



René Lévesque interviewing Fidel Castro, Montreal, 1959

Canadian Policy Stays Unchanged

By WALTER GRAY
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Ottawa, Jan. 4 — Canada has chosen to go along with its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies, excluding the United States, in continuing normal relations with Cuba, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker indicated today.
Emerging from a Cabinet

meeting this morning, the Prime Minister declined comment on the latest move by the United States in severing diplomatic relations with the regime of Fidel Castro. But, he added, if changes become necessary they will be made.

The Prime Minister, who has been planning to go to the Caribbean for a few days' holiday before Parliament reconvenes Jan. 16, apparently referred to the NATO allies in an effort to set the public in both Canada and the United States straight on the subject of Canadian relations with Cuba. Mr. Diefenbaker is apparently perturbed by the fact that Canada has been criticized for choosing to ignore the U.S. trade embargo.

He outlined the Canadian position in Saskatoon last week. The text of his statement, reported for distribution in Ottawa, makes this reference: "In answer to those well-intentioned people who feel that Canada should follow the course taken by the United States, I would emphasize that no other

The decision of the United States government in January 1961 to sever diplomatic relations and impose a trade embargo on Cuba placed other members of the Organization of American States (OAS) under tremendous pressure to follow suit. Canada, although a member of NATO and trans-Atlantic ally of the United States, was not a member of the OAS and felt no obligation to do the same, as Prime Minister John Diefenbaker explained to his Cabinet on January 4th 1961. Canada and Mexico proved to be the only two nations of the Americas which maintained uninterrupted diplomatic relations with Cuba throughout the 1960s.

In the mid-1970s, the Liberal government in Ottawa decided to focus more political attention on Canada's relations with Latin America, including Cuba. A series of Ministerial visits followed,