

# THE HEMISPHERE



CASTRO  
Stomach in Moscow.

## CUBA

### The Petrified Forest

(See Cover)

It was Fidel Castro's first major speech since the July 26 anniversary of his 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks that started the Cuban revolution. There he stood last week before a crowd of 50,000 in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución, meandering for hours about everything and nothing—poverty, classroom shortages, taxes, new houses, and the problem of bureaucrats who do "absolutely nothing." Then, amid the chatter, he dropped two electric statements that instantly set telephones jangling from Miami to Washington. Castro offhandedly promised to 1) let any Cuban with relatives in the U.S. depart from the Communist island free and clear after Oct. 10, and 2) make a statement "in a few days" that would clear up the mysterious seven-month disappearance of Ernesto ("Che") Guevara, 37, the Argentine-born Marxist who ranks as Cuba's top theoretician, ace guerrilla fighter and longtime No. 2 to Castro himself.

Taken together, the two announcements said a lot about what was going on in Castro's ugly little dictatorship six years eight months and 28 days after the bearded revolutionary marched triumphantly into Havana, with the worshipful cheers of 6,500,000 Cubans ringing in his ears.

What has happened to Castro is disappointment, disillusion and decay. After nearly seven years of power, the grandiose dreams are ended. Gone is the hope of a swift socialist transformation to make agricultural Cuba a Carib-

bean industrial colossus; the Cuban economy is in tatters, back where it started as a one-crop sugar producer. Gone is the vision of leading a vast Latin American popular revolution; that revolution is being ably led by the democratic left of Peru's Fernando Belaúnde Terry, Venezuela's Raúl Leoni and Chile's Eduardo Frei—while Castro's once-great mass appeal has faded. Gone is the assurance of being the greatest Cuban national hero since Liberator José Martí; Cuba today is populated by a sullen, lifeless people who dream their own dreams—of fleeing to somewhere else, as they say, "on the other side." Gone even is the ebullient, wildly spinning personality of Fidel Castro himself, replaced by a brooding, gloomy figure, rarely seen, rarely heard, struggling like any other Communist subchieftain to run a country for his masters in Moscow.

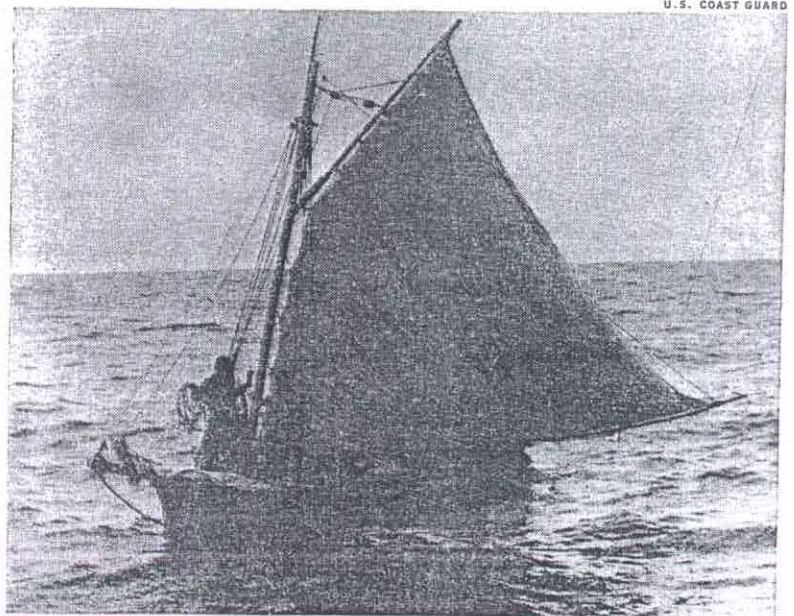
That is the reality in Cuba today. The Cuban dictator's heart may still lift at thoughts of a violent, Chinese-style revolutionary struggle against "Yanqui imperialism." But his stomach is in Moscow—and he finally seems to realize it. Castro survives only because of a \$500 million, Soviet-supplied military machine and a subsistence-level economic dole amounting to about \$1,000,000 a day. In return, the Kremlin demands the imposition of a Soviet-style political rule on Cuba, the institutionalization of the regime, an end to the "cult of personality," even coexistence with the U.S.—up to a point. As one U.S. Castrologist says, "Castro will never become the apostle of peaceful coexistence. Yet it does seem clear that he is subject to Soviet pressure and has no choice other than to accept it." The refugees and

Che Guevara are two sources of acute embarrassment to Castro, and therefore to Moscow.

