

U.S. Bitterness at British Trade Affecting NATO

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PARIS, May 8—American bitterness toward Britain for what is regarded as the role of a disloyal ally in trade with Cuba has begun to prejudice relationships in NATO.

Sales of British buses to the Castro regime and the probability of long-term British credits to the Soviet Union have supplanted the separatist views of French President de Gaulle as the major irritant in the eyes of American diplomats here.

British policy "is the worst threat to the Alliance we have," an American official said today, "and it is odd to have it come from a country that proclaims itself our staunchest ally."

The focal point of immediate criticism is the announcement from London that negotiations are under way for the sale of 500 more buses to Cuba on credit terms after the earlier sale of 450 for cash.

Not Against Cash Deals

An American source drew a distinction between sales for cash and sales on credit. "We are not against cash deals," he said, because they constitute a drain on Cuban resources.

The fear is that the British example will make it impossible for other countries which have cooperated with the American embargo to hold the line. France recently announced the sale of 20 diesel-electric locomotives on credit with the possible sale of 10 more.

Cuban purchasing missions touring Europe reportedly have sounded out manufacturers in Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands about possible purchases.

What makes American officials here especially choleric is their contention that the British have ignored evidence repeatedly furnished them by the United States that Cuba constitutes a bad credit risk.

"The terms which Britain has been talking about actually amount to aid," one American course charged.

No Charge Expected

He contended that Britain quietly changed the export credit guarantee classification

of the enabling legislation to make the bus sale seem more a commercial transaction, but that originally there had been an element of government subsidy because the credit worthiness did not justify the risk.

Despite heavy American pressure, British diplomats here see no likelihood of a change in the official position that the trade with Cuba is not strategic. Any appearance of yielding to American suasion might become a political issue in the forthcoming election.

American officials tend to exculpate France for the sale of locomotives on three-year credits because Britain broke the dam. "They've all held firm except for Britain," an official commented acidly.

Previously France has sold 100 Berliet trucks to Cuba for cash but had deferred a possible deal for 500 more on credit. Pressure from manufacturers in depressed areas made it impossible to hold back on the locomotives after the British example, a French source said.

Western Allies

Warned by Rusk

BRUSSELS, May 8 (AP) Secretary of State Dean Rusk arrived here tonight with a warning to the Western Allies that "no nation stands alone."

He flew from Washington to speak to a Belgian-American luncheon tomorrow, en route to the NATO foreign ministers meeting in The Hague next week.

At the airport, Rusk said: "In our age of interdependence, when no nation stands alone, it becomes even more necessary that the nations, particularly those of our evolving Atlantic Community, come to know one another as thoroughly and as sympathetically as possible."

Rusk will confer tomorrow with Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak and European Common Market leaders and then will leave for The Hague for a three-day session of the NATO Ministerial Council, beginning Tuesday.