

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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PASTOR GENERAL SPEAKS AT HONG KONG AND BANGKOK

by Herbert W. Armstrong

In Flight, January 31, Bangkok--Manila

I will bring you up to date on the present trip so far. Sabbath, January 23, I spoke to the brethren at the regular Sabbath service in Honolulu. There was a nice increase in membership since I last spoke there a year before.

Sunday, the 24th, we flew on to Hong Kong, crossing the international dateline. Suddenly it was Monday. It was Chinese New Year in Hong Kong. All businesses and shops were closed. Wednesday evening I spoke about an hour and 20 minutes to about 200 readers of The PLAIN TRUTH. There seems to be a real interest there and apparently God has people there He is calling. I left David Hulme there to purchase time, if possible, on television and/or radio in Hong Kong. If we are successful in obtaining a good time on the air there, I feel sure we shall have a new church in Hong Kong within a year. We already have about three members there.

Thursday we flew down around the southern tip of Viet Nam and over to Bangkok. Friday we flew north to Chiang Mai. I was met at the airport by the mayor and other officials, and they supplied a car to a local hotel. At the hotel the king's mountain jeep van was waiting to take me, with Aaron Dean, my personal aide, and the Abbot PhraThepsopon of the Buddhist religion (a rank similar to cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church) up to the king's northern palace atop the mountain. There I had a fourth personal visit with King Bhumibol. The Abbot had arranged the meeting by telephone from Los Angeles, after visiting me in my home in Pasadena. The Abbot had been much impressed by the splendid performance of students and graduates from Ambassador College, serving in the refugee program to the north of Chiang Mai at the Thailand border. These Ambassador men and women have certainly let their light shine in Thailand that people there have seen and warmed up enthusiastically from their good works.

In Hong Kong the newspaper headlines were filled with serious bad news and evil in that part of the world. The Thursday morning Bangkok newspaper headlines were filled with the news in big front-page headlines, of serious drug smuggling from surrounding nations across the Thai borders, in order secretly to smuggle such drugs as opium and heroin out of Bangkok ports to other parts of the world.

When I talked with the king, he had a new worry. Some ten years ago, when I first talked with him for about an hour and a half, he pleaded with me to help him. At that time his hill tribes, illiterate nomads, had

forsaken raising vegetables and foodstuffs and turned to poppies for the opium traffic. Through the AICF, we provided six portable schools to teach them, and educate them to drop poppy raising and go back to food. Last time I saw the king, six years ago, he told me we had wiped out 90% of the opium raising. But on this visit he had a new problem and worry. We had virtually wiped out the poppy raising of the Thai hill tribes. But now Communists and underground agents were smuggling in opium and heroin from neighboring countries, using Thailand as a means of getting these drugs smuggled out over the world. Even the United States government and the United Nations are seriously concerned, and threatening to use force to stop this drug traffic.

When we returned to the hotel in Chiang Mai from visiting the king, the evening newspapers were off the press, and my picture, landing at the airport, was prominently on the first page. My picture also appeared with a news story in the English-language Bangkok newspaper. At Chiang Mai a supreme court justice and other officials of high rank were at either the airport or the hotel to welcome me.

Yesterday, Sabbath afternoon, I held a 1:30 p.m. service for PLAIN TRUTH subscribers in the ballroom of The Oriental Hotel. About 250 interested readers came, and I spoke for about an hour and 20 minutes. This, as well as the Hong Kong speech, was recorded for television by our own TV crew. Portions of these meetings will be seen on our own TV program within a few weeks.

As I proceed along, I am growing more and more bold in proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God, and Christ's return as the world's only hope. And I think people are more willing to listen to God's truth than they were seven to ten years ago. As conditions worsen all over the world, Christ's message seems to strike a more responsive chord.

I find it may even be possible to put The WORLD TOMORROW on TV and/or radio in Bangkok. Truly we are becoming a WORLDWIDE church! Satan's opposition will increase, but more and more people are becoming reachable.