The Refugees. Castro is still capable of considerable maneuver—as well as enormous mischief. In his speech he said that it was the U.S., not he, who shut off the flow of refugees. "We never closed the ports," he thundered. "The imperialists closed all the routes, and for three years they have been making propaganda, fraudulent and dirty. Very well. We must put an end to this at once."

Castro promised to arrange a special embarkation port at Camarioca, on the north coast of Matanzas province, where boats from the U.S. could pick up refugees. On each trip, the rescue boats could have 48 hours in port "with all guarantees." In fact, said Castro, he might supply a few boats himself to help speed matters, later in the week added that he would even schedule two "free" airplane flights a day into the U.S. Warming up, he then went on to say that the offer was being expanded still further—any Cuban at all who wanted to leave could simply line up and take off.

In Washington, the wary reaction was that Castro might be playing another of his vicious little games—possibly putting out another ransom feeler, as he did with the Bay of Pigs prisoners, or possibly laying a trap to lure anti-Castro Cubans into exposing themselves. The U.S. called the offer "vague and ambiguous," said that Castro ought to use diplomatic channels for his offer, then later announced that it would accept any and all refugees if Castro was really serious about it. President Johnson even indicated that he would ask



ESCAPEES CROSSING FLORIDA STRAITS  
Dreams of "the other side."

Congress for a \$12.6 million appropriation to help get the program underway.

Only time would tell whether Castro was serious. Yet one thing is obviously clear. The steady stream of fleeing Cubans does nothing to polish the Communist image—either Castro's or that of his Soviet mentors. Since Jan. 1, 1959, more than 335,000 Cubans have gone into exile—one out of every 21 people on the island. The first to go was the upper class—the landowners and big businessmen. Then went the middle class Castro needed to run his government. Now it is the working class—the humble fisherfolk, farm people, laborers, the very Cubans Castro swore to "save" from all sorts of devils, including the U.S.

They flee across the 90-mile Straits of Florida in any kind of weather, in anything that floats—from stolen fishing boats to rafts made of inner tubes and scrap lumber, running the treacherous gauntlet of Castro patrol boats and helicopters. In the past four years, 8,300 have made the perilous journey by water. A British freighter captain who puts into Havana estimates that for every refugee who evades Castro's patrols, three die. He calls the 40-mile stretch extending from the northern coast "Machine Gun Alley," and says: "Time and again, we come across small boats drifting helplessly. And when we look inside, we find bodies riddled with bullets—men, women and children."

Still they come. In August alone, 259 Cubans made it across to the U.S. Two weeks ago the U.S. Coast Guard came upon two boats jammed with 67 refugees, including the chauffeur of Fidel's brother Ramón (an obscure bureaucrat in the Department of Sugar Transport) and Orlando Contreras, once one of Cuba's most popular singers, now declared "decadent." Said Contreras: "They wouldn't let me sing what I wanted to, and they wouldn't let me make a tour inside the country, and finally they put a 70% tax on my wages to make me stop asking." So he and the others set sail to join their countrymen in Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Boston and pray for a return to a free Cuba one day.

Compulsive v. Cool. If the refugees were embarrassing to Castro, the curious case of Che Guevara was doubly so. For that had to do with Cuba's independence and leadership. In the early days of the revolution, Castro and Guevara were virtually inseparable, one the compulsive man of action, the other the cool, brainy tactician. Some wags called the Argentine Guevara a "Gaucho Marx," but they said it with a sour smile. Che was in the original rebel band in the Sierra Maestra mountains in 1956, the man who mapped Castro's guerrilla tactics against Dictator Fulgencio Batista and became world-famous for his handbook of dirty tricks, *La Guerra de Guerrillas*. He was Cuba's first economic czar, running the

national bank, then the Ministry of Industries, all the while plotting to extend Castro's revolution throughout Latin America with "wars of national liberation." Always he spouted hatred for the U.S., contempt for the "soft" Moscow line, and admiration for the warlike cries coming from the Chinese Communists.

