

[1964]

Honorable
Lyndon B. Johnson
President of the United States
Washington, D. C.

Mr. President:

The author of this letter, a Cuban of age, forced to reside in the United States, and veteran of the 2506 Assault Brigade, availing himself of his prerogative as such, if in reality this prerogative exists, respectfully submits the following petition:

Mr. President, in one word....please leave us alone! Please instruct your government to cease helping us gain our freedom. Worthy Cubans will sincerely appreciate this gesture more than any amount of equipment for a hundred 2506 Brigades, assylum in every State of the Union, or the type of help we have received from this country, our friend and ally, since the very beginning of our tragic encounter with Communism.

No Sir, I am not crazy, nor ungrateful, and by inference a bad patriot. It is only that I am convinced that the best thing which could happen to the Cubans, amidst all their suffering, is that this aid cease.

I realize that it has been quite a time now since I understand the things that go on in this world. Cuba, only 90 miles away from this country, the most loyal ally your country ever had, protected by all the inter-American treaties

of which she was a signatory, was suddenly occupied by an extra-continental power, enslaved by an inhuman ideology and converted from a prosperous and happy country, into a dark and malignant center of subversion, menacing the whole hemisphere, including the very United States.

Five years have since gone by, Mr. President, and I now ask myself, what can other allies expect from the United States? What can Americans themselves expect from their country? When I put forward the last question, I am referring to true Americans, not the traitors or egotistical ignoramuses who in search of a shameful coexistence, still dare ask that stupid and insolent question: why grant so much importance to Cuba?

Five years have passed, and looking back to what this country has done in the field of its commitments, I have reached the sad conclusion that it would have been preferable if it would have refrained from doing anything.

I still remember how upon entering into contact with us, the anti-Communist Cubans, the first thing you told us was that we were not of the same ideas, and that we were divided. We were divided Mr. President, because we were free men and free men always think in different ways. But in our situation, the same would have happened to you. I believe Mr. President, and this might be one of my possible errors, that I should be proud to be a Cuban and that the only thing which you have over us is a larger country and population.

Then you proceeded to choose the best suited Cubans, and to this end you utilized the services of the all-powerful CIA.

And what did this magnificent organization, upon which a great part of this country's security rests, do? Faced with exiles divided by deep political and social dissent, and by a people burning with the frustrated desires of true Nationalism, did you encourage anybody and point to a new group, equidistant from all conflicts and free from any blemish? No, instead you chose the people from the so-called Revolutionary Democratic Front. Yes, it was easier to deal with the vested interests, especially if you harbored no real intention of liberating Cuba. All others were vetoed or ignored, including those who were fighting in Cuba and only received derisive aid, resulting in the Escambray disaster. Yes, those who wished to do something for Cuba had to go to the camps, to those camps in Guatemala where the super-army of liberty was being prepared under the expert and paternal vigilance of CIA mercenaries. Those infamous camps where Frank's and John's would treat their allies as paid assassins, and not as men who were going to fight for their country's liberty. The only ones who ate and drank well were those Franks and Johns, and their "Cuban" friends who had protectors. Amidst the squandering of the American taxpayer's money, bribery favoritism, venality and infamy reigned, and in Miami and other places desperate exiles led a miserable life from factory to factory, while there was an abundance of lavish automobiles, cheques with many zeros, expensive trips, etc. among the Council's favorites.

Then, as you remember, the war came. 1,500 men, from 16 to 60 years of age, of which scarcely a third had any military training, were placed one morning in front of a army of 60,000 men. Practically six divisions against a reinforced battalion!

But the CIA had given information to the effect that there would be no resistance in Cuba, and that the underground would produce an uprising. However, some hours before the landing, aerial bombardment which alerted the Communists, permitting them to destroy the resistance, with the preventive arrest of more than 100,000 persons, was ordered. On whose side is the CIA Mr. President?

In spite of these odds, we resisted three days. It was hard battle Mr. President, because Cubans, Communists or Patriots are brave, and not the degenerate native Hollywood portrays. During these three days many things which I am not going to describe, because they would make this account endless, occurred. Nevertheless, I do not want this opportunity to go by without telling you how one night when the battle was most fierce, we were treated to boxes of Springfield ammunition, an obsolete rifle! We, who only had Garand rifles, given to us by them! This joke forces me to ask the same question: On whose side is the CIA, Mr. President?

After this episode, all that we are aware of came to pass, until the Brigade's partial liberation. Note that I say partial, because the Brigade is still jailed, Mr. President. The fact that the majority were set free does not mean that a handful of our comrades in arms, nine to be exact, do not still linger there. They were as part of the Brigade as any CIA stooge, and as betrayed as any of the honorable men who formed the 2506 Assault Brigade. But naturally, nine is not a substantial figure. With this insignificant handful of men there is no danger of a scandal arising. Over a thousand men, with all their friends and relatives was quite another story, but nine, what can the friends and relatives of nine men do?

That is the square truth, Mr. President. Because of this, I want to interrupt this letter to ask you not to return the famous Orange Bowl Flag. My flag in Giron was stained in the swamps with the blood of my companions. Only do something for these men, for this Brigade, which still remains in prison, so that at least we may all sleep peacefully, you and ourselves.

Well, then, when we returned from those prisons, we thought that a rectification was in order. This would have surely eliminated the negative factors and sought out those elements capable of a unifying influence and of determining the great struggle which was approaching. We felt then that an investigation of the Agency, mainly responsible for our failure, yours and ours, was in order. And what happened? After a great deal of hesitation, which lasted a few months indeed, the Council was dropped, even if the CIA still remained as powerful and untouchable as ever. Again it directed our destiny, vetoed all those who did not respond to the particular interests of some of its leading figures, submitting countless false reports, and pouring into the bottomless chest of the most negative and unpopular Cubans, the American tax payers money.

Mr. President, we have waited over a year in silence, because we felt that everybody should have a chance to rectify, but such rectification did not come. Instead you have mocked us. A friend friendly people have been mocked during a struggle without precedent in its history, and what is equally monstrous is that the interests of this country have also been betrayed and mocked by those who were called to serve it.

No Mr. President, we do not want this kind of help, which

in short, only benefits the Communists. Leave us alone, and if our destiny is that we end under six feet of earth or a hundred phantoms of water, we should at least fulfill it with the dignity called for. We refuse to accept orders and have leaders imposed on us by certain of Fidel's crypto heirs, who when brought before a simple Communist tribunal did not speak out, frightened by threats of a firing squad, and accepting the insults of the Red rabble which today enslaves Cuba. A people like ours, superior and proud of its historic destiny, do not accept domination, remember this Mr. President, and those bad Cubans, friends of the CIA, who impudently enjoy its favors, are nothing, absolutely nothing in this case.

Upon ending this letter, which has involuntarily become an "I accuse," against bad Cubans as well as their American cohorts, many of which can grotesquely affirm that I am only after publicity, I want to state that I am not frightened by them or their slander, and that insofar as publicity is concerned, I have already gained it in Cuba. I found it before the firing squad which so frightened those phony heroes we are now subject to. One thing is sure Mr. President: the words I have expressed here can be submitted to the greatest of tests.

If I were an American, I would demand it, but since I am only a Cuban, I request that an exhaustive Congressional investigation of the activities of the CIA, in the Cuban case, especially its handling of funds, take place. In sum, I am willing to accept full responsibility for the words expressed here, if in any way I have spoken untruthfully.

I remain of this nation and you,

Very truly yours,

For the Executive Council of the
Cuban Nationalist Association

FELIPE RIVERO DIAZ
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