

5 January 1961



CUBAN AND CENTRAL AMERICAN DEVELOPMENTS

The Castro regime has responded defiantly to the 3 January break in diplomatic and consular relations by the United States, calling this a new "imperialist" move preparatory to "aggression." It may also formally demand US withdrawal from the Guantanamo naval base.

Initial Soviet reaction to the break in relations was to label the move "a new step toward aggression." Early Chinese Communist reaction was harsher and lengthier.

The news was treated as a flash item by Latin American media, but early comment took no predominant line and many officials were reluctant to make statements. A leading Brazilian newspaper called the US-Cuban rupture the worst crisis in Pan American history and urged other Latin American governments to seek a solution and not merely to follow the US example, since this would make

them "satellites." In Peru, which broke relations with Cuba on 30 December, a leading paper headlined: "Number one power in the world follows Peru's example."

Venezuela and Honduras, which had been considering breaking with Castro, may now hesitate to follow the US action too closely for fear of being labeled by their domestic opposition as "lackeys" of the United States. The Chilean foreign minister told the press on 4 January that he saw no reason for Chile to break with Cuba under present circumstances. On the other hand, there are indications that Panama may shortly declare the Cuban ambassador there persona non grata, and pressure has been mounting in Colombia for a diplomatic break with Cuba.

In Mexico--where sympathy for Latin American revolutionary movements runs deep, stemming from Mexico's own experiences--the foreign minister told the

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US Embassy that he feels the situation has reached the point where it would be difficult to influence Cuba "back into the inter-American family." He said it is primarily a problem for the Cuban people to solve, but they will need "a little bit of outside help" which must be in a form, however, that would not "lower the prestige of any nation."

In the Mexican foreign minister's opinion, the only way the Organization of American States (OAS) can act on the Cuban problem is by using the 1954 anti-Communist Caracas resolution, but Mexico will have to abstain if this resolution is invoked, inasmuch as it is the only Latin American country that has not endorsed it. The American Embassy sees this conversation as an indication that Mexico may "convey a benevolent nod for someone else to terminate the Cuban headache while Mexico goes on abstaining."

Meanwhile, Latin American Communists and front groups are urging increased popular support in their countries for Castro. The Uruguayan Communist party issued an "ardent appeal" on 3 January urging the Uruguayans to "rise up in defense of the Cuban people." According to the Cuban press service, Argentine university students publicly warned on 3 January that "a second front will open up in the streets" if aggression is perpetrated against Cuba.

Since the resumption of major bloc arms shipments to Cuba in late December after a two-month pause, four Soviet vessels are believed to have transported military equipment to Cuban ports. There are indications that other shipments may be in process. Deliveries of bloc arms, including those supplied during September and

October, now total well over 25,000 tons, only a small portion of which has thus far been observed.

Castro's 2 January anniversary parade in Havana, in which some of the bloc weapons were displayed, revealed that at least 15 JS-2 heavy tanks, 15 T-34 medium tanks, and 19 self-propelled assault guns, various artillery, and other weapons are now in the hands of the Cuban Army. Soviet jeeps and truck-mounted rocket launchers--possibly six-tube 280-mm.--also were observed.

The armored fighting vehicles and some of the artillery are World War II models no longer in use by the Soviet armed forces. With the exception of 60 JS-3 tanks delivered to Egypt in 1955, Soviet heavy tanks have not been supplied to any other nonbloc country. However, since 1958 Soviet arms deliveries outside the bloc--particularly to the UAR and Iraq--have included T-54 medium tanks and more modern artillery and heavy weapons.

Premier Khrushchev, along with other high Soviet officials, attended the 2 January reception at the Cuban Embassy in Moscow and made a speech sharply critical of US policy, labeling as "foul slander" reports that the Soviet Union had set up rocket bases in Cuba. Despite the belligerent tone of his remarks, however, Khrushchev continued to be vague in pledging Soviet support and promised only that "the Cuban people can always count on the support and aid of the Soviet people." This speech follows the familiar Soviet pattern of making harsh pronouncements concerning Cuba immediately prior to UN consideration of Cuban complaints against the United States.

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The many foreign delegates in Havana for the 2 January celebrations, which may have totaled more than a thousand, included representatives from the USSR, Communist China, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia as well as sizable groups from Latin American countries and the United States. Most, if not all, of the transportation costs for these delegations were paid by the Cuban Government. The Chinese Communist delegation, headed by Peiping's leading "peace" spokesman Kuo Mo-jo, was particularly prominent at the celebrations.

[REDACTED] requests for agreement for a Bulgarian and a North Korean ambassador to Cuba. Four bloc embassies--the Soviet, Chinese Communist, Czech, and Polish--are already established in Cuba; diplomatic and trade mission personnel from these countries now in Havana number over 100 and, in addition, more than 200 bloc economic and military technicians are now in Cuba. In addition to the Bulgarian and North Korean, five other bloc embassies are expected to be opened soon in Havana.

Meanwhile, Cuban subversion against other Latin American governments continues. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is reported to have forwarded to Havana in [REDACTED]

December maps of the Paraguayan border areas in Brazil and Bolivia in order to assist Cuban-Soviet bloc plans for supplying Paraguayan rebels with arms.

In El Salvador, the growing influence of pro-Communists and pro-Castro elements in the provisional government may be responsible for the apparent government decision to reduce US economic and military assistance programs. On 24 December, one US-supported project was closed and another may shortly be shut down. The minister of defense told a group of US officials on 28 December that his government intends to replace US advisers to the National Police with Chileans or Italians or both, and added that all US assistance programs have been "void of beneficial results for El Salvador."

These statements completely reverse expressions of support for US assistance programs made by the minister earlier in December and apparently reflect a high-level policy decision by the government.

Meanwhile, Communists continue their efforts to extend their influence outside the government. The increasing Communist activity appears to stem from confidence resulting from the confusion and rivalries among anti-Communists, both military and civilian. [REDACTED]

