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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

Approved for Release
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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 country 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.

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.

Recent reports indicate that sugar cane fires--allegedly set by saboteurs--may be increasing. 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. (S-
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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	Cuba	REPORT NO.	CS -3/470,587
SUBJECT	Signs of Discontent among the Cuban Populace; Activities of the Government to Strengthen the Regime	DATE DISTR.	6 April 1961
		NO. PAGES	3
		REFERENCES	RD

DATE OF INFO. March 1961

PLACE & DATE ACQ. (31 March 1961)

FIELD REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE:

1. The great mass of Cuban people believe that the hour of decision is at hand and that the survival of the CASTRO regime is in balance. They expect an invasion to take place before mid-April 1961 and place great reliance in it.
2. The CASTRO regime is steadily losing popularity, and the lack of enthusiasm of the Cuban people is reflected in Habana, where housewives and servants must stand in line for hours to obtain such necessities as soap and lard. Cuban women have become the leaders of opposition activity and urge their husbands to undertake action to alleviate the present situation. The people have begun to lose their fear of the government, and subtle sabotage is common. People deliberately break beer bottles and glasses, knowing that the government cannot replace them, and no one uses change, so that small commercial transactions have become hopelessly involved. CASTRO has said publicly that people who stand in line to purchase scarce items are counterrevolutionaries because they are trying to show that the government cannot provide. As a result nearly everyone stands in line, lines at grocery stores can be seen extending for four to five blocks. Church attendance is at an all-time high as a demonstration of opposition to the government.
3. Travelers through the interior of Cuba have reported that the disenchantment of the masses has spread through all the provinces. Spokesmen of opposition groups say that Santiago de Cuba and all of Oriente Province is seething with hate. For oppositionists Santiago is the easiest city in Cuba in which to operate. Workers there readily give all the support they can, including hiding underground leaders in their homes. Very few of the aims of the Cuban revolution have passed on to the Cuban masses. The salary of cane-cutters has been cut about fifty per cent; fishermen must sell their catch to the National Institute for Agrarian Reform at low prices and are paid in script which they consider valueless. Consequently, it is difficult to buy fish, and the fishermen try every means to sell their products illegally on the free or black market. Many government housing units have been constructed, but few are occupied. The reason in some cases is that poor planning or lack of supplies has led to failure to install plumbing and sewage facilities.

CLASS	GROUP	INDEX	FILE	SEARCHED	SERIALIZED	FILED

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4. The defection of Jose PARDO Llada, CASTRO propagandist and news commentator, has been discussed in all walks of life and is regarded as highly significant. Although everyone is aware that PARDO is a complete opportunist, it is also known that he often has the ability to predict the future and change his political affiliations. The ranks of the oppositionists will increase as more and more Cubans seek a means to join the "winning side."
5. It is impossible to estimate the number of arms which have now passed into private hands. It is easy to obtain a gun in Habana; weapons, usually rifles, are furnished by underground organizations. No one wishes to cache any extensive amount of arms because of the difficulty in hiding them successfully.
6. It is generally believed that the Cuban Army has been successfully penetrated by opposition groups and that it will not fight in the event of a showdown. It is also certain that the police, who despise the militia, will not fight. The morale of the militia is falling. They have shown little wish to fight the opposition forces in the Escambray area of central Cuba, and some have been jailed for refusal to go to combat areas. Both militiamen and women try to find any excuse to wear civilian clothing, possibly because members of the opposition have been killing and wounding militia members in the streets and alleys of Habana and taking away their weapons. The government has had to disarm most of the women's militia because opposition groups were taking their weapons away from them.
7. As a result of the evident lack of support for the regime among the armed forces and the militia, CASTRO appears to have shifted his trust to the Asociacion de Jovenes Rebeldes (AJR, Rebel Youth Association)² which is composed of a large number of teen-agers from the lower classes. AJR members, uniformed and armed with Czech machine-guns, are arrogant and mean and are feared by the Cuban populace. They are fiercely loyal to CASTRO because of their new-found notoriety and pay. The AJR is divided into military-type platoons and trained in military tactics. AJR members are used to show the force of the government at rallies and demonstrations and also in attacks upon Catholics. Parents of members resent the formation of the AJR because it has brought about loss of parental control and respect.
8. CASTRO's decree of 1961 as the "Year of Education" and his order for closing all schools on 15 April and sending the students to rural areas to teach the farmers has caused much resentment among certain groups. Parents, especially of female students, do not want to send their children to rural areas to risk their health and lose the effects of their parental upbringing. Operators of private schools, whose fixed expenses will continue during the period of suspension of school, fear they will become bankrupt and be forced to ask the government to assume the operation of the school.
9. Habana is filled with Soviet, Satellite, and Communist Chinese nationals, who appear to be living comfortably at government expense, probably part of the barter plan between Cuba and bloc countries. Through an arrangement with the government these nationals do not have to pay for expenses in public places but only sign a bill, which the owner of the establishment must present to the government for reimbursement. Cuban employees do not like this procedure because it eliminates tipping and the owners of the establishment are uncertain over their reimbursement. Soviet and Satellite officers are assigned to Cuban Government offices. Chinese are more of a mystery to the Cubans, since they are seen in large numbers but their function is not known. It is speculated that they are working largely in the Chinese colony, that they are assigned to government agricultural co-operatives in the interior of the country, or that they are helping the militia in the Escambray as instructors in guerrilla warfare.
10. The military camp at Managua is probably the most important one in the Habana area, it is a central depot for cargoes arriving on Soviet ships. The cargoes are unloaded by Soviet crews under maximum security on to trucks covered with

canvas. The convoy route is guarded by militiamen stationed at 25-yard intervals. On one occasion a canvas covering blew off a truck, and oblong boxes, approximately 25 feet long and two feet square, were observed. The airfield at Caspo Libertad has recently become a maximum security area and is protected by fences, searchlights, and constantly-manned .50-caliber machine-gun emplacements.

