

# CURRENT INTELLIGENCE DIGEST



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LATIN AMERICA

11. The Cuban Situation

The communiqué read in Fidel Castro's name on the Cuban radio early on 20 April acclaimed the victory "in less than 72 hours" over the "mercenary army" in southern Las Villas Province. Future Cuban statements are likely to expand on the theme that this victory was a "significant defeat for "US imperialism." Meanwhile, strong repressive measures continue against those Cubans unsympathetic to Castro, and several "traitors," including Castro's former Minister of Agriculture Humberto Sori Marin, were executed on 20 April.

In Guatemala, Communists are reported by a usually reliable source to be planning demonstrations on 21 April against President Ydigoras for his alleged assistance to the anti-Castro "mercenaries."

Another source reports that the demonstrations are to pave the way for a coup that would be "a lesson to the United States to leave Castro alone in the future." Ydigoras, though at present in a relatively strong position, does face opposition from diverse political elements and some dissidence in the armed forces.

Sources: CIA  
TDCS-3472034, 20 Apr 61  
; CIA/FBIS HAVANA,  
20 Apr 61 (OUO).

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5. When the invasion by anti-CASTRO forces took place on 17 April all security precautions were taken. Radio Swan was completely jammed, and little news was available to the public. All travel to and from Habana was immediately stopped. Official cars were later allowed to enter and leave the city, but only after a thorough search by militiamen. Mass arrests continued on a large scale.<sup>3</sup>
6. When the government announced the collapse of the invasion on 19 April there was deep despair among the people of Habana. They realized that not only had CASTRO defeated an outside force but he had also destroyed, by the use of terror, the organized resistance inside Cuba. The mass arrests, although involving many people who were innocent, succeeded in eliminating the Cuban underground, at least temporarily. CASTRO's ability to withstand the attack has given him added strength. A sense of resignation in the face of his seemingly secure position has increased support for his regime.

Source Comments

1. Two women who were arrested in the late stages of pregnancy were reported to have suffered miscarriages while under detention.
2. Cases of mumps and typhus are reported to have been discovered among those detained at the Elanquita de Hornedo Theater.
3. As of 29 April only a few of the many arrested were known to have been released.

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Cuba  
REPORT NO. OO-K 3,127,929  
Experiences Before, During and After  
the Attempted Invasion of 17 Apr 61  
DATE DISC 5 June 1961  
NO PAGES 2  
REFERENCES  
DATE OF INFO May 61 and earlier  
PLACE & DATE ACQ Caraquey, May 61 and earlier  
THIS IS UN-EVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. The underground group with which I was affiliated was known as Directorio Estudiantil Revolucionario. I first heard about the invasion attempt at 0700 on 17 Apr 61 by means of a broadcast from Miami. I heard nothing from my underground group until 1500 that afternoon when I received a call from one of the leaders, an alumnus of our school, a man about 21 years old, who told me that the invasion was doomed, that many of the invaders had been captured, and that we should attempt to conceal ourselves. I learned later that afternoon that the young man who had warned us surrendered himself and about 40 other boys to Castro's Secret Police. I do not know what happened to them thereafter. Of our student body of about 150 only six or seven boys were members of the Directorio Estudiantil Revolucionario.
2. The school went on as usual during the day and the local students went home about 1600. At about 1700 the militia arrived and placed the six faculty members and the boarding students under arrest. The boarders were released about 1900. At 2330, 50 or more militiamen came and searched the school and the faculty residence with great thoroughness. They found some literature which they regarded as anti-Communist and at 0300 on 18 May 61 they took me and other faculty members to Secret Police Headquarters and then to a concentration camp. There were 200 - 1000 people in that camp including many of the students from our school. That camp was in Caraquey. Later, we were moved to another place outside of the town on the airport highway. None of the captured invaders was in either camp. I remained in the camp for eight days. The police attempted to recruit me as a mechanic and offered to pay me a salary if I would resume teaching at the school and would keep the police vehicles in repair. I pretended to agree and told the police that I would resign from my Order and would do whatever they wished. I told them, however, that my status with the Cuban Immigration Office was that of a religious immigrant and that it would be necessary for me to visit the Italian Embassy in Havana in order to renounce my religious standing and to

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regularize my status as a layman. This, of course, was foolishness, but the police were deceived and wrote me out a safe-conduct which enabled me to go back to the school and pick up my few personal belongings and then to board the train for Havana. The militia was arresting everyone they met and on my journey to Havana, and between the railroad station and the Embassy, I was stopped and questioned six times. However, with my safe-conduct I managed to make it to the Embassy. I remained in asylum in the Embassy until I boarded the ship on 3 May 61. The Embassy officials were unaware of my connection with the anti-Castro underground.

