

Washington Post

Times Herald

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1964

WTOP-TV (9) Radio (1500)

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Guantanamo Is Ordered On Alert in Cuba Row

Navy to Supply Water; Johnson Announces Cut In Natives' Employment

By Murrey Marder
Staff Reporter

President Johnson last night gave orders to make the American naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, "self-sufficient" in water supplies and on the alert for further "reckless and irresponsible conduct" by the

Cuban government.

A reduction in the employment of 3000 Cubans at the United States base also was ordered, to cut the \$5 million a year that their wages put into the Cuban economy.

The President also asked all nations, especially this Nation's Latin American and European NATO allies, to re-examine the fact that Communist Cuba "remains a constant threat to the peace of this Hemisphere." That implied renewed attempts by the United States to try to shore up the flagging effort to tighten the economic squeeze on the regime of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

These relatively moderate decisions were announced after a second lengthy top-level strategy conference at the White House yesterday in a day of intensive discussions across Washington about ways to cope with Cuba's cut-off of fresh water supplies to the American base.

Cuba shut off the water line Thursday after giving the United States a 45-minute ultimatum that it would do so unless the United States released four Cuban fishing vessels and their crews. They were seized Sunday on charges of illegally fishing in territorial waters off Florida.

Will Guarantee Security

"The United States is determined to guarantee the security of the Guantanamo Naval Base," the White House said last night, "and does not intend to submit the security or the welfare of the servicemen and their families who live there to further irresponsible actions by the Cuban government."

By its decision last night, the Johnson Administration sidestepped all the drastic courses of action that had been suggested in the first angry outbursts on Capitol Hill against Castro's action.

There had been Capitol Hill talk of the likelihood of taking all kinds of action ranging from blockading Cuba to "sending in the Marines."

Administration sources last night noted that what the United States was dealing with was a breach of contract by Cuba on supplying water, rather than what could be construed as an act of war. In response, these sources said, the United States was taking adequate action to protect its interests and to put Castro on notice if Cuba should attempt any more drastic action.

Rusk Says We'll Stay

A few hours earlier, Secre-

Text of President Johnson's statement on Guantanamo dispute. Page E12.

Text of Secretary Rusk's statement. Page E12.

Captains of Cuban boats said they intruded in U.S. waters because of Gulf storm. Page A16.

Castro fails to keep promise to turn on Guantanamo water for an hour daily. Page A16.

tary of State Dean Rusk said if Communist Cuba is trying to squeeze the United States out of Guantanamo, the attempt is certain to fail.

"The basic fact is that we are in Guantanamo and will remain there for the foreseeable future," Rusk said.

What American officials are weighing is what next steps, if any, Castro may take; how the United States should retaliate, and, above all, the East-West implications of the new Cuban tangle. A major question, that confronts the

Johnson Administration is how far the Soviet Union will back Castro in his latest clash with the United States.

Rusk, at a news conference, flatly rejected Cuba's contention that cutting off the Cuban supply of water was a justifiable reprisal for United States detention of four Cuban fishing vessels and their crews.

Cuba's attempt "to link these two incidents is not only mischievous and unproductive," Rusk said, but "it is en-

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tirely inadmissible to us here in the United States."

Rusk produced new information that two captains of the boats "have admitted to Coast Guard officials that they were knowingly fishing in United States waters" in the Dry Tortugas Islands off Key West.

Radio conversations between one of the boats and Havana on Sunday, the day the vessels and 38 crewmen were seized, said Rusk, showed the following conversation:

"Havana: Where are you anchored?"

"Lambda 33: Well, we are East of Tortugas. Go ahead."

"Havana: International waters?"

"Lambda 33: Well, no; this is national waters. National waters."

"Havana: I understand."

That conversation, plus the United States' knowledge of the vessels' location, said

Rusk, "completely disproves the claim of the Cuban government that the Cuban boats were in international waters when apprehended."

Cuba, at 11:15 on Thursday, gave the Swiss Ambassador in Havana a note saying the water supply to the American naval base would be cut at noon unless the boats, and 36 of the crewmen jailed in Florida were released in that 45-minute interval.

Protest Note Spurned

Rusk said that at 4 p.m. Thursday when the Czech Embassy here tried to deliver a Cuban protest note on detention of the vessels and their crews, the State Department refused to accept it "because of its gross distortion of the facts and its highly offensive language."

Cuba has charged that seizure of the boats and crews

was "insolent, arbitrary and illegal" and said the men were "kidnaped" by the United States.

Rusk said, without implication, that "we have noticed Cuban broadcasts which suggest a concerted campaign against our presence in Guantanamo."

2 Tankers to Haul Guantanamo Water

By John G. Norris
Staff Reporter

Two Navy tankers were ordered diverted from normal duties yesterday to haul 8 million gallons of fresh water from Port Everglades, Fla. to the Guantanamo naval base each week.

With a third craft for backup, the base can continue indefinitely under much less austere water rationing than now in effect, officials said.

After Communist Cuba shut off the base's normal water supply Thursday, it was put on "Condition A" water rationing limiting consumption to 500,000 gallons a day. Water hours were invoked for Guantanamo's 10,500 inhabitants, with the taps generally turned off for 21 hours daily.

Hope to Ease Rate

Navy officials were hopeful that once the tankers start operating and base reservoirs are filled that this can be eased. Under an alternate "Condition B" rationing plan, a 1-million-gallon daily consumption — half the normal quantity—is contemplated.

This is somewhat similar to summer water rationing in some U.S. communities, barring its use for sprinkling lawns and golf greens, washing cars and filling swimming pools.

By rotating the 4-million gallon tankers, Tallulah and Suamico, between the Port Everglades water reservoirs and Guantanamo—a six-day turnaround — "Condition B" rationing should be possible, it was believed here.

The MSTS ship Tallulah left Portsmouth, N.H., yesterday for Norfolk, Va., and a 5-day steam bath to clean out oil from its hold. It will then load water in Florida, and reach Guantanamo Feb. 18.

The Suamico, now at Jacksonville, Fla., will be steamed out there, and should arrive at Guantanamo, Feb. 18 or 19.

Cost of the water-hauling effort has not yet been officially estimated, but it probably will run over \$10,000 a day. It costs \$3800 a day to

operate tankers of the Tallulah type, and water purchased from the Port Everglades Port Authority costs the Navy 25 cents for 1000 gallons, 2½ cents more than has been paid Cuba.

The base now is living off its 15-million-gallon supply on base and 4-million-gallon reserve in the water tanker Abatan in Guantanamo Bay. The water ship makes its own fresh water from sea water by evaporators of the type aboard other naval vessels.

120,000-Gallon Capacity

Salt water is pumped aboard through underwater scoops and boiled in a vacuum. Steam is carried into another compartment and condenses into fresh water as it cools. The condensing process usually is repeated, and the drinking water is chlorinated. Heavily salted residue water is pumped into the sea. The Abatan can make 120,000 gallons a day.

Cuba announced late Thursday night that it would turn on the water from the Yateras River Pumping Station—the now cut water source—from 8 to 9 each morning to provide water for "women and children" at the base. This was not done yesterday morning and the Pentagon said last night that it was still off as of 5 p.m.