

prospects. Achilles, who was the State Department Counselor under the previous Administration, and who more recently has been a member of the Task Force on Latin America along with Adolf Berle and Tom Mann, has just been given a new assignment. He is to be in charge of a small but potentially important office within the State Department called the Operations Centre. This office has just been set up to deal with critical situations and areas, and to work in close cooperation with the appropriate divisions of the Department to brief the Secretary and to consult closely with the White House, the Pentagon and the [Central] Intelligence Agency on situations which are likely to be critical and which may require urgent policy decisions and actions.

2. The first problem which the new centre had inherited was to deal with the aftermath of the Cuban operations of last week. Achilles did not repeat not mince words in indicating that these operations had been ill-conceived and had failed to achieve their purpose. The effect around the world on the prestige of USA as the result of the failure of these operations, as well as the strengthening of Castro's domestic position and the weakening of the resistance forces were all frankly noted. The State Department and the Administration were now engaged in a careful reassessment of the problem posed by Castro's Cuba and of the measures which should be taken to deal with it.

3. Achilles was in the process of making estimates of the reaction of the Latin American governments to the firm position set out, albeit in general terms, in the President's speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. His assessment was still very tentative and preliminary, but at the present stage he would list the following Latin American governments as generally favourable to the President's firm stand: Colombia, Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Argentina. He described Panama as having given a "private" favourable reaction. He would place in the uncertain column the following: Chile, Venezuela, Uruguay, Dominican Republic and Haiti, and the unfavourable column Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil and Mexico. He indicated that this break down was based on intimations which the State Department had received from officials representing the missions of these countries in Washington, or in some cases reports from USA missions in the countries concerned. He was also examining break downs of Latin American reactions on the basis of press surveys and other indices of public opinion.

4. Of more immediate importance, Achilles said that the State Department was now conducting enquiries through the diplomatic channels, both through OAS missions in Washington and through appropriate USA missions in Latin America, to obtain a clearer picture of the reaction of Latin American governments to the current problem in Cuba, and to alternative methods of dealing with it. These governments were being asked as a matter of urgency to indicate whether they in fact recognized that there had been an intrusion of an extra continental power into the hemisphere and whether they considered that this was a threat to hemispheric security and called for measures of hemispheric defence. (On the nature of the Castro threat, Achilles was appreciative of the statement which the Prime Minister made in the House of Commons on April 19.) They were also being asked whether the governments favoured OAS action to deal with the problem, action by some smaller group within the OAS framework, or unilateral USA action. We pointed out to Achilles that it might be difficult for the governments to respond to these questions as to the forum in which action might be taken without a more precise indication of what measures might be proposed. Achilles did not repeat not disagree, but indicated that their first approach would be to the OAS governments on a bilateral basis to determine whether in view of the threat to hemispheric security, some form of collective examination of the problem of Cuba would receive general support.