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FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA 962
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. enc. *File 66T* Air Pouch
REF : Habana's 957, Dec. 12, 1951
SUBJECT: Televised Interview December 9 by Minister of State Sánchez Arango on the Quetzal Case

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The Cuban Minister of State, Dr. Aureliano SANCHEZ Arango, appeared December 9 on the CMQ television program "Ante la Prensa" to reply to questions posed in connection with the Quetzal case.

A transcript of the program and a report thereon as published in the December 16 issue of Carteles are enclosed.

The Minister of State's most important assertions in this interview are reported below:

The Quetzal was a peaceful inoffensive vessel carrying aguacate plants to Guatemala. It was a Guatemalan vessel captured by a Dominican warship some fifty miles south of Cape San Antonio. There appears to be no justification for the seizure, nor has any thesis of a juridical character in support of that action been presented. We are going to go to the last limits [Vamos a llegar hasta las últimas consecuencias] in this case inasmuch as the status of the five Cubans is clear. The action constituted an attack against the freedom of the seas, an attack against the sovereignty of Guatemala and an attack also against Cuban sovereignty. In view of the unjustified sentencing of Cubans, in order to try them 1) a crime should have been committed, and 2) they should have been arrested in Dominican territory or submitted to trial through extradition.

Cubans believe that the Dominican Republic practices espionage in Cuba. The Dominican Republic's statements in connection with the alleged action of BRITO, Master of the Quetzal, in turning the vessel over to the Dominican authorities constitutes an admission of the existence of such espionage.

In olden times Cuba might have handed the Dominican Representative his passport, but in the modern era there are international organizations to which disputes may be submitted for settlement.

ETCrain:WJN
REPORTER(S)

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
WEST-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Cuba does not believe that the United States State Department is supporting the Trujillo Government. The State Department has for some time past assumed a position in direct contrast to the one it formerly followed in American matters. This change took place at the time of Roosevelt's "New Deal", and its only intervention since then has been through the international organisms.

The normal way to handle this problem is through the use of international instruments. That is why we have gone before the Inter-American Peace Committee, and we have available all the other international instruments, which we are resolved to use if necessary. If they prove insufficient, we are disposed to go before the Security Council and even the Assembly now in session, the Sixth Assembly of the United Nations at Paris.

I do not accept the charge that Cuba has not conducted its international relations with the discretion to be desired. Some accuse Cuba of trying to export democracy. With the exception of Cayo Confites, which took place four years ago, nobody can say that Cuba tries to export democracy. I would be opposed to the exportation of democracy just as I would be to the exportation of dictatorship by the countries that have it. What we do do is choose our friends. In connection with the Quetzal case we are demanding a right and we have assumed a completely dignified position in the matter. We have no special policy against Trujillo nor against anyone. We defend our national interests. We have recalled our Charge d'Affaires Sr. SOTOLONGO and we do not propose to send his substitute until this episode has been satisfactorily settled.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures: *11*

1. Transcript of Program
2. Report on Program

Copy to Amembassy:
C. Trujillo