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Fulbright Calls for Curbs On Castro's Threat to Latins

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Senator Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, today suggested that actions taken unilaterally by the United States to oppose the regime of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro are largely pointless.

In an interview expanding on his extensive foreign policy

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speech of last week, the Arkansas Democrat stressed that he does consider the Castro regime a real threat to the nations of Latin America.

Consequently, he noted, it is of particular urgency that United States moves to counter the Cuban dictator be worked out in concert with the nations threatened.

Support Stressed

"It is very important as we proceed to have the support of the Latin American countries themselves," he said.

The Senator indicated that his opinion that single-handed anti-Castro is secure in office indefinitely. "There is hope," he deconstructed as a belief that Mr. Castro is secure in office indefinitely. "There is hope," he declared, "that the regime may change (its policies) or that Castro's own people will rise up and throw him out."

In Senator Fulbright's discussion of his views, which focused primarily on Latin America, only one point emerged in which the Senator appeared at



SENATOR FULBRIGHT
—AP Photo

sharp variance with the Johnson administration.

This was on the proper handling of the crisis with the Republic of Panama over the status of the Panama Canal.

A high administration official contended last week that the impasse which has developed over whether the United States should now "discuss" or "negotiate" revisions of the Panama Canal treaty of 1903 is probably in the best interests of the United States.

Said Senator Fulbright of the situation:

"In Panama we run the risk of appearing a great bully."

He added, "We won't and shouldn't tolerate a unilateral breaking of the treaty. But there's plenty of elbow room to make adjustments."

The Senator observed that the Canal's failure to be a money-

maker, which is frequently cited as the United States' reason for not increasing the "rent" paid annually to Panama for use of the Canal Zone, is artificially induced.

Shipping Costs Rise

Since 1914, he reported, shipping costs from eastern United States ports to the west coast have gone up 200 to 300 per cent. But Canal transit fees have actually been reduced, he said.

The United States Government is in fact subsidizing the transit fees at the behest of shippers, Senator Fulbright charged. He described the shippers as "one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington."

Senator Fulbright also criticized excessive salary scales in the Canal Zone, which he said permit Zonians to enjoy a per capita income twice that of the United States and ten times that of Panama.

Senator Fulbright displayed little sympathy with the prescription of "greater firmness" which others have proposed for United States dealings with Latin America.

Great Deal of Tact

"We can't be firm without a great deal of tact," he commented.

Citing Mexico, he said: "If we were to put in sanctions against Mexico for trading with Cuba, the Mexicans would just say 'the hell with you.'"

"The Mexicans do not agree with our policy toward Cuba. This is not because they are sympathetic to communism. They just don't think our policy is wise."

Senator Fulbright appeared a bit startled by the interest which his speech has stirred in Washington and across the country. He said it was planned as one of the reviews of policy trends which he has for some time delivered every six months or so.

"This one just caught more attention than most," he observed mildly.

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Encouraged Discussion

The Senator said his major purpose in making the speech was to encourage greater public discussion of the foundations of American foreign policy. He added that this development seems to be under way.

He also expressed a hope that the discussion would center on the issues rather than on attaching unflattering names to those who espoused unfamiliar or unpopular ideas.

He said he attached more importance to the nurturing of this discussion than to the dissemination of his own ideas.

"I hope my views were expressed with modesty," he noted, adding that one makes proposals modestly he can blush less highly when his ideas change.