

Castro Says U.S. Infiltrates Agents And Arms Into Cuba

MIAMI, July 26 (UPI) — Premier Castro charged today that the United States is infiltrating agents, arms and explosives into Cuba in a continuing effort to topple his regime through counter-revolution.

Although predicting these alleged activities were doomed to failure, Castro said he was ready if necessary to mass newly organized "bandit fighting battalions" into a division-sized unit to meet any threat.

He spoke in Santa Clara, capital of Las Villas Province, which once was a hotbed of anti-Castro activities. His speech, marking the 12th anniversary of his attack on Cuban army barracks in 1953, was monitored here.

Castro gave some of the casualty figures in battles and skirmishes over the past few years in Las Villas.

He said 295 government troops died "in combat" or in operations-connected accidents in that province alone. His force killed or captured 2005

"counter-revolutionaries" in the same unspecified period, presumably 1961-1965.

"It was a long fight, lasting several years," he said. Some (anti-Castro) bands were wiped out and then the enemy (United States) organized new bands and armed them until finally they were all totally wiped out.

"Now only three of these counter-revolutionaries remain at large in Las Villas, not as a band but as three fugitives," he added.

Observers had expected Castro to lift the veil of mystery which has shrouded the disappearance from public of Industry Minister Ernesto Che Guevara.

Castro mentioned Guevara but only noted that he and the late Camilo Cienfuegos had achieved "heroic feats" as leaders of twin army columns in the struggle against the Batista dictatorship.