

STATINTL



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"Give light and the people will find their own way."

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What to Do About Cuba

MOUNTING public concern over U. S. policy as to Cuba is completely misunderstood, in our opinion, by J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

And he misstates his case when he implies criticism mainly is prompted by partisan Republican motives. High-ranking Democrats also are numbered among the critics.

Sen. Fulbright discounts Cuba as a military threat to the United States and there isn't a great deal of argument about that. The 17,000 to 20,000 Soviet troops on the island would be overwhelmed by U. S. forces in event of armed conflict. Repeated emphasis on this military threat, or the lack of it—offensive or defensive missiles—serves merely to distract attention from the real menace of communist Cuba.

That menace is the establishment of a hostile foreign power almost within sight of U. S. soil. It is the existence of a communist police state within the Americas—something President Kennedy once said we would not tolerate.

We do not know why the Soviets maintain this large military force on Cuba but believe it to have two purposes: To hold over the Cuban people the threat of Soviet tanks, as in Hungary, if they try to revolt against the Castro tyranny; to train subversive agents for sabotage and revolution in the Latin American states, carrying explosives and small arms, trans-shipped from this bristling arms depot.

This subversive campaign isn't a theory. Castro boasts of it. The effects are plain in, for instance, Venezuela where there have been communist-led riots, dynamitings and, most recently,

the hijacking of a Venezuelan ship by communist pirates. Cuba is little more than a rowboat ride from the island of Hispaniola, occupied by the bitterly misruled nation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the latter struggling to establish democratic rule after a long generation of vile dictatorship.

These only hint the dangers inherent in a communist Cuba. The imminent menace extends to the militarily weak, small nations of Central America, to economically troubled Brazil—in fact to most of Latin America.

Among those urging "highest priority" to forcing the Soviet troops out of Cuba is John Stennis, a Democrat and head of the Senate Preparedness sub-committee investigating the Cuban military buildup.

He does not urge invasion. In our opinion few would approve that, at least at this time. But there are effective measures the Administration could take, short of invasion. These call for tough economic and diplomatic sanctions to isolate Cuba, with reimposition of the blockade as a next-to-last resort.

Naturally these steps involve dangers; but doing nothing, or next to nothing, involves still worse dangers. Basically we think growing U. S. discontent is inspired by a feeling that the Administration, after vigorous blockade action, has gone soft on Cuba—that it is submissive to repeated Soviet affront, that it even has relaxed the sternness of measures in preparation before the big missiles were photographed.

By one method or another this increasingly dangerous infection must be rooted out of the Americas and the longer we delay the wider it will spread.