As usual Madam Sunirat Telan, the wealthiest woman in Thailand, put her Rolls Royce car at my disposal. She's a little wisp of a woman, only 4-feet eight inches tall (or short). It was through her that God first opened the door to meet the king. I hosted a dinner in her honor on Thursday evening, and she hosted me and our party at dinner last evening. Along with the Buddhist Abbot, she met us at the plane on arrival, and saw us off at the plane.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Herbert Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

ABOUT THE ENCLOSED CALENDARS

Mr. Armstrong requested that the enclosed wallet-size calendars be designed and printed for the ministry of God's Church. The idea came about after he had seen a Church member's business card with a calendar on the back listing the Holy Days separately. Mr. Armstrong wanted to share the basic idea with the ministry because of the convenience of combining two calendars into

one. Notice that the dates of the weekly and annual Sabbaths are highlighted in red.

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Illustrated Ministerial Supplement Nears Completion

Ministerial Services and The WORLDWIDE NEWS are planning to distribute an up-to-date listing of the entire ordained ministry of the Worldwide Church of God. This Ministerial Supplement is now nearing completion, with the mailing scheduled for March of this year.

Included within this special publication will be a listing of the Advisory Council of Elders, as well as photographs of all the evangelists, regional directors and full-time ministers of God's Church. Following these photos, there will be two complete listings; one of the full-time ministers and their assigned churches, and the other showing all local church elders and the churches they serve. The supplement will conclude with a special feature about the Ministerial Refreshing Program.

The 34-page supplement will be printed in black and white, and will be saddle-stitched (as magazines are) for durability. One copy will be mailed to all regular recipients of The WORLDWIDE NEWS.

Y.E.S. Update

Due to the current workload of the Publishing Department, printing and mailing of the new Y.E.S. Lessons is being rescheduled. We are hoping to produce one lesson of each grade level every month and will mail the lessons on a monthly basis as we are able from now through September, 1982. Lesson One of all nine levels is in the mail with Lessons Two through Five in various stages of production.

Once again we would like to thank you for your patience and cooperation, and apologize for the delay in distribution. When a lesson is printed each Church Pastor will receive a complete set for each church he pastors. We will keep you updated as each lesson comes along, and if we can answer any questions please don't hesitate to contact the Y.O.U. Office in Pasadena. (See the end of the Ministerial Services section for comments about the special Feast Lessons.)

International News

Spanish Language Area Report As a result of the Spanish Department's presentation Mr. Leon Walker, Regional Director, made to Mr. Armstrong in Mexico City last November, approval was given to boost Spanish PT circulation to the 200,000 mark by December, 1982. This essentially represents a doubling of the present PV list. Since PV subscribers are renewed on a yearly basis, about half of the current list will drop off in 1982, which means that a total of 160,000 new subscribers will need to be added in order to reach the 200,000 level! This will represent a challenging, yet welcome undertaking for employees of the Spanish Department.

Mario Seiglie, pastor of the Santiago, Chile congregation, conducted four PLAIN TRUTH lectures in that city November 27-28 and December 11-12, which were attended by a total of 100 new people! Almost 1,050 prime PV sub-

scribers from Santiago and environs were invited to attend the meetings, which were held in the beautiful, stately Club Espanol located in the heart of the capital city of four million residents. Mr. Seiglie reported that 40 people attended three or more of the meetings, and that 10 to 15 "good prospects" have shown interest in the Church.

The lectures were encouraging for the brethren in that area who have been working tirelessly maintaining the most successful cardholder distribution program in the Spanish-speaking areas. Over the past two and one-half years 11,400 new subscribers have been added to the PV subscription list there, which is now 10 times larger than it was just two and one-half years ago.

Year-to-date income figures from November indicate a 32.1% increase over all twelve months of 1980! Some of the most substantial increases are found in Chile (129%), Mexico (45%) and Colombia (40%).

Over 300 requests for the Bible Correspondence Course, advertised on the back cover of the September Spanish PT, have been received, representing a four percent response. This marked the first time in the history of the Spanish Department that anything other than the PT has been offered by means of an inserted "lit card," a method used by other PT editions for several years.

Four advertisements promoting La PURA VERDAD were placed in one of Spain's largest circulation daily newspapers, EL PAIS, December 20, 22, 27 and 29. Previous ads placed in EL PAIS have yielded very good results. These ads will be the first step of an ambitious plan to increase PV circulation in Spain from its present level of 4,100 to 25,000 by the end of 1982.

