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Cuddling Up To Caribbean Communists

Romance With Castro

Newspapers in recent months have had almost daily updates on the unfolding story about the courtship of Fidel Castro by U.S. politicians and businessmen. It is an interesting romance to watch. Papa State Department has given its blessing. Fidel is playing his hand with the skill of a clever woman serving her best recipes, playing hard to get, and dangling the promise of special favors to the eager suitor if he persists in the chase and presents the right proposal or proposition at the opportune moment.

Amid all the optimistic news stories about our changing relationship with Cuba, and how great it is to sign a fishing agreement, and how promising are trade prospects, there are two jarring notes.

An enterprising reporter in Havana interviewed an American named Garland Grant of Milwaukee, who hijacked a Northwest Airlines plane in 1971 and has been living in Cuba ever since. Grant isn't the sort of person we relish getting our information from. A member of the Black Panthers, he committed a criminal act endangering the lives of 59 people on that Boeing 727 jet.

Grant's comments on Cuba do, however, ring with the sincerity of six years' first-hand experience. His main goal now is to get back to the United States because Cuba is so horrible and "everybody is too scared to say anything." It doesn't bother him that this would mean spending most of the rest of his life in a U.S. prison. "Just open my cell door," he said, "and I will walk in. . . . I'm all for the United States now. I'd even wear a Nixon button."

Grant now sweeps floors in a Havana hotel for \$100 a month. He says he is "living like a dog," and blacks are treated worse "than in the worst parts of Mississippi." Grant spent two and a half years in jail, not for hijacking, but for picketing the Cuban Ministry of the Interior. He lost an eye from a beating by a prison guard.

The dog's life of living under a dictatorship is equaled only by its economic privation. The American businessmen who have been so royally entertained by Castro with rum-and-lobster luncheons, Havana cigars, and other gifts, could not help but see that the Cuban economy is in desperate financial straits. Practically all consumer goods are in acutely short supply; and in this once coffee-drinking nation, Cubans are now rationed

to one ounce per week.

American businessmen and politicians should wake up and realize that Castro has no favors to give that are worth the price we would have to pay.

Trading With Castro

The American economic system is largely built on a relationship known as "buy now and pay later." Retail merchants engage in ingenious advertising to persuade prospective customers to enjoy their merchandise today, while promising that the payment will be painless because it is postponed.

In many other countries, such a system would be too risky to depend on. In America, it works because the seller, first, extends credit only to those who have a steady income and a record of paying their bills, and, second, the law enforces the buy-sell contracts. Businessmen don't spend much time advertising their wares or extending credit among those who lack visible means of paying for their purchases in the near future.

It is a puzzlement, therefore, to watch otherwise keen American businessmen panting at the prospect of trading with Fidel Castro. There has been a steady stream of leading businessmen in 1977 traveling to Havana to fawn over Fidel. Castro entertains the businessmen royally and sends them home with truckloads of gifts.

But when you wipe away all the razzmatazz of meeting with a head of state, the plain fact is that Castro isn't a good prospective customer because he doesn't have the money to pay for what he wants to buy.

Castro's Communism has ruined the economy of Cuba, once one of the most productive in Latin America. Soon after he came into power, he de-emphasized sugar in favor of industrialization. After that failed, he disrupted the economy again by a massive effort to re-emphasize sugar. Sugar is Cuba's main source of hard currency, but today the market price of sugar is below Cuba's cost of production.

Like all Communist countries, Cuba is always starting a new five-year economic plan when the previous one flops. Castro is kept in power only by Soviet subsidies, estimated to total at least \$3 million per day. The few products that Cuba has to sell -- cigars, rum, nickel, citrus and fish -- are only a fraction of the volume necessary to pay for what Castro hopes to buy. Al-

though the need for housing is acute, the government has decreed that buildings may be no more than five stories tall because Cuba cannot afford to import elevators.

The Castro regime is ambivalent about promoting tourism as a source of dollars. This would require a large capital investment in hotels and modern facilities. Why would Americans go to Cuba and put up with inconveniences when Florida has such beautiful beaches and everything else a tourist could want? Furthermore, it is not at all clear that Castro really wants to have Americans traveling over the island, or wants to devote scarce Cuban resources to the goal of making American tourists comfortable.

Finally, there is that thorny problem of Angola. Will Castro withdraw his troops, or keep them in Africa to expand their role as conquerors? Returning American businessmen said that Castro has fixed a date for withdrawal. The catch is that he wouldn't say what the date is. For all we know, the secret date could be the year 2000.

Cuba's problems are not caused by Cuban people. The thousands who have emigrated to the United States have proved that Cubans are hardworking, skilled producers, and good citizens. Cuba's problem is Communist control.

