

OAS Considers Cuba Sanctions; Maneuvers Hint at Compromise

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Members of the Organization of American States polarized around two extreme positions yesterday as hemispheric Foreign Ministers met to consider the application of collective sanctions against Cuba.

Although this first session of the conference was devoted simply to generalized introductory remarks, most of the Foreign Ministers announced privately that they supported either compulsory diplomatic and economic sanctions or no sanctions at all.

Few if any members openly appeared ready to compromise. But this very fact has led many observers to believe that the way is indeed being paved for a compromise. Yesterday's unyielding stands, it is felt, were made simply for bargaining and face-saving purposes.

In past discussions, only Venezuela and Costa Rica displayed no inclination whatever to compromise on the hard position. Venezuela called for the present conference as the result of an effort by Cuba to subvert and overthrow its democratic government late last year.

But yesterday Colombia and Panama, in addition to Costa Rica, prepared a resolution calling for sanctions at least as tough as those advocated by Venezuela. And United States officials indicated they looked favorably on this resolution.

Previously, the United States, Colombia, and Panama had been ready to support a compromise solution providing for compulsory economic sanctions but only recommending that all OAS nations cut diplomatic ties with Cuba.

Some Latin officials suggest-

ed that the tougher position taken by more countries now would permit agreement on the compromise plan without resulting in a loss of face for Venezuela, since that country is not a sponsor of the "hard" resolution.

It is pointed out that Venezuela has been too identified with the tough stand to be able to back down gracefully from a resolution that it sponsored. However, the other countries can retreat without great difficulty.

By the same token, Argentina, which also had previously regarded favorably the compromise plan, yesterday moved to the opposite extreme, apparently to permit Mexico and Chile to save face in the same way. These two countries strongly oppose sanctions, partly because of their unswerving adherence to the principle of national sovereignty, and partly because of internal leftist influences.

Argentina circulated a resolution that merely condemned Cuba for aggression against Venezuela and warned the aggressor that if it persisted in its subversive ways another Foreign Ministers' meeting would be called to take action.

It appeared that nations favoring sanctions could obtain the necessary two-thirds vote even for the toughest penalties if they wanted to steamroller the minority. But most countries, including the United States, fear that to push the issue without at least a show of concession could seriously split the OAS.

Only Mexico and Chile are against sanctions as such. But they are receiving support in varying degrees from Uruguay, Bolivia, Brazil, and Argentina because those countries do not want to put the

two dissident nations on the spot.

Actually, much more is at stake for some OAS countries than was true when a bare two-thirds majority approved the ouster of Cuba from the OAS in 1961. For in this case,

if obligatory sanctions are approved, countries dealing with Cuba would be forced either to change their policies or to abandon the OAS. At present, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba.