

CUBA

There has been only limited international comment so far on the 22 March announcement of the formation of the anti-Castro "Revolutionary Council" under Castro's former Premier Jose Miro Cardona. An Argentine representative in the UN gave as his immediate opinion that the creation of a Cuban government-in-exile would have a "favorable impact in Latin America," but added that the formal announcement should have been made in some Latin American countries to avoid the charge that the new organization is a US "satellite" or "puppet." Radio Moscow charged the United States with violating several international agreements in allowing the anti-Castro group to organize a "government" on its soil.

Castro reacted by boasting in a 25 March speech of the resistance with which Cubans would meet any invasion attempt by "mercenaries" (i.e., anti-Castro Cuban exiles) or "marines." The "mercenary government" would last 24 hours or perhaps a little longer, he said, adding that "if they begin playing at local war, imperialism may meet with hemispheric war." He said that Cuba had many more arms than the Congo or Laos, and asserted that, in case of an attack on Cuba, "peasants and workers from many other American countries will march to war against imperialism."

Recent reports describing Cuba's internal economic situation are dominated by accounts of consumer-goods shortages, but most foreign observers in Havana continue to feel that the regime is not threatened by such economic dislocations. [redacted] ambassador to Havana commented to [redacted] that the shortage of consumer

goods in the market would "increase the state of discontent," but that he did not believe "the economic factor...will cause the collapse of the regime." He also stated, however, that "the next three months will be decisive for Castro and his revolution."

Sabotage and organized resistance activities evidently are continuing to increase throughout Cuba despite a presumably steady gain in the strength of the government's instruments of repression. Accounts of attempted sabotage of industrial and agricultural installations are becoming increasingly frequent, and anti-Castro terrorists are exploding bombs daily in Havana--twelve in a single day, according to one recent report. Sources in the Guantanamo area report that government forces are being employed against four "major" groups in eastern Oriente Province, and other armed dissidents are said to be active in Pinar del Rio and Las Villas provinces.

[redacted] reported at least 50 instances of suspected sabotage in sugar cane fires in four of Cuba's six provinces. A considerable portion of such fire-damaged cane normally can be salvaged by grinding it immediately, but the growing incidence of such reports implies some reduction in Cuba's estimated total 1961 sugar crop of 5,500,000-6,000,000 tons as well as the further erosion of support for Castro among the peasant groups on which his popularity rests. The present slowdown in Camaguey Province by sugar-mill workers protesting wage cuts provides a further illustration of disenchantment with Castro among lower income groups. [redacted]