

'No Information' of Change

Cuban Missile Pullout Is Denied by Pentagon

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The Defense Department said yesterday that it has "no information indicating any change in the characteristics of the ground-to-air missiles installed in Cuba, despite published reports."

The statement was handed to reporters by Arthur Sylvester, Assistant Secretary of Defense and the Pentagon's top spokesman. He was referring to accounts of a belief, current here, that the Soviet Union may have pulled its better rockets out of Cuba and deprived Premier Fidel Castro of means of blasting high-flying spy planes from the skies.

When one reporter suggested that the statement could be interpreted as other than a denial, Sylvester said:

"It's intended to be a denial."

A pullout of the higher-flying rockets would lessen the likelihood that the dispute with the Red-ruled island could erupt in a clash of arms. It also would go a long way toward explaining Castro's May Day statement that Cuba is alone in her dispute with the United States.

Castro himself has conceded that his armed forces cannot shoot down the high-flying American planes without the Soviet rockets. Thus, when he said on May Day that "We will prevent these flights to the limits of what our weapons can do," he may have been, in a veiled way, revealing a new weapons limitation.