

Mexico Dissents *Post 8/7/64*

The memory of the past and the lure of the future both lie behind Mexico's refusal to break relations with Cuba. Mexico was one of four countries (Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia were the others) to oppose the Organization of American States resolution calling for an end to trade and diplomatic relations with Cuba. She is now the first country to ignore the resolution, and her example may induce the other dissenters to follow her course, at least for a while.

Mexico's decision is consistent with her long tradition of fervent anti-interventionism. On July 5, Mexico elected a new president, Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, who is slightly to the right of President Adolfo Lopez Mateos and hence is especially sensitive to charges of alleged subservience to Washington. Significantly, Mr. Diaz Ordaz was endorsed by the champion of the far left, former President Cardenas. The price for this endorsement may well have included assurances that there would be no change in Mexico's policy toward Cuba.

In addition, Mexicans also feel that a break in relations would jeopardize the present air connection from Mexico City to Havana. This air link was specifically exempted from the OAS resolution, partly on humanitarian grounds and partly on the security argument that surveillance of the flights enables the hemisphere to keep track of who is going to Cuba.

But beyond these factors are Mexico's new ambitions to take a larger part in world affairs. A quiet campaign has been started to promote Mr. Lopez Mateos as successor to Secretary General U Thant. There has been a marked tendency in Mexico to play down the regional system and to play up world organizations.

Perhaps this helps to account for the strange Mexican proposal that the Cuban dispute be submitted to the International Court. Mexicans surely know that a precedent of appealing OAS decisions to the World Court would weaken, probably fatally, the peace-keeping machinery of the regional organization. But this may be precisely what Mexico wants to do.

Mexico is pretty much alone in her doctrinal hostility to the OAS resolution. In the cases of Chile, Bolivia and Uruguay, internal politics had more to do with reluctance to support the OAS sanctions. All three countries are concerned about tossing an emotional issue to the far left. Now that Mexico has led the way, these countries may decide to ignore the OAS too. All of which raises the question of whether it was wise to press so hard in the OAS for a resolution that everyone knew Mexico was sure to defy.