PURA VERDAD renewal rates have nearly doubled in many countries since last October when we changed from renewal insert cards to a letter and card sent by mail. Examples of response to this renewal letter sent to both new and prime subscribers are as follows: 55% in the U.S.A. and Dominican Republic, 64% in Costa Rica, 77% in El Salvador, 69% in Colombia.

Comments From Monthly Church Reports

FORT WORTH, TX--BOB SMITH: What a beautiful sight is the NATURAL look of our lovely sisters in Christ. "Coming out" from behind the facade of make-up has prompted many other deep evaluations of hidden roadblocks to salvation--as the penalty for being "lukewarm" looms clearly over the not-too-distant horizon.

MONTGOMERY, AL--PAUL KURTS: Women in the area are really seeing the spiritual side to the make-up decision and applying the principle to other areas of their lives. Men also are seeing the deeper spiritual meaning of sin and trying as never before to rid it from their lives.

BALTIMORE, MD--ROY DEMAREST: The area has responded very favorably to the make-up decision. Ninety-nine percent physical compliance and only a handful of attitude problems. Tape on Holy Spirit had a great impact on the Church.

GRAND JUNCTION, CO--RON MILLER: Change on make-up seems to be well understood and received. Mr. Armstrong's detailed and caring explanation helped a great deal.

AUSTIN, TX--HAROLD J. RHODES: The brethren continue to support Mr. Armstrong as he follows Christ's lead in cleaning up the Church. As far as I can tell, there have been no problems about the decision on make-up.

MOUNTAIN VIEW, AR--TOM BLACKWELL: Brethren were enthusiastic about make-up decision--no problems. They are fellowshiping more after services.

CHAMPAIGN, IL--RANDY HOLM: By and large, ladies (and men) are accepting the change on make-up very well. To most it is just a matter of readjusting.

MURFREESBORO, TN--DARRIS MCNEELY: Everyone taking the make-up decision very well. Those who had questions have settled them and are "on track."

FT. WAYNE, IN--STEPHEN SMITH: Everyone seems to be trying even harder since the Feast and the Church seems to be even more united. The recent sermons given by Mr. Armstrong have prodded many people to get busy and make sure they are on the right track with Mr. Armstrong as Christ guides him.

MELBOURNE, FL--CRAIG L. BACHELLER: Everyone really appreciated the visit we had with Mr. Waterhouse. They are still buzzing with what he had to say. Church is stable, and they are making real strides to overcome and grow.

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO/PADUCAH, KY--JOHN CAFOUREK: Bible study attendance has reached an all-time high--77% of average Sabbath service attendance in Cape Girardeau and 82% in Paducah. Most of the brethren are extremely well-pleased with the intensified and positive direction of all facets of God's Work. The excellent articles appearing in the GN, PT, and YOUTH 82 magazines are being very well received.

MICHIGAN CITY, IN--RAND MILLICH: The economic conditions are still affecting the area. The majority are still working, but some have had their hours cut back. Others are having to work several part-time jobs. Some are having to fight discouragement. These problems help the Church realize how much we need to rely on God and HIS help!

LAFAYETTE, LA--KARL BEYERSDORFER: Have made almost 2,000 phone calls for PT Waiting Room Program last year, with 52% success in getting new subscriptions placed in waiting rooms.

PORTSMOUTH, OH--DAVE TREYBIG: The Church is doing well. The PT distribution program has been very successful and more people are volunteering their help to the program. Thanks for the tapes from Mr. Armstrong!

Comments About Y.E.S. Feast LessonsPastor's Comments

I wanted to give you a little feedback on members' response to the Y.E.S. Program. It has been appreciated by the parents as much, probably more, than the children. It has made a tremendous impact in the Dallas area (referring to the special Feast Lesson) in ways that might not be initially apparent.

When a parent comes to me and says that the Y.E.S. lessons have helped convict them of their own deficiencies in Bible study and growth, I see this as a program that is turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and turning the hearts of fathers and mothers to God.