Guevara was at his most consistent during an incredible three-month tour that started last December with a U.N. appearance and continued on to Algeria, West Africa, Cairo and Peking. The U.N. speech attacking the U.S. and other "imperialist powers" was ultrabelligerent, going so far as to accuse U.S. marines of "sexual exhibitionism" on the perimeter of the Guantánamo naval base. A few days later, on CBS-TV's *Face the Nation*, Guevara loudly

he had been demoted, possibly put in jail, maybe even executed. In his speech last week, promising to clear up the status of "el Compañero Ernesto Guevara," Castro gave only the vaguest hints as to what that status might be. "The enemy has put out many guesses and rumors, sometimes confused, sometimes trying to confuse," said Castro. "Well, in a few days, we are going to read a document by el Compañero Ernesto Guevara that explains his absence during these past months." With that, Castro teased his audience by waving a sheet of paper. "This is the act to which I refer," he said. "Read it! Read it!" pleaded the crowd. "Not now," said Castro.

All on Paper. Washington's Cuba watchers thought the document might have to do with a Soviet-style con-



RAÚL & CHE (1964)  
*Heart in China.*

owned up to promoting Communist revolution in Latin America. "When people are fighting for their freedom, it would not be moral for us not to assist them. We have taught some of them to acquire military knowledge. There will be fighting in every country of Latin America." On and on it went, with Che making a special point of accusing Russia and its East European partners of being "accomplices of imperialist exploitation" by selling their machines to underdeveloped nations for a profit. Real Communists would give them away.

The Russians plainly could not let this statement go by unchallenged, and reportedly told Castro so in no uncertain terms. "When Guevara got back to Havana last March," says an observer in Cuba, "Castro called him in and the two had it out on the subject." They disappeared for a week. Then Castro popped up. Guevara has not been seen or heard from since.

The rumor mills had him fighting with the rebels in Santo Domingo, stirring up guerrilla trouble variously in Peru, Colombia, Guatemala and Argentina. Other stories whispered that

stitution calling for the usual circus elections some time in the next few years. According to this theory, Che might have been ordered to draft such a constitution as a kind of act of contrition. The document might also be a manifesto, with Che either penitently apologizing for his errors or bringing his doctrinal dispute with Cuba's Kremlin-Castro leadership into the open. Che is not the type to be easily weaned from belief in his violent revolutionary war and his grinding distaste for Cuba's Soviet-enforced position as a supplier of raw materials in return for fancy-priced industrial goods. Whatever the paper is, if there is one, and whatever position Che holds or appears to hold when and if he emerges, the split with Castro is real. Toward week's end Castro's government announced the formation of a new party leadership, and Guevara's name was notably absent from the list. In place of the old national directorate, of which Guevara was a top-ranking member, the party created a new secretariat, central committee and a higher-level political bureau that will serve as the party's principal executive council. As one U.S.

expert puts it: "Castro is now willing to go down the line with the Russians. Che is not."

Some people may find it hard to imagine Fidel Castro going down the line with anyone, remembering his swagger after defeating the U.S.-sponsored Bay of Pigs exile invasion, his white fury when the Russians pulled their missiles out of Cuba, his vows that "we will never be anyone's satellite." But that was years ago, before cockeyed Communist economics, compounded by an almost willful Latin mismanagement, brought Castro's revolution to its present state of decay. "We are now," says one Havana observer, "watching the slow decline of Cuba into another Bulgaria."

To the Bureau. Nowhere does the decay show more vividly than in Fidel Castro himself. The old Castro was a swinger, an extrovert who enjoyed yacking with Western newsmen or moving along the embassy cocktail circuit. He gunned around town in a souped-up Oldsmobile, showing up everywhere for spur-of-the-moment rallies, TV talkathons, hilarious games of *beisbol* in Havana's public parks, spear-fishing at Varadero beach and interminable gab-fests with the students at Havana University, where he would often hold court until 4 or 5 a.m. No more. Today's Fidel Castro has a dull, grey look about him. He goes only to Iron Curtain receptions, talks only to Communist correspondents—and then only out of duty. "The heady days are over," notes a resident in Havana. "All you hear of Castro these days is in the newspapers. He's suddenly started behaving like a bureaucrat. We've been told he often doesn't stir from his desk all day."

And like Castro, everybody else in Cuba is getting dull. Younger Brother

Raúl, Cuba's armed forces chief, who used to give a pretty noisy speech, now works in the background as quietly as any Russian general. President Osvaldo Dorticos sometimes does not even bother to accept the credentials of new ambassadors, shunting the chore instead to an assistant. As Russification grows, Cuba's bureaucracy is now overlaid by yet another bureaucracy. Two years ago, the P.U.R.S., Cuba's Communist Party, organized a special branch to provide political commissars in the military, factories and national education system.

