

6. Situation in Cuba

The Swiss Embassy in Havana has reported that a large part of the population there is armed and in a fanatical mood and that massacres could occur if passions continued to rise. A number of American citizens have sought Swiss protection, and the Swiss are consulting the Canadian and British ambassadors on the possibility of negotiating the Americans' evacuation. The report, passed to the US Embassy in Bern on 22 April, noted that the situation in Cuba is graver than can be seen from outside. Several hundred American citizens elected to remain in Cuba after the United States severed diplomatic relations with the Castro regime last January.

Unconfirmed reports received by the Swiss Embassy in Havana state that the Cuban

Government has arrested about 20,000 persons. A growing number of Latin American chiefs of state, including the Presidents of Chile and Venezuela, are urging the Castro government to treat its political prisoners with clemency.

Khrushchev's letter to President Kennedy on 22 April referred to the US presence at the base at Guantanamo "against the clearly expressed wish of the Cuban people and government." This is probably intended to suggest that the USSR would support any Cuban demand that the US relinquish the base.

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