The only negative comments which I have heard are: 1) "The material is not enough to keep us going for a month...give us more." 2) "When is the next lesson coming out?" Members have approached me with these questions and comments who have never expressed any feelings about any aspect of the Y.O.U. program before this time.

I hope that the lessons can continue to be produced in a high quality and regular manner since they are feeding a hungry flock of parents, as well as our own set apart group of young prospective members whom God commands us not to forget.

Randal Dick

Comments From Parents

I want to thank you immensely for the YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS. Our children were just delighted to get them, and have really enjoyed working on them. My congratulations to all who were involved with them. They are really right on target as to age and ability level.

Mr. & Mrs. T.B. (Porterville, CA)

Our children enjoyed their Special Feast Lessons and are now looking forward to their monthly lessons. We hope that they soon will be receiving their monthly Bible lessons. Those lessons will be a tremendous help and guideline to us parents, and will help us in teaching our children more effectively. It truly is a blessing to be in God's Church.

C.V. (Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada)

Our two younger girls received their Special Feast Lessons from Y.E.S. and we think they are great. Thank you so much, they are like a special kick-off to the Y.E.S. Program.

G.B. (S. Pasadena, CA)

I am very happy that the children are receiving their Y.E.S. lessons now. The only complaint I've heard from them is that the one at level five would like pictures to color and more activity

things like the lower levels. Otherwise, they are enjoying them very much.

I have worried about this need of theirs very much. I have seen Satan's surcharge of the air against them especially hard from March through May of '81, but they have been having trouble with bad attitudes off and on for a while now. We as parents are trying to talk to them more about God and the Bible, but sometimes we feel they need others to do that too, so they (the children) don't feel like it's only father and mother who say it is the best way. These Bible lessons for them should fill that gap....

Parents (Paramount, CA)

Our children received the first issues of the YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS. It's great; they are so happy. We thank God for this program. Thank you everyone!

Mr. & Mrs. D.A. (Salem, WV)

The lessons are just great. I'm so happy about them. Thank you so much for the help with our children.

Mrs. D.C. (Winslow, IN)

Thank you for sending our three children the Bible Feast workbooks. This makes the children feel like a special part of the Church also as they really are.

Mr. & Mrs. R.R. (Ft. Pierce, FL)

The children were so excited when they received their lessons on the Feast. They had been learning how to depend on God. Thank you for everything.

Mr. & Mrs. R.K. (Okeman, OK)

Comments From Children

Thank you for the YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS. I am in level 5, and nine years old. My brother is in level 2, and is six years old. The first lesson made my Feast more exciting. I can't wait till I receive my other lessons. My brother likes them too.

I.W. (Youngstown, Alberta, Canada)

I love your YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS. I really enjoy reading them. They are just what I enjoy reading about: prophecy, Almighty God's overall picture, and how He's going to save the world from utter destruction (which would happen if He did not intervene). So, thank you for sending them and keep up the good work!

H.C. (Woodbury, NJ)

How are you? I'm fine. I'm happy with my YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS because they have fun things in them to do. My family enjoys hearing you on the radio. Me and my sister read the Bible stories in The GOOD NEWS. My name is Tonia and I'm seven and in second grade.

Tonia (Harrisburg, PA)

Mr. Armstrong, I always pray for your good health. How grateful (sic) your works are. I appreciated it very much especially the Bible study which you are sending us. I have learned many of God's Words. I would like to see and meet you personally, but I think only my father can go there in June. But I know we will surely meet at the place of safety. Hope and pray for your good works! May you have strong life until the end. I am 11 years old now. I love you.

D.G. (Mandduriao Iloilo City, Philippines)

Thank you very much for the YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS. I know it was a lot of work to make the Bible lessons. I have Level 5 and I'm nine years old. I am glad you're still well and happy.

B.R. (Ft. Pierce, FL)

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE UPDATE

(Pasadena Campus)

The second half of the college year is now in full swing, and we expect to have another very good semester. Last semester, the students did very well in their G.P.A.'s (grade point averages), and we hope they will do even better this semester. I must also mention that so far as I can remember, the lowest number of students dropped out of Ambassador College last semester (only six) that I can ever recall in the College's history.

