

Castro Reports a Landing Of Exile Force From U.S.

Fighting Said to Continue —Washington Denies Knowledge of Raid

Special to The New York Times

MIAMI, April 19—Premier Fidel Castro announced today that a group of "mercenaries" landed in eastern Cuba on Friday and that Government troops were still fighting the invaders.

In a 270-word communiqué, broadcast by the Havana radio, Mr. Castro said that the landing took place some 15 miles east of Baracoa, in Oriente Province, on the eastern tip of Cuba across from Haiti.

The communiqué said that four soldiers were killed and two seriously wounded in clashes with the mercenaries. Two of the mercenaries were reported to have been killed and three captured.

U. S. Links Charged

Mr. Castro indicated that the mercenaries, who he said came from the United States, were Cuban exiles. He said they were equipped with "modern automatic Yankee army weapons."

[In Washington, the State Department said Sunday that no agency of the Government had any knowledge of an armed expedition mounted on United States territory for an attack on Cuba.]

The fact that the communiqué was signed by Mr. Castro, and that it acknowledged that



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operations against the invaders were continuing, appeared to indicate that the Cuban Government regarded the landing as a significant development.

In Miami, Andres Nazario Sargen, secretary general of Alpha 66, an exile "action group," said in a telephone interview that it was possible that the men who had landed in Cuba belonged to his organization.

Mr. Nazario emphasized that Alpha 66 did not have any operational base in the United States and that any actions against Cuba had been carried out from outside United States territory.

He declined to give more details about the landing. He said that to do so might jeopardize the men, who were being pursued by Cuban troops.

Other exiles here said that about 40 men could be involved

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in the landing. The sources said that possibly two or more landings had taken place and that the exiles had been headed by Vicente Mendez, a former rebel army captain, who fought with Mr. Castro against the dictatorship of President Fulgencio Batista.

The landing coincided with the ninth anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion in which a force of 1,600 exiles was defeated by Cuban soldiers in less than 72 hours.

Alpha 66 was formed in February, 1962, in Miami by a group of 66 Cuban exiles and

since then it has reported a number of raids against Cuba. The group chose the name Alpha, the first letter of the Greek alphabet, as representing the beginning of the end for the Castro Government.

Mr. Castro's communiqué said that shortly after the landing at dawn on Friday, Government forces had made contact with the rebels and had captured two prisoners, two automatic weapons and plastic explosives.

The rest of the group apparently managed to escape, according to the communiqué. Several hours later, army troops, militia and frontier guard detachments clashed with the in-

vaders and reported that four of the Government force had been killed and two seriously wounded.

Two of the invaders were reported to have been killed and one captured in the clash. The rest managed to escape again, the communiqué indicated.

Harvest Termed Target

The area of the landing is one of the least populated sections of Cuba. Because of this and the mountainous terrain, the Baracoa region is suitable for guerrilla operations, Mr. Nazario said.

It was in the hills of the Sierra Maestra in this area that Premier Castro mounted his up-

rising against the Batista regime, and here his younger brother, Maj. Raúl Castro, carried on a lengthy guerrilla campaign.

In his communiqué, Mr. Castro said that the "landing of mercenaries" had been part of "imperialist plans to obstruct and hinder the [1970 sugar] harvest."

He said that such actions would have no effect on the harvest, in which the Government is trying to produce a record crop of 10 million tons of sugar.

Since 1961, more than a dozen exile landings, involving groups of five to 30 men, have

been reported by the Cuban Government.

It is believed that Mr. Castro is personally directing operations against the exiles. The Defense Minister, Raúl Castro; the Interior Minister Maj. Sergio del Valle, and President Osvaldo Dorticós are in Moscow heading the Cuban delegation to the Lenin anniversary celebration.

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