The Happy City. In the early years of the revolution, Havana retained much of its irrepressible, boisterous humor. Four years after Castro, the place still bustled, its hundreds of bars thronged with noisy knots of people guffawing over the latest rumors, its streets snarled with ill-tempered, horn-honking traffic jams. Today there are hardly any rumors, and the streets are so empty that even impoverished La Paz, Bolivia, teems with traffic by comparison. The armed militiamen and -women once standing guard in truculent excitement before virtually every public building have disappeared. Life has become predictable, its Latin impulse governed by ration books, arbitrary government edicts and complex forms to be filled out in quadruplicate.

The regime tries valiantly to convince Habañeros that their city is still the same old fun town it always was. A sign in one hotel proclaims: "Let's tour this happy city at night." But people stay away from nightclubs, theaters and restaurants. The thudding propaganda in the shows is one reason; the food and drink are another. A daiquiri runs \$1.10, and the once-famed Cuban rum approaches the undrinkable. A sin-

ewy little beef filet goes for \$10 at the official exchange rate, and red snapper for \$4.50 a plate. "It's Stalin-style economics carried to the ultimate," says one foreign visitor. "If you can strip the consumer economy of its buying power, then you can plow your resources into heavy machinery and infrastructure."

Seven years after the revolution, Cuba has hardly any industry to speak of. At the start, Castro opted to diversify Cuba's sugar-based economy and ordered a vast program of industrialization at the expense of agriculture. Within 39 months, practically every food was rationed. Meantime the sugar crop, representing 90% of the country's foreign exchange, dropped from 6,800,000 tons in 1961 to 3,800,000 in 1963. But the Russians and other Cuba traders were either unwilling or unable to supply machines for industry without a better barter deal, so back to sugar it was. This year the crop is up to 6,000,000 tons—but Castro is still hurting. So many other countries have found it so easy to grow cane that world sugar prices tumbled from 10¢ per lb. last year to a mere 2¢ last week. With more than half his crop committed to the Soviets under their barter arrangement, Castro will realize at most \$130 million on open-market sugar sales this year.

Love Those Mangoes. Sugar is no longer rationed, as it was in 1963. Just about everything else still is—either that, or it appears on a feast-or-famine basis. "Right now," says one resident, "they've got so much corn they can't unload it. They keep saying: 'Eat corn, eat corn.'" Before that, it was eggs, then avocados, then mangoes. "We must find a way to use our mangoes—every single one," pleaded the Communist daily *Hoy*. Wrote one Cuban to a friend in Miami: "We substitute mangoes for squash, eat fried mangoes, mango fritters, mango omelets, and if you have rice, then rice with mangoes."

There is no genuine forward-planning except that forced on the reluctant Cubans by the Russians. With cane-planting time almost upon them, Castro officials were frantically scouring world markets last week for nitrate fertilizers that should have been ordered six months ago. Castro faces the problem of a physical plant that is disintegrating with no way to replace it. Last year a Castro official described the state of the country's railroad system as "desperate," noting that 75% of the locomotives operating in 1959 were out of commission. Havana Radio recently criticized a pulp and paper plant for an "interminable list" of breakdowns that put the plant out of action for more than seven hours on the sample day.

To get replacement parts, engineers and mechanics cannibalize pieces of old farm and industrial equipment, trucks, and anything else they can find, and graft them onto other machines. Cubana Airlines has three four-engined Bristol Britannias at Havana airport.



DOWNTOWN HAVANA STORE  
Harsh reality is at hand.



Often just one flies; the other two supply the spare parts. The few cars on Havana streets are rolling junk heaps—but precious junkheaps. “I could sell this thing for \$1,400,” boasts the proud owner of a broken-down 1948 Kaiser. When Havana’s old General Motors buses finally began to give out, Castro imported a flashy new fleet from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. They could not take the heat. Early this year Castro bought 400 British buses from Leyland Motors, which do better in the heat but suffer from Cuban drivers and Russia’s low-octane fuel.

All told, rocketing prices and shortages of every kind have cut the value of the Cuban peso by one-third since Castro came to power. “The typical industrial worker,” says one observer in Havana, “has thus gained nothing and lost much by the revolution. If he was earning \$225 a month before, he was able to look forward to buying a refrigerator, television set or even a car. Now all these things are shut off to him.”