Why do we now have such a low attrition rate in the student body? There are apparently several basic reasons for this: 1) Even before the students arrive in Pasadena, they know how very fortunate they are to be chosen to attend Ambassador--since the College can accept only one out of every 19 prospective students. 2) And even after students are accepted, they well know that if they don't keep up their grades (a minimum 2.0 is required) and if they don't maintain a high standard of moral and social performance, they can be dropped from the College.

3) Furthermore, the students also know that the Ambassador education (as counted in actual dollars and cents) is considerably less expensive than that of many (if not most) private colleges. They realize they are getting a real bargain. I might mention that next year the tuition cost per unit (a unit equals one class hour) will have to be raised from \$45 to \$50.

This afternoon, I lectured to the ministers here on the Ministerial Refreshing Program concerning Ambassador College. I also had Mr. Richard Ames (Director of Admissions), Mr. Arthur Suckling (Financial Aids Officer) and Dr. David Albert (Director of Career Services) speak on various facets of college life and activities here at Ambassador.

Mr. Ames mentioned that we now have 1538 prospective students wanting to enter Ambassador College at Pasadena, and 365 seeking admission to Ambassador College at Big Sandy. But, we will only be able to accept about 80 freshmen at Pasadena next fall--if present projections are correct. Big Sandy will apparently only be able to accept about 100 freshmen for the 1982-83 college year. Presently, we anticipate sending about 50 students from Pasadena to Big Sandy next fall. Mr. Leon Walker, Deputy Chancellor at Big Sandy, thinks this will be fine so far as he and the others in the

College Administration at Big Sandy are concerned. We will check first with Mr. Armstrong to make sure he approves of our sending a smaller group of students to Big Sandy for the coming 1982-83 college year.

Due to increased budget allocations, it is now possible for the College to finance various scholarships for additional countries of the international area of the Work. (We will, however, not be able to give "Regional Scholarships" to U.S. and Canadian students.) We will be able to give scholarships to students from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Britain, and Ireland. I am sure this will be good news to you ministers in these areas.

We want to do all within our power to assist any very promising, prospective students from overseas so that they can be thoroughly trained as quickly as possible in order to go back to their native countries and serve in God's Work. We never know when darkness will fall across any one of those countries--with a tyrannical, hostile government kicking out all foreigners living in their countries. We therefore want to make certain that we have sufficient trained personnel to be able to carry on with God's Work in their countries if that ever happens.

Just before Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and his party left on their recent trip to the Orient, he mentioned to me that he was pleased with the way the College is going. I pray that we can continue to please him; but most of all, I pray that all of us on the faculty and administration of the two campuses will be able to please God by diligently training the youth of His Church. We have a joyful, yet weighty job to do. The young people of the Worldwide Church of God are very precious in our sight, and in the sight of Almighty God!

It is very good to see many of God's ministers and their wives back on campus once again. I am sure all of you will be encouraged, inspired, and refreshed by the second round of the Ministerial Refreshing Program. It is always a privilege for the ministers here at Pasadena to meet our fellow ministers and their wives--to get to know each other better, thereby strengthening and encouraging one another.

God willing, we shall eventually be seeing all of you here at the Ministerial Refreshing Program. We continue to remember all of you ministers and your families in our prayers and ask your continued prayers for Mr. Armstrong, for the ministers and faculty at the two campuses and for all of us here at Pasadena!

--Raymond F. McNair, Deputy Chancellor

MAIL PROCESSING CENTER UPDATE

1982 Starts Off With Two New All-Time Records

Record Donations for December Semiannual Mr. Armstrong's 1981 winter semi-annual letter broke all records and brought the highest donation for any semiannual to date, with by far the largest percentage coming from the membership. The average donation per member showed an increase of 23% (far exceeding inflation in this country) over the previous record resulting from the June 1981 semiannual letter.

God's people are to be highly commended for their outstanding willingness to support His Work.

Record Phone Response to Mideast Special On the weekend of January 23-24, "Mideast Special, Part I" was aired on TV stations throughout the U.S. An all-time record of 8,900 calls came in for the telecast--the busiest weekend in WATS history.

