
CARIBBEAN

U.S. Cuba policy leads to war

by Gretchen Small

Tensions between Cuba and the United States, after a near military incident between them last week, were momentarily cooled yesterday when Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca delivered an official apology to Wayne Smith, head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. Cuban MIGs had "buzzed" a U.S. military helicopter while it was searching for four missing Bahamians in the Bahama Straits. The apology included a promise that no more such incidents would occur, according to the New York Times.

U.S. officials were quoted as "pleased" over the apology. The United States has decided to "send them a signal, too," an unnamed State Department official reportedly stated. "We want to see if they will bite on this, and be a little more forthcoming on some of the other issues that divide us from Cuba."

The resolution of this one immediate military tripwire, however, has not pulled Washington back from the brink of confrontation in the region. The high density of Cuban and U.S. military units and equipment circling in tight proximity to each other a few miles off the coast of Florida, in the climate of extreme hostility between the two countries, makes that area a ticking timebomb for another, more dangerous incident and an outbreak of war that would bring in Soviet forces.

The present situation, however, is the result of the Cuban policy adopted by the Trilateral Commission before it installed Jimmy Carter in the White House. Cuba has been targeted to become the "test case" internationally, to prove a Soviet ally can be pulled out of the Soviet orbit and into the "Western fold." This would be the signal for a wave of uncontrollable dissension and turmoil within the Warsaw Pact nations. The "soft" and "hardline" swings in Washington policy over the last four years have remained within that policy framework.

The policy was stated in a 1975 report on Latin America by the Commission on Critical Choices, headed

by the late Nelson Rockefeller. Two Georgetown University pundits, James Theberge and Roger Fontaine, wrote its Latin America Report. Reviewing varied scenarios for interactions between the United States and Cuba based on the "carrot and stick" approach, the CCC Report concluded: "Making Cuba the Socialist camp's first true deserter is good policy because it is a possibility ... Cuba is a test case for the United States."

Roger Fontaine, now an adviser to the Reagan campaign, restated that policy in a March interview, this time with a sense that plans had moved into the operational phase. Cuba must be "put on notice that they either break their military alliance with the Soviet Union, or pay the price," intoned Fontaine. "We should turn the screws tighter and tighter against Castro, and then come in with a substantial carrot." The current economic crisis "gives us opportunities to help Cuba out if Cuba plays the game," he said.

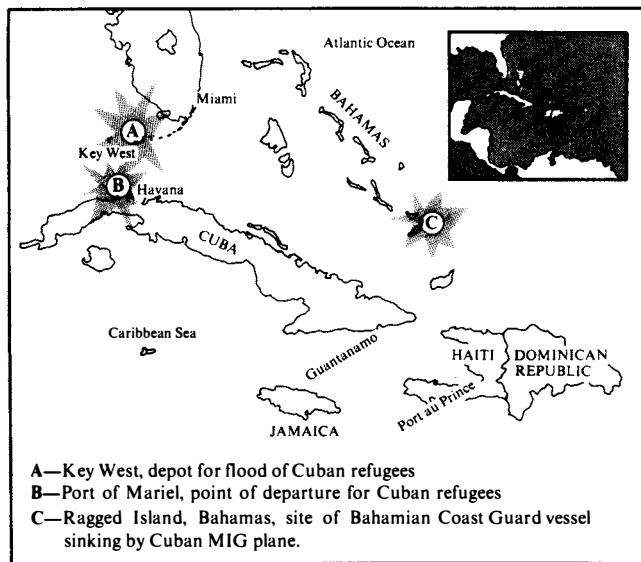
During the last week, the prospect of pulling Cuba away from the Soviets emerged in the press. "One ultimate goal inevitably asserts itself," wrote Kissinger-buddy Joseph Kraft in the Washington Post May 15 in an article on the refugee situation, "Making Cuba Desert the Bloc." How? "A new bout of confrontation may open one route to that goal," Kraft opined, but "perhaps it would be better to give Cuba the kind of help that facilitates the shedding of a Soviet connection that is becoming increasingly distasteful—even to Castro."

The consequences of this policy are not unknown to the Trilateral crowd, whether of the Carter or the Reagan stripe. In one of the wildest scenarios to appear so far, Washington Post columnist Ernesto Betancourt called this week for Washington to begin working out "options" to face the Soviets' inevitable response. Speaking of the "disintegration" of the Castro regime, Betancourt warned that the United States "must be prepared to face the eventuality of a Soviet move to replace Castro," noting the likelihood that Soviet forces may be used. "That is the moment for which we had better start preparing contingency plans," Betancourt concluded.

