

French to Supply Locomotives

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U.S. Muffles Ire Over Sale to Cuba

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Staff Reporter

United States officials yesterday muffled their irritation over a French sale of 20 locomotives to Cuba and said the American boycott of Fidel Castro's regime would continue.

"It happens sometimes," said a French spokesman in Paris, "that allies are not in full agreement on everything."

Official confirmation was given in Paris yesterday that the firm of Brissonneau et Lotz had signed a \$4 million contract to supply 20 diesel locomotives to Cuba, with an option for 10 more.

Guarantee Reported

The French government reportedly is guaranteeing payment for the order through its credit insurance plan. Deliveries will start at the end of this year or in early 1965, a Brissonneau spokesman said. Last February another French firm announced it would sell 300 trucks to Cuba for \$7,980,000.

Under Secretary of State George W. Ball said on April 23 that sale of Western locomotives to Cuba "would have even greater impact" on

the American policy of "economic denial" for the Castro regime, than Britain's sale of 450 buses to Cuba, announced in January.

Movement of sugar to Cuban ports is almost entirely by rail, said Ball, and Cuba's railroad system "is presently in a critical state of disrepair."

Ball only alluded in passing to the French locomotive sale in a speech here yesterday, before the Advertising Council.

'Most Effective Weapon'

But he said the American policy of "economic denial" to "seal off" the Castro government was "the most effective weapon."

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, addressing the same audience, said again that the Castro regime's security measures were so tight that "I would not anticipate in the near future overthrow of Castro . . . by the actions of Cubans" on the island.

United States policy, Ball reiterated, is not based on the premise that economic action against Castro "is likely by

itself to bring down the present Cuban regime."

The objectives, Ball repeated, are to reduce the regime's capacity for "subversion and violence" in the Western Hemisphere; to show Cubans that the Castro government "cannot serve their interests"; to demonstrate

Cubans discover arms cache and charge it was placed by U.S. agents.
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that "communism has no future" in Latin America, and to increase the Soviet cost of "a Communist outpost" in this hemisphere.

'Serious Concern'

Because the State Department acknowledged that there was nothing further it could do to block the French sale of locomotives to Cuba, officials only recorded American displeasure. That was in line with the theory that it was unwise to make furious protests about actions by the gov-

ernment of President de Gaulle that the United States could not prevent.

Press Officer Richard I. Phillips said the State Department had expressed "serious concern" to French officials here and in Paris about the locomotive sale, when it was being considered.

In Paris, a spokesman said "the French government has no intention of interfering with the ordinary course of trade in this case."

Announced Last Month

Cuba announced last month that it had signed an agreement with the Soviet Union to purchase 40 locomotives at a cost of \$7,332,000, with delivery to begin next Dec. 20.

The number of locomotives in Cuba is now estimated at between 150 and 190, American sources said. This represents a sharp decline from the 500 or 600 before Castro gained power in 1959. The Cubans in 1963 officially acknowledged that they had about only one-quarter as many locomotives in operating condition as they had in 1959.