

American Policy on Latin Reds Sparks Anger About Indochina

By WILLIAM G. GAUDET

Military involvement in South Vietnam and in Cambodia has acted as a catalytic agent for thousands to protest within the United States, but despite the violence that has been engendered, it is not nearly as deep rooted as has been the resentment produced in the countries of Latin America.

Reason for the resentment

is that the United States has made no effort to actually oust the pro-Communist government in Cuba of Fidel Castro, even though the Rio pact of 1947, implemented by the pact in Caracas of 1953 definitely declares that the United States will not tolerate any Communist regime in the Western Hemisphere.

Damaging even more is the fact that from the Communist spearhead in Cuba, trained guerrillas and trained agitators have infiltrated a majority of the countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America.

FEW Latin Americans expect the United States to launch a full scale attack against the Castro regime, but Latins do feel that the U.S. should actively assist in every

move, whether it is launched from the United States or a neighboring country, to overthrow Castro and his Communist cohorts.

The United States' image, of course, received its greatest blow because of the tragedy at the Bay of Pigs. Some 1,200 Cubans were involved in that move and without air support from the United States, only a few hundred managed

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to escape. Others were either killed by the Communists or taken prisoner and tortured by them. To this day the Latins blame the entire tragedy on the United States for its failure to assist those Cubans.

President John F. Kennedy managed to erase some of this by his bold declaration on the issue of offensive missiles being placed in Cuba, but with the passing of time, more and more Latins lean to the conclusion that the Communists, and not President Kennedy, came out the victor in that diplomatic tug-of-war. Ken-

(Editor's Note: This is the fourth of a series of articles

on U.S.-Latin America relations, written by William G. Gaudet who has had more than 30 years' experience in Latin America as a newspaper columnist, magazine publisher, State Department attache and consultant on business, investment and travel in the Americas.)

dy had demanded an on-board inspection of the vessels removing the offensive missiles and then settled for aerial reconnaissance.

The fact is that no true pro-democratic government anywhere in Latin America currently feels secure as long as Castro is allowed to rule over a Communist nation less than 90 miles from the shoreline of the United States. For this reason statements by various administration leaders that the war in far away Asia is designed to contain communism makes virtually no sense to the average Latin American or Latin American government.

AS IT WAS in the case of the Marshall Plan, Latin Americans had no resentment over the United States helping Europe, but they did resent the failure of Washington to work up some program for them. This is the way they feel about the Indochina conflict. While billions of dollars are being spent in that area, only pennies are being expended by the United States in all of Latin America.

It is not the amount of money involved, but it is the feeling of being neglected and ignored. The Nelson Rockefeller mission was supposed to eliminate some of this, but that mission simply brought into sharp focus the fact that Latin America is not satisfied with the United States.

In the case of Cuba, what must not be overlooked is that during World War II Cuba was of tremendous help to the U.S. The Cubans provided us with air and military bases, stepped up their sugar production, and in addition, thousands of Cubans volunteered in the United States armed services. Then after the war, Cuba was one of the very best

markets for U.S.-made manufactured items.

CUBA is not the only case of a stand-off policy by the U.S. The grievances which led to the Honduras-El Salvador conflict, one of the very worst in the modern history of Central America, well could have been averted had the United States acted in the role of peacemaker before the trouble began.

Many seem to think that the Honduras-El Salvador conflict is something which started overnight, but the fact is that this has been a problem for many years. Until hostilities actually started, most observers are convinced that the United States could have worked with both countries to come up with a plan which would have reduced the friction which finally erupted in bitter fighting.

No nation in Latin America is in favor of the United States reverting back to the famous "Big Stick" policy, but few nations in Latin America would resent an offer of assistance to resolve an international problem — as was the Honduras-El Salvador situation.

Now, of course, the United States is in no position to side with either government — Honduras or El Salvador. The only avenue now is the slow process of the Organization of American States.

All of which comes to one conclusion, the United States is one of the great powers in the world, but it is not using this prestige and wealth to ease tensions that exist within the Western Hemisphere — and the countries of this hemisphere feel very strongly that the United States should have a closer working relationship with them than with any other area of the entire world.