

'The Americans still in to come here'

says CHE GUEVARA, Cuba's Deputy Premier and Minister of Industries, in an exclusive interview with Sam Russell

DESPITE American attempts to lull the world into a false sense of security, there is an ever-present threat of American aggression against Cuba.

This was underlined to me by Cuba's Deputy Premier and Minister of Industries, Comandante Che Guevara, in the only interview given by a Cuban leader since the Cuban crisis began over a month ago.

For over two hours, until well past midnight, I discussed the situation with him in his office on Havana's Revolution Square, as he put Cuba's point of view with complete frankness and sincerity.

Danger

The olive-green uniform which he, like all other Cuban leaders, still wear, the armed guards on the building and the men and women drilling in the streets as I came to his office also underlined the sense of imminent danger which every Cuban feels.

"The rockets have gone," he said, "the B-29 planes are going. But the Americans want to come here. They have still not given any guarantee against aggression and make everything dependent on unilateral inspection which we will not accept.

"What matters, the Americans reserve the right to be the sole arbiters as to when they should intervene openly as well as the right to violate our air space whenever they want."

Major Guevara said that therefore the situation was still serious, but what would happen in the future depended on a number of circumstances.

The U.S. was trying to estimate what it would cost to liquidate Cuba and what it would save from liquidating Cuba and on the results of this estimation would depend the decision whether they launch their attack.

"In the face of an aggressor like the U.S. there can be no other solution than a fight to the death, inflicting the maximum damage on the enemy."

Liquidate

Major Guevara said he realized that to some people this might sound highly emotional, but during the days of acute crisis the Cuban people agreed that what they were faced with the threat of atomic annihilation and that their determination to resist was that they would die because they were in the front line.

"Whether the Americans attack or not depends on their estimate of our internal situation and of the international situation. That is why the solidarity of the peoples of the world is of such importance to us.

"We are under no illusion. We know we cannot exist on our own. We depend on the solidarity of the Socialist camp and of the whole world."

I then asked Major Guevara what was the present state of relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba, especially in view of Premier Fidel Castro's statement on November 1, that certain misunderstandings or discrepancies had arisen.



Sam Russell (left) talking to Che Guevara in Havana.



"During Comrade Mikoyan's visit," he said, "we went into a great number of questions with the Soviet Union. We discussed frankly and fully and each side put his point of view.

"We know that the Soviet Union is the friend that can help us most and we are convinced that she will continue to help us.

"All we have done is to use our right as an independent party within the framework of the principles of international proletarian solidarity.

"The discrepancies are past and will not be of importance in the future. We consider ourselves part of the Socialist world and absolutely faithful to Marxist-Leninist ideas.

My next question was on the effects of the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba and how she has dealt with the situation.

Major Guevara pointed out that while President Kennedy had announced the end of the so-called quarantine, the economic block-

ade was continuing and President Kennedy had himself declared that political, economic and other measures against Cuba would be intensified.

He pointed out too that the blockade had been imposed in a number of stages. The first stage was when the U.S. closed its ports to Cuban goods and stopped the export of goods Cuba needed. Then the U.S. asked its allies not to trade with Cuba.

Blockade

"And now," he continued, "the U.S. is preparing to impose sanctions on those ships, merchants and manufacturers who are trading with Cuba. This will hit Britain most of all.

"There could be further acts in this connection. But we can say that each time we have found ways of overcoming the effects of this blockade policy."

Major Guevara said that it would be ridiculous to pretend that the blockade has not hit Cuba, for her factories and public services are mostly equipped with American and British machinery, which needs spare parts for services.

"But if we cannot get these spare parts," he added, "then we shall find other ways of overcoming our difficulties, and we have achieved considerable success in this respect already.

"Of course this will mean hardship for us, but today it is impossible to strangle a country economically. So we shall win through. Of course it will mean that our development plans will have to be modified and be less ambitious."

On President Kennedy's threat to use, apart from political and economic pressure, "other mea-

asures" against Cuba, Major Guevara said that this covered the whole field of para-military action.

This includes espionage, sabotage, the dropping of arms and the sending of agents by parachute and small landings on Cuba's long coastline, in fact, "everything short of open war, but reserving the right to resort to open attack.

"The violation of our air space continues all the time," he said, "and we have not seen the end of this sort of thing by any means."

Major Guevara then gave me some interesting details about the way in which the Cuban people had strengthened their political organization in the past year in face of the growing American threat.

Every street

The trade unions, the women's organization, the Young Communist League, and the mass organizations of the people in the Defence Committees which exist in every street and village have been drawn into the solution of a multitude of questions.

For example, things like rationing, prophylactic health measures (especially vaccination and immunisation of children) as well as ensuring round-the-clock vigilance to protect factories, fields and homes against sabotage and espionage.

The past seven months, however, have been especially significant for they have seen the beginning of the formation of the new United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS) following the removal of the former Communist leader Amnibal Escalante for sectarianism and his attempts to create an elite separated from the masses of the people.

New party

At present the political organization of the Cuban people is the Integrated Revolutionary Action of the new United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS) following the removal of the former Communist leader Amnibal Escalante for sectarianism and his attempts to create an elite separated from the masses of the people.

The new party is being formed on the basis of mass meetings being held at all places of work where the workers are invited to choose model workers from among themselves.

These are then invited to join the new Party while the situation for membership of the new Party of members of the present organizations is also discussed at mass meetings.

Vanguard

This process is continuing at the present time all over the country, although what has been said up somewhat by the mobilisation measures necessitated by the current situation.

When it is completed by the beginning of next year it is hoped to have created the first nucleus of some 50,000 to 60,000 members and hold the first Congress of the new Party built on the basis of men and women chosen by the people themselves to be the vanguard of Cuba's Socialist revolution.

Watching what Nelly does isn't enough

IT seems fantastic that in this day and age it should

WOMAN'S WORLD

In 1951 it suddenly disappeared from the scene, though one might expect to find it very

MAUGHAM I