

# Castro Intrusions Viewed Calmly

By Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

Venezuela's recent rebuff of a guerrilla landing led by officers of the Cuban army, together with the discovery of a handful of guerrillas in the Bolivian lowlands, has caused a lot of headlines throughout the Hemisphere but actually doesn't raise any dangerous problems.

It is true that Venezuela is more exposed to Castro's guerrilla operations than any other country; due, first, to the proximity of Cuba to Venezuela and, second, to the terrific wealth at stake.

Venezuela is the biggest exporter of oil in the world and one of the largest exporters of iron ore. But the actual fact is that Venezuela has experienced stray guerrilla fighting for a good many years, most of it completely unrelated to Castro. Some of it dates back to the Gomez dictatorship when the present Accion Democratica was trying to overthrow Gomez and later trying to overthrow dictator Perez Jimenez.

Likewise, in Colombia there have been sporadic gangs of marauders controlling pockets of the countryside for years, completely beyond reach of the government in Bogota. Many valleys in the Colombian mountains are almost impenetrable when strongly defended by local guerrillas.

As far as is known, the guerrilla bands have not been

supplied by Castro in the past, though this may have changed recently.

In Bolivia the actual number of guerrillas is not 200, as published in some press dispatches, but only 60. However, the significant point is that they are extremely well armed with the most modern weapons, smuggled in via Argentina. There is no question that the guerrilla band in Bolivia was inspired by Fidel Castro, just as the recent attempted landing on the shores of Venezuela was so inspired.

The fact that Castroites had definitely promoted the Bolivian guerrilla attempt was confirmed by the presence of at least two left-wing newspapermen from England and France. Obviously they had been tipped off by the Communist underground that an attempt was going to be made to penetrate Bolivia.

## Panama Fiasco

Early in his administration, Castro, in April 1960, chartered a boat under the command of his brother Raul, with about 40 Cubans aboard, with an assortment of weapons, to sail to Panama in a bizarre attempt to cut off the water that supplies Gatun Lake in the Gatun Locks. It was poorly conceived and ended in a complete fiasco.

However, this set the stage for Castro's attempt to set himself up as the "Nasser of the Caribbean" with the eventual goal of taking over all the

countries adjoining the Caribbean on the south, particularly the Panama Canal.

Reports from inside Cuba indicate that he is a long way from success. The price of sugar is down, Cuban labor is getting restless. The Cuban population is complaining about the high cost of living, and it is probable that Castro needed a foreign diversion to focus popular attention away from his own ills.

Before the recent coolness developed between the United States and Russia over Vietnam, the State Department had received some informal overtures from Moscow suggesting that it was time for the United States and Cuba to resume diplomatic relations. The Russians obviously are fed up with the high cost of supporting Castro, which runs to about \$1 million a day.

Meanwhile sentiment among countries ringing the Caribbean, particularly Venezuela, is increasingly strong that something must be done by the Organization of American States regarding the bad boy of the Caribbean. While they don't really worry too much about the petty forays Castro sends against them, they do get indignant when bombs are thrown on downtown streets in Caracas.

And President Barrientos of Bolivia becomes equally indignant when the most modern U.S. arms—more modern than those supplied the Bo-

livian army—turn up in the hands of insurgents.

There is definite reason to believe that Castro's forays are both inspired and financed by the radical Chinese Communists, not the more restrained Russian wing of the Party.

## Whither the Penny?

The plight of the copper penny, mostly lowly and rejected of our coins, was dramatically disclosed in an interchange between Eva Adams, Director of the Mint, Rep. Silvio Conte of Massachusetts and other members of the House Appropriations Committee. Here is what they said:

Conte: "There is a shortage of copper and quite a bit of it is used for pennies. Have you considered a copper-clad penny?"

Miss Adams: "A copper-clad penny? What would it be clad with?"

Conte: "You would have copper on the outside, and sandwich something else inside."

Miss Adams: "As I understand, a pound of material makes 145 pennies. We make about a dollar for every pound of material. For every 145 pennies, we get a dollar profit."

Robison: "Then you don't really care whether they come back?"

Miss Adams: "Well, I care. A little penny has a personality of its own. You cannot do without them."

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