Cortez and Castro

In 1519 a Spanish adventurer named Hernando Cortez and 650 men sailed west from Cuba to conquer a continent. They landed on the coast of Mexico, burned their ships behind them, and within two years had totally subdued the giant Aztec nation. It was one of history's most remarkable military conquests.

Well, move over Cortez. Another adventurer from Cuba has rivaled your record. In the fall of 1975, Fidel Castro sent a few thousand troops east across the Atlantic Ocean and within a few months conquered Angola, one of the richest countries in Africa.

This remarkable accomplishment is exceeded only by Castro's ambitious plans for the future. Flushed with the exhilaration of victory, he is spreading his wings over all of Africa. In addition to retaining 14,000 troops in Angola, he has thousands of Cuban advisers, military instructors, and so-called technicians stationed at strategic points all over Africa, including Mozambique, Somalia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Congo-Brazzaville, and Tanzania.

Of course the Cubans are not doing this alone. The Soviets invested \$500 million in the Angola campaign. The Soviets, who are very good at fighting proxy wars, are reaping the benefits.

The next Cuban-Soviet objective is Rhodesia, and the final objective is South Africa, where much of the continent's wealth lies. Southern Africa's mineral riches include gold, diamonds, platinum, copper, and chrome. Geography makes South Africa just as important a target. About 70 percent of the strategic materials needed by NATO countries travel around the tip of South Africa. The oil supertankers must sail the Cape route since they are too large for the Suez Canal.

Castro's current popularity in both East and West is new proof of the old maxim that nothing succeeds like success. At the very same time that he is royally entertained in Moscow by Kremlin leaders, American politicians move in the direction of granting him diplomatic recognition. Of all the nations in the world that might be worthy of American friendship and credits,

Castro's Cuba certainly is not one.

Cuba and Africa

When the U.S. Senate on December 17, 1975 debated the question of cutting off aid to the anti-Soviet forces in Angola, some Senators suggested that, if we would just stay out of the way, Angola might prove to be Russia's Vietnam.

That was wooly-headed wishful thinking. The reason why Angola could not become Russia's Vietnam is that the Soviets had no intention of committing their own troops. They fight proxy wars. While we withdrew all aid, thereby forcing the retreat of the anti-Soviet forces, the Russians put up \$500 million and got the Cubans to do their fighting. The Soviets have continued to send about \$350 million a year in weapons and equipment to Angola.

The Soviets are receiving a big return on their investment. By October 1976 the Angola government officially described itself as a "Marxist-Leninist republic." The Russians have established excellent naval bases for their warships at Luanda in Angola, at four ports in Mozambique, and in Somalia and Congo-Brazzaville.

Cuba is the country that could become Russia's Vietnam. The Castro regime has brought economic disaster to Cuba, and it costs the Soviets \$3 million per day to keep Castro propped up in power.

Instead of letting the Soviets struggle with their Cuban albatross, some American politicians, such as Senator George McGovern, appear to want to help Brezhnev carry his Cuban burden. These politicians are urging us to "normalize" relations with Castro, leading to diplomatic recognition. These politicians are suggesting that we lift our trade embargo and resume trade with Cuba. Since Cuba hasn't the money to trade with us, such "trade" would have to be financed by U.S. loans.

The Carter Administration has been extending the olive branch to Castro. It quietly cancelled our aircraft surveillance of Cuba which could give us advance warning if the Soviets deploy any offensive missiles there as Khrushchev did in 1962.

Does President Carter think that the Soviets wouldn't do such a thing? If so, he should remember that the Soviet Foreign Minister who solemnly assured President John F. Kennedy in the Oval Office that there were no missiles in Cuba, at the very time that Kennedy had our U-2 pictures of their missiles sitting in his desk drawer, is the same Andrei Gromyko who bitterly denounced Secretary Cyrus Vance's Moscow proposal on arms control.

Castro is pushing ahead with his ambitious plans for aggression in Africa. The 14,000 Cuban troops still in Angola have divided the country into six military regions and are consolidating their political and economic control. The flight of refugees out of Angola into South West Africa testifies to how the new Cuban masters are feared by the native population.

More than 1,000 Cuban advisers and military instructors are in Mozambique. At least 600 Cuban instructors are in Somalia. Cubans are active in Equatorial Guinea and in Sekou Toure's Guinea. Cuban instructors are training units in Sierra Leone. Cuban "technicians" are in strategic West African points such as Guine-Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands, and Sao Tome e Principe. Cuban advisers and "technicians" are in Tanzania.

A more inappropriate time to resume friendship with Cuba could hardly have been selected. Diplomatic recognition of Castro would prove that aggression pays.

Canal Treaty Negotiations

The new treaty with Panama to give away the U.S. Canal is in the final stage of negotiation and is expected to be submitted to the Senate in late summer, 1977. Our negotiators are optimistic that they will achieve their goal of eliminating U.S. ownership over the Zone which we bought and paid for under the 1903 treaty.

