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EDITORIALS

Cuban Dilemma

Two days into the post mortem on the Cuban fiasco, Chairman J. William Fulbright says the testimony confirms his prior conviction that "the operation as a whole was a mistake" for which the White House, the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the State Department share "a collective blame."

A committee associate, Sen. Frank Church of Idaho, calls it a "dual mistake" inasmuch as "Communism can not be shot down in Latin America; it must be shown up, and this should be the object of our policy."

President Kennedy and his advisers may well be coming around to such a conclusion.

While there are still some abashed actionists around urging military intervention, that is the last step the United States could take, lacking a Castro move against the Guantanamo Naval Base. Even in that event the measures employed would be limited to the needs of base defense.

The U. S. can not make a military move against Cuba without stirring up the Latin American nations, most of whose peoples are sympathetic in varying degrees toward Castro as a revolutionist and fail to see him as a Communist puppet. Because of this, Latin American governments feel themselves restrained to act as circumstances otherwise dictate.

Moreover the highly critical reaction in Europe to even the small assistance this country gave the Cuban rebels is forewarning enough of what would be the situation in case of a direct move.

Nor can the U. S. logically support a talked-of follow-up invasion by Cuban rebels. It is obvious now that Castro has the military strength to repulse anything short of a fullscale landing operation backed by air and sea support the rebels can't command.

So circumstances seem to dictate a policy of the containment of Castro rather than his quick overthrow. This means a greater effort to influence the Latin American states to active resistance by arousing their peoples to the dangers of the Castro doctrine; and, of course, the only way the peoples can be aroused is to show them an alternate way to better their condition.

Peoples who have known little freedom are not much impressed by possible loss of it to Communism.

It appears now that if Castro is to be overthrown it must be by subversion, and it is expected that the Cuban rebels will become active along this line. This would involve infiltration by small groups and the building up of an underground to work methodically to prepare Cuban public opinion for spontaneous revolution. That, in fact, is the only way Cuba can be redeemed, for after Castro, another government must be established, and careful and intelligent preparation must be made for it.

But even subversive activity is not the simple matter it once was in Cuba, for Castro obviously has gone a long way in the employment of the mechanics of Communism. He has created a bigger military establishment than Cuba ever dreamed, backed by an armed militia. He has been systematically eliminating as enemies Cubans who show any sign of leadership.

He apparently has a well-established spy system that sets neighbor against neighbor. In any event, the abortive landing was only hours old when tens of thousands of Cubans had been rounded up and put in confinement as possible participants in the counter-revolution.

In short, Cuba gives the appearance of a full-blown police state fashioned to the Communist pattern. That carries no direct threat to the United States, but it is something to be sealed off from Latin America.