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*File 75
Political
Reading*

LATIN AMERICAN, SII; YANKERS, NO:

BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, MAY 2 (PL).-

PRIME MINISTER FIDEL CASTRO'S MAY FIRST SPEECH HERE BEFORE ALMOST A MILLION ENTHUSIASTIC CUBANS IN REVOLUTIONARY SQUARE WAS CHARACTERIZED FOR TWO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS: ITS FLEXIBLE AND NON-DOGMATIC ATTITUDE TOWARD LATIN AMERICAN UNITY AND ITS PRINCIPLED REJECTION OF ANY DEALS WITH AN AGGRESSIVE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

AS CASTRO'S SPEECH UNFOLDED, CUBA'S BASIC STRATEGY FOR LATIN AMERICA BECAME CRYSTAL CLEAR. ITS MAIN THRUST IS DIRECTED TOWARD THE UNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS AGAINST CONTINUED UNITED STATES PENETRATION AND CONTROL. IN INSTITUTIONAL TERMS IT AIMS AT THE CREATION OF A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS (INCLUDING ENGLISH SPEAKING NATIONS OF THE CARIBBEAN AREA) AND AS A BASIC PREMISE, THE EXCLUSION OF THE UNITED STATES FROM THE PROPOSED GROUPING. IN EFFECT, THE PROPOSAL IS CUBA'S ANSWER TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS) WHICH WAS FOUNDED IN 1947 AS AN INSTRUMENT OF AMERICAN COLD WAR POLICY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND WHICH WAS USED DURING THE SIXTIES TO IMPLEMENT THE ISOLATION OF CUBA AND ITS ACCOMPANYING COMMERCIAL EMBARGO.

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LATIN AMERICA, 311...TWO

THE CUBAN PRIME MINISTER MADE CLEAR THAT CUBA HAD THE PATIENCE TO WAIT UNTIL THE MAJORITY OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, "ALTHOUGH THEY NOT BE SOCIALIST" COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE PRESENT OAS MUST DISAPPEAR AND BE REPLACED BY AN ALL-LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. AT THE SAME TIME HE DESIGNATED AS "POSITIVE" THE DECISION OF A RECENT OAS MEETING IN WASHINGTON THAT STRUCK AT US POLICY BY AFFIRMING THAT NATIONS WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORGANIZATION. BUT HE INSISTED THAT CUBA WOULD NEVER JOIN THE OAS AS IT IS NOW CONSTITUTED.

THE PROCESS OF AMERICAN EXPANSION AND POWER IN LATIN AMERICAN HAD BEEN BROKEN BY THE CUBAN REVOLUTION. DURING ALMOST ALL OF THE SIXTIES HOWEVER, THE UNITED STATES CONTINUED TO EXERT ALMOST UNCHALLENGED HEGEMONY OVER LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS. INDICATIVE OF THIS WAS THE FACT THAT ALL LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MEXICO BROKE DIPLOMATIC AND TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. IT WAS AT THE END OF THE SIXTIES, WITH THE COMING TO POWER OF A GROUP OF NATIONALIST-MINDED MILITARY MEN IN PERU WHO WERE DEVELOPING THEIR COUNTRY ALONG PROGRESSIVE LINES THAT THE TIDE BEGAN TO SWING AGAINST US POLICY AND PENETRATION IN LATIN AMERICA. THE RECENT MEETINGS OF THE OAS IN WASHINGTON, THE UN IN PANAMA AND THE ECONOMIC COUNCIL FOR LATIN AMERICA IN QUITO WERE ALL INDICATIVE THAT A GROWING NUMBER OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO ENERGETICALLY CONFRONT UNITED STATES POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY IN THE HEMISPHERE.

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LATIN AMERICA, SII..THREE

PRIME MINISTER CASTRO PINTED SPECIFICALLY TO CHILE (*THERE IS NOT JUST ONE BUT THERE ARE TWO THAT SPEAK OF SOCIALISM*), PERU AND PANAMA AS NATIONS THAT HAVE CHALLENGED AMERICAN CONTROL OF THEIR POLITICS AND ECONOMY. USING THE LATTER TWO AS EXAMPLES, CASTRO DECLARED THAT CUBA IS READY TO ORGANIZE "FORMS OF COOPERATION" WITH NATIONS WHICH ARE NOT SOCIALIST BUT WHICH ASSERT THEIR INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY AND THE DEFENSE OF THEIR INTERESTS VIS A VIS THE UNITED STATES.

THE CUBAN PRIME MINISTER REAFFIRMED THAT SOCIALISM IS THE ONLY ROAD IN LATIN AMERICAN THAT WILL PRODUCE THE NECESSARY CHANGES AND THE UNITY NEEDED FOR SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS. BUT HE OBSERVED THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT EXPECT THE NATIONS OF LATIN AMERICAN TO TAKE THE SOCIALIST ROAD "FROM ONE DAY TO THE OTHER." REMINISCENT OF HIS ASSERTION IN CHILE IN 1971 THAT "THERE ARE DIFFERENT ROADS TO REVOLUTION BONE", FIDEL CASTRO SAID IN HIS MAY FIRST SPEECH THAT "THERE WILL BE DIVERSE PROCESSES AND EACH ONE WILL HAVE ITS OWN CHARACTERISTICS." HE SAID THAT "WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER" AND ADDED THAT THE PEOPLE OF LATIN AMERICA HAVE A HARD ROAD AHEAD IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FUNDAMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS.

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LATIN AMERICA, III...FOUR AND FINAL

THE CUBAN PRIME MINISTER DECLARED THAT CUBA "VIEWS WITH SYMPATHY THE ANNULMENT BY VENEZUELA OF THE COMMERCIAL ACCORD WHICH SUBMITS ITS FOREIGN COMMERCE TO THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES." ON THE SAME THEME HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE STRUGGLE OF ALL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST THE "EXPORTATION OF ECONOMIC CRISIS BY THE UNITED STATES" BY MONETARY AND COMMERCIAL CONTROLS.

FIDEL CASTRO INSISTED THAT CUBA WOULD NEVER NEGOTIATE WITH THE UNITED STATES AS LONG AS THAT COUNTRY CONTINUES ITS "ECONOMIC BLOCKADE" OF CUBA. "WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN RECEIVING ANY US REPRESENTATIVES HERE" UNTIL THAT BLOCKADE IS UNCONDITIONALLY ENDED. HOWEVER HE ADDED, EVEN IF TALKS BETWEEN CUBA AND THE UNITED STATES DID TAKE PLACE, HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ONLY DISCUSS THE PROBLEMS OF CUBA, SUCH AS THE GUANTANAMO NAVAL BASE ON CUBA TERRITORY, BUT ALSO, IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE PROBLEMS OF ALL LATIN AMERICA. HE AFFIRMED THAT "OUR PROBLEMS ARE NOT THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF CUBA BUT THE PROBLEMS OF LATIN AMERICA." HE ASSERTED THAT "THERE WILL BE NO IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN CUBA AND THE UNITED STATES AS LONG AS THE UNITED STATES PRETENDED TO EXERCISE THE ROLE OF GENDARME WITH RESPECT TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS HEMISPHERE."

DURING HIS SPEECH PRIME MINISTER CASTRO ALSO DECLARED THAT CUBA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO BACK "LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARIES THAT STRUGGLE AGAINST OLIGARCHIC AND REACTIONARY GOVERNMENTS IN THE SERVICE OF IMPERIALIST POLICY ON THIS CONTINENT."