

that emerged in Venezuela, Central America, and Bolivia for “adventurism”, and branded the body of “Castroite” revolutionary theory — and notably the notion that the party should be built around the revolutionary army and that the establishment of the guerrilla column itself was more important than efforts to seek broad support among the masses — on which they were based “unmarxist”. In so doing they greatly strained the relationship with Castro himself.

The Soviets presumably followed this line because they felt that the Cuban Revolution was an exception rather than a model, conditions elsewhere in the region not being conducive to successful armed struggle. Moreover, their condemnation of “Castroite” theoretical innovation may have reflected not only actual Soviet understanding of conditions prevailing in Latin America but also concern to maintain their own doctrinal primacy within the “world revolutionary movement”. It is plausible to maintain that it was also in part a product of the uncomfortable experience of confrontation with the United States over Cuba, in conditions of strategic and conventional inferiority.

In this context, it is germane to note that the Soviet Union has not yet provided Cuba with any formal security guarantee although Cuba is clearly interested in this. This caution in the Soviet security relationship with Cuba reflects the Soviet Union’s desire to maintain its flexibility and to avoid the embarrassment of non-fulfilment of such a commitment, or the dangers of escalation that attempts to honour it might entail. In private conversations, Soviet scholars continue to stress the great danger of escalation associated with Soviet-US conflict over Cuba. The 1962 experience seems to have left a lasting impression despite considerable change in Soviet military capabilities.<sup>36</sup>

Soviet preferences for gradualistic peaceful tactics in Latin America were strengthened late in the decade by the growing influence of the left in Chilean politics and, ultimately, by Allende’s victory in the 1970 presidential elections. In diplomacy, the Soviet Union in the late 1960s and early 1970s worked hard to develop diplomatic ties with a broad array of Latin American states, achieving notable success in a number of instances such as Peru in 1968-75.

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<sup>36</sup> Conversations in Campinas, Brazil, July 1985.