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High Cuban officials have on several recent occasions publicly expressed willingness to resume "normal" relations with the United States, although these statements clearly imply prior acceptance by the United States of Cuba's ties with the bloc. The controlled press and radio contrast Cuba's "conciliatory gestures" with what they interpret as increasing signs of US intransigence.

The Castro regime is courting the newly inaugurated Quadros administration in Brazil, but there are indications that Quadros thus far prefers a neutral position and that the Brazilian military would strongly oppose close ties with Cuba. Cuban media have lauded Quadros for his "independence" of the US, and Fidel Castro on 16 February spent several hours with the departing Brazilian ambassador, Vasco Leitao da Cunha--

the first time in over a year he is known to have talked alone with a Western diplomat. The ambassador, who left later the same day to assume the second most influential post in Brazil's Foreign Ministry, told the Brazilian press on his return home that "Fidel Castro emphasized to me that Cuba cannot withdraw from the American community" and that Castro expects President Quadros to visit Cuba shortly.

Leitao da Cunha was one of the more knowledgeable diplomats during his nearly three years in Havana, and it is doubtful that he succumbed to Castro's blandishments; his private report to high Brazilian officials will probably be pessimistic concerning Cuban developments. Quadros, who visited Cuba last year as a presidential candidate, is not known to have expressed an intention to return.

Other Brazilian officials are known to be pessimistic on the prospects of mediating US-Cuban differences. The first secretary of the Brazilian Embassy in Havana, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] expressed the belief that Che Guevara's 22 January speech had implied that Cuba no longer belongs to the Western world and, in effect, linked any settlement of US-Cuban differences to an eventual East-West accord. [REDACTED]

Ecuador's attempts to promote an inter-American effort to "conciliate US-Cuban differences" appear to have met with little favorable response. The Castro's regime's enthusiastic endorsement of Ecuador's efforts, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was apparently designed to encourage any Latin American move that could be used to demonstrate "US intransigence." Castro's recent threat to support antigovernment groups in other Latin American countries--in retaliation for US aid to Cuban refugees--has led to bitter anti-Castro reactions

elsewhere in the hemisphere and serves to undercut Cuban efforts to appear desirous of maintaining normal relations with other hemisphere countries.

Cuba's recognition of the Gizenga regime in the Congo on 16 February was accompanied by propaganda blasts at the United States, as well as at the UN and Belgium, equaled in virulence only by Communist China's.

Inside Cuba, government forces continue to try to liquidate anti-Castro guerrilla forces in the Escambray Mountains of Las Villas Province, but there is still no indication that the operations are nearing success. It has been over six months since the government initiated this effort and nearly two months since it announced the launching of a "major offensive." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Castro forces have succeeded during the past week in capturing several air-drops of arms and supplies intended for the guerrillas.

Although large-scale landings in Oriente Province by anti-Castro groups have been reported in the US press, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] no reference to them. [REDACTED] continuing acts of sabotage in Oriente as well as other provinces. [REDACTED]