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STATE WHITE PAPER ON CUBA

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In view of the physical proximity of Cuba to the United States, close historical relationships between the two countries, and our many interests there, Cuba occupies a special place in United States foreign relations. Because of those factors, unusually difficult decisions were faced in dealing with Cuban-U.S. relationships in 1957-58 as the domestic strife increased in scope and intensity. This paper describes briefly the background of the Cuban situation during those years and the complex problems posed for United States policy in the final two years of the Batista administration. To put those problems in proper context, however, it is important to set forth the basic considerations which underlay policy deliberations and which set effective limits to decisions which could be reached on these questions.

First and foremost of these considerations was the protection of the long-range U.S. relationships with and interests in Cuba. The most important of these interests are the more than 5,000 American citizens who reside in Cuba, the \$1 billion of United States investments there, and our important Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay in the southeastern portion of the island. With the rise in intensity of feeling among all elements of the population as the ~~civil~~ ^{internal} struggle continued, the impact on the Cuban people of United States policy decisions relating to Cuba became of paramount importance to these long-range relationships. It was believed to be of primary importance that our citizens, their investments and our Naval installation should find an atmosphere in Cuba in future years of understanding and cooperation and not ^{one} of hostility.

Achievement of that objective required careful observation of the now firmly established principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the other American Republics. This principle is a treaty

obligation

obligation of the United States and adherence to it is prescribed in NSC and OCB directives. Cubans are especially sensitive about any intervention by the United States since, from 1903 until 1934, the United States had treaty rights to intervene in Cuban internal affairs under certain conditions. The mere possibility of the exercise of these rights established a pattern of behavior on the part of some Cubans which offended others. The word "intervention" can be interpreted to include almost any activity to which an interested party wishes to take exception and sensitivity to any such interpretation is magnified when a country is involved in internal strife. The most minor relationship of the United States with Cuba during this two-year period, therefore, had to be weighed as to its likely effects and as to the possibility that any given decision could be interpreted as "intervention". The adverse and shrill reaction to the despatch of Marines to Guantanamo and airborne troops to San Juan when Vice President Nixon was in Caracas in February 1958 illustrates the feeling in the entire hemisphere against any action on the part of the United States which might be considered to be intervention.

Finally, great interest in the Cuban internal strife was shown in United States Congressional circles and on the part of the public in this country. This interest was not confined to pressure groups or to public-spirited citizens and organizations but included many spontaneous expressions of opinion on the part of individual citizens. The result of this expressed interest was that U.S. Government actions respecting the Cuban situation were spotlighted and subject to more than usual Congressional and public scrutiny. This was particularly the case during

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the period since normal confidential interchange between the two governments often were leaked to rebel groups due to infiltration of government organizations by rebels and such information was at times distorted and used by opposition groups for their own ends.

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I. Considerations Affecting United States Policy Toward President Batista's Regime at the Beginning of 1957

A. General Background of the Cuban Political Situation

General Fulgencio Batista, who had been Cuba's "strong man" from 1933 to 1939 and its elected President from 1940 to 1944, was a presidential candidate in the elections to be held in June 1952. He was opposed by Carlos Hevia, the candidate of the Autentico Party which had been in power since 1944, and the present Foreign Minister, Dr. Roberto Agramonte, then a University of Habana professor and the candidate of the Ortodoxo Party, the major opposition party. Running a poor third in the electoral campaign was General Fulgencio Batista, who had returned to Cuba from exile in the United States in November 1948 following his election to the Cuban Senate. He was the candidate of the Acción Unitaria Party, which had been specifically created by him to support his candidacy. Though Batista had some personal following, his party did not have wide popular appeal nor an effective and well-organized political machine such as backed each of his two opponents.