Headquarters Comments

1. Although Source is entirely reliable and is generally in a position to have access to the information on which he is reporting, his view of current conditions in Cuba may be somewhat influenced by his connections with opposition forces and his lack of close contact with pro-CASTRO Cubans.

2. ~~on~~ Joel IGLESIAS, president of the AJR, left Habana in late February to attend the meetings in Helsinki of the international preparatory committee of the Eighth World Youth Festival, after which he went to Moscow at the invitation of Soviet youth organizations.

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COUNTRY	Cuba	REPORT NO.	CS -3/473,011
SUBJECT	Military Activities in Pinar del Rio Province	DATE DISTR.	1 May 1961
		NO. PAGES	2
		REFERENCES	RD
DATE OF INFO.	Late March 1961		
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	() April 1961	FIELD REPORT NO.	

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SOURCE

1. On 24 March 1961, when a ship was sighted in the Santa Lucia-Dimas-Mantua area of the northern coast of Pinar del Rio Province, militiamen were sent out to patrol the hills and coasts of this area.¹
2. The eastern end of the province was under strict surveillance and every night the militiamen began their shooting and persecution of the anti-CASTRO men in the area. In the central part of the province the residents were not permitted to move about freely. The militiamen had helicopters at their disposal in this area and they had picked up a man they suspected of being engaged in counterrevolutionary activities. After the man was kept dangling from the helicopter at the end of a rope he talked and caused some arrests in Los Palacios. Around Mundito Ranch they were even searching vehicles driven by members of the Rebel Army.
3. After the landing of four or five anti-CASTRO men at Maratira Beach near Caranan and their capture as a result of a farmer's suspicions the coast and hills of this area were immediately surrounded by militiamen, who were also posted at all the bridges and culverts on the Mariel-Cabanas highway. About two hundred militiamen were sent to capture a group of men already in the hills in that area, but ten of the men evaded capture and took refuge in several nearby farms.
4. Armament placed at the Matahambre Mines had been reduced.²
5. One of the workers at the electric plant in Santa Lucia said that the militia was a form of slavery and that he refused to become a member. The other workers backed him up and there is no militia at this plant.
6. A militia instructor was haranguing the men at San Julian Base, saying that they must have no family other than their country and must give up their parents and children. As a result, one of the peasant militiamen arose and expressed his sentiments about Fidel CASTRO in no uncertain terms; this had repercussions throughout the area.

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Source Comments

1. The number of militiamen stationed in an area changes frequently. For example, during the week of 20 - 25 March there were two thousand four hundred men stationed at San Julian, whereas on 27 March there were only three hundred. In other places, where there have been no militia, they suddenly appear in large numbers.
2. As of late March 1961 ninety per cent of the workers there were believed to be anti-government.

COUNTRY Cuba/US/S/West Germany REPORT NO. OO-B 3,184,664
SUBJECT Underground in Cuba Beginning to Distrust and Hate US/Soviets Searching for Bottoms to Transport Cuban Sugar to Hamburg/Arrest of 42 G-2 Members/ Abortive Plan to Take Over Havana DATE DISTR. 25 April 1961
NO. PAGES 2
REFERENCES
DATE OF INFO 4 Apr 61 and earlier
PLACE & DATE ACQ ---
14 Apr 61

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE

1. Cuban underground elements of all parties are beginning to show unmistakable signs of distrust and hate in their feelings toward the US. These sentiments have been inspired by two quite opposed forces. First, by the Cuban exile leaders in Miami who have blamed every blunder and delay in supply and drop operations on the stupidity of the Yankees. Secondly, by the Castro forces inside Cuba who have effectively spread the story that the US is aiming to take over Cuba and plans to facilitate this action by letting the undesirables in the country kill each other off in civil war. A third factor, the knowledge that the US financially aided Castro with sums up to US\$150,000,000.00 and now, professed to be against him, still continues to trade with him, as in tobacco, adds further fuel.
2. Two Soviets, who did not identify themselves with any organization, approached a well-known shipping agency in Havana about 1 Apr 61 and stated that they were looking for ships to carry Soviet-purchased Cuban sugar from Havana to Hamburg, West Germany, where it would be sold to German interests. One hundred thousand tons of sugar are involved in the transaction and 10 bottoms would be needed to transport it to Germany. There was no indication that the Soviets were able to arrange the transportation as of 4 Apr 61.
3. Forty-two members of Castro's G-2 organization were arrested on 29 Mar 61, for conspiring with anti-Castro elements to provide the latter with classified government information.
4. A plan to take over the city of Havana in early April 1961 with a force of some 10 thousand men, made up of disenchanted members of the Cuban army, navy and police on the one hand and underground elements on the other, came to an abortive end when they failed to win the support of some 30 thousand ex-army regulars who are underground throughout Cuba. These ex-army regulars, who are partly armed, are in two main groups:
 - a. The Junta Cívica Militar Cristiana, which has about 15 thousand men, is well organized and has platoons all over the island, with about seven thousand in Havana alone. This group works with the MRR and is now getting arms.
 - b. A group of about 10 thousand men operating independently of the

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Junta (above) with resources throughout the island. This group has been talking union with the MTR and was the one which refused to join in the move against Havana. It had hinged its decision to join the movement on the arrival of [redacted] When he was arrested and imprisoned the group withdrew its support and the project was abandoned.

-end-

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
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