3. I have been asked about the conditions in the concentration camps. They were rugged but not unbearable. We slept on the ground. But I saw no evidences of torture or of executions. Discipline was maintained. On one occasion a militiaman attempted to hit one of the prisoners. His superior saw him, immediately intervened and took the militiaman away. From time to time groups of prisoners were released. When I left, after eight days, there were about 300 prisoners still remaining in the camp. Of course, all prisoners were photographed and fingerprinted. Prisoners who were released were informed that any infraction of the law, no matter how slight, would result in their reincarceration.
4. I have also been asked about the usefulness of Radio Swan. In my opinion, it would have been better if Radio Swan had never existed. Its broadcasts were full of lies and exaggerations. For example, Radio Swan, in one of its broadcasts, spoke at length about a big fire which was supposed to be raging at that time in Camaguey. I know for a fact that that story was completely false. Radio Swan also deceived, or attempted to deceive, the people about the efficiency of the operations in the Escambray mountains. Most of the people in the underground stopped listening to Radio Swan because they distrusted everything it broadcast.
5. I estimate that 60-70% of all Cubans are now anti-Castro but they are disorganized and are afraid of Castro's informers and of his strong-arm methods. As to leadership, the Cubans would prefer to be governed by a Junta rather than by an individual dictator. However, they recognize the need for a military leader in the counterrevolution and there are several men in Cuba whom they trust and respect. Probably the best choice is                      who is, I believe, still fighting in the Escambray. His lieutenant                      is also a good man.                      has an extensive organization in Cuba which has been responsible for numerous acts of sabotage, but he is suspected of having leftist tendencies. I heard a rumor at an underground Council in Camaguey to the effect that                      planned to recognize the Communist Party in Cuba. That rumor cost                      60% of his following in Camaguey, including his leader in that area.
6. If there is to be a new invasion it will have to be mounted on a massive scale if it is to have any chance for success. The underground must be armed and kept informed. When the invasion is imminent the underground forces should be given time to go to the hills. Then, and not until then, should a landing be attempted.

COUNTRY	Cuba	REF ID	CO- K 3, 187, 028
SUBJECT	Experiences Just Before, During and After the 17 Apr 61 Invasion Attempt	DATE	5 June 1961
		NO. PAGES	3
		REFERENCES	
DATE OF INFO	May 61 and earlier		
PLACE & DATE ACQ	Havana, May 61 and earlier		

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE

1. The invasion of 17 Apr 61 came as a complete surprise. We of the underground had expected it not sooner than 28 Apr 61. Our first intimation that the invasion was under way came from a broadcast from Miami, Fla, which I heard on 17 Apr 61 at 0500. Shortly thereafter I received warning from one of the underground members that the militia was on the way to our school and he urged me to go into hiding. This warning was repeated, some hours later, by the superior of my order. Unfortunately, I could not comply immediately since I had all the boys in our school to think about. At noon I dismissed the school and saw that the boys were taken to their homes. I then set about arranging for hiding places for the priests on our faculty. I placed three of them under concealment in private homes but when I returned for the fourth the militia had arrived and were engaged in an intensive search of the school and the private quarters of the faculty. They said they were searching for anti-Castro literature. They found none, but they told us that we were restricted to the school buildings.
2. We remained under house arrest for the next 10 days, during which a lay administrator came and took over the management of the school. On 27 Apr 61 I managed to escape by going through a glass door which the guards thought was an immovable window, and made my way to the Italian Embassy, where I was granted asylum. On 3 May 61, the Embassy placed me aboard a ship bound for Italy, via certain Gulf ports in the US.
3. Communications between the various anti-Castro groups before the invasion was most ineffectual. The group of rebels in the mountains were known as the Legion Democrática Anticomunista. It was supported and, insofar as possible, supplied with food, by the groups in the various cities and towns, known, collectively, as the Legion Democrática Constitucional. Also, they were supplied by air drops from the exile groups. There were five prominent exile groups in Cuba, among them "Rescate," the "30th of November

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"Movement" and "Monte Christi." Their communications consisted of person-to-person meetings between their leaders. Radio "Swan" was consistently jammed by Havana, but, even before the jamming started, we of the underground had learned to discount the messages from Radio "Swan" because of the exaggerations which they invariably contained.

