

No Time To Let Up on Castro

For the moment at least, the State Department can feel pretty good about its diplomatic war with Fidel Castro. The Organization of American States has voted 15-4 to apply sanctions against him for trying to overthrow the democratic government of Venezuela. Even Mexico, Bolivia, Uruguay and Chile, who voted against sanctions, are expected to suspend diplomatic relations with Cuba in due course. Castro is also warned that his subversive interventions in this hemisphere are "aggression" under the Rio Treaty and could justify military retaliation unless he calls them off.

Secretary Rusk and his deputy, Thomas Mann, deserve much credit for proving that the inter-American system can work. And so do the Venezuelans, Castro's prime target, who made a case against him that the O.A.S. investigating committee just had to believe. The Venezuelans got the goods on Castro in the form of a 3-ton arms cache and then refused to let his terrorists scare them out of holding an honest election, thus frustrating his major political objective of 1963.

Still another blow to Castro came from an unexpected source: his sister Juanita. Just before the O.A.S. meeting, she shocked Castro's remaining friends and foot-draggers with a broadcast from Mexico City. An early supporter of the revolution, Juanita Castro soon learned that "our ideals had been betrayed," but kept silence in Havana until this June. She described the terror, the hunger, the forced labor, the 75,000 political prisoners; and

she testified "that Cuba is directing the Communist subversion in Latin America" through its Department of State Security. Her country, concluded Juanita Castro, has become "a giant prison surrounded by water. . . . It is my desire, and that of all Cubans, that [the O.A.S.] take definite action against the dictatorial government of Cuba."

As his troubles deepened, Castro last month turned like a marlin and ran toward the boat. In an impetuous three days of interviews, he admitted exporting his revolution (what he had previously denied) but offered to stop if the U.S. would let up on him (e.g., resume trade relations). Rusk was not buying that. He told the O.A.S. foreign ministers that subversion "is not a subject for bargaining. It simply must stop."

It hasn't stopped. Castro's agents still wage guerrilla war in the hills of Venezuela, have been sighted in British Guiana and picked up in the Argentine. His embassies still agitate in touchy situations like the Chilean election. A U.S. expatriate, Robert Williams, uses a Havana radio to incite U.S. Negroes to violence. Castro's answer to the O.A.S. declaration, which he called "garbage," was to declare his policy of subversion "non-negotiable."

So be it. As Rusk says, "Castro has no future in Cuba or in this hemisphere." But if we are serious about helping the Cuban people get rid of him, the O.A.S. victory must be followed up. Castro is hurting; his economy, now 80 per cent dependent on the Soviet bloc, is a stagnant mess. Since most of his remaining hemisphere trade is food, which is exempt, the new O.A.S. trade sanctions won't hurt him much more. But the O.A.S. declaration also summoned other Western states to reconsider their trade with Castro (e.g., British buses, French locomotives, Spanish boats). The State Department has a new argument against this trade: it's not just the U.S. that objects to it, it is now 15 American nations who do. Chairman Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to the contrary, the ostracism of Castro *has* been effective, and the U.S. should now renew its pressure on other countries to make it more complete.

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