

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

October 16, 1959

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SUBJECT: Expression of Interest by Cuban Ambassador in Japan in Improving Relations between Cuba and the United States.

On October 31, 1959, an officer of the Embassy held a conversation with His Excellency, Dr. Mario ALZUGARAY y Ramos Izguiero, regarding the latter's concern over the state of relations between the United States and Cuba. Dr. Alzugaray was emphatic in declaring that the Cuban Government is not Communist and has no sympathy with the Communists, and that relations between the United States and Cuba had been injured through a campaign carried on by the press of the United States against the Cuban Government. The Embassy officer replied that the Government of the United States does not consider Fidel Castro a Communist, but has less confidence in some of the people around him. He also pointed out that certain public statements made by Cuban officials, including a recent speech by Dr. Castro, did not seem calculated to improve relations between the two countries. The Cuban Ambassador replied that he thought the speech was unfortunate, but urged consideration of the fact that Dr. Castro was a very young man. The Cuban Ambassador then showed a telegram he had just received from his Government requesting him to continue in his position in Tokyo. The Cuban Ambassador expressed a desire to call upon Ambassador MacArthur, and requested that Ambassador MacArthur show him special cordiality at social gatherings as a means of demonstrating to the public in Tokyo that good relations exist between Cuba and the United States.

The Cuban Ambassador has attracted relatively little attention in Tokyo although he has made certain public utterances which have not been reassuring as to his attitude toward the United States. In one of these, he referred to Cuba's obtaining its independence after "a cruel war of thirty years against the colonial power and of American occupation that lasted four years". In another, he spoke of the American and Russian revolutions as contributing to the advancement of mankind.

While Ambassador MacArthur in a private conversation with Ambassador Alzugaray expressed his displeasure at the first of those remarks, he has displayed a friendly attitude towards the Cuban Ambassador in all of their meetings.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

Andrew B. Wardlaw
 Andrew B. Wardlaw
 Commercial Attache

Enclosure:

Memorandum of conversation

Copy to Habana

AWardlaw:ml

REPORTER

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ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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CLASSIFIED FILE

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: October 31, 1959

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Mario Alzugaray, Cuban Ambassador
Mr. Nihil Ramirez, Cuban Commercial Attaché
Mr. A.B. Wardlaw, Commercial Attaché

SUBJECT: Relations between Cuba and the United States

On October 31, 1959, I called upon Ambassador Alzugaray in response to an invitation from him extended through Mr. Nihil Ramirez, the Commercial Attaché of the Cuban Embassy. Mr. Haverkamp had informed me earlier that I might expect such an invitation because of Ambassador MacArthur's suggestion that the Cuban Ambassador get in touch with me since Ambassador MacArthur could not receive him.

Ambassador Alzugaray expressed his sympathy at the loss of Ambassador MacArthur's mother and said he understood perfectly why the Ambassador could not receive him at this time. He then went on to deplore the unsatisfactory state of relations between the United States and Cuba at this time. He placed the responsibility for the bad relations upon newspapers in the United States which were carrying out, he said, an unrelenting campaign designed to put the Cuban Government in the worst light possible. He emphasized that the Cuban Government is not Communist and has no sympathy with the Communists. He went on to say that the Cuban people are all strongly anti-Communist. He mentioned the history of good will between the United States and Cuba and dwelled at length upon the role of the United States in freeing Cuba from Spanish domination. He insisted the newspapers were influenced by a few large American concerns who had made great profits in Cuba without investing anything in the country. During this recital, he became very emotional and seemed on the point of bursting into tears.

I replied that our Government certainly did not regard Dr. Fidel Castro as a Communist even though we were less sure about certain of the people around him. I insisted that our Government had sought to be neutral during the Revolution and to establish the best possible relations with the new Government when it came to power. I mentioned the assignment of Ambassador Bonsal with his known ability and devotion to democracy as an example of the desire of our Government to maintain friendly relations with the new Cuban Government. I pointed out that our own press had at times attacked American Presidents much more energetically than it was now criticizing the Cuban President. I said that on the other hand certain public statements made by Cuban officials, particularly the most recent speech by Dr. Castro, did not seem designed to improve relations between our two countries. I said we were well aware of Dr. Castro's youth but his words had to be considered as those of the Cuban Government.

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The Cuban Ambassador said he was sorry about the recent speech, particularly the accusation which it contained that the U.S. Government was responsible for the flight of a plane from the United States which dropped leaflets over Havana. He said, however, that I was quite right about the youth of Dr. Castro and that we should try to make allowances for that.

The Cuban Ambassador then expressed a desire to consult with Ambassador MacArthur because he thought that together they could work out means of improving relations between Cuba and the United States. I said that I knew Ambassador MacArthur would wish to see those relations improved but I thought that that work would have to be done in Havana and Washington, but he insisted he would like to talk over the matter with the American Ambassador.

He then showed me a telegram which he had received that day from his Government in Havana, which stated that it was essential that he continue as Ambassador in Tokyo. He explained that Cuban newspapers had carried a rumor that he was about to be withdrawn and that he had accordingly telegraphed his Government referring to those rumors and offering to submit his resignation if that was the wish of the Government. The telegram which he showed me was in reply to his offer to resign.

The Cuban Ambassador then proceeded to what I believe to be the real purpose of his invitation to call. He asked whether it would not be possible for Ambassador MacArthur to join him in a display of special cordiality when the two of them meet at social gatherings. He said such a display would dispel local impressions that relations are not of the best between Cuba and the United States and that this would thereby make a contribution towards the improvement of relations between Cuba and the United States. I told him I would inform Ambassador MacArthur of this wish and of all other points covered in the conversation.