

THE DIRECTOR OF
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International outlook

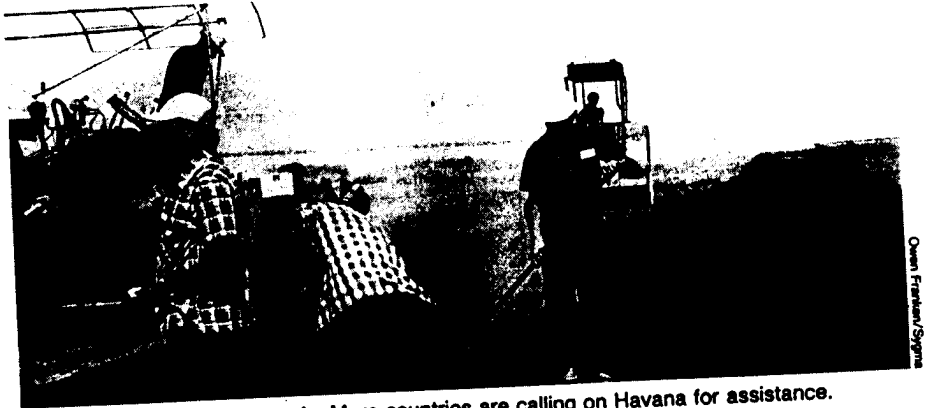
Why Cuba's clout continues to grow in the Caribbean

The U. S. effort to isolate Cuba within the western hemisphere is disintegrating. Cuba appears to have at least the possibility of another satellite in the Caribbean community, the former Dutch colony of Surinam, and may be on its way—with the help of Moscow and other East bloc countries—toward seizing an opportunity in Haiti similar to the one that preceded the leftist Nicaraguan takeover (BW—Jan. 24).

These developments result in part from the U. S. policy during the Falkland Islands war. In the eyes of most Latin Americans, that policy vacillated on defense of the hemisphere. Thus, Colombia, which only six months ago favored invoking the Rio Treaty against Havana for its activities in Nicaragua, has now sought Fidel Castro's aid in becoming a member of the so-called nonaligned bloc.

Confusing statements. Bolivia, with a newly elected left-of-center government, has sought to reestablish relations with Havana. Costa Rica's new president, Luis Alberto Monge, has sent semi-official emissaries to Castro to talk compromise in Central America. In El Salvador, U. S. statements have confused the issue by equating pursuit of a military victory over the Communist-led insurgency with solving the country's myriad problems.

But the most dramatic changes have come in Surinam, on the northeastern coast of South America, and more can be expected in Haiti—the western portion of the island of Hispaniola, strategic in the inner Caribbean. Dutch authorities believe that Communist support from Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua has helped Surinam install a brutal military dictatorship. And, because The Hague cut off \$100 million in annual aid to Surinam after 15 democratic leaders were executed there, the new regime may turn to Havana and Moscow. The Cubans have sent in Oscar Osvaldo Cardenas, a



Cuban technicians in Grenada: More countries are calling on Havana for assistance.

senior member of the Department of the Americas—a specialized branch of Cuba's intelligence that works closely with the Soviet KGB—as ambassador, with an expanded staff.

Meanwhile, Jean-Claude Luis-Jean, a Haitian trained in weapons and explosives in Libya and Lebanon by the Palestine Liberation Organization, has formed the Hector Riobe Brigade. Named after a Haitian killed in a revolt against the regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier, the brigade is said to number only a dozen hard-core urban terrorists. But Luis-Jean is a charismatic figure, with a reputation for prowess as a karate master and an uncanny ability to disguise himself for visits to Haiti.

In late December, one of his followers, Hilertaut Dominique, was arrested in neighboring Dominican Republic for smuggling weapons. Dominique had traveled to Libya, East Germany, Angola, Cuba, and Nicaragua, and he said that the organization was planning a campaign of destabilization to start this year. The brigade's claim of responsibility for airborne raids, assassination attempts, and bombings in Port-au-Prince has emboldened anti-Duvalier groups in the large Haitian communities in New York, Miami, Paris, and Montreal. ■

Reagan's zone plan to promote offshore development

The Reagan Administration believes that it has found a way of rejecting the U. N. Law of the Sea Treaty without throwing the baby out with the bathwater. In a Presidential proclamation to be issued in early February, the U. S. is establishing a new Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for commercial development of living and nonliving natural resources in an area 200 mi. seaward from all U. S. territory.

Polymetallic sulfides from the seafloor crusts of submerged islands, which are rich in strategic minerals (manganese and cobalt) and other base metals, as well as phosphate, are available for mining development within the EEZs projected from both Hawaii and the West Coast. Washington expects to attract investors because of the absence of political risk under the U. S. flag.

The strategy anticipates that the U. S. will have established seabed mining on a technologically and commercially feasible

basis in these areas long before the signers of the U. N. treaty have implemented its provisions. And since the treaty provides for the creation of something akin to the EEZ option, Washington hopes to attract the 52 other countries with EEZ possibilities into joint ventures.

The EEZ concept was developed by Interior Secretary James Watt's office, working since last summer with two inter-agency groups. While the precise definition of what constitutes the continental shelf is still unclear, the extension of U. S. borders allows developers early opportunities free of legal risk. The Reagan Administration sees the EEZ as the cornerstone of its oceans policy and another component in its strategic effort to reduce U. S. dependence on foreign energy and mineral sources.

—Daniel I. Fine
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