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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

April 6, 1959

Participants: Dr. José Pardo Llada, leader of former Partido Nacionalista Revolucionario
Dr. Napoleon Padilla
The Ambassador
Daniel M. Braddock

Dr. Pardo Llada called to pay his respects. He spoke of the excellent impression which the Ambassador had made in Cuba from the time of his arrival and of his conviction that the Ambassador would make a great contribution to the establishment of a friendly relationship between the United States and the Revolutionary Government. Dr. Pardo Llada asked the Ambassador of his general impression of the Cuban situation. The Ambassador said he was hopeful and that one of the very best things which the revolution had brought was honesty in government, which would permit many other improvements to flower.

Dr. Pardo Llada said he was not always an admirer of American policy and had often criticized it. He said he had at one time thought highly of Albizu Campos, but now had only praise for what had been accomplished in Puerto Rico by Muñoz Marín with the assistance of the U. S. Government. He said that some of Fidel Castro's statements with respect to the United States had been too aggressive and violent. He paused for the Ambassador to comment, but the Ambassador said nothing. Dr. Pardo Llada said that while he did not agree with the substance of Castro's rebuttal of Figueres on March 22, he felt that the intrusion by Figueres of an international issue on that occasion was a discordant note and that Castro's reaction to it was justifiable under the circumstances.

Dr. Pardo Llada asked the Ambassador's views regarding the usefulness of Castro's approaching visit to the United States. The Ambassador thought it would be helpful. Dr. Padilla raised a question as to how Castro's recently expressed tolerant attitude toward Communism would be received in the United States. The Ambassador went into some detail in his reply. He noted how the United States had progressed since its own revolution, how there was still a great deal to be accomplished, and how the United States adhered to democratic processes in its evolution. He spoke of the sacrifices which the United States had made to defend the free world against Communism. He stated that the United States could not share a tolerant attitude toward

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Dr. Pardo Llada: Dr. Braddock: ...

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Communism, and that it hoped and believed that Latin America would continue to cooperate with the free world in combatting the menace of Communism.

Mr. Braddock asked whether Dr. Pardo Llada planned to re-establish his political party. Dr. Pardo Llada said he did not intend to do so for the present; that opposition to the Government during this formative period would not be in the interest of the revolution, which he had supported though he was not a Fidelista. He said that when elections were held, as they would have to be within two years, there would of course be political activity. The only real opposition at that time, he was convinced, would have to come from a split among the revolutionaries themselves. He believed that the leaders of such parties would be young revolutionary politicians. As an older politician he did not expect that he would be a candidate, but if circumstances required him to lead an opposition party, he would do so. At present he found himself in a rather uncomfortable position as a writer and radio commentator: when he said anything critical of the Government, he received a large stack of complimentary fan mail but risked being called a counterrevolutionary, while when he praised the Government, no one showed any appreciation. He thought he might be better off if he were out of Cuba for the next year, but that he could not leave and keep his self-respect.

The Ambassador stressed that this conversation was a frank and informal exchange of views, not for attribution in any way. He said he hoped to maintain contact with Dr. Pardo Llada.

cc: ARA/CMA/C


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