

# Guantanamo Barred to Newsmen

By Fred S. Hoffman  
Associated Press

The Defense Department said yesterday that "it is not believed in the national interest" to allow newsmen to travel to the Guantanamo naval base for on-the-spot reporting of the latest U.S.-Cuban crisis.

"We will continue to review the matter daily," the Pentagon told the Associated Press. But, it added in a statement, "in view of the situation between the United States and Cuba, Government-sponsored transport of newsmen to Guantanamo is not believed in the national interest at this particular time."

Officials declined to elaborate on the reasons for the ban.

A British reporter, Edwin Tetlow of the London Daily Telegraph's New York office, has been at Guantanamo since Thursday, before Fidel Castro announced he was cutting off the base's fresh-water supply.

Although the Pentagon statement referred to Government-sponsored travel, as a practical matter the ban is complete. There is no way to get to the base, on Cuba's eastern tip, except by military or other Government transportation.

Newsmen have been appealing for authority to go to the base since Castro announced his move last Thursday.

There is evidence that the question of admitting newsmen to Guantanamo has been the subject of extensive Government conferences, reaching up to the White House level. White House press secretary Pierre Salinger, asked yesterday whether the ban had White House approval, replied: "I would have to discuss that with the Pentagon."

Some Navy authorities were said to oppose allowing newsmen into Guantanamo on various grounds, including the possibility that their stories might heat up the situation and certain military contingency plans might be compromised.

# U.S. Files Protest on Cuba Cutoff

Associated Press

The United States has formally protested to Cuba against the cutoff of water for Guantanamo and has served notice that the Cuban fishermen seized for poaching will be tried under Florida law.

The "vigorous" U.S. protest was delivered at Havana Sunday through the Swiss Embassy, which represents U.S. interests in Cuba, the State Department disclosed.

The American note responded to Cuba's Jan. 29 note announcing that the water for the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo would be cut off until the fishermen are released. President Johnson responded by ordering that Guantanamo be made self-sufficient in its water supply and that the number of Cuban workers on the big U.S. base be cut to reduce the flow of dollars into Cuba.

A Florida State court in Key West now has the case of 29 Cuban fishermen charged with fishing in Florida waters. State Department press officer Robert J. McCloskey said he knows of no plan for Federal intervention in the case.

The formal U.S. protest denounced the Guantanamo water cutoff as a "totally unwarranted" breach of a water supply contract not due to expire until 1969. It said that the Cuban fishing vessels had clearly violated U.S. waters, that there is no proper link between the Guantanamo water and fishing questions, and that the fishermen will be tried by Florida under full guarantees of a fair trial.

Cmdr. Ted Gibson, Chief law enforcement agent of the Florida Conservation Board, said evidence abounded that the Cubans violated State law. Gibson heads a team of 14 Conservation Board men here for the case.

The next move, hearing pleas of the 29 prisoners, awaited the arrival of an attorney to defend them.

Czech diplomat Frantisek Talicka said before returning to Washington Sunday that he would expedite the matter. The Czech Embassy handles Cuban affairs in the United States.