There are few issues on which the American people are so united as on the question of retaining U.S. ownership and control of our Canal. A recent nationwide survey made by Decision Making Information of California shows that Americans by a ratio of five to one favor continued U.S. control and ownership of the Canal.

Faced with this phalanx of public opinion against the giveaway, the new treaty advocates are trying to avoid a national debate on the terms of the treaty. They propose to keep its provisions secret until the treaty is presented to the Senate, then argue that it must be accepted as written in order to avoid an international crisis. The State Department has been briefing people that "the greatest tragedy politically would be to negotiate a treaty and then have it turned down by the Senate."

The State Department has the cart before the horse. The President's power to make treaties is constitutionally limited by the power of the Senate to advise and consent. The blame should be on the State Department if it negotiates a treaty that the Senate will not accept.

Canal Treaty Lobbying

In order to try to cultivate a friendly reception for the treaty, State Department agents have begun what they call "consultations with Congress." That's a fancy phrase that means lobbying. Their chief lobbyist is Sol Linowitz, whose main argument is that we can't defend the Canal anyway, so it would be better to give it away peacefully.

The principal duty of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines is to defend our lives and property against attack. If they are not willing or able to defend American lives and property against the pro-Communist dictator Torrijos and his little mob, then something is very wrong with our military establishment.

The fact is that we can easily defend the U.S. Canal. When our Zone commander, Lieutenant General Dennis McAuliffe, was asked about the Canal's defensibility, he replied that his 7,000 troops can defend the Zone and Canal from any attacks and are better trained and equipped than at the time of the 1964 riots.

Secondly, Linowitz argues that we are obliged to acquiesce in Panama's demands because all Latin American and Third World nations are solidly against us on this issue and aligned with Panama. Latin American experts and travelers say that, on the contrary, most Latin Americans oppose our handing over the Canal to Torrijos, and that he really is supported only by Mexico, Costa Rica, Columbia, and Venezuela. The last three of those have a special interest and hope to get favorable concessions if Torrijos gets control of the

Canal.

Third, Linowitz argues that the Joint Chiefs have said that it is in our interests to sign a new treaty. If the Joint Chiefs ever said that, it was only after they were so ordered by the Commander-in-Chief. The Joint Chiefs know that, if they oppose the Carter-endorsed giveaway treaty, they will get the "General Singlaub treatment" and jeopardize their careers.

Fourth, Linowitz argues that the Canal is not of strategic value to the United States because only one percent of our Gross National Product and only eight percent of our foreign trade go through it.

The present Chairman of the House Merchant Marine Committee, Congressman John M. Murphy, refuted this. He said that closure of the Canal would result in a 71% increase in the average annual consumption of fuel by ocean carriers operating in U.S. foreign trade, a 31-day increase in average shipping time, a \$932 million increase in the yearly total delivered price of all exports from the United States, and a \$583 million increase in the yearly delivered price of all imports to the United States.

Our chief negotiator is Sol M. Linowitz who was a registered agent for the pro-Communist government of Salvador Allende when he controlled Chile. Until very recently, Linowitz was a director and member of the executive committee of Marine Midland Bank in New York, which is on the Federal Reserve Board's "problem list" of banks that have overextended themselves with large loans that may be uncollectable.

Marine Midland Bank has made large loans to Panama, which is now ruled by an unelected, insolvent dictatorship. It is very doubtful whether Panama will be able to pay its debts unless it somehow gets control of the U.S. Canal and the fees paid by the ships that use it.

When Linowitz met recently with the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, Congressman Robert Dornan tried to ask him about the Marine Midland connection, but Linowitz would not discuss it except to say that he would resign from the bank board.

Human Rights and Panama

The secrecy which has enveloped the negotiations that Linowitz and his co-negotiator, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, have been conducting with Panama was rudely broken recently when one of the Panamanian negotiators revealed what has already been decided. Carlos Alfredo Lopez told the press: "The [Canal] Zone could be out of existence before the end of 1977. We have finished negotiating about 60 percent of the treaty, and we have agreed that when the treaty goes into effect the American Zone will go out of existence."

Lopez's revelation was a big shock not only to Americans who had no idea that our diplomats were planning to surrender this valuable U.S. property so soon, but especially to the 3,500 American citizens living in the Canal Zone. They are understandably frightened at the prospect of living under Panamanian criminal law which does not recognize basic legal rights. Those accused of crime can be arrested by dictator Torrijos' soldiers and imprisoned for months without bail or seeing an attorney.

The experience of four U.S. Navy seamen is a good example. While walking about 10:00 P.M. on the street that divides U.S. and Panama property, they

were accosted from behind by Panamanian policemen, handcuffed, and thrown in the back of a truck. With no explanation of what offense they might have committed, they were thrown in a jail with at least 800 other prisoners. One sewer drain in the center was the only latrine facility. An old man sold dirty newspapers at 10c per copy to sleep on.