The President leading up to the 1952 elections was Dr. Carlos Prío Socarrás, the titular head of the Autentico Party. His party came to power in 1944 under Dr. Ramon Grau San Martín who at that time had wide popular support for his ^{promises} program of social reform, honesty in public administration and national progress. However, the administrations of Drs. Grau and Prío did not live up to expectations. They

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were characterized by graft, corruption, and political gangsterism and little in the way of social reform was accomplished. The clamor of the public for honesty in government had a strong influence, therefore, in the selection of presidential candidates by the two major parties for the presidential elections of 1952. Both Carlos Hevia and Dr. Agramonte were considered men of integrity and many Cubans nourished sincere hopes that their country was on the threshold of electing an incorruptible president capable of giving the type of government they had sought so long. These hopes were shattered just 80 days prior to the elections when General Batista engineered a nearly bloodless coup d'etat on March 10, 1952 ^{overthrowing} the government of President Carlos Prío Socarrás. Batista cited the dishonesty of the Prío regime as the reason for his action and charged that Prío had intended on April 15 to suspend the June elections. The coup came as a complete surprise in Cuba and was carried out by Batista with the aid of junior officers and some retired senior officers of the Cuban armed forces. The shock and dismay which was felt by the democratic forces in Cuba on this occasion was deepened by the knowledge that the new intelligent master of Cuba was a tough, and altogether formidable antagonist whose long political and executive experience could not be matched by that of any other national figure.

Fulgencio Batista had first become prominent on September 4, 1933 when as an Army sergeant he led the famous "revolt of the sergeants"

sargeantsⁿ which forced the removal of some 500 Army officers and overthrew the short-lived government of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, who had been the last Secretary of State under the detested dictatorial government of General Gerardo Machado (1925-33). The latter had fled the country on August 12, 1933 following a general strike and at the request of his Army officers. Batista became Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army and a new provisional government was formed under Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin. Dr. Grau was quickly ousted and a succession of six more presidents followed him during the period 1934-40, all being placed in power by Batista. The latter was elected to the presidency in July 1940, as already stated, with the support of the Democratic Socialist Coalition, which included the Communist Party, and took office on October 10, 1940. The elections were generally considered to have been fraudulent. Under the first Batista regime (1940-44) the Communist Party prospered and it gained control over the powerful Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC). Also, on March 1943 Batista appointed an able Communist leader, Juan Marinello, to his cabinet as Minister without Portfolio.

Prior to the 1944 elections it was suspected that Batista would try to find some way to extend his term of office, but he threw his support to Dr. Carlos Saladrigas, a well-known lawyer who had the backing of the Batista coalition party. His candidate was opposed by ex-President Grau San Martin, who was idealized by the masses for the social legislation he sponsored in 1933. Much to the amazement of

most

most Cubans [populace] Batista permitted an honest election on June 1, 1944. He admitted Grau's victory and accepted with good grace the defeat of his own candidate. Overnight Batista found himself almost as popular a hero as Dr. Grau. He departed Cuba to reside in Daytona Beach, Florida, while Grau organized his new administration, and did not return until 1948. During his residence in this country he exhibited a cautious respect for our neutrality laws and an appreciation of the hospitality offered him.

Immediately following his successful coup of March 10, 1952, General Batista proclaimed himself Chief of State, vested the executive and legislative powers in himself and a Council of Ministers, closed the Congress, suspended the guarantees stipulated in the Constitution of 1940 for 45 days and cancelled the June 1 elections. He promptly replaced the military and civilian officials of the former government with men of his own choosing.

The only organized opposition to the Batista coup came from the powerful Cuban Confederation of Labor who tried to call a general strike on the day of the coup. Only a partial walkout occurred, and it was quickly suppressed by the police. Batista then made his peace with labor by agreeing with its top leaders to heed labor's demands in exchange for their support. The abrupt change in administration was not unwelcome to the business community. While a number of Autentico Party political leaders including ex-President Prío fled

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the country, many remained and others soon returned and initiated conversations with Batista which they hoped would bring about the restoration of constitutional government. The leaders of the Ortodoxo Party and the Federation of University Students (FEU) refused to recognize the legality of the new government and announced that they would not participate in any elections held by it. The Communist Party and some members of the Autentico Party also vehemently denounced the Batista seizure of power.

By May 1952 those political elements which had openly opposed the Batista government began covertly to plot its overthrow under the leadership of Agruliano Sánchez Arango, former Minister of Education in the Prío administration. Dr. Prío, who was in exile in Miami, was understood to have given Sánchez Arango his support for this endeavor but it did not get beyond the planning stage.

