

Acid test faced in Castro protest

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Today's demonstration against Cuban Premier Fidel Castro at the United Nations in Manhattan is extremely important for local exile leaders, who must show they can still muster impassioned support 20 years after their community was forced from its native land.

News Analysis

Leaders of the anti-Castro movement who reject negotiating with the Cuban ruler have the opportunity to prove tomorrow that their position has support in the exile community.

In the media spotlight, they will also be able to show their influence as a lobbying group to urge a harder line regarding Castro in American foreign policy.

The anti-Castro movement has experienced difficulty in sending its message

through the English-language media. Even though the Cuban government picked an exile committee that met with Castro in December, the event was widely treated as if the committee were truly representative of the exile community.

The anti-Castro movement's grounds for criticizing the committee and an agreement regarding political prisoners never received wide exposure, however.

Instead, it was widely reported that there is a serious split in the Cuban exile community.

Today, the Bloques Cubano, an umbrella organization of anti-Castro groups, can combat this impression with a strong showing at the demonstration.

Numbers count. Some hope that as many as 20,000 people will take part in the demonstration.

But there has also been a complex confidence game between the exile leaders and their arch-enemy, Castro. Conflicting reports on whether Castro will appear have circulated through the exile community.

The premier is the big draw for the demonstration, and definite information that he will appear at the United Nations today would certainly bolster the protest.

Castro has not extended this courtesy to his foes, however.

There are conflicting reports of when Castro may come to the UN. Some say he will arrive Monday, meanwhile leaving uncertainty about the date in the minds of his foes.

A showing by 20,000 persons, at a time when Cuba once again has become an important issue, would be a great asset to exile leaders in their long battle against the man who pushed them from their homeland.