

# One Solution for Cuban Problem: Steal Some of Castro's Thunder

By Renny Ashleman

Our Cuban policy is ill. The appalling fact is that it is not going to get better. Despite the 500 million dollars in social sulfa and political penicillin recently appropriated, despite the CIA, despite the Rockefeller Foundation, and even despite the thousands of newspaper editorials and columns devoted to the subject, the patient is going to die.

We're treating the wrong disease and we're using the wrong medicine. The problem in Latin America is not Castro and it is not even communism. The problem is disease, poverty, ignorance, tyranny, hypocrisy, American Imperialism, and downright stupid American foreign policy — not necessarily in that order.

Castro is barely a symptom of what is wrong with Latin America from the viewpoint of the United States. Castro is temperamental, insulting, unstable. But he merely represents the man intelligent enough to call for what nearly all of Latin America needs: land reform. This is a good deal more intelligence displayed than that offered by all of the foreign policy of the United States experts put together.

Castro has seized all of the United States property in Cuba. The same thing happened in Latin America years ago. The theft was carried out by our warm neighbor to the South, Mexico. Castro is friendly to the East. So are all of our allies, if trade is the criterion, and nearly all of our foreign aid recipients, if aid is the criterion. Castro is a dictator. This entitles him to break bread with our good friends Batista, Trujillo, and Franco.

This is not to apologize for Castro. It is simply to put him in perspective. If he did not lead the Cuban revolution, someone else would. The Cubans want land reform, they want expropriation, and they want to twist the tail of the United States.

This makes Cuba just like the other countries of the world. An attack on Castro is not an attack on a dictator. It is an attack on a nation which is doing

precisely what the rest of Latin America and much of the world wants to do.

When we attack Cuba or help attack Cuba we are announcing just this: we intend to block the movements of any nation in the world, if its movements are inimical to the United States.

Such fears are real not just postulated. Peru has refused a loan of ours to set up a cooperative movement among the American states. Instead Peru is considering seizing United States oil property. Mexican government officials have openly praised Castro and his defense efforts. Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and many others have accepted aid and trade offers from the Communists.

In most of Latin America the leadership of the universities becomes the leadership of the country. Most of this leadership is today communist and leftist. It is rapidly becoming pro-Castro. This is serious for University politics are one of the best indices of national political trends in LA.

Take Peru. In a recent election in the leading University of San Marcos the vote

thousands, perhaps millions of Cubans. We would have had to maintain a dictator in power. We would have solidly proved Russia's case of dollar diplomacy.

The problem is South America runs deeper than the United States blunders. South America is restless because of its poverty. This poverty is not walking poverty, nor breadline poverty. It is the poverty of the underfed, the starving; the underhoused, the homeless; the poorly paid, unemployed, and virtual slave.

The Buenos Aires Herald points out the facts in December 1960 "When you have a population growing at a rate three times faster than the increase in production there is but one result possible . . . ever deepening poverty."

Argentina gets less food to its workers than it did in 1930. Uruguay is not developing. Chile is in risk of political violence of the worst sort. On her own, Chile (next twenty-five years) could not repay the cost of one of her earthquakes. Colombia is killing off as many as 500,000 of her people by civil disturbance, per decade. Venezuela is the richest nation in LA, and has one of the worst social lags. The opposition in Venezuela is fully fidelista. Brazil's northern province is in a semi-revolt stage and her inflationary problems are unbelievable. She has at times printed more money than her entire economy is worth.

In economic terms all of Latin America is still undeveloped. Only Argentina feeds her people the satisfactory number of calories for a low calorie country according to FAO. Many thousands die of malnutrition yearly in 17 of the LA countries.

The final blow to Latin America's economic strength is the fact that none of the Latin American countries trade with each other to any appreciable extent. In Northern Chile, mountain towns needing fresh vegetables cannot get them from Argentina, though both sides would benefit from a trade exchange. Political difficulties keep the two countries railroads separated — by fifty yards.

If the United States wants to save Latin America for the kind of world that it favors, it must attack all dictatorships, not just those against us. We must quit holding our friends in power and let the true popular governments come into power.

The second thing that we must do is aid Latin America. This aid cannot be of the type which we have given in the past which aids the oligarchs or rich families and which supports armies ten times as big as any of the countries need to maintain order or preserve their borders.

This aid must go for agrarian reform, better transportation systems, better housing, better water, and the development of markets for Latin American products. We are giving all of Latin America 500 million for these aims today. We have given Franco of Spain over two billion in past years. No amount of money will make Latin America prosperous. An aid amount in the two billion category would give them markedly better housing, sanitation, and transportation. This is Castro's program. If Free Enterprise is superior to communism, the only way to prove it is to prove it by action. Genuine democratic land reform would destroy Castroism in every country of Latin America. Nothing else will.



was 4,300 for Castro party candidates, 3,000 for the left wing Aprista candidate, and 1,390 for the Christian Democrat party. This is the university of the wealthy students, the conservatives. It is the university that has furnished the leadership of that country. These results are not singular. They are a good match for most of the countries in Latin America.

It is maintained that despite the clear evidence that we are fighting a popular and ever more popular cause in Latin America that we must continue to do so because our honor is at stake. Our prestige must be protected.

I fail to see the sense of that statement. Our prestige was disastrously damaged by the ill-planned, ill-advised, ill-fated adventure. Our prestige would have been damaged had we succeeded. This is nothing prestigious about the most powerful nation in the West beating one of the smallest. There is nothing prestigious about crushing a popular government.

Had we won we would have had to kill

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