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Castro's Lures in Trading

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WASHINGTON.

A double-barreled Cuban crisis is brewing for the Johnson Administration and government officials yesterday admitted it seems almost insoluble in the heat of an election year.

One thorny issue is the increase of Allied trade with Fidel Castro's regime. In a speech before a meeting of the International Union of Electrical Workers here yesterday, Secretary of State Dean Rusk made it clear that the U. S. is deeply concerned.

"The free nations" he said, "who sell to Cuba goods and equipment important to the Cuban economy are interfering with the efforts of the free nations of this hemisphere to curb this danger. In the missile crisis of 1962, it was evident that what happened in Cuba could directly affect the security of the entire free world. That is still so."

The other issue is the lukewarm reception Latin-American

can governments can be expected to give Monday's report by an Organization of American States fact-finding committee accusing Cuba of aggression and subversion against Venezuela.

It does not appear that the U. S. is going to be able to convince its European allies or its OAS partners of the need for urgent action to isolate Cuba from the rest of the free world.

The political implications of an Administration failure to "get tough" with Premier Castro are bound to be damaging come next November, say worried government officials.

Despite increasingly strong U. S. efforts to put its point across, the nearly \$100 million the Castro regime has piled up in foreign exchange over the last two years looks too tempting to European manufacturers.

In London yesterday, the enormous British-Dutch Shell Oil Co. was seriously considering a tentative Cuban offer to negotiate compensation for the \$50 million refinery the Cubans took over almost four years ago. The offer came as a direct result of an \$106 million deal for 400 British buses signed last month.

An eight-man Cuban trade mission was also reported heading for London seeking more deals, including an additional 1,000-bus contract from the Leyland Motors Corp., which first broke the trade dam with its bus sale.

The French and the Spaniards are also getting in on the sudden trade rush, and if the Shell discussions work out an almost irresistible inducement to trade with Cuba will present itself to Europe.

To make matters stickier

for the Administration, the Castro regime has been making sweet sounding overtures about renewed relations with the U. S. and the suggestion has arisen several times that if this were done, the millions of dollars in U. S. property confiscated by Cuba might be at least partially indemnified.

The U. S. consistently has declared that it will not recognize the Castro government, which "does not speak for the people of Cuba." The question of what would happen if Premier Castro agreed to negotiate over expropriated U. S. property is always greeted with: "It would be political suicide for any Administration even to suggest renewed relations."

The problem of trade, said one government official, "Doesn't look as if it is going to get solved. We are standing firm against it, and every government willing to trade with Cuba is just as firmly committed not to change its mind."

Because most of Europe has maintained or resumed almost normal relations with Cuba, it is becoming vastly more difficult for the U. S. to talk Latin-American governments into sticking with the U. S. in its anti-Castro policy.

Despite the damaging OAS committee report detailing evidence that Cuba is exporting its Communist revolution by aggressive means, there is faint hope that the OAS will take measures any more forceful than its already declared opposition to Cuba.

The possibility of a blockade to shut off arms traffic from Cuba to the rest of Latin America is almost nil. That, say most Latin diplomats, would take a miracle of Latin unity. Even the possibility of the withdrawal of diplomatic recognition by the five latin nations which still deal with Cuba seems remote.

Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay and Mexico still recognize the Castro regime, and for reasons of internal politics and a Latin hands-off tradition they are unlikely to be swayed easily—even by such a damning report.

Most diplomats agree that it will take some fancy politicking and persuasion on the part of the U. S. and its supporters in the OAS to gain anything more than a moral condemnation against Cuba, and for the U. S. public, the Venezuelans, and other com-
that is not enough.