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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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American Consulate,  
Santiago de Cuba, Cuba,  
January 15, 1958.

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

Dear Ed:

Reference is made to my despatch No. 10 of August 22, 1953 and to my official-informal letter to Terry Leahardy on August 25 concerning the progress of the anti-American feeling in Oriente.

Oriente is now run by Raul Castro's Second Front crowd which pushed most of the previous propaganda. This combined with the fact that Oriente has been in this war for over two years tends to lend a more emotional and less critical approach by most of the people. Fidel has done nothing to stop this and seems to be doing considerable whisker pulling himself.

The results of the revolution with respect to our relations have been worse in some respects than I would have thought, but there are some aspects which are better than might have been imagined.

Despite the feeling that is being whipped up, there is still a reservoir of good will in many segments of the population. While we have received considerable criticism here, there have been no untoward incidents and it has been done in a fairly friendly manner as far as personal relations are concerned. This could change if any campaign continues.

Some of this is undoubtedly the natural proud reaction to a successful revolution. I think that many Cubans have always had an inferiority complex with respect to the United States, and the feeling about the Platt Amendment is not yet dead. One frequently hears that this is the first time that Cuba has actually been free, and by its own efforts despite "opposition" from the United States. The danger is, of course, that the small communist minority and/or other anti-American elements will let this get out of hand.

The United States and its representatives are currently taking the blame for everything that has happened. They are still connecting us with the bombing of towns and with the atrocities through what seems to me to be an unwarranted "guilt by association" with largely an emotional base.

I do not see why we should take the rap for all of this when much of it is the result of Batista's censorship, as pointed out in previous communications. The general public here is unaware of the positive steps taken in

Edward Little, Esquire,  
Department of State,  
OMA,  
Washington, D.C.

(Signed) Park

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Park F.U. all Am  
American Consul

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pursuit of our (difficult to achieve) ideal of non-intervention.

It seems that we do not need so much a defense of our policy as we need to have people informed on our policy. Unfortunately it is too late to utilize the services of Father Bez Chebebe or others to get this across discreetly. That instruction arrived after the overthrow.

It might still be useful to have something for the record as suggested in August either through a speech or an article which might be reprinted should it seem feasible. As previously stated this should certainly not be a defense or an apology but the record presented as deemed prudent. This would have to be considered most carefully both for content and timing since there would be nothing served in merely starting further debate. It must also be considered that what we consider very correct action may not be so considered by many here, on the basis that if we were not for them we were against them.

I may be uninformed on many aspects of the situation, but my understanding is that we started a slowdown of shipments of arms to the GOC early in 1957, and that the last actual shipment (except for the unfortunate rocket head replacement) was in October 1957. If I am correct, our prohibiting even the sale of combat equipment to Batista was the first time in history that this has been done to a friendly nation. Certainly this unusual measure was in direct response to the Cuban internal situation.

Because of Batista's censorship this is certainly not known, nor is it known that the United States deplored the violence reported, although we did not spell it out.

The second major emotional point in the province is concerning the use of "U.S." bombs and napalm on Oriente and other towns. This is still being blamed on the United States. I think that we should, if possible, develop evidence that napalm did not come from the United States, and that bomb shipments ended a long time ago. The papers state that a Spaniard making bombs for the air force in Habana has been captured by the government. Perhaps there are other clues which might be used in discretion. This can not be disregarded in Oriente as the people have felt the impact of the bombs and there is a lot of visible evidence in many of the towns in addition to our own mine at Nicaro.

We have undoubtedly made protests to the GOC about the use of MAP equipment and that might also be put on the record, with the blame placed where it belongs, the GOC and censorship.

There were undoubtedly many atrocities previously, the details of which are just coming to light. The U.S. should certainly not share the guilt for what one Cuban did to another.

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Points listed in your instruction re Father Escobedo are also possibly worth repeating, as are others if properly developed. Inasmuch as the people here have made much of repetition to get points across, we might have to do the same.

I am hopeful that a lot of the present shouting will die a natural death as every one gets back to work. Perhaps, however, we can calculate some way to give this a push.

Locally, if you can find some way to return Masferrer it would be helpful, although I do not know the legal concepts. He represents the worst in local minds, but I am not certain what can be proven against him. If he remains in the U.S. they probably will not let us forget it.

These are mere thoughts on the local situation and you are probably way ahead of us.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

  
Park F. Wollam  
American Consul

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