The American seamen were denied any use of the telephone. No one spoke to them in English. In the morning, a naval liaison officer appeared and told the seamen that they were charged with "peace disturbance" because they had walked on the Panama side of the street.

The naval officer advised them that, if they pled not guilty, their ship would not wait for them, the trial would not take place for at least a month, and that in Panama prisoners are responsible for all their own food and necessities which are presumed to be sent in by friends and relatives. Since the American seamen had none in Panama, they were advised that it would be "prudent" to plead guilty and pay the fine, which they did.

If President Carter is so interested in human rights, he might start by defending the 3,500 American citizens who live in the U.S. Canal Zone. If we abandon them by turning over the Canal Zone to Torrijos, they will lose all their human and civil rights.

It is not only the Americans in the Canal Zone but the Panamanians themselves who are fearful of a Torrijos takeover of the Canal. Typical comments of the people, as reported by the *Chicago Tribune*, are: "As long as America has control of the Canal, there will be jobs for Panamanians. . . . If the United States gives the Canal to Panama, it's going to all go to hell and nobody will have any jobs." The people think that the trouble between the United States and Panama is instigated by the Communists, rich university students, intellectuals, and politicians.

A new treaty with Panama would result in a grievous loss of legal and civil rights for American citizens who live in the Canal Zone, and a loss of economic rights for the people of Panama. However, Marine Midland Bank will be able to collect its loan.

In order for a giveaway treaty to take effect, it would have to be ratified by the Senate. Parts of it, at least, would also have to be approved by the House because it involves the transfer of U.S. property. Write your Senators and Congressmen and tell them emphatically that you want them to vote to retain U.S. ownership and control of the U.S. Canal "in perpetuity," in accordance with the terms of the treaty the Panamanians begged us to sign in 1903.

Old Communist Dictators Must Die

The Communist system is based on having plans for the entire political, economic, and social order. There are five-year plans for agriculture, ten-year plans for industrial protection, and twenty-year plans for military weapons.

While in theory this allows the Kremlin to allocate national resources wherever needed, in practice it is destructive of freedom and also inefficient. It places the nation at the mercy of a cumbersome bureaucracy that moves only after the boss gives the "go" order. It means that, in any area where the Communist hierarchy has not formulated a plan, the nation is helpless to act.

The one circumstance for which the Communist system has not developed a plan is the death or incapacity of the dictator. Communist officials just hang around and wait for the big boss to die, and then get ready for a cutthroat power struggle. Those who rise to the top are usually those who murder the most number of people. Once the boss is entrenched in power, no one dares to suggest that he move over to make way for a successor, no matter how old, feeble, or senile he becomes.

Mao Tse-tung ruled Red China for 28 years and held on to the top job long after senility and incapacity had overtaken him. His widow tried to accede to his position of total power, but this was not acceptable to others who aspire to be the boss, and China is seething with political unrest.

The ranking Communist dictator is 85-year-old Tito. He has ruled Yugoslavia with an iron hand for 31 years. Nobody elected him and he plans to select his own successor.

North Korea's Communist dictator Kim Il Sung has decreed that his successor will be his son, Kim Jung Il. The father has been dictator for 30 years. He was inflicted on the North Koreans by the Soviets after we let them occupy the Japanese possessions in Asia.

This is the 20th year of Fidel Castro's dictatorship in Cuba. No talk of a successor or free elections is permitted. Castro is still young and his reign may last as long as the long-lived Bourbon kings of old France.

Dictator Brezhnev of the Soviet Union is 70 and those who have seen him recently report that he looks like a sick man. Most of his associates are even older. The Soviet Union has no procedure for dealing with this problem.

Just because the Communists lack contingency plans to provide for the certainty that their Big Boss will someday die, that is no reason for the West to be similarly unprepared. A Communist dictator's death offers an opportunity for the United States to take advantage of this great weakness in the Communist system.

We should have a plan of action to push for whatever diplomatic goals are then appropriate. We could insist that the Soviets pay us back the money they have borrowed, agree to a true reduction of nuclear weapons, allow on-site verification of ICBMs and ABMs, allow free emigration, or grant some measure of human rights.

In regard to the article in the June P.S. Report, Section 1, page 4, entitled:

"The New Feudalism"

those wishing further information are urged to read a comprehensive article entitled "Farmers, Freedom, and Feudalism" by John McClaughry, in the *South Dakota Law Review*, Summer 1976. Reprints are available at \$1.50 each from the Institute for Liberty and Community, Concord, Vt. 05824. Mr. McClaughry deserves the credit for original research into land use and control and for his articulate and documented exposition of a modern theory of private property.

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