

decides what changes he would like to make in his court, one cannot say with any confidence at present. Suffice it, however, that something appears to be going on.

4. Fidel Castro himself has not spoken to his people since he took to the air just prior to the arrival of Mikoyan. This is six weeks ago, an unusually long period of silence on his part for a nation used to hearing from him regularly. Furthermore, since he appeared last in public almost two weeks ago at the funeral of the air crash victims, he has been out of the public view. Even the press has been silent about his activities. Indeed, we seem almost to be going through a period somewhat similar to that of the political in-fighting prior to the demise of Anibal Escalante this spring. Rumours are naturally beginning to pile on top of one another. He is said to be back in the Sierra Maestra; he has been in an automobile accident; he is making a grass-roots tour of the country. The net effect, however, when the personification of the Revolution drops out of sight, whereas his is customarily an ubiquitous presence, is to create uncertainty and despondency. The dynamism has temporarily gone out of the Cuban body politic and the country does not know in what direction it should turn. Ergo listlessness prevails.

5. In my view Castro blundered when he declined so strongly to go along with any sort of United Nations inspection. Admittedly by adopting a firm stand on this matter and by bringing out his Five-Point programme so closely on the heels of the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchange of letters, he recaptured a measure of initiative and regained some lost prestige to the extent that he was able to reassure his supporters and to convince the people that he was not a complete puppet of the Kremlin. Nevertheless, in so doing he sacrificed potential long-term gains for a short-term advantage. Through the acceptance of inspection, which he could readily have trammelled and made considerably less than effective in practice, he could have transferred the Cuban issue from the bilateral network on which it was being dealt to the multilateral United Nations forum. Here he could have muddied the waters more successfully and employed the resolution of the offensive weapons question to extract some political benefits. In this atmosphere he could have counted on a more congenial audience among the large block of non-aligned states and, after all, once his ability to commit the USSR to engage in nuclear war to preserve his régime was weakened there was all the more need to secure some political guarantee, however limited, from the United States. This the Americans might have found embarrassing not to accept at least in part in the world organization.

6. Instead he played the role of the petulant child. He laid down conditions and made demands that he did not have the power to back up. Indeed, if it turns out that he finally comes out of the crisis empty-handed politically, his tactics would seem to have been counter-productive. His failure to agree in some degree to cooperate with the United Nations may well have antagonized sections of neutral opinion. The need to demobilize quietly and without having explained the whys and wherefores of the whole operation has already left the Cuban people with a certain feeling of wasted purpose, particularly after the exhilaration created by the national response to his patriotic appeals at the time the crisis began. If, on top of this, his *quinque-partite* programme also gets nowhere, he again faces the charge of having failed to have achieved anything. That the Cuban authorities may be beginning to realize this was suggested to me when, in a conversation the other day with the Foreign Minister on the general subject of the crisis, Dr. Roa said somewhat plaintively at one point that if only the Americans would agree to discuss the future of Guantanamo this would be considered satisfactory in lieu of the immediate return of the base.

7. There is little doubt that Castro has lost prestige domestically and is in danger of losing more as the months go by, if he no longer appears to be able to dominate the scene and can offer no more than a further round of belt-tightening. At the same time, one should appreciate that to some extent he has been able to lay the public blame at the door of the Soviet Union. Moreover, he so towers above other figures in the Government that it is highly doubtful if the