Reactions to the Batista coup in Latin America varied according to the character of the various governments. Conservative and dictatorial governments welcomed the change and promptly recognized the new regime, while democratic governments generally deplored the overthrow of Dr. Prío and were slow to accord recognition to the Batista government. In making its decision on recognition, the United States carefully applied its normal customary tests of recognition, considering such factors as the new government's control over the national territory, the general acquiescence of the Cuban people

people, and the acceptance of Cuba's international obligations by the new administration. Our government, also, was concerned over the possible repercussions of Batista's action in other countries of Latin America where unstable political situations existed and elections were about to be held, such as Panama, Ecuador, and Chile. The United States was aware, however, that a delay in recognition might adversely react on the stability of the new regime and prejudice our important interests in Cuba. After a delay of seventeen days and following similar action by other countries, United States recognition was accorded on March 27, 1952. Most of the Latin American countries which had been delaying recognition awaiting our decision, followed suit.

Instead of governing within the framework of the Constitution of 1940, the new Batista government modified it by promulgating a series of "Constitutional Statutes" on April 4, 1952 which provided for a government by a President (Batista) and a Council of Ministers to be advised by a Consultative Council of about 80 persons. Wherever possible, the statutes closely followed the wording of the Constitution of 1940 with modifications designed to give the executive branch broad powers. Within this new framework the Batista Government launched an ambitious public works program and increased the wages of teachers and the armed forces. It was unable, however, through

through these measures to develop popular political support and began to vacillate between those forces wishing it to take a strong position against the excesses of labor and graft and corruption and those who wished to maintain the status quo by avoiding the alienation of labor, its principal source of civilian support.

One year after Batista seized power, his regime still continued to depend on the loyalty of the armed forces and the uneasy support of organized labor. His efforts to popularize his regime failed and revolutionary plotting by ex-President Prío and other groups had become more active. Some students at the University of Habana rioted on January 15, 1953, burning Batista in effigy; newsreels of the incident were censored. Opposition parties wrangled over participation in the elections which had been scheduled for November 1953 ^{but} and on the first anniversary of his coup, Batista announced their postponement until June 1, 1954 due to conspiratorial activities. He also announced that the office of the presidency would not be included. This abrupt action was generally attributed to (1) his desire to remain in power, (2) his realization that he lacked the popular support to win and (3) his desire to meet some of the opposition demands to obtain a more representative participation in the elections.

On April 5, 1953 some 80 students at the University of Habana were arrested on charges of conspiracy to assault the Army headquarters in Habana. Student demonstrations followed in which a

number

number of students were wounded by police gunfire and clubs. The alleged ringleader of the conspiracy, Rafael Garcia Barcena, and twelve others were convicted of conspiracy and sentenced to prison terms of up to two years. These punitive measures and increased government vigilance did not prevent further plotting, however, and on July 26, 1953 a youthful armed group of 200 men led by Dr. Fidel Castro made an abortive assault on the Moncada Barracks at Santiago de Cuba. Approximately 100 of the attackers were killed and of the remainder 30 were given prison sentences. The leader, himself, was sentenced to 15 years while his younger brother, Raul, was given a lighter sentence. This incident, followed by the arrest for conspiracy of some 40 young Army officers and enlisted men on September 22, 1953, led the government to postpone elections from June 1, 1954 to November 1, 1954 and to announce that all offices, including the presidency, would be filled on the latter date. In late 1953 the first incidents of terrorist bombings took place in Habana and Santiago accompanied by rumors that police authorities were responsible for deaths of oppositionists. By early 1954, Embassies in Habana were beginning to receive requests for asylum from persons reportedly showing signs of having been tortured.

