P.S. to the NEWS
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POLICY TOWARD CASTRO

For the past several weeks, the Spanish-language press in the United States has been buzzing with speculation and comment about a murder near Miami which, strangely, has gone almost unnoticed by the regular news media. On the Thursday before Easter, a 70-year-old businessman and civic leader named Jose de la Torriente was shot as he sat with his wife watching television in their home in Coral Gables, Florida. The bullet came through the window, and the killer escaped under cover of darkness. The killer never entered the house, there was no attempt at robbery, and it was obviously a well-planned murder by professionals.

Torriente was widely known as a staunch anti-Communist. His enemies were Castro and the Communist Party. The Cubans in Florida are convinced that this was a political execution ordered by Fidel Castro and carried out by his agents in the United States. Recent declarations by Raul Castro have boasted that there are Castro infiltrators among Cuban refugees in Miami, and he praised them for the work they are doing there. The Cuban press in Florida is conjecturing that Torriente was the first victim of a plan by Fidel and Raul Castro against leaders of the anti-Communist Cubans in order to terrorize and intimdate them.

Torriente became a prime target because he has been speaking out forthrightly against any proposed agreement between the United

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States and Castro which would, in diplomatic jargon, normalize relations. Shortly before his death, Torriente sent a message to President Nixon warning that such an agreement "would betray the principles under which the United States has traditionally aided people fighting for their independence," and would simply "assure Castro's permanence and relieve the Soviet Union of the financial burden of maintaining Castro's government."

The big money involved is why there is suddenly an effort by certain groups to get the United States to reestablish relations with Castro. Since Castro ruined Cuba's economic system, the Soviet Union has had to subsidize him in order to maintain this vital Soviet submarine base in the Western Hemisphere. Castro is in hock to Brezhnev to the tune of several billion dollars, and Brezhnev would like to shift this financial burden onto the backs of the American taxpayers. # If the United States would open diplomatic ties with Castro, Cuba would become eligible for U.S. foreign aid and Export-Import Bank loans. The State Department has already taken the first step by issuing export licenses allowing Argentine subsidiaries of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler to sell Cuba several million dollars worth of cars and trucks, thus bypassing the current U.S. embargo on trade with Cuba.

Getting courageous spokesmen such as Torriente out of the way is one way to silence the opposition to recognizing Castro. We hope Castro's terrorist tactics will be counterproductive and that Torriente's murder will stiffen our backbone to keep Castro in a diplomatic deepfreeze. Let him continue to drain Brezhnev's pocketbook. The American taxpayers are already carrying too many freeloaders on their backs without adding Castro.

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