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Rusk Statement on Cuban

Here is the text of Secretary of State Dean Rusk's description yesterday of what he termed "the matter of the Cuban fishing boats and the water supply for the U.S. base at Guantanamo."

First, I think it should be clear that the attempt by the Cuban Government somehow to link these two incidents is not only mischievous and unproductive; it is entirely inadmissible to us here in the United States.

I think it is important that we all have the straight facts about the four Cuban fishing boats which have been taken into custody along with certain of their crewmen.

The United States Coast Guard Cutter Cape Knox sighted the four Cuban vessels on Feb. 1, trolling at approximately 19 miles west southwest of Marquesas Key. At 1:20 in the afternoon on Feb. 2, the Coast Guard observed the four Cuban boats fishing in United States territorial waters at approximately one and a half miles east southeast of East Key.

Visibility at the time was 10 miles and the seas moderate. The boats were directed to anchor and stand by for boarding. The Cuban boats obeyed this order. When they anchored the various vessels were between 1.5 and 1.9 miles off of East Key.

Coast Guard Inspection

When the United States Coast Guard Cutter Cape Star arrived on the scene

at 7 o'clock that evening with the boarding party, the inspection of the Cuban vessels began. The inspection was carried out by only one party and it took three hours. The boarding and inspection was conducted in the normal manner with due regard for the welfare of the crews.

Early the next morning the Coast Guard vessels on the scene began to escort the four Cuban ships to Key West, with a boarding party on the lead boat, the Lambda 33, and they arrived in Key West at 5:45 in the afternoon. The decision to take these vessels to Key West, taken following consultation with the Department of State, had as its purpose further investigation and interrogation of the boats and crews in connection with the violation of Federal law.

Officials of the Coast Guard and Customs and Immigration conducted the investigation and interrogation. When these were completed, on the evening of February 5, the United States Coast Guard, at the official request of the appropriate authorities of the State of Florida, turned over the boats and crews to State officials for handling under State law.

I wish to point out that the Coast Guard is authorized under the United States Code upon the request of the proper authority to utilize its personnel and facilities to assist any state to perform any activity for which such person-

nel and facilities are especially qualified.

Turned Over to Florida

Federal authorities, from their investigation and interrogation, concluded that the Cuban vessels were fishing in the territorial waters of the United States contrary to Section 251 of Title 46 of the United States Code. However, as this statute contains no penalties, prosecution by Federal authorities was not undertaken. As the boats and crews were also in probable violation of the laws of the State of Florida and thus subject to prosecution by State authorities, the Coast Guard allowed the State of Florida to assume jurisdiction. This step was undertaken in consultation with the Department of State.

Two of the masters of the Cuban fishing boats have admitted to Coast Guard officials that they were knowingly fishing in the United States waters. Monitored conversation between the Lambda 33 and a control station in Havana, which took place at 2:25 p.m. on February 2, read as follows:

"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."

Now, from the foregoing it is clear that the Cuban fishing vessels knew they were fishing inside the territorial sea of the United States and that Havana was also aware of this fact. This, plus our own knowledge of their location, completely disproves the claim of the Cuban government that the Cuban boats were in international waters when apprehended.

Protest to Cuba

The United States Government first communicated with the Cuban government on this matter on the morning of February 4, when the Swiss Ambassador in Havana presented a note from us to the Cuban Foreign Minister relating the facts of the case and protesting the unauthorized intrusion of the fishing vessels into the United States waters in violation of international law, and requesting all necessary steps by the Cuban government to prevent a recurrence of such incidents.

At 4:30 on the same day the Counselor of the Czech Embassy, which represents Cuba's interests in the United States, made an oral protest of the detention of the vessels and crews and requested on behalf of the Cuban government the release of the boats and crews.

Then about 11:15 a.m. of February 6, the Cuban Foreign Minister handed the

Fishing Boats

Swiss Ambassador a note announcing that as of noon that day the water supply to the Naval Base would be cut off and that the suspension of water deliveries would be maintained until the crew members of the fishing vessels were put at liberty.

Note Is Refused

At 4:00 o'clock on the same afternoon the Counselor of the Czech Embassy attempted to deliver to the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs in the Department of State a written note from the Cuban Government on the question of the detention of the vessels and crews. The coordinator quite properly refused to accept the note because of its gross distortion of the facts and its highly offensive language. The note did not refer to the action already taken by the Cuban Government against the water supply of the Naval Base.

Now, let me say that we have noticed Cuban broadcasts which suggest a concerted campaign against our presence in Guantanamo. The basic fact is that we are in Guantanamo and will

remain there for the foreseeable future. Those arrangements cannot be abrogated except with the consent of both parties. We shall certainly not discuss the future of Guantanamo with a regime which does not speak for the Cuban people, which has been unanimously condemned by the governments of this hemisphere, and which demonstrates both in words and actions its hostility toward its neighbors.

President's Statement On Guantanamo Dispute

Here is President Johnson's statement yesterday on the Guantanamo Base situation:

When the Cuban government shut off the water supply to Guantanamo it deliberately broke an agreement made in 1938, reasserted in 1947 and personally supported by Fidel Castro in 1958. The United States is determined to guarantee the security of the Guantanamo Naval Base and does not intend to submit that security or the

welfare of the servicemen and their families who live there to further irresponsible actions of the Cuban government. The President has instructed the Department of Defense to make the Guantanamo base self-sufficient. In response, the Secretary of Defense has issued instructions to: 1. Assure the base control over its own water supplies both by conversion of sea water to fresh water and by the transportation of water by ship. 2. Reduce the employment of Cuban personnel who are subject to the control of the Cuban government and whose wages contribute to its foreign exchange.

The reckless and irresponsible conduct of the Cuban government remains a constant threat to the peace of this hemisphere. The consequences of further provocations by Castro should be carefully weighed by all nations.

These matters are being called to the attention of the members of the OAS for consideration in connection with charges now pending against Cuba in that organization. They will also be discussed with the members of NATO in order that those governments can take them into account in connection with their determination of their own policies towards the threats to the security of the Western Hemisphere posed by the Castro regime."