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COPY NO. 711

OCI NO. 0270/E

9 March 196

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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date 10 Jan 77

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CUBA

Opposition elements are maintaining their campaign against the Castro government through a variety of activities. Sabotage attempts against industrial installations and public utilities are occurring frequently, and many tons of sugar cane have been reported burned. A source who recently escaped from Cuba said that an opposition group has detailed plans for the sabotage of Cuban oil refineries around Havana.

Fighting is continuing in the Escambray Mountains, al-

though reports of government seizures of supplies intended for opposition forces suggest that anti-Castro operations there have been considerably reduced.

Castro's 4 March speech, delivered at ceremonies marking the first anniversary of the explosion of an ammunition ship in Havana harbor with a large number of casualties, blamed the United States for all activity against his regime and taunted the anti-Castro exiles for not attempting to invade Cuba and reinforce

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the guerrilla bands, which he claimed are being "mopped up" in Las Villas and Oriente provinces. He ridiculed attempts to supply opposition forces by means of air drops and said that the regime had captured all such materiel and would soon exhibit it in Havana so that foreign newspapermen and diplomats could view it and "decide to whom it belongs and who intervenes in affairs of others."

President Dorticos, addressing the first Latin American plantation workers' conference in Havana on 4 March, frankly exhorted the delegates to follow the Cuban example on agrarian reform in their own countries--a statement sharply contrasting with the Castro regime's recent protestations to other Latin American governments that the Cuban revolution would not be "exported" to their countries.

Cuba's circular note of late February welcoming Latin American efforts to mediate differences between the United States and Cuba elicited a response from the Frondizi government in Argentina announcing its intention to send special envoys to Havana and Washington in order to seek means of easing tension between the two countries. This action was probably intended as a gesture to impress public opinion both at home and abroad, inasmuch as, among the large Latin American countries, Argentina has been the strongest critic of Cuba and has supported only multilateral consideration of the Cuban problem. Argentina as well as most other Latin American countries criticized a recent Ecuadorean mediation offer inspired mainly by propaganda motives.

Cuba declined the Argentine offer on 8 March, basing its action on the assertion that the US "does not want to sit down and talk" about its differences with Cuba or reduce hemisphere tensions, as Castro charged in his 4 March speech.

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10 March 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Is Time on Our Side in Cuba?

1. We continue to hold to the view, last expressed in a memorandum to you on 27 January, that Castro remains firmly in control of Cuba and that his position is, if anything, likely to grow stronger rather than weaker as time goes on.*

2. To be sure, the regime's once overwhelming popular support has greatly diminished in recent months and various instances of guerrilla opposition, sabotage, and economic dislocation have arisen to plague it. However, we see no signs that such developments portend any serious threat to a regime which by now has established a formidable structure of control over the daily lives of the Cuban people. The militia is absorbing experience, training, and new weapons

*This was also one of the principal conclusions of our last formal assessment of the Cuban situation, SHIE 85-3-60, "Prospects for the Castro Regime," 8 December 1960.

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and is becoming a pervasive instrument for internal security, though the fully effective portion of it is likely to be much smaller numerically than its rumored gross size of 200,000 or more. Internal opposition, though widespread, still appears to lack sufficient organized strength, equipment and cohesion to provide a serious challenge. Moreover, Cuba's economic difficulties will probably not become great enough to jeopardize the regime. This year's sugar crop will probably be of normal size. In any event the Sino-Soviet Bloc can be depended on to provide such assistance as Cuba may need to stay afloat.

3. The prospects for effective international action against Cuba remain poor, even though Castro's appeal and prestige have declined considerably throughout Latin America since 1959. Most of the governments in the OAS are opposed to Castro on one account or another, but, with the exception of six which have no relations with Cuba,⁶ there is extreme reluctance or unwillingness to participate in collective action on the Cuba problem. The hands-off policies of Brazil, Chile, and Mexico are of considerable influence in this respect.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

⁶El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru.

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23 March 1961

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

CUBA

The Castro regime continues to expand its ties with the Sino-Soviet bloc. At least two Cuban delegations are traveling in the bloc on official missions. One, headed by Transport Minister Camacho, held talks with transport officials in East Germany and Czechoslovakia and then went on to the USSR.

Education Minister Armando Hart left Havana in mid-March with a cultural delegation for a 45-day tour of Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, and Communist China. A government-sponsored Cuban ballet troupe is performing in Czechoslovakia following appearances in Communist China, North Korea, and other bloc countries, and in Havana President Dorticos on 16 March inaugurated a pictorial exhibition of Chinese Communist "economic achievements."