Mr. Armstrong's interesting and informative interview with President Mubarak of Egypt, and his strong endorsement of THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY booklet and The PLAIN TRUTH--as well as the increased number of TV stations and phone lines, the bad winter weather and perhaps a larger viewing audience as a result of "Super Bowl Sunday"--contributed to the high interest and heavy response.

These two new all-time records for God's Work have given 1982 a flying start. We are eagerly anticipating further records in God's Work during this year.

Inspiring Accounts of God's Healing Power

Our letters this week show remarkable instances of God's healing power today in the lives of His people.

Healed of Snake Bite

A member of the French-speaking Church of Fort-de-France in Martinique was bitten by a poisonous snake while working at a banana plantation. She was immediately taken to the hospital. Twenty-two days earlier, a young man was also bitten by a snake at the same plantation and died in terrible pain. Our member was anointed while at the hospital. Today, she is at home without ever having received any kind of injection.

The doctors couldn't believe it and didn't want to let her go. Death usually occurs 24 hours later. She was held under observation for one month. Finally they had to let her go.

The nurses, as well as all her neighbours, say that she is exceptionally lucky. But we know that her "luck" is to have the God of Israel as her Protector--the One who listens to the prayers of His children in the Church.

Gilbert Carbonnel, Martinique

Son Raised from Coma

We have been through one of the most frightful traumas of our lives these past four weeks. We have seen God's love and deliverance firsthand and have so very much to praise Him for.

Our 13-year-old son was near death's door. He was unconscious for almost 30 hours in a convulsive coma with no brain responses at all. After being anointed by our local elder, God intervened and healed him of this malady and a very plaguing problem at the same time.

L.H. (Vina, AL)

Appendicitis Healed

God has just worked a most wonderful miracle in my life! About a month ago I was suddenly beset with intense stomach pains followed by vomiting and more pain. I could not even stand up. We immediately called for an anointed cloth to be sent. The pains increased and I was only able to drink ice water. The signs read appendicitis.

I decided to put myself in God's hands and not go to the hospital. It is easy to say that now, but at the time I was often weak and had doubts, especially when my appendix burst and the pain was so great that I was delirious. But our merciful Father strengthened me and gave me faith.

It was two weeks before the pain quit and I was able to sleep at night. A week later I was out of bed. God healed me of a most serious illness that generally causes death when left untreated! This truly is a miracle.

R.C. (Lansing, MI)

Hearing Restored

About 16 years ago I was a co-worker. I was almost deaf. An operation would not correct the problem. I was instructed on how to lip read and second guess the person I was talking to. I had a serious problem....

One day I met a customer who had been cured of an incurable disease through divine intervention....I asked her to tell me what she had done. She knew about Herbert W. Armstrong, and had written in for an anointed cloth. It was that simple....So as soon as I got home, I sent a letter off to Pasadena asking for a cloth. The day I received it, I was also given a hearing aid.... Twenty-four hours later I discovered by accident I could hear without the aid--much better in fact. The hearing aid was a poor substitute.

J.B. (Sylacauga, AL)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

RED DRIVE IN CENTRAL AMERICA CONTINUES The Soviets and their Caribbean surrogates, the Cubans, are moving as fast as caution will permit to capitalize on U.S. weakness in Central America.

The buildup of Nicaragua into a Marxist regional superpower was covered in this column last week. That buildup coincides with the continual strengthening of Cuba's own military might.

Despite confused protests from Washington (the Pentagon wants a direct face-off with Moscow, the State Department urges private diplomatic protests), the Soviet Union has shipped a squadron of new warplanes to Cuba. The planes, probably MiG-23's, arrived in Cuban ports disassembled in crates. A major reason for the Pentagon concern is that one version of

the MiG-23 plane can be used as a attack fighterbomber. As such, it would be capable of striking American East and Gulf Coast cities!

Such a deployment, of course, would be a clear violation of the 1962 post-Cuban Missile Crisis agreement between the U.S. and the Soviet Union whereby Moscow agreed not to station further "offensive" weapons in Cuba in return for an American pledge not to overturn the Castro regime (as the U.S. had tried to do in the 1961 "Bay of Pigs" fiasco).

