

U. S. ATTACK FEARED

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# Castro Plays It Safe

By William R. Frye

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GUANTANAMO CITY, Cuba — Two things now are clear about Fidel Castro's international posture:

ONE — His desire for an accommodation with the United States — real or feigned — is a deliberate policy from which he is not likely to be easily jolted.

TWO — Castro is afraid that either Sen. Barry Goldwater will be elected president or, more likely, he will goad President Johnson into an election year attack on Cuba.

These impressions clearly emerge from an incident outside the Guantanamo Naval Base Monday night in which a Cuban soldier was killed — and from Castro's well-orchestrated response to it.

Castro's intense, supremely self-confident younger brother Raul, head of the armed forces, has handled the response.

He has seemed to observers to be more

concerned with explaining what Cuba did not plan to do in retaliation than with what it did.

He said for example in a "funeral oration" of nearly two hours here:

That Cuba could react by shooting down U-2 plane — but would not do that.

That Cuba could give the order to march on Guantanamo and "drive the Yankees into the sea" — but would not do that.

That Cuba could order its militia to shoot at American Marines — but it would not do that either.

The speech was overlain with frenetic oratorical denunciations of "Yankee assassins", and so is the local press. But this all seems to add up to what diplomats call "waffle", a policy of making a lot of noise and doing nothing.

The net impression, no doubt carefully calculated, is of restraint in the face of

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provocation. Whether Cuba herself deliberately arranged the provocation, as the United States charges, or whether it was the isolated act of an individual American Marine is not really relevant.

Raul Castro said in a post midnight press conference Tuesday morning after his speech that Cuba still wanted to sit down with the United States and discuss differences between the two countries. Indignation over the incident was thus kept careful under control, at least for foreign consumption. For the local audience, the Cuban press has been screaming at the top of its lungs. This is considered par for the course.

Raul's contrived explanation for the incident — that the commander of Guantanamo is a Birch Society fanatic trying to ignite Cuban-American conflict and thus benefit Goldwater — also casts interesting light on Cuban thinking.

Nothing is taken here wholly at face value by the diplomatic community. The game is to guess what is behind the government moves.

In this case, the guess is that Goldwater's attitude toward Cuba has genuinely alarmed either Havana or Moscow or both.

It also is clear that with the OAS meeting under way in Washington, Castro believes an anti-Goldwater stand will win friends for Cuba. Opposition to the senator is equated with good

sense and responsibility in many parts of the world.

The fact that thunderbolts from Havana will immensely strengthen Goldwater in the United States, and if continued long enough could conceivably elect him, does not seem to be fully appreciated here.

I asked Castro if he understood this fact. He dodged the question.

This correspondent had a few minutes in an undesired limelight during which I understood a little of how Richard Nixon must have felt in the famous kitchen confrontation with Khrushchev at the American exhibition in Moscow.

Raul Castro summoned me to the front of the platform after his speech and asked if I had any questions to put to the Cuban audience.

I asked them if they knew the American people were friends of the Cuban people. They shouted "non."

Castro told them they had misunderstood; that I had referred to the American people, not government, and they obediently shouted "si."

I then asked them if they understood one of the main things Americans objected to was Cuba's link to Russia. "Cuba si, Russia non," I said, plagiarizing Adlai Stevenson. "Russia si," they belted.

But it was a good natured crowd despite the occasion.

They seemed to enjoy playing a dramatic part, taking their cues from Castro and getting into the act.

I doubt very much that the Castro regime has been able to implant anti-Americanism deeply in very many Cubans.

The audience included many of the young people supposed to have been heavily indoctrinated. They have been, but I did not have the feeling it was a matter of profound conviction. It seemed to be more of a psychological outlet for pent-up frustrations.

Hungary too was indoctrinated but it was the young people who led the 1956 revolt.