

Prio Proposes 'Deal' To Dictator Batista

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Carlos Prio Socarras, former president of Cuba now living in exile here, today told The Miami News he soon will offer strongman Fulgencio Batista a way to end the bloodshed and bombings in Cuba.

The offer is quite simple:

Prio, who gets blamed for most of the unrest in Cuba, will agree to give up his political ambitions and stay in exile if Batista also will give up his dictatorship and go into exile.

The offer will take the form of a letter which Prio hopes will be published in its entirety by the Cuban press.

For Batista, whose government is faced daily with terrorist bombings and the uncomfortable realization that Fidel Castro's rebels are causing revolution to

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snowball with their determined stand in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains, the offer by Prio could provide an astonishingly easy way out.

Since it is not uncommon for ex-presidents of Cuba to leave the country when they leave office, Batista could follow a pattern and get rid of his chief enemy at the same time.

A primary condition of Prio's offer is that Batista insure the right of free elections in Cuba for all political parties and make no attempt to put in a "stooge" to replace himself in the presidency.



EDUARDO HERNANDEZ
Defends Batista

Eduardo Hernandez, the Cuban consul in Miami and a key figure in the government of President Batista, told The News that he considers Prio's offer "unacceptable," saying:

"Prio realizes he couldn't win an election in Cuba, anyway."

Nevertheless, Hernandez echoed the sentiments of Batista in listing Prio as the chief antagonist of revolution.

"Although Fidel Castro has many more followers than Prio in Cuba, Prio has supplied Castro with money to carry out his rebellion against the duly constituted and recognized government of Cuba," said Hernandez.

What happens if Batista refuses to accept Prio's offer?

Prio told The News that "the same type of resistance now going on in Cuba will continue."

"But in the near future a force strong enough to overthrow Batista will come up inside Cuba. There won't be a landing of troops. It will come from inside Cuba."

Prio, often portrayed as a man of mystery, did not give that impression to this writer. He answered every question put to him in a straightforward manner. He remained courteous even in the face of necessarily discourteous questions.

Prio scoffed at reports that Batista will allow free elections in Cuba next year. He said that any election under Batista's control would see a dummy opposition party set up with Batista sympathizers controlling the party.

"Batista would be out but his stooges would be in," said Prio.

Prio said that there are "two strong currents of opposition to Batista in Cuba today — Fidel

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Exiled Prio Offers Deal To Batista

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Castro and the Autentico Party, of which I am head."

Consul Hernandez said that was simply Prio's version of the situation in Cuba.

"All of the principal political parties have agreed with President Batista on the terms of an election to be held June 1 of next year," said Hernandez. "Prio was not a part of the conference but he could participate in the elections. Fidel Castro has no political party."

Hernandez said that Batista is willing to declare amnesty for all political leaders if they will stop the bombings and clashes with government troops.

"That means that men who have killed again and again in the name politics would be free of their crimes," said Hernandez. "People who have bombed the streets of Havana causing death and injury to old people and children would be free. Even their criminal records would be removed from the files."

No Amnesty Till Peace

Batista, he added, will not declare amnesty as long as the violence continues.

Commenting on The News' investigation of revolutionary activities here, Hernandez said he had no doubt that Miami is the headquarters for key groups try-

ing to overthrow the government of Batista by force.

"They are violating the hospitality of the American people," said Hernandez.

Disclaiming any responsibility for the bombings taking place in Cuba, former President Prio said the raid on the presidential palace March 13 was led by a member of his political party, Menelao Mora, but he denied that Mora sought his advice or permission to make the raid.

Prio said, however, that he had the "highest respect" for Mora, who was killed in the abortive attempt to either kill or capture Batista.

Commenting on reports in The Miami News that the young revolutionary leaders in Cuba are inclined to discard the old line politicians and their lust for graft, Prio said he agreed that this was so.

He added, however, that he did not consider himself an old-time politician but a man of reform.

He said that during his tenure of office he established the first minimum wage and hour law in the country; the first banking system in Cuba and set up the Corps of Accountants to prevent the graft and corruption which kept government stripped of its resources during earlier administrations.

'Disregard' of Laws

If the laws set up during his tenure of office were observed, there would be little graft available to politicians, Prio contended. He said, however, that Batista has "recklessly disregarded" the laws of Cuba.

What happens if Batista suddenly clears out of Cuba with the wealth he is alleged to have built up during his period of control? Will another Batista step forward from the ranks of the army?

"The same men who were running the army when I was president are still in command," said Prio. "Only the top officer posts have changed. The army did not try to seize power then and I doubt that it would now."

Prio added that he didn't think there was a military figure in Cuba today who could last if he were to seize control of the government.

Only A Few Involved

Prio said that less than 10 per cent of the army and national police are responsible for "murders and atrocities committed in Batista's name. Many of the officers have refused to be a part of the Batista killings and have won the applause of the people."

He summed up the troubles of Cuba with one word—Batista.

"Batista doesn't want to give free elections. Batista is for Batista. When it was convenient for him he embraced communism. He was pro-Nazi. He will do anything to get his way.

"But I have a strong faith that Cuba will regain its freedoms."