

(4) There would be established a Caribbean Arms Control Commission under the aegis of OAS, composed of the Caribbean Powers and whose Governments would also endorse the arms prohibition (the USA, Mexico, Central American States, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, Dominican Republic? Haiti?). The Commission would supervise the embargo on the acquisition of armaments and be competent to recommend collective action and intervention, if necessary, by the Caribbean Powers in case of violation by a signatory to the Agreement. The Commission would also be empowered by the Governments to make a study of the level of armed forces in the Caribbean area and make recommendations as to the level of the armaments necessary to maintain internal order and peace in the area.

5. I am aware of course that the various elements of the course advocated here constitute only a very partial answer to the real problem posed by Cuba which essentially is a conflict of ideologies in the Americas. The basic and legitimate worry of the USA Government is over possible communist ideological penetration, through Cuba, in the whole of the Latin-American area. From that point of view, the above suggestions have little direct value. They aim only at removing an immediate and physical danger; at obviating the use by the Soviet Union of Cuba as a military pawn; and at relieving tensions for a period long enough for the USA to reconsider the best means of containing the non-military aspects of the threat posed by Cuba. In the latter respect, it seems to me, after attending the current ECLA Conference, that the really serious danger does not lie in Cuba's ability to disseminate propaganda, or to provide moral and financial support to revolutionary elements in Latin America, but rather, it lies in the possibility that despite USA sanctions, and with the sole support of the Soviet bloc, the Cuban régime might be successful in raising the standard of living of the Cuban masses sufficiently far above the low standards prevailing in other Latin American countries so as to tip the delicately balanced scale in these countries in favour of their taking the Cuban road to economic and social development. Once this possibility is as fully appreciated in the United States as it would seem to be now in Latin America, it may then be possible for the USA to devote itself to an unemotional appraisal of the course to be followed both vis-à-vis Cuba and in the rest of Latin America during the crucial phase of the political, social and economic struggle lying ahead. In my despatch 127 of April 10, 1961,† I have already set out some views on more positive USA policy for Latin America. As for Cuba, once the USA fully examines and, as it must, rejects the possibility of either sweeping away the irritant through direct military intervention or of so completely isolating Cuba as to insulate the rest of South America from contamination by the example it might offer, it must come round to accepting the prospect of accommodation to the new Cuba, thereby making it possible to work constructively towards the neutralisation of its potential as a catalyst of an anti-American, anti-Western political movement of explosive force. This will not be easy – there is much pride to be swallowed, economic interest to be surrendered – but it must be tried in the best western interests.

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