

# Cuba Withdraws Welcome From U.S. Newsmen

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Cuba appears to have reversed its short-lived policy of welcoming American newsmen to the island.

An attempt to confirm this switch in policy by a telephone call to the Foreign Ministry press office in Havana met, however, with little success. In fact, the phone call brought forth an anonymous aide who said no press officials were available because everybody was out in

the fields cutting sugar cane.

In recent weeks, several U.S. reporters who applied for visas have been turned down.

It could not be ascertained whether the clamp-down on visas represents a blanket policy similar to the ban that existed before last July, or whether visas are being denied only to those news organizations deemed undesirable.

## New Tough Attitude

In any event, the increased difficulty in obtaining a visa appears to be consistent with

Cuba's toughening attitude toward the United States.

Last summer, Premier Fidel Castro indicated that he wanted better relations with the United States presumably as the result of Soviet pressure and the desire to improve Cuba's economic position.

In the hope of paving the way toward a detente, Castro invited most major U.S. newspapers and news magazines to send reporters to cover the July 26th anniversary celebration. He permitted them to remain as long as they desired, even for a few months. This

reporter was free to travel throughout Cuba.

## Encouraged Newsmen

Castro said that he would be satisfied if the visiting correspondents reported "only 20 per cent of the truth," since almost all previous reports from Cuba had come from fleeing refugees less interested in objectivity.

The Cubans apparently were not disappointed on the whole, since most reports, even if largely unfavorable, lacked the exaggerations of the refugee reports. And more important,

they stressed the prevalent diplomatic view in Havana that improved U.S.-Cuban relations might work to Washington's advantage.

However, late last year, after the United States spurned Castro's subtly offered peace overtures, Cuba apparently gave up its effort to woo this country and stepped up its subversive activities in the Hemisphere. The situation in Viet-Nam has since lent new fuel to Cuban bitterness. This bitterness appears to be reflected in the new obvious ban on U.S. newsmen.