Havana spring?

In effect, the Carter administration has been carrying out an undeclared war against Cuba, using every covert and overt option available. The desired outcome is the eruption of a new "Havana Spring," like the famous "Prague Spring" in 1968 where British destabilizations of the Czechoslovak regime led to the flowering of a hippy-oriented opposition to the ruling regime.

The war against Cuba has ranged from economic sabotage inside Cuba to biological warfare against its crops, military operations in Cuba's immediate environs, revival of Cold War propaganda, and the instigation of internal unrest. Even intelligence agencies friendly to the



United States view the steady flow of refugees from Cuba as the work of the Central Intelligence Agency.

State Department officials feel their operations against Cuba have been successful, yesterday's Washington Star noted. "The Cuban economy is stagnant, living standards have declined, and people are demoralized."

Rumors are circulating of a serious "debate" among Cuba's leaders over how to respond to Carter's undeclared war. Differences reportedly exist between Defense Minister Raul Castro, a pro-Soviet hardliner, and his brother President Fidel Castro who allegedly favors a more "radical" Third World approach.

But how far advanced is the Brzezinski-run strategy for a "Havana Spring"?

In the past weeks millions have marched in support of the Castro government. Intensely nationalistic after twenty years of living under near siege, one-half the population of Cuba—an estimated 5 million people—were scheduled to again demonstrate that support again today.

The country is preparing for war, both psychologically and militarily, throwing already scarce resources into military preparedness. Castro announced May 1 that plans are being made in case of a new naval blockade that would sever the country's oil supply lines.

However, operating from a paranoid "fortress mentality" in response to the real threat against Cuba, President Fidel Castro in particular has retreated into the worst excesses of his Third Worldist radicalism in an attempt to find allies against the United States. Castro's stated support for Khomeini in Iran and his cooperation and support for Puerto Rican terrorism exemplifies the problem. Agents linked to the Society of Jesus who have worked their way into the Cuban government, are feeding the "radical" tendency.

Once before, British intelligence efforts turned Cuba

into a virtual international deployment center of guerrilla-styled "radicalism," particularly in the Third World. Following the beginning of the U.S. economic blockage and the Bay of Pigs, Cuba encouraged "guerrilla struggles" for "national liberation" across the developing sector, a strategy exemplified by Che Guevara's travels and final demise in the Bolivian mountains.

Under the impetus of this suicidal course, Cuba became a hub of the "ultraleft" antigrowth radicals: K.S. Karol, René Dumont, Regis DeBray, Jean Paul Sartre, and so forth. Today these same men support and "advise" the Iranian experiment in a return to the Dark Ages and control terrorism of the Red Brigades type. Nearly successful in setting up a terrorist-guerrilla international with Cuba as its launching point in 1968, these networks hoped to get Cuba to adopt a full "Chinese" strategy internationally, pushing labor-intensive agriculture, cultural revolution, and anti-Sovietism.

Castro's earlier stupidity and the immediate success of that little project was halted ironically by the developments of Prague Spring itself. When Soviet troops rolled into Czechoslovakia in 1968, Castro made a near 180-degree policy aboutface, coming down hard on the Czechoslovak destabilization and the networks that ran it.

Most taken aback were several hundred "radicals" attending an international conference in Cuba. Intending to use Cuba as the springboard for an international Jacobin campaign against the Soviet Union, the assembled agents and fools were started as Castro leveled a blistering attack on the Czechoslovak "radicals" and their backers as "agents of imperialism." Castro defended the Soviet action as strategically necessary.

Shortly thereafter, René Dumont, Regis DeBray, et al were booted out of Cuba—under the charge of being "CIA agents."

Apparently Fidel Castro has so far missed the parallel between 1968 and now and is seeking an alliance with the Khomeini regime, whose agricultural adviser is Dark Ages advocate René Dumont! Perhaps he should have paid more attention when Foreign Minister Malmierca was received by Bani-Sadr in Iran with the message that before speaking of mutual defense with Iran, Cuba must denounce the Soviet action in Afghanistan.

It was the strategic significance of the Prague Spring caper, where NATO forces came very close to pulling off a fullscale destabilization in the Warsaw Pact nations, that brought Castro up short the last time around. Trilateral Commission planners who want a Cuban break with the Soviet Union, shattering the Cuban economy and its political structure, are forgetting the dominant "realist" factor in the Cuban government. Their strategy is much more likely to put them in a showdown with Cuba.