As the electoral period approached, our Embassy in Habana reported (Monthly Report, March 2, 1954) that "the opposition is divided into factions on the issues of participation in the scheduled elections, on
passive

passive resistance or violence, and is ineffective." As late as April 1954, Batista had not announced whether he would be the candidate of his own Popular Action Party and the three other parties in coalition with it, and no major opposition party had yet registered for the elections. Batista, apparently realizing that another postponement of the elections would increase the instability of his government, declared his intention to hold them on schedule and on August 14, 1954 he resigned his office so that he might formally become a presidential candidate. A wing of the Autentico Party led by ex-President Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin nominated the latter for its candidate. No other political parties agreed to participate. To attract popular support, the government announced during the electoral campaign a new \$350 million peso "Economic and Social Development Plan" to follow its intensive public works program which had helped bring Cuba out of a 1953 sugar slump.

Dr. Grau San Martin, the only opposition presidential candidate, announced on October 29, 1954 that he was withdrawing his candidacy, alleging fraud and intimidation. He took this action despite having obtained more concessions of guarantees from the Government than the opposition had ever before received from a Cuban administration. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal heard Dr. Grau's complaints and made a number of rulings to meet them but refused to postpone the elections and Dr. Grau remained adamant in his decision not to run. The

November

November 1 elections took place as scheduled. Batista triumphed by the overwhelming majority of 1.3 million votes to Dr. Grau's .2 million but with only 52.4% of the total electorate voting. He carried with him most of his coalition's candidates for national and local offices. Though Dr. Grau sought unsuccessfully to have the elections annulled, all but 2 out of 18 of his party's successful candidates for Congress resolved to take their seats. Batista was inaugurated on February 24, 1955. During the succeeding six months the Constitution of 1940 was reinstated, replacing government by decree, and a general amnesty for political offenders was announced to be effective on May 6, 1955. The return of constitutional government, the announcement of an amnesty and the appointment to many cabinet posts and other key positions of reputable persons gave to Batista's Government a somewhat greater degree of respectability than it had enjoyed before. Nevertheless, Batista remained unpopular and was nominally opposed by political groups probably representing a majority of the politically articulate sector. The bulk of the people, however, were politically apathetic.

Despite the great hopes that the general amnesty of May 6, 1955 would result in political stability, it failed to reduce the activities of the revolutionists and the counter-revolutionary actions by the government. On June 9, 1955, for example, Jorge Agostini, former Chief of the National Police under Dr. Prío, was assassinated and the
opposition

opposition newspaper La Calle was closed and its editor jailed. Student riots became a monthly occurrence and serious student disorders broke out in Santiago in November 1955, spreading to Habana the following month.

While the Batista regime in late 1955 and early 1956 was faced with increasing unrest, there was no serious threat to its stability as the Cuban Army, on which it chiefly depended, remained steadfastly loyal. The Army, which was large by Latin American standards (about 28,000 men including the National Police) was largely dominated by Batista, who had come up through its ranks. Favored officers, who had obtained positions which they had made extremely lucrative, were not anxious to see their interests jeopardized by a change in government. Other factors which minimized the possibility of the early demise of the Batista regime were (1) the continued support of the regime by organized labor, (2) the fragmentation of the two major political opposition parties into quarreling factions, (3) the political apathy of the Cuban populace, and (4) the upswing in the economy which was complemented by the government's vast public works program. The government continued to function without instituting any serious restraints on individual freedoms. Batista exhibited sensitivity to public opinion and political pressures and refrained from taking stringent measures to deal with revolutionists and agitators even though many of his supporters advocated such measures.

Indicative

Indicative of this restraint was the prompt release by the police of students arrested during the demonstrations against the government in December 1955.

While there had been rumors, from time to time, of plots within the armed forces to oust the Batista regime, there was no evidence that such plotting had made any headway until a coup planned by the Cuban Military Attaché in Washington and former member of the Inter American Defense Board, Colonel Ramon Barquin, was uncovered on April 3, 1956. As a result, thirteen young officers, most of whom had received training in the United States, were courtmartialed and sentenced to a military prison. Over 170 additional officers were suspected of involvement and the government, in an attempt to cover up the extent of the plot, quietly dismissed, retired or arrested them. The ringleaders, who were the outstanding professional men in the Army and highly regarded by their fellow officers, indicated that their plan had been to take the military out of politics by seizing and deporting President Batista and his close collaborators, and holding elections as soon as possible. The abortive coup shook the government to its very foundation. It ordered a sweeping shakeup of the military high command while Congress authorized a reorganization of the armed forces. A number of officers sympathizing with the Barquin group were known to have remained in the armed forces, however.

