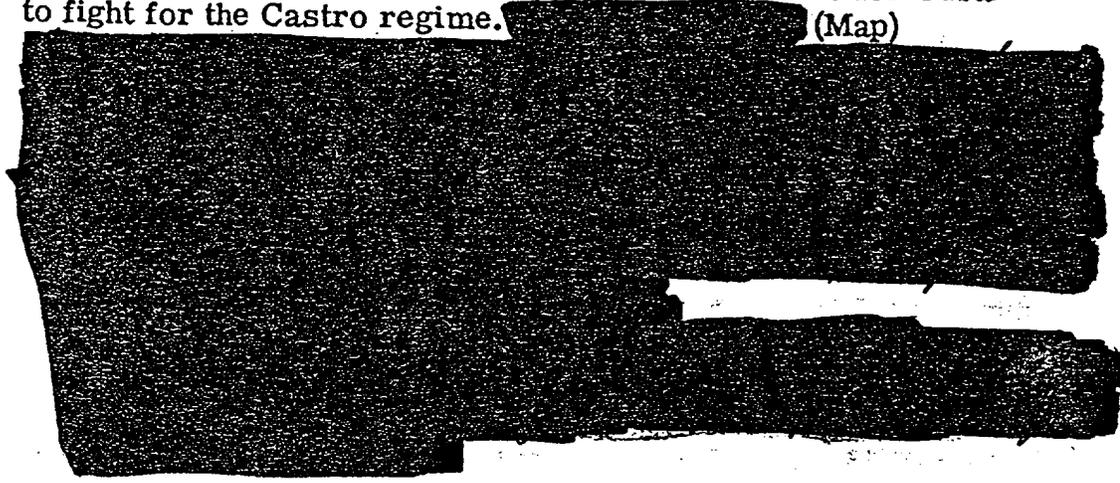
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through relatively small groups. Yesterday saw pro-Castro demonstrations, of varying sizes and frequently aimed against US installations, in most Latin American countries; the Communist and pro-Communist direction of these efforts seemed most evident in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela. In Panama, several hundred Castro sympathizers are said to have tried to enter the Canal Zone to demonstrate there. Further demonstrations of "solidarity with Cuba," some possibly violent, are likely.

On 17 April, the Venezuela Chamber of Deputies unanimously approved a resolution condemning "armed intervention by a foreign country" in Cuba. This followed approval of a similar resolution in the Venezuelan Senate two days earlier. In Chile, Communist and other leftist groups have been urged by the Cuban ambassador to prepare strikes and work stoppages in support of Castro, a tactic which may be employed by pro-Castro elements elsewhere. Press reports state that "volunteers" to help the Castro forces are being enrolled in Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela, and the Cuban press service claims that "more than 1,000 volunteers" will leave Mexico for Cuba to fight for the Castro regime. (Map)



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