

STATINTL

Why Latins Hold Back on Acting Against Castro

Some Nations Fear U. S. Aid Would Dwindle if Red Threat Eased Off

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WASHINGTON.

Governments, like people, are only human. That is one big reason why the United States is taking its lumps in trying to rally the other American republics against Fidel Castro.

Latin America is basking in the warm glow of almost unprecedented attention from Washington these days. For years, while the United States' attention and foreign aid dollars flowed elsewhere, our good neighbors to the south cried out in vain for adequate help.

Now, what with the \$600,000,000 being voted by Congress and other steps, they feel their pleas are being heeded. And they think they know why: the frightening spectacle of a Moscow-controlled government in Cuba.

Fear Own Leftists

What would happen, the Latin leaders are asking themselves, if the threat of Castroism were erased? Would we plunge back into the doldrums? Fair or not, this assessment is creating laggards among these leaders who, though as opposed to Castroism as C. I. A. chief Allen W. Dulles, would mourn its passing as a hemispheric "bete noire." They fear the Congressional cash register might quit jingling. But they also fear malcontents in their own countries.

President Julio Quadros of Brazil is a case in point. He

does not like Dr. Castro. But he has a strong Leftist element to contend with and potentially explosive poverty in northeastern Brazil. Castroism has made strong inroads among these starving farmers, whose average income is something like \$110 a year, and collectivist peasant leagues are reported wielding considerable power.

President Quadros therefore stolidly holds himself neutral in the Cuban situation. He is a shrewd, volatile politician who must keep his country behind him while doing what he believes to be the right thing. American officials hope that, no matter how he talks, he will do the right thing when the chips are down.

He and other hemispheric leaders must make their decisions in the few months ahead. The United States is cautiously moving toward a denouement in its effort to isolate Cuba, as if Castroism were a disease shunned by all. The United States probably has enough votes to do this through the Organization of American States. But it wants greater solidarity before forcing things to a head.

3 Avenues Open

There are three avenues of action:

1. The Inter-American Conference, originally scheduled for May 24 at Quito, Ecuador, and now indefinitely postponed. An agenda of forty-two points

has been adopted. But everybody knows that, at the mere mention of Cuba, the agenda will go out the window.

2. The 1947 Rio Pact could be invoked. This provides that, if there is an extra-hemispheric threat, a Foreign Ministers' meeting could adopt stern measures by a two-thirds vote. These measures could include a break-off in diplomatic, communications and trade relations, and even, in extreme circumstances, military sanctions.

3. Article 6 of the 1948 O. A. S. charter. It provides for a Foreign Ministers meeting, in the event of a threat to the peace, to determine how to meet it. Joint police action, such as that which protected Panama during its 1959 invasion fitters, could be ordered on a larger scale.

Favor Third Approach

The Kennedy administration favors the third approach, primarily because the O. A. S. charter is less restrictive than the Rio Pact as to what steps can be taken. Nine American nations already have broken relations with Cuba. Only five more are needed, therefore, and they should not be hard to get.

But it is important that these include some of the bigger, more independent countries like Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. That is why Brazil is being wooed so strenuously. Argentina and Brazil have

agreed to consult closely on foreign policy—which is almost to say to co-ordinate it. Venezuela probably would follow their lead. Mexico is utterly opposed to joint action against Cuba.

The United States would like to have a Foreign Ministers' meeting on Cuba before the Inter-American Economic Conference, scheduled for July 15, probably at Montevideo, Uruguay. This is an effort to keep the two questions separate.

Shakedown Seen

But Chile, speaking in a way for many, if not all, of the other Latin governments, has suggested holding the economic meeting first. This could be interpreted as a diplomatic shakedown: that some nations first want to see the color of Uncle Sam's money before deciding how to vote on the Cuba issue.

It would not be good for the United States government to accept Chile's proposal. No matter what happened, Washington could be accused of buying votes by proffering economic aid to those countries willing to go along with its isolate-Cuba move. There is no sign yet that the Latin governments are heeding President Kennedy's warning that Castroism is a greater threat to them than to the United States.