In addition to the frustrated April 1956 military coup, two other anti-government incidents which occurred in the same month served to
provide

provide further serious tests for the Batista regime. In early April two student demonstrators were killed by the police in Santiago, causing Habana students in retaliation to raid a radio station near the University of Habana. After being repulsed by the police, they were driven back into the sanctuary of the University. The police violated the University's autonomy by entering its buildings and conducting searches, an act which was condemned by civic and educational leaders. The Government then closed the University and all secondary schools. The strong-arm tactics used by the police stirred up resentment amongst students and citizens who had hitherto been indifferently opposed to Batista. On April 29, 1956 approximately 70 heavily armed revolutionists stormed the Army barracks in Matanzas and were repulsed. Twelve of the raiding party were killed and a wave of arrests followed, including the arrest of some members of the armed forces and of ex-President Prío who had returned to Cuba from Miami in August 1955 as a result of the Batista amnesty. Dr. Prío was promptly released on the personal orders of Batista. The government viewed the Matanzas incident with such seriousness that it suspended constitutional guarantees for 45 days. Also, it kept Dr. Prío under such close surveillance that he was a virtual prisoner in his own home. Stating that he was given the choice of arrest or immediate exile, Dr. Prío departed hurriedly by plane for Miami on May 9, 1956 in his shirtsleeves. The government described his departure as "voluntary".

Animosity between the active revolutionists and law enforcement
officials

officials reached a new peak with the assassination of Colonel Blanco Rico, Chief of Military Intelligence, on October 28, 1956 and the fatal shooting the following day of General Salas Canizares, Chief of the National Police. The latter was shot during a gun battle with Cuban revolutionists asyumed in the Haitian Embassy. All of the revolutionists, some of whom were unarmed, were killed by the police inside the Embassy, an occurrence which served to complicate Cuba's relations with Haiti for many months.

In the fall of 1956 rumors were current that a revolutionary expeditionary force would soon invade Cuba. Dr. Fidel Castro, who had been freed by Batista's amnesty in May 1955, was reported to be training some 50 to 100 of his followers near Mexico City for an invasion attempt, receiving military advice from General Alberto Bayo Giraud, a naturalized Mexican who as a Spaniard had fought against the Franco forces in Spain. Dr. Castro had visited the United States in late 1955 to gather financial and moral support for his 26th of July Movement, named for the day of the abortive attack he had led against the Army barracks in Santiago in 1953. This visit had little success in obtaining popular subscription but he was reliably reported to have been given substantial financial support by Dr. Prio. The fact that Dr. Prio had the resources and was willing to support any revolutionary group that might have a chance for success gives credence to this report. The Castro forces received a temporary setback in June 1956, however, when he and 25 followers were arrested

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by the Mexican authorities for plotting against a friendly government. They were promptly released but asked to leave the country. Some charges were made at the time that Castro and his followers were Communists. Late in November, an expeditionary force of some 80 men under Castro departed from Mexico for Cuba on the yacht "Granma". The group landed near Niquero in southern Oriente Province on December 2, 1956, two days after some 200 youthful members of Castro's movement had staged an uprising in Santiago which was supposed to have coincided with the landing. The latter group had held the city for two hours before being repulsed by Government troops. The expeditionary force was strafed and bombed by government aircraft and reduced to about 18 men, including Dr. Castro and his younger brother Raul, all of whom managed to find refuge in the recesses of the nearby rugged Sierra Maestra mountains.

The government at first announced that the expeditionary force had been completely annihilated and its leader killed, but later admitted that a small group of the rebels remained. They were soon reinforced by adherents from the surrounding area and within one month had grown to an estimated 300 men. Revolutionists throughout the island who previously had to be content with sporadic and ill-organized attempts to oust the Batista regime now had a symbol of open resistance to support. Castro was not long in captivating the imagination of a large segment of the youth of Cuba as well as various substantial citizens in every walk of life.

