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Costa Rican President Suggests OAS Move to Protect Cuban Prisoners

Several Latin American presidents, including Frondizi of Argentina, Quadros of Brazil, and Lopez Mateos of Mexico-- [REDACTED] -have appealed to the Cuban Government for the lives of the prisoners captured last week, but the Costa Rican move is the first effort to use OAS machinery for this purpose. Costa Rican President Echandi apparently intends his resolution to be presented to the OAS Council, which is made up of ambassadors to the OAS from the 21 American republics.

Echandi may be seeking to demonstrate his strong anti-Castro sympathies to the people of Costa Rica while resisting their pressures to break relations with Cuba. In Costa Rica, perhaps to a greater degree than in any other Latin American country, initial sympathy for Castro's assumption of power in Cuba was rapidly dissipated as the informed public observed the evolution of his totalitarian regime. Nevertheless, Echandi has thus far refused to break diplomatic relations, claiming that his government lacks evidence of any flagrant Cuban violation of Costa Rica's national sovereignty and that the Costa Rican Embassy in Havana serves both a useful and a humanitarian purpose as a refuge for individuals opposing Castro.

The probability of full-scale public discussion of the Cuban problem at the Eleventh Inter-American Conference scheduled for 24 May in Quito has increased Latin American pressures on the Ecuadorean Government to postpone the meeting. [Ecuadorean President Velasco is reluctant to accept the postponement but now is resigned to the necessity of doing so, according to his foreign minister.]

The Panamanian foreign minister expressed an interest in inter-American action on Cuba on 19 April when he told a Latin American diplomat in Panama City that Soviet delivery of arms to Cuba represents an attack on all America [REDACTED]

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Panamanian President Chiari probably holds these opinions, he is motivated primarily by a desire to defend his own government against pro-Castro forces now agitating increasingly for revolution in Panama. It is unlikely that he feels secure enough to join any strong campaign against Cuba or to break relations with the Castro government.

On 24 April the Honduran Government of President Villeda Morales--who faces perhaps the most active pro-Castro forces in Central America but is personally a strong anti-Communist of the liberal left--broke diplomatic relations with Cuba until it "submits to the norms and discipline of the inter-American system." Seven other Latin American governments have previously broken or suspended relations with the Castro regime. [REDACTED]

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