**Everyone a Loser.** U.S. intelligence estimates say that only 20% to 30% of Cuba’s population still actively support Fidel Castro. Aside from all the other aggravations, Castro’s police state is such that virtually every Cuban has lost a relative or close friend in exile, or locked up among the 50,000 prisoners in Cuban jails, or dead at the hands of Castro’s executioners. A distinguished, once-prosperous Havana doctor shrugged his shoulders disconsolately, as he explained that most of his friends are in exile. “I’d go myself,” he sighed, “except that I have my mother here, who is 79. I also can’t leave because I have two relatives in prison. They couldn’t get along without the food we send in every month.”

A few Cubans have tried to stay and fight—usually small bands of desperate men operating in the central Escambray Mountains and in Castro’s old Sierra Maestra stamping grounds. They face the full might of a 200,000-man army (plus 100,000 militia reserves) equipped with the best of everything Russian, including supersonic MIG-21s based outside of Havana. They also face Raúl Castro, who used to be quite a guerrilla fighter himself but now heads the counter-insurgency operations and treats it as rather a sport.

The Castro technique offers an in-



teresting example for anti-guerrilla students everywhere. When a guerrilla band turns up in Cuba, Raúl smothers the area with as many as 5,000 troops. All civilians are removed, along with cattle, chickens and other sources of food; homes and barns are destroyed, wells filled in, fences pulled down. Then the troops sweep forward, much as beaters at a rabbit hunt. When the guerrillas are caught, they are shot; if they own land, it is confiscated. Their children become wards of the state, are separated from their mothers and placed in Castro training schools.

**Ready for Plucking.** From time to time there is talk that Castro’s army will one day turn on him. After all, it is a Latin American army. But these troops have always seemed too well-fed, too pleased with their toys to give Cubans much hope. They are also young—members of the Cuban youth that Castro works incessantly to indoctrinate. “Our commitment,” says Jorge Enrique Mendoza, national director of the state scholarship program, “is to forge Communists.”

Ciudad Libertad (Liberty City) is a

huge educational complex that covers more than 1,000 acres of former military barracks in Havana. It is the pride of the Castro government; more than 10,000 Cubans study there, taking primary, high-school and technical-school courses. An art instructor laid it on the line: “Children don’t have prejudices. They are like fruit on the tree, ready to be plucked when ripe.” On the walls were student sketches of Castro with peace doves, Castro standing atop the globe with a radiant smile, Castro at the Bay of Pigs invasion, a defiant David facing a hideous U.S. Goliath. A reporter asked if art was giving way to politics. “No,” said the instructor. “We give the children complete freedom in what they do. I just give them a theme. Last week we talked about Algeria and the Congo. Today, I’ll tell them about South Viet Nam.”

**Strings Attached.** So secure is Communism in Cuba—Moscow’s brand of Communism—that only about 3,000 to 4,000 Russian troops remain in the country, most of them genuine technical advisers. The Chinese, once very much in evidence, are scarcely seen any more. They have almost nothing to sell and very little to say. The one place where their influence was still strong until recently was in Castro’s overseas operations, where, at Che Guevara’s inspiration, the whole tone was a blatant call for immediate bloody revolt. Castro is still permitted to support his “wars of national liberation,” but Moscow insists on knowing all about such operations and wants to be sure that they are carried on without leaving such obvious traces as the three-ton Cuban arms cache uncovered in Venezuela in 1963. That error lost Castro his diplomatic relations with every Hemisphere nation except Mexico and Canada.

For the past several months Castro has felt the results of a Havana meeting of Latin American Communist leaders

last November, at which Moscow demanded, and Castro agreed, that Cuba channel its subversion through existing orthodox Communist parties—with a few notable exceptions, such as in Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala. This now gives the Russians better control of purse strings and operating methods. The Havana meeting also laid out a list of likely present and future targets. Among them: Honduras, El Salvador, Panama, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Paraguay and British Guiana.

There is currently quite a lot going on, both in Cuba's training camps and

him. But most of them fight in his name and with his methods. In Venezuela, hardly a week goes by that the Castroite FALN terrorists do not shoot a cop in Caracas, dynamite an oil pipeline, or raid some remote village. Last week one band clashed with government troops 200 miles south of Caracas, and when the shooting was over two guerrillas and two soldiers were dead. In neighboring Colombia, long troubled by a siege of backlands banditry, President Guillermo León Valencia's biggest headache is "Sure Shot" Pedro Antonio Marín, 35, who leads some 100 guer-

U.S. has tried everything, and now we're trying nothing." The pillars of Cuban Communism appear firmly in place, decaying but hardening into some weird sort of petrified forest. The regime might even survive Castro's death. Yet for the moment at least, Cuban Communism and subversion seem more or less neutralized. The guerrilla situation in the Hemisphere is troublesome but hardly desperate. Politically, Castro and Cuba have been discredited, both by what they have become and by the force of stronger ideas. The Alliance for Progress is slowly beginning to live up to its name. In half a dozen countries, impressive new leaders are pushing hard for a peaceful social and economic evolution; in most of the others, the realization is dawning on those in power—the military, the landowners, the Roman Catholic Church—that they will have to work for their salvation.

