

Fourteen leaders of the Salvadoran Communist-front April and May Revolutionary party (PRAM) are reported to have left or to be about to leave for Cuba. The US Embassy at San Salvador commented that the size and composition of the group indicate that El Salvador is about to receive a "massive injection" of Castro-Communist doctrine, guidance, and support. The group may hope that it can obscure the real purpose of its trip by timing the visit to coincide with celebrations in Cuba on 1 and 2 January--to be attended by delegations from various Latin American countries--in commemoration of the second anniversary of Fidel Castro's revolutionary victory.

Peasant groups being organized by PRAM and the Communist-dominated labor federation reportedly are taking on the character of a "popular militia" and already may control certain strategic points in the country. The three civilians on the governing six-man junta and several cabinet members suspected of being Communist sympathizers have continued to fill government posts at all levels, particularly in the ministries of labor and justice, with suspected Communists.

A concerted drive led by Mario Castrillo Zeledon, a suspected Communist who is attorney general, to gain control over the internal security functions of the government has resulted in a growing awareness of the Communist threat by some military members of the regime. The military is split by dissension, however, and has given no recent indication that it is about to unite to stem the Communist bid for power.

The junta reportedly has decided to hold congressional elections next May, to be followed by the election in the new Congress of a provisional president to serve until a duly elected president takes office in September 1962. This move may be intended to mollify the military and quiet the fears of the urban citizenry, which along with other segments of the population is becoming increasingly worried over gains being made by Communist and Castro sympathizers. The Communists have already made considerable progress in gaining control over the nation's electoral machinery, however, and PRAM will probably soon be inscribed as a political party and thus be able to compete in the May elections.

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