

Cuba Seeking Ecuadorean Support

The Ecuadorean Government, already the Latin American regime most favorably disposed toward Castro, is receiving further attention from Cuba. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] at an embassy reception on 9 May, Fidel Castro "demonstrated exceptional sympathy and deference toward Ecuador," said he wanted to invite President Velasco to visit Cuba, and announced that he will establish 200 scholarships there for Ecuadoreans, including 50 for university students.

Cuba is actively striving to influence public opinion in the hemisphere in its behalf. A number of students from other Latin American countries are now in Cuba, apparently without the approval of their governments. A Cuban good-will mission to various Latin American countries is now in Mexico and will probably include Ecuador in its itinerary. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] One of the two leaders of the mission is a member of the Popular Socialist (Communist) party of Cuba.

The Ecuadorean ambassador in Havana made no commitments

regarding Castro's offer of scholarships or a Velasco visit to Cuba. Velasco is tentatively scheduled to make an official visit to the United States sometime this fall.

Within Ecuador, Velasco's acceptance of an invitation from Castro would probably provoke a sharp reaction from anti-Castro forces--which include not only conservative elements and the Catholic clergy, but also a faction of the President's own heterogeneous following. Some retired and active military officers, who are strongly anti-Castro, joined with civilians earlier this year to consider Velasco's ouster because of the leftist drift in his policies and his close ties with the principal pro-Castro leader in the country--former Minister of Government Manuel Araujo.

Foreign Minister Chiriboga, a leader of the anti-Castro forces in the Ecuadorean cabinet, resigned on 10 May in opposition to the government's favorable policy toward Cuba and was replaced by Wilson Vela, who apparently is in complete conformity with President Velasco's views. Vela is also a friend of the President's, having held high positions while Velasco was in office from 1952 to 1956. On 9 May, Chiriboga strongly chastised Ambassador Falconi in Havana for hailing Castro as a "great leader." In

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his now public letter of resignation Chiriboga described the Castro regime as a "bloody Communist dictatorship" which had openly proclaimed its alignment with the Sino-Soviet bloc and is threatening "the foundations

of the Organization of American States."

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***Cuba:** Fidel Castro's demand that the number of US Embassy personnel in Havana be reduced to eleven within 48 hours climaxed his address before a mass rally on 2 January commemorating the second anniversary of his revolutionary victory. The Cuban Embassy in Washington has eleven members. Foreign delegations, including representatives of most Sino-Soviet bloc and Latin American countries were present at the ceremonies, which featured a parade including military equipment recently purchased from the bloc. The observances took place amid strident charges of imminent US aggression. [REDACTED] Soviet, Chinese Communist, Czech, and Polish embassy and trade mission personnel now in Cuba number over 100 and, in addition, more than 200 bloc economic and military technicians are in Cuba. Seven other bloc embassies are expected shortly to be opened in Havana. [REDACTED]

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