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Guatemalan Antiterrorist Campaign

The recent successful counterinsurgency operations have encouraged President Arana to extend the state of siege indefinitely.

During the state of siege due to expire today, security forces quietly eliminated many terrorists and bandits, mainly in the interior of the country. An estimated 200 have been killed in San Marcos Department alone. In Guatemala City, police apprehended or killed about 30 suspected terrorists, including the Chief of the Communist Party's terrorist arm. Bolstered by these successes, the army has closed all roads leading from the capital and is making a house-to-house search for subversives in a determined effort to cripple leftist organizations.

It is still too early to tell whether the insurgents will be seriously hurt by the campaign. The state of siege has given the government an opportunity to deal with its enemies, but its heavy-handed tactics could provoke popular antagonism. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

NOTE

CUBA: The number of Cubans leaving the country illegally via Guantanamo decreased last year. A total of 384 Cubans entered the base in 1970 as compared with 786 in 1969. The number coming by water routes rose last year, but a significant decline in land entries caused a 50 per cent drop in overall figures. The slowdown can be attributed to better civilian and military security as well as to the newly completed barrier fence. The 1971 total will probably also decrease substantially because of measures such as mine laying along the barrier fence, improved guard expertise, and an increase in waterborne security. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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