It now appears that Premier Nikita Khrushchev and not President John Kennedy was the real--meaning long-term--winner of the so-called "Missiles of October" confrontation. An embarrassed Khrushchev lost the initial skirmish, having little choice but to ship the weapons back home. However, the future of Cuba's revolutionary government was assured, free to haunt a weakened America in the years to come. The Communist Chinese, incidentally, refer to the missile crisis and its resultant "understanding" as the "Caribbean Munich."

Over the years, Cuba's Fidel Castro--viewed in some Third World circles as a kind of "Red Robin Hood" or a "Second Bolivar"--has been anxious to export revolution throughout the Americas. Early attempts failed, culminating in the death of Ernesto "Che" Guevara in 1967. American influence in the region, moreover, was still too strong.

The Soviets were far more cautious than Castro all along, and still are. They saw Central America as a vital sphere of U.S. interest, similar to their own position in Eastern Europe. Throughout the 1960's and much of the 1970's the Kremlin, writes Soviet expert Jiri Valenta in the fall, 1981 issue of ORBIS, "continued to believe...that the United States had the ability and will to challenge outright revolution in Central America."

This perception changed in the latter 1970's due to the humiliating defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam (proscribing direct American military involvement elsewhere, even closer to home), the relinquishing of the Canal Zone in Panama, and indecisiveness with regard to the budding revolution in Nicaragua.

The ever-cautious Soviets provided very limited direct support to the Sandinista victory, choosing to get involved heavily after the Somoza government's fall, cementing the Sandinista-Moscow ties with various economic, technical and trade agreements. Sensing the opportunity, however, Moscow has been much more involved at the ground level in leftist strategy in the El Salvador war. (This revolution, as the experts say, is "less genuine"--meaning that the majority of Salvadorans do not support it. The rebels there have had to first create a "climate of revolution.")

In sum, the men in Moscow as well as Havana are clever opportunists, skillful at exploiting America's collapsing power and prestige in Central America. The Kremlin is clever, too, to get other members of its worldwide "socialist fraternity" to share in "the struggle." Now Yasser Arafat is bragging that PLO pilots are flying jet fighters in Nicaragua.

Where--unless the U.S. stands up--will the radicalization stop? Max Single, deputy director of the Hudson Institute issues this somber warning:

If El Salvador's revolutionary government of Jose Napoleon Duarte falls, there seems to be little possibility of preventing either the repressive military regime in Guatemala or the freely-elected civilian government of Honduras from being replaced by Marxist-Leninist regimes allied to Cuba. Then drastic polarization is likely to be started in Mexico, which is nominally revolutionary but socially backward. Violent conflict in Mexico would be likely to have serious security implications for the United States.

And that's putting it mildly! The mind boggles. Will we one day see MiGs in Mexico City? Or missiles in Monterrey?

That sounds preposterous at first. But Communist Russia's ties to Mexico are long, going back to the early days of the Bolshevik as well as the Mexican revolutions. Notes Valenta: "Early Bolsheviks were viewed as natural allies by revolutionary and patriotic circles in Mexico." Until the Cuban revolution, Mexico, Uruguay and Argentina were the only Latin American countries with which the USSR had diplomatic relations. Before World War II, Mexico's legal Communist party was the principal center for the dissemination of Communist propaganda literature to Spanish-speaking countries in Central America.

Now, for the first time, the Communists and other leftist small parties in Mexico have united to field a single candidate in that nation's upcoming national election. He won't win against the handpicked government candidate, of course--this time. But it will be interesting to see the vote totals.

The Soviets will be watching, too. They may choose to continue to work with their own small party in Mexico. Or, they may choose, at some later date, to switch support to a revolutionary "progressive" force more in the Sandinista mold--whichever group best serves Moscow's interests at the time.

Truly, the U.S. faces a bleak future in its own back yard in Central America and the Caribbean, the region Soviet geopoliticians refer to as America's "strategic rear." President Reagan has once again issued veiled threats to Cuba to mend its ways. In a televised interview with CBS' Dan Rather the other evening, Mr. Reagan suggested that Cuba "rejoin the Western Hemisphere," and did not rule out any type of U.S. action. But will America back up its words with actions?

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau