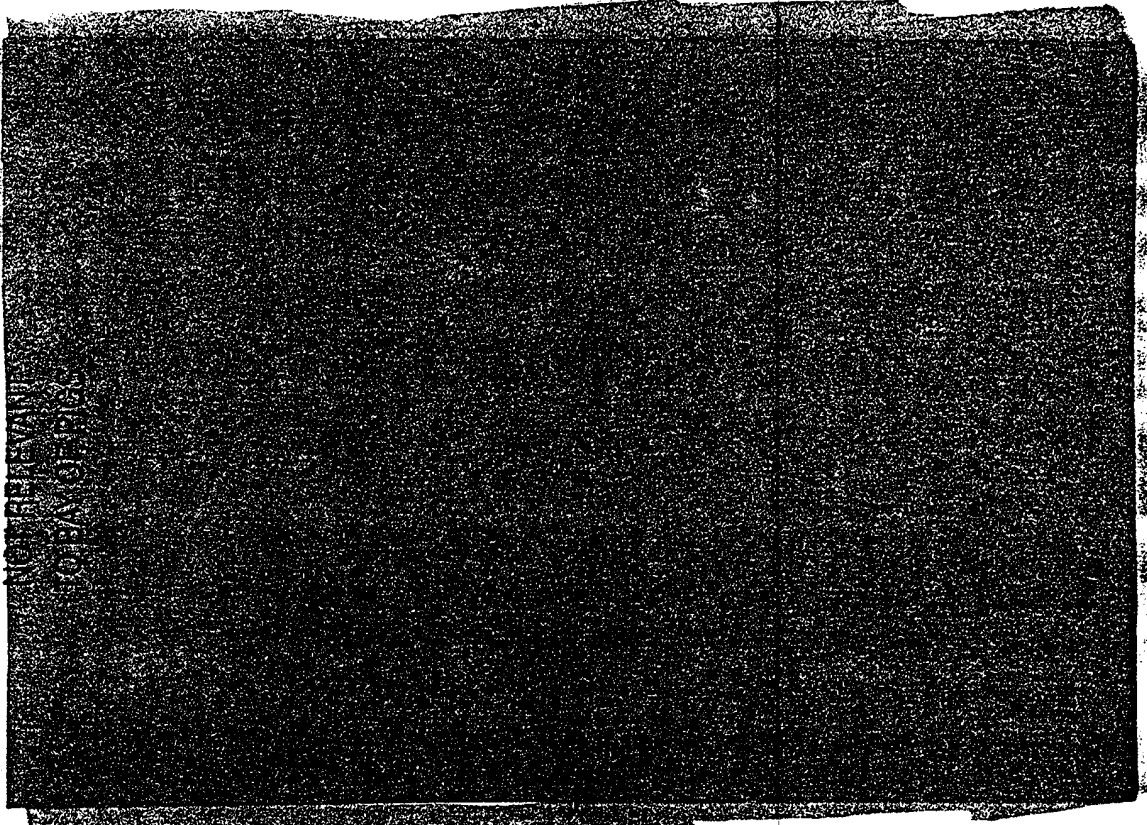


14 April 1960

DELETED (EAI)



CUBA

The Castro regime continues to expand relations with the bloc. It is preparing its first exchange of ambassadors with a Sino-Soviet bloc country--Czechoslovakia.

[redacted] that a Czech request for agreement for Vladimir Pavlicek as ambassador to Havana was imminent. Pavlicek has previously served as minister to Mexico, Guatemala, Argentina, and Bolivia and most recently has been chief of the American Affairs Division of the Czech Foreign Ministry.

On 7 April, the secretary general of the Cuban Communist party, in Prague en route to Moscow, told Czech newsmen that

he hoped "the Cuban ambassador would soon arrive in Prague on the basis of an agreement to establish diplomatic relations." Czechoslovakia was the first Communist country to establish permanent trade representation with the Castro regime, and there have been increasing cultural, military, and economic contacts but no formal trade agreement like those with the USSR, East Germany, and Poland.

Polish officials have insisted that only sport and agricultural planes and helicopters will be sold to Cuba under a trade and payments agreement signed recently in Havana by the Polish deputy minister of commerce. However,

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the provisions of the agreement referring to aircraft are reliably reported to be vague and probably could be interpreted to include military aircraft.

Exchanges of visits by cultural, labor, and agricultural missions between Cuba and the Soviet Union and Communist China are increasingly reported, and Castro plans to establish diplomatic relations with these regimes and other Communist countries. However, there is no evidence that the USSR has yet taken action on the expressed agreement of Mikoyan and Castro in February to resume diplomatic relations "at a convenient time." Moscow may wish to assess reaction to the Czech move and to wait until after the summit conference in May.

Fidel Castro is evidently concerned over the presence of antigovernment guerrilla bands in the Sierra Maestra and is reportedly directing operations against one band personally. Although the group, led by a former captain in Castro's army, Manuel Beaton, probably numbers fewer than 100, it could provide the nucleus for an eventually much larger and more serious challenge to Castro's position.

A growing number of defections from the regime has caused widespread comment in other Latin American countries adverse to the Castro regime. The Cuban air attaché in Mexico defected on 11 April, declaring his conviction that Castro has betrayed the Cuban revolution. He said the only road now open for him is again to take up arms, this time to fight Castro. The resignation on 7 April of the Cuban ambassador to UN offices in Geneva, Andres Vargas Gomez, is perhaps even more significant, since he is widely respected and capable and is representative of professional and business elements who have become thoroughly disillusioned with Castro.

In its plans for the "hungry nations" conference in Havana in September, Cuba now seems resigned to accept unofficial delegations to an obviously non-governmental conference. This is indicated by the recent Cuban invitation to ten Honduran students and pro-Castro members of the Honduran congress. The conference will thus be a far cry from Castro's original plan for a meeting of official delegations headed by prominent personages, but his control of the conference is assured and extensive propaganda exploitation can be expected.

NOT RELEVANT  
TO BAY OF PIGS