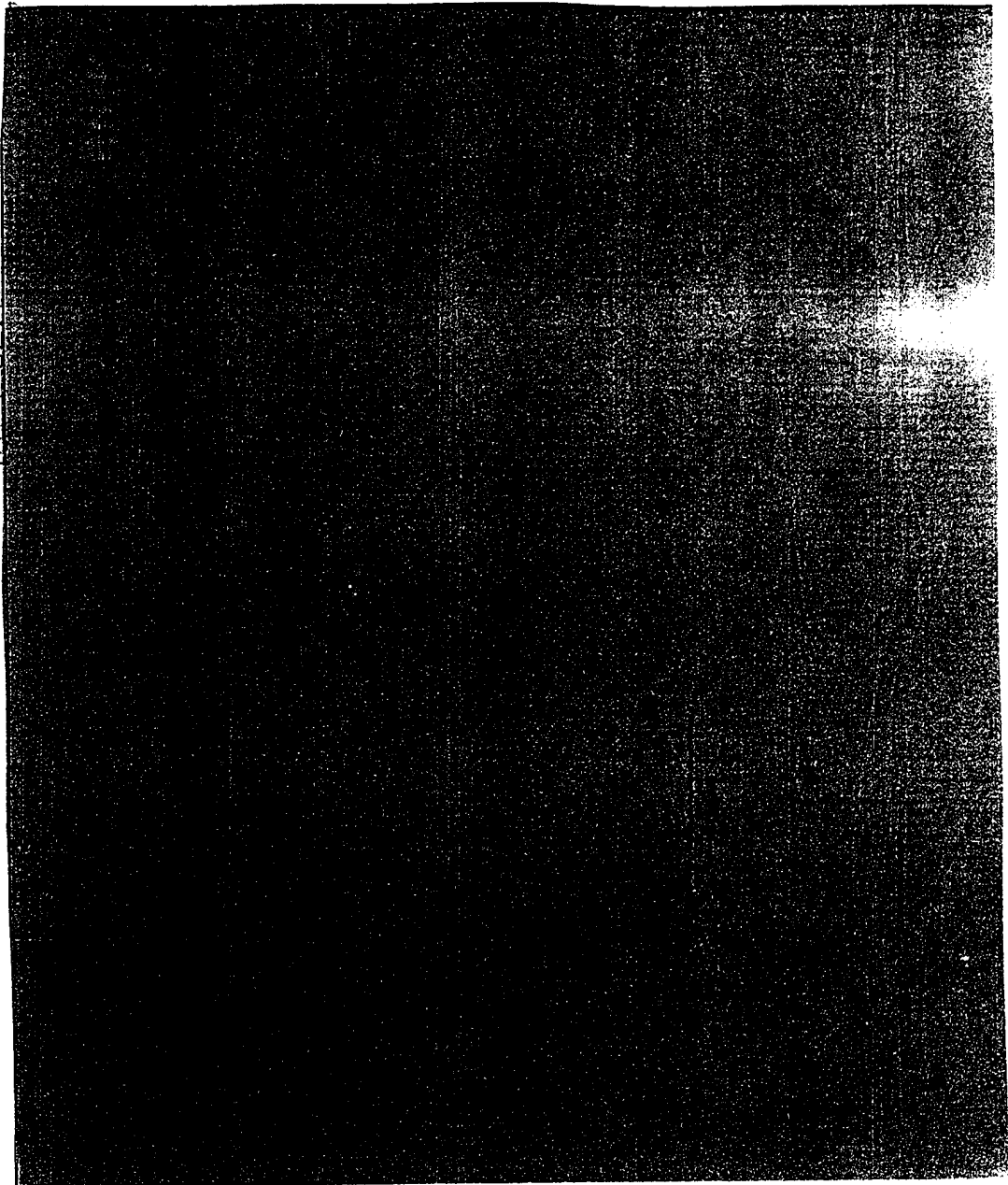


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CUBAN GOVERNMENT CHANGES

The shake-up in high Cuban Government posts on 26 November demonstrates Fidel Castro's apparently complete commitment to extremism in his efforts to re-

make Cuba. He now has rejected practically all experienced and moderate advisers. He is resorting increasingly to charges of persecution of the Cuban



PART I

OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

Page 7 of 8

PART II

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Page 1 of 19

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY REVIEW

3 December 1959

revolution and is continuing his vicious attacks against the United States. Ambassador Bonsal believes this trend is accompanied by a growing receptivity to guidance by Communist-oriented elements.

The pro-Communist Ernesto "Che" Guevara, new head of the National Bank, now is in a position to determine the allocation of the foreign exchange, on which Cuba's economy is based because of its large sugar sales. He can thus implement his precept that to achieve true independence Cuba must shift the pattern of its trade away from dependence on the United States.

Guevara laid the basis for expanded trade contacts during a three-month trip last summer to nine Afro-Asian countries and Yugoslavia. Numerous trade missions he has sent to Europe have found evident interest in supplying Cuba--particularly the well-financed National Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA)--with credits, arms, agricultural equipment, industrial machinery, and technical assistance. Guevara is also likely to be instrumental in implementing Castro's long-planned nationalization of private banking in Cuba.

The prime minister relies heavily for advice on Guevara,

whose economic knowledge is basically weak and colored by his concept of the Cuban revolution as a class struggle in which the government must "change the economic panorama" of the country and its social system.

The new minister of public works--also a powerful post--is Captain Osmani Cienfuegos, who is probably a Communist. He has served since last March as director of the Cuban Army's indoctrination program. The new "minister for recovery of misappropriated assets," Lt. Commander Rolando Diaz, is a naval officer of unknown political orientation but considered an opportunist approved by Raul Castro.

The few remaining moderate officials, including the ministers of finance and communications, now are virtually without influence and almost certain to be replaced soon. They are convinced that Cuba is rapidly headed for economic collapse and a Communist take-over. Moderate elements appear despondent and disorganized and have made no evident move toward unity. Despite the political overtones of the recent successful Catholic congress, the church hierarchy lacks unity and firm leadership and is reluctant to take a stand on internal political issues.

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PART I

OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

Page 8 of 8

PART II

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Page 1 of 19