The Cuban Navy is to acquire two "destroyers" from the Soviet Union in late April, according to a usually reliable Cuban national, who added that the crews would consist mainly of Soviet nationals until a sufficient number of Cubans were trained to take over. Extensive training would probably be necessary, since Castro has drastically purged the navy's regular officer corps. Cuba has no destroyers

at present, its largest vessels being in the patrol escort class. The Castro government is known to have been seeking to purchase high-speed coast guard craft since July 1959, and the "destroyers" referred to may actually be coastal patrol vessels.

Rumors persist of imminent Cuban action against the US Naval Base at Guantanamo. A 16 March report stated that many Cuban workers at the base are convinced that their government will soon prohibit all Cuban employees from working there. Such a possibility appears remote, however, since the American dollars received by Cuban employees provide Castro with badly needed foreign exchange.

Government military tribunals will deal harshly with the 381 insurgents who the government claims were captured by its forces in the Sierra Escambray area of central Cuba. The trials are expected to begin shortly in Santa Clara, capital of Las Villas Province. There are continuing indications that anti-Castro forces are still operating in the Escambray region, however, as well as in other parts of the island. On 21 March, Cuban officials announced the capture of four Cubans and one American after they had landed in Pinar del Rio Province.

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

The announcement on 21 March of the establishment of the anti-Castro "Revolutionary Council," headed by former Premier Jose Miro Cardona, signals the coalescence--at least on an interim basis--of many Cuban exile groups, and their action may presage more vigorous and effective exile activity against Castro.

In the UN General Assembly, Foreign Minister Raul Roa again

is pressing for action on Cuba's charges of US "aggression" and predicting an imminent US-backed invasion of Cuba. Bloc support for the Cuban claims seems assured, and bloc radio transmitters are echoing the Cuban charges. Most Latin American members give little weight to Cuba's anti-US charges. This fact, along with the death of Cuban permanent UN delegate Bisbe on 20 March, may delay a full airing of the Cuban complaint. ~~(SECRET)~~

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CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

COUNTRY	CUBA	REPORT NO.	TDCS-3/469,975
SUBJECT	CUBAN AIRCRAFT ON ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE USE	DATE DISTR.	30 MARCH 1961
DATE OF INFO.	25 MARCH 1961	PRECEDENCE	ROUTINE
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	(21 MARCH 1961)	REFERENCES	IN 27410
APPRAISAL	3	FIELD REPORT NO.	
THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.			
SOURCE			

1. THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT HAS THREE AIRPLANES IN READINESS FOR AN IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE AT ANY TIME. A BRITANNIA, WITH A PERMANENT CREW, IS STATIONED AT THE RANCHO BOYEROS AIRPORT AND IS TESTED EVERY DAY. A CATALINA AMPHIBIOUS PLANE IS STATIONED ALTERNATELY IN CAMP LIBERTAD AND PLAYA BARAGOA. WHEN IN CAMP LIBERTAD, IT IS PARKED BESIDE THE HANGAR NEXT TO THE HELICOPTER USED BY FIDEL CASTRO. THE "PIOO TURQUINO", WHICH IS SIMILAR TO THE LOST AIRPLANE "SIERRA MAESTRA", IS EQUIPPED WITH AUXILIARY FUEL TANKS AND IS STATIONED AT THE INTERSECTION OF RUNWAY #3 AND THE NORTH-SOUTH RUNWAY AT THE SAN ANTONIO DE LOS BAÑOS AIR BASE. IT IS PARKED NEAR A TOWER FORTIFIED WITH MACHINE-GUNS. (SOURCE COMMENT: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THESE THREE PLANES ARE KEPT IN READINESS MERELY TO DRAW SUSPICION AWAY FROM THE "VIBER" PLANE PAINTED RED, WHITE, AND BLUE, WHICH IS USED NORMALLY FOR CASTRO. THIS PLANE

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STATE	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SECDEF	NSA	NSC	USA	OC	ONE	OCY	OAR	OO	EBL	JAN			
TELEGRAM													INFORMATION REPORT			TELEGRAM		
TREASURY													REPCINCLANT					

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IN 27410

PAGE 2

IS EQUIPPED WITH WHEELS AND PONTONS AND HAS PLACES FOR SIX PASSENGERS. IT IS ALWAYS KEPT IN THE VICINITY OF CASTRO, NO MATTER WHERE HE TRAVELS. THE AIRCRAFT IS EQUIPPED WITH EXTREMELY POWERFUL RADIO EQUIPMENT.)

2. FIELD DISSEM: CINCLANT.

END OF MESSAGE

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