In Abeyance. The U.S. obviously has the power to crush Castro's military machine any time it chooses. But that would risk a confrontation with the Kremlin, and for the time being the U.S. would rather see the Russians focusing their hostility on Red China. "This extreme approach is in abeyance, in the absence of a major provocation by Castro," says a U.S. expert. Neither, despite occasional Cuban feelers, will the U.S. consider negotiating a live-and-let-live deal with Castro so long as he remains totally committed to the Soviet bloc and continues his subversion around Latin America. President Johnson's policy is isolation and containment, while doing everything possible to deny Castro the free-world trade he so gravely needs.

The headline-grabbing but woefully futile anti-Castro exile raids have been discouraged to the point where most of the exiles have given up the game. Obviously, the CIA still sends in agents on information-gathering missions and to explore the possibilities of a genuinely effective underground inside Cuba. When Castro boasts that he has captured and executed CIA men, he is often telling the truth. Other than that, the U.S. is content to watch Cuba with high-flying U-2s and an occasional supersonic tree-top dash by Air Force RF-101 or Navy RA-5C reconnaissance jets. Should Castro shoot down one of the jets with his Soviet-supplied SAM II missiles, the U.S. contingency plan is to "take out"—meaning obliterate—the specific SAM site involved. The plan, as of now, does not call for invasion.

"If Castro is going to be overthrown," a U.S. official told a reporter in Washington recently, "it will have to come from within." A few days later, the reporter was talking with a proud young Castroite functionary at the Cuban Foreign Office in Havana. "You see," he said, "we have achieved a stalemate." That afternoon, an anti-Castro Havana lawyer put it somewhat differently: "I think the U.S. is letting us stew in our own juice for a while."



STUDENT DRILL

"Our commitment is to forge Communists."

in the field. The job of training Castro's subversion army is handled by Cuba's *Dirección General de Inteligencia* (DGI), whose *comandante*, Manuel Pineiro Lozada—known variously as "Red Beard," "M-1," and "Petronio"—oversees everything from guerrilla training to cash disbursements for Castro's Latin American agents. The DGI has trained more than 5,000 Latin Americans in guerrilla warfare, including 500 Venezuelans, 300 Peruvians, 200 Panamanians, 75 Dominicans, 60 Salvadorans. Trainees receive Guevara's *La Guerra de Guerrillas* and another handy pocket guide called *150 Questions on Guerrilla Warfare*, written by Castro's old mentor, Alberto Bayo, a Communist veteran of the Spanish Civil War. Bayo's dedication reads: "To those who have died and are dying in the filthy dictatorial bourgeoisie military oligarchic prisons in Latin America." The students spend from four weeks to a year learning about explosives, weapons and psychological warfare, then return home to await the proper time for action.

Raids in the Backlands. Not every guerrilla band in Latin America is controlled by Castro; to think so would attribute far too much importance to

rillas and killed 17 people on one recent backlands raid. Another 150 guerrillas are operating in the Guatemala countryside, the most important group led by Marco Antonio Yon Sosa, 34, a one-time army lieutenant who graduated from the U.S. Army counter-insurgency school in Panama before deciding to go left. In Peru, bands totaling 1,300 guerrillas are operating high in the Andes, so far have killed 22 troops while eluding pursuing government forces.

Then there is the Dominican Republic, where Communists and far-leftists of every stripe attempted to steal away a coup in favor of deposed President Juan Bosch, then fought bitterly to keep OAS and U.S. troops from pacifying the situation. These Red groups, the most rabid of which is the Castroite 14th of June Movement, have now hidden thousands of arms in case another opportunity presents itself. In the meantime, Juan Bosch has been parading around Santo Domingo calling for "strikes, demonstrations and appeals" to drive out the OAS's peace-keeping troops.

Where does the U.S. stand today? Says a State Department official: "The