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SOME UNPLEASANT FACTS OF LIFE

UNPLEASANT as the prospect is, we may as well get used to the idea that we are going to have to live with Fidel Castro, and all he stands for in Cuba, for an indefinite time. That fact was sealed with the invasion fiasco that took place at the Bay of Pigs.

What are the alternatives?
Up to then, there existed a strong possibility of Castro's overthrow. Cubans worked from within to soften up the regime and prepare the way for other Cubans to invade. Manolo Ray's underground was strong and active. Properly supplied, in time it might have become a real threat to Castro. Cubans well trained in guerilla warfare could have landed repeatedly to infiltrate the mountains in small parties. A policy of continuous harassment may have brought the Castro regime to its knees.

The naive idea of the all-or-nothing adventure at the Bay of Pigs crumbled these hopes, at least for the foreseeable future. The underground was so decimated by mass arrests made by Castro on the excuse given him by the invasion, that it may never again constitute a serious threat. The fighting spirit of anti-communist Cubans in and out of Cuba was dampened by disillusionment. World opinion neutralized the possibility of continued large-scale U. S. aid, either to underground or invasion groups. The invasion so strengthened Castro's totalitarian hand that probably nothing short of direct U. S. military intervention could now shake loose his grip on the island and its people.

At the time of the invasion, the United States might have gotten away with direct military support of the rebels, at least from the air. We should likely not have been more castigated then we were, and the job would have been over and done with. We lost that advantage. To attempt it again, in the absence of direct provocation by Castro, would be too damning. Only in the remote event that Russia would establish a military base on the island, or that Castro would make an overt assault on a neighboring republic, would we have justification for direct intervention.

On the other hand, hopes of effective OAS action for economic and diplomatic isolation of Cuba are pretty slim. Latin American governments, for reasons of their own, have shown little stomach for such a move.

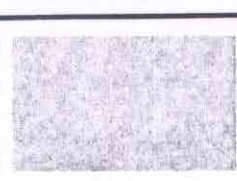
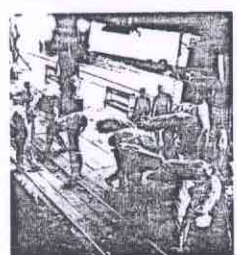
So, what course of action is left to us?

The most practical alternative is to impose on Castro's Cuba such isolation as we can, while launching a long-range attack on the seedbeds of communism elsewhere in Latin America. By massive assault on social injustice and economic stagnation, starve the Castro idea for want of fertile soil in which to put down roots. When Western Democracy has proven by deeds that it can deliver more to the masses of Latin Americans than communism can, then the Castro idea will lose its potency. Freedom-loving Cubans, with such help as we can give them, will in time fight their way back into the society of free men.

William G. Gaudet
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THIS MONTH'S COVER: Colorful mosaic mural decorating the facade of a modern government building in Guatemala City, (Color photo by Dennis J. Cipnic.)



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Contents

ARTICLES

REPORT ON GUATEMALA..... 3
LAND AND THE PEOPLE..... 4
2,000 YEARS OF GUATEMALA (TRAVEL)..... 9
AGRICULTURE.....13
INDUSTRY.....16
WHY THEY FLEE CUBA.....22

STAFF
William G. Gaudet Publisher
Norman Thomas Editor
Dennis J. Cipnic Contributing Editor

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