4. There is no doubt that a great many people in Cuba are disaffected. Probably not more than one-third of the populace is pro-Castro, but those are the people who have profited from the Castro revolution, they are fanatically in favor of the regime and almost all of them are well armed. Another third of the populace is anti-Castro but they would probably remain passive if another invasion were launched. The remaining third of the people, and, probably, 80% of the armed forces, would militantly join an effort to overthrow the Castro regime provided: (a) they had sufficient warning that the invasion was to take place, (b) they had access to weapons, (c) the invasion was of sufficient magnitude as to appear to have a reasonable chance of success. An effective bombing of military installations would be of paramount importance. It would also be most helpful, of course, in the case of these doubtful starters, if the invasion were initiated by the liquidation of the Castros and Guevara. It may be asked why none of these people did anything to help the invaders on 17 Apr 61. There are two answers: In the first place, they were not informed that the invasion was to take place on that day so that they were not prepared to act. In the second place, Castro got the jump on them by arresting and imprisoning from 150 thousand to 200 thousand people within the first 24 hours after the invasion began. It is my estimate that the anti-Castro underground, before the invasion, numbered about two thousand in Havana and about 10 thousand in the rest of the country. While I have no exact information about the fate of the members of the underground, I doubt that many of them escaped Castro's dragnet.

5. Cardinal Archbishop Arceaga is in asylum in the Argentine Embassy in Havana. The other eight bishops are all in their home dioceses but are under house arrest. They have given permission for foreign priests and religious to leave Cuba. Native-born priests and nuns are expected to stay. I know of no plans by Church authorities to take countermeasures against Castro. Obviously, he has merited excommunication but he announced on the radio, on 1 May 61, I believe, that he would pay no attention to such a move, so I think it improbable that the Church authorities will resort to that penalty. The church schools are being taken over by lay authorities. In my school, for example, a layman is in charge, although four priests still remain there. My school is a college devoted to higher education, but since Castro's representative has taken over, many of the students are illiterates who are using the school's facilities to try to learn to read and write. The text books used in the school abound in pro-Communist and anti-imperialist sentiments. Before the Castro take-over of the school, a great majority of the students were anti-Castro, but, as is usual, there was a small core of devoted Fidelistas. I do not know what the situation is at present.
6. I have been asked if I have any information about possible missile sites on the island of Cuba or on Cayo Grande. My information is entirely inferential or based on rumors. There is an area about 20 km east of Havana, on the northern coast, which is closed to all traffic. I have heard that many technicians have gone to that area and that none of them have been permitted to return. When trucks arrive at the gate to the installation the drivers are relieved and supplanted by drivers from the installation. I tried to penetrate the installation by sending a group of boy-scouts on a hike in that vicinity but the scout leader told me that the group was turned back by guards. The area is served by a road but not by any railroad. There are a number of beaches where craft could land. With regard to Cayo Grande, there is little doubt that a great deal of construction is going on there but no one appears to have any definite information as to what is being built. The conjectures vary from hotels to prisons.

7. There are still about one thousand men fighting in the Escambray and perhaps 500 in Pinar del Rio, but I am sure that the problem of supplying them with food and ammunition is becoming increasingly difficult since most, if not all, of their supporters are in jail. The rumor, even before the invasion, was that Castro had surrounded the rebels with 70 thousand militia. If that rumor is only partly true it would appear to rule out the Escambray as a suitable area from which to launch a counterrevolutionary effort even if the fighters there were massively reinforced by air.
8. As to the personality of the leader of an invasion who would be acceptable to the anti-Castro groups, I do not think that his background is too important provided he is unmistakably anti-Communist. The fact that the leader or leaders had had some past identification with Batista would not disqualify them.

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