

CASTRO DEMANDS AIRED

(Reprint of Broadcast Over WRAL-TV)

The American press significantly is not saying very much about it, but this nation's prestige took its greatest tumble around the world when it became clear that Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Walter Reuther--along with Dr. Milton Eisenhower--were being upheld and supported by President Kennedy in yielding this nation to the blackmail demands of Fidel Castro.

The eyes of the world see, not humanitarianism, but a display of America's weakness and timidity. The issue is not whether a human life is worth more than a tractor. Of course it is. The issue revolves around the question of how much longer the United States will permit Castro to obliterate the Monroe Doctrine while we needlessly and foolishly paint ourselves into a corner.

This is a strange role for the United States--one of retreat and compromise, and even deceit. President Kennedy, after one bold and inspiring message to Castro, has since done and said nothing to back up his words. Meanwhile, Castro--undoubtedly guided in his every move by the Kremlin--has successfully made mockery of the President's words and this nation's historic courage. The simple truth is that Castro has called our bluff.

This nation needs nothing less than the meddling of Mrs. Roosevelt, Walter Reuther and Milton Eisenhower in its hemispheric policy. Yet, at the moment they are not merely meddling in it--they are leading it. This humiliating fact cannot be erased by the President's simple contention that the tractor blackmail is a "humanitarian movement." Nor can the President pretend that his endorsement of it is a private matter. For, how can he explain his announcement, contained in the same statement, that contributions to the fund would be tax exempt

"as a matter of course"? How can he detach his so-called "private" endorsement from his simultaneous revelation that export licenses would be granted for the shipment of tractors?

Aside from the fact that the President has backed and filled on the entire Cuban crisis from the very beginning, he has a record of failure in coming to grips with the dangers of a Communist stronghold 90 miles off our shores. The denial that this government had anything to do with the ill-fated invasion force--when in fact it did--did nothing to enhance the acceptance of our word in other parts of the world.

Castro and Communist Cuba are not problems that will go away if we simply pretend they aren't there. The use of force is not a pleasant thing to contemplate. Yet, it is now clear that the President--and probably most of the people of this nation--were willing for force to be used, supported if not promoted by our government, in the form of an ill-fated invasion which failed largely because it did not receive the necessary aerial support.

This means, presumably, that the President--and the nation which he heads--are sufficiently persuaded that Fidel Castro and his acknowledged Communist regime in Cuba are enemies of the United States. Then, why the reluctance to say so in terms and actions the world will understand?

Fidel Castro's jeering, cruel offer to swap a thousand or more prisoners is nothing but blackmail. This nation should not yield, collectively or individually, to any misguided humanitarian temptation to pay Castro such blood money. It is to be remembered that the prisoners are Cuban, not American. There is not even any certainty that Castro is not plotting to unload Trojan Horses upon us. In any event, if we refuse to yield to his blackmail, Castro's own sense of justice and humanitarianism will be