



CUBA

Anti-Castro Groups

Increased activity has been apparent in the past week among anti-Castro groups both inside Cuba and in exile. Holy Week was the occasion for new popular

demonstrations against the government in Havana and elsewhere on the island as the Roman Catholic Church, although relatively weak in Cuba, came increasingly to be identified among some segments of the opposition as a

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rallying point for the anti-Castro, anti-Communist cause.

Intercepted messages among clandestine stations of the anti-Castro movement between 23 March and 1 April reveal increased coordination between units of the underground and Cubans in exile. Preparations for the infiltration into Cuba of men and arms are noted. In one message, dated 27 March, a station inside Cuba informed Cubans in Miami that "arrangements (have) already (been) made for reception plus a party of 50 guaranteed noninfiltrated"; the message also mentioned "two tons of merchandise." Another, similar message referred to anticipated acts of coordinated sabotage in Havana.

Reports on 1 April that the government had discovered an antigovernment plot among naval officers and men indicate that the navy, always the branch of the armed forces least loyal to Castro, has been further weakened. An anti-Castro message of six days earlier reported that the commander of the vessel Caribe, one of the navy's five coast guard cutters, was in contact with anti-Castro activists and had "promised us 50 percent of the total navy."

The guerrilla bands in the Escambray Mountains continue active, although their strength has been considerably reduced by government action in the past several months. The leader of a guerrilla group in this area reported in late March that while the militiamen sent against the guerrillas have usually been 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 militiamen, but this was minimized by the immediate arrest or transfer of malcontents. He added that most militia units are commanded by Communist officers.

A Cuban small farmer from this area who recently escaped from Cuba told US officials in Florida that his conversations with militiamen during the past several months had convinced him that many of them are waiting for a good opportunity to defect.

New outbreaks of guerrilla activity have occurred elsewhere, particularly in Oriente Province and near the Las Villas - Matanzas border. In eastern Oriente, where one group of insurgents landed in mid-March, there are now reported to be four major guerrilla bands in action.

An intercepted message from the leader of one of these bands reported on 22 March that he had over 50 men, "among them the turnkey of the Holguin jail who is willing to open the cell doors." [REDACTED] possible government foreknowledge of a coming insurgent action in this important provincial city.

[REDACTED] the initiation of action against an insurgent group in the Matanzas - Las Villas border area on that day and reported the travel of Fidel Castro to the area. The western province of Pinar del Rio is also the site of anti-Castro insurgent activity, according to [REDACTED]

International Contacts

The Communists continue to use Cuba as a base for spreading their influence elsewhere in the hemisphere. Preparations are under way for holding a meeting of the executive committee of the Communist-front International Students' Union in Cuba next month, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Paul Robeson has been invited to participate in "youth week" which is to begin on 22 April.

An "international volunteer labor camp" for youths is scheduled for Cuba in June. A conference of Latin American Women is to be held possibly this month in Brazil to prepare for a World Congress of Women in Cuba later this year under Communist-front auspices. Invitations are going out to a number of countries, in Latin America as well as the Sino-Soviet bloc, for representatives to participate in May Day celebrations in Cuba.

These various gatherings in Cuba will provide further opportunities for liaison among Latin American and bloc Communist leaders and for spreading Castro influence among susceptible groups from other countries.

Cuban Minister of Education Armando Hart, now traveling in several bloc countries, concluded a five-year cultural agreement with the East German regime on 29 March providing for the exchange of cultural groups, TV programs, and "informative material." Although East Germany remains the only bloc country with which Cuba does not yet have formal diplomatic relations, recent East Berlin broadcasts have reported the arrival there of a Cuban "mission," apparently permanent, which was greeted by officials of the East German Foreign Ministry.

Municipal officials of Moscow and Peiping are currently touring Cuba, returning the recent visits by the former Havana municipal councilor.

The Economy

The recent visit to Venezuela by the Soviet ambassador to Mexico was followed by reports that Moscow is seeking to have Venezuela resume at least a portion of its petroleum exports to Cuba. Although the Soviet Union has considerably expanded its tanker fleet since it began providing Cuba with all its petroleum needs in mid-1960,

a resumption of Venezuelan oil shipments to Cuba would relieve the USSR of at least a portion of an expensive burden.

The Cuban refineries were built to process Venezuelan crude, and have not operated as efficiently with the Soviet product, which has a relatively high sulfur content. In addition, the "lighter" Soviet crude does not provide the quantities of fuel oil required by Cuba, which necessitates large additional imports of fuel oil. It is unlikely that Venezuela will soon resume its traditional exports to Cuba. In any event, Venezuela's insistence on cash payment for its oil sales would require Moscow either to provide Cuba with the necessary foreign exchange or to reimburse Caracas for its exports to Cuba under some sort of triangular trade arrangement.

Cuban sugar production appears to be proceeding at a normal rate despite frequent fires in the canefields. Che Guevara, in his 28 March speech, implied that production had already nearly reached the 4,000,000 tons which the Sino-Soviet bloc is committed to buy. This quantity, about two thirds of the total expected crop, will be sold or bartered to the bloc at a premium price of four cents per pound. The remainder--the "sacrifice crop" for which the workers are to receive lower wages--is to be sold on the free world market. Morocco, Japan, and Chile have already contracted for Cuban sugar at prices equal to or slightly below those prevailing in the world market.

At the UN

Cuba's complaint of US "aggression and acts of intervention" may be discussed in the UN General Assembly's main political committee as early as 10 April. Certain members of the Afro-Asian bloc are reported planning to present a resolution highly critical of the

United States. The Mexican and Ecuadorean UN delegates believe that it would be preferable for the Latin American members to submit their own proposal "calling for peaceful settlement" and citing UN Charter provisions relating to use of regional organizations for settlement of disputes. Such a resolution, particularly if it had Latin American sponsorship, would command wide support in the 99-member General Assembly.

in bilateral discussions with the US, provided such discussions are "on a basis of equality and with an open agenda," but that the present attitude of the US Government would make any such discussions at this time "useless."

[REDACTED]

Cuba is actively supporting a resolution which would call on Havana and Washington to settle their differences "in bilateral discussions" and ask all UN members to "refrain from any act that might further aggravate tension between the two governments." For some weeks Cuba's public position has been that it is willing and anxious to engage