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DEFENCE PREPAREDNESS STRESSED IN MILITARY EXERCISES:

BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, NOV 24, REUTER -- MORE THAN FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND CIVILIANS TOOK PART IN SUNDAY'S +DEFENCE DAY+ (DIA DE DEFENSA) EXERCISE IN THE CITY OF HAVANA +AIMED AT MAKING SURE THAT EVERY CITIZEN KNOWS HIS PLACE, MEANS AND FORM OF BATTLE TO CONFRONT THE ENEMY WHEN NECESSARY (DIRIGIDO A LOGRAR QUE CADA CIUDADANO CONOZCA SU LUGAR, MEDIO Y FORMA DE LUCHA PARA ENFRENTAR AL ENEMIGO EN CASO NECESARIO), GRANMA REPORTED TODAY.

THE EXERCISES ARE PART OF A NATION-WIDE EFFORT TO ANSWER CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO'S CALL FOR +A WAR OF ALL THE PEOPLE+ (GUERRA DE TODO EL PUEBLO) IN CASE OF ENEMY ATTACK OR INVASION. THE CUBAN PRESIDENT HAS SAID THAT +ALMOST EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE COMBAT POTENTIAL OF OUR POPULATION, THAT IS, MEN AND WOMEN PHYSICALLY FIT TO FIGHT, IS ORGANIZED.+

LOCAL EXERCISES LIKE THOSE HELD IN HAVANA SUNDAY WILL CULMINATE IN THE +BASTION '86 STRATEGIC EXERCISE+ ON DECEMBER SEVENTH DURING WHICH THE REGULAR CUBAN ARMED FORCES, THE VOLUNTEER PEOPLE'S MILITIA WITH MORE THAN ONE MILLION MEMBERS AND THE COMMITTEES FOR DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION WITH VIRTUALLY HALF OF CUBA'S TEN MILLION POPULATION WILL CARRY OUT COMBINED MILITARY AND CIVILIAN DEFENCE OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT CUBA.

THE +BASTION '86 STRATEGIC EXERCISE+ WILL BE +THE MOST AMBITIOUS JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE EVER HELD IN CUBA,+ A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SAID.

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THE +BASTION '86 EXERCISE' WILL BE PRECEDED ON DECEMBER 2 BY THE BIGGEST MILITARY PARADE SINCE THE REVOLUTION, THE OFFICIAL SAID. THE PARADE, WHICH WILL ROLL AND MARCH THROUGH HAVANA'S REVOLUTION SQUARE (PLAZA DE LA REVOLUCION) MARKS THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF FIDEL CASTRO'S GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST THE CUBAN DICTATOR FULGENCIO BATISTA. IT WILL FEATURE A FLY-OVER BY MIG FIGHTERS, TANKS, ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND OTHER HEAVY EQUIPMENT AS WELL AS UNITS OF CUBA'S ARMY, NAVY, AIRFORCE, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES) AND THE VOLUNTEER PEOPLE'S MILITIA.

SUNDAY'S EXERCISE IN HAVANA, WHICH WAS CONDUCTED BY THE LOCAL COMMITTEES FOR DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION WAS CALLED +A SUCCESS+ BY PEDRO CHAVEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE'S POWER (ASAMBLEA PROVINCIAL DEL PODER POPULAR), GRANMA SAID.

GRASSROOT COMMITTEES FOR DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION ARE ORGANIZED IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD AND RURAL AREA OF THIS CARIBBEAN ISLAND. ACCORDING TO CUBAN OFFICIALS, ITS RPT THEIR

MAIN TASKS DURING PERIODS OF EMERGENCY WILL BE REVOLUTIONARY VIGILANCE, PREPARATION OF BOMB SHELTERS AND COOPERATING WITH THE PEOPLE'S MILITIA IN SUCH JOBS AS DIGGING TRENCHES. THE COMMITTEES MUST ALSO ENSURE THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AND THE ORGANIZED EVACUATION OF THE CITY IN CASE OF WAR.

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CUBAN SOURCES SAY THAT THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES FOR DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION HAVE BEEN TOLD TO ORIENT EACH FAMILY TO MAINTAIN A STOCK OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD SUCH AS CANNED MEAT AND CONDENSED MILK. IN ADDITION, THE SOURCES SAID, SPECIAL WAREHOUSES HAVE BEEN SET UP IN EACH OF THE FIFTEEN MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS OF THE CITY OF HAVANA PROVINCE FOR STORING RESERVES OF +UNTOUCHABLE+ FOOD TO BE USED IN CASE OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

ACCORDING TO A RECENT EDITION OF GRANMA, A SPECIAL MILITIA +CENTRAL CONTINGENT FOR FOOD INDUSTRY PROVISIONS+ (DESTACAMENTO CENTRAL DE ALIMENTOS DE LA INDUSTRIA ALIMENTICIA) HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO GUARD THE STORAGE PLACES.

IN A SPEECH LAST DEPTENBER, PRESIDENT CASTRO SAID THAT IF +THE IMPERIALISTS+ INVAD E CUBA THEY WOULD SUFFER +LIKE AN ELEPHANT AMONG SWARMS OF RED ANTS AND ANGRY WASPS.+ (...SE METIERA DENTRO DE ESTE HORNIGUERO, DENTRO DE ESTE AVISPERO, ESTE ENJAMBRE DE HORMIGAS Y AVISPAS BRAVAS...)

--REUTER/LEN
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