Despite the general deterioration which took place in the political
climate

climate in Cuba between Batista's inauguration in February 1955 and the end of 1956, serious attempts were made by a non-political group known as the Society of Friends of the Republic (SAR) under elder statesman Dr. Cosme de la Torriente to effect a political compromise. The SAR in June 1955 called upon the government and various opposition groups to solve Cuba's "institutional crisis". One month later it negated its non-political character by announcing a "formula" for the solution of the country's problems which branded the Batista government as illegitimate and called for general elections to fill all offices as soon as possible. It also demanded certain measures to make constitutional guarantees effective. The government was adamant on the question of general elections, refusing to consider them before 1958 though it indicated to the SAR it would discuss conditions for partial elections in 1956. President Batista and Dr. Cosme de la Torriente held two meetings, in late 1955 and early 1956, on the general subject of a political solution after which they announced their agreement to refer further negotiations to commissions representing the government and the various opposition political groups.

After considerable bickering among the opposition politicians the commissions representing the government and the opposition began their negotiations (which became known as the "civic dialogue") on March 6, 1956. During the four meetings of the commissioners which followed, the government steadfastly refused to agree to the opposition demands for general elections prior to 1958, concluding that by accepting such demands

it

it would be declaring itself de facto and illegitimate. As an alternative the government proposed general elections to choose delegates to a constituent assembly, ~~which~~ the opposition refused, and the "civic dialogue" came to an abrupt end on March 12, 1956.

In May 1956 the government announced that it was working on various electoral formulas and indicated its willingness to hold elections for most offices except the presidency in 1957. Dr. Cosme de la Torriente tried to resume the "civic dialogue" but the opposition leaders did not rally to his support. The government in early July 1956 presented its election formula which called for partial elections in 1957 and general elections in 1958, while in December 1956 Dr. José Miró Cardona, the new SAR leader following the death of Dr. Cosme de la Torriente, called unsuccessfully on opposition leaders to resume discussions with the government. The prestige of the SAR following the death of its former leader had been greatly reduced and it never again became an effective organization. [While further attempts were to be made a conciliation,] the government's unilateral announcement of its own election formula followed by stepped up revolutionary activity, the closing of the University of Habana on November 30, 1956, and the suspension of constitutional guarantees on November 30, 1956 left little promise that the major opposition leaders and the government could arrive at a satisfactory political compromise.

B. Historical Factors and Other Considerations Affecting U.S. Interests.

1. Traditional U.S. Relationships with Cuba and Problems Created Thereby.

The deteriorating political situation in Cuba beginning in 1957

was of particular import to the United States because of our close historical and economic ties with that country, its strategic location so close to our own shores, and the presence of our Naval base at Guantanamo and our Nicare nickel installations in northern Oriente Province.

Politically the United States played a major role in Cuba's struggle for independence and the subsequent establishment of a free democratic government. Long before Cuba obtained its independence from Spain (1898), the United States had provided a haven for thousands of Cubans who fled their country to carry on the fight against their Spanish oppressors. The great Cuban revolutionary apostle, José Martí, used the United States as a base for his revolutionary activities. Nearly all arms received by Martí's revolutionists originated in this country as did a number of armed expeditions, and our public support for their cause was a significant factor in their ultimate success. Similarly, during the administration of General Gerardo Machado (1925-33) many Cubans sought haven in this country and engaged in plotting Machado's downfall. Again they obtained considerable public support in this country for their cause. It was not unexpected, then, that as the political climate became more disturbed under the Batista government the revolutionary opposition would begin to utilize our national terrain as a safe haven from which to engage in revolutionary activities.

In Cuba's struggle for independence, it was open United States armed intervention that turned the tide in her favor. During the turmoil at the time of the Machado overthrow our position differed considerably from
that

that of 1898 in that the struggle was an internal one between Cubans, and the United States, under the famous Platt Amendment to the Cuban Constitution of 1901, had the right to intervene to preserve order, a right which our government had previously exercised. The United States during the internal struggle against Machado had to reconcile its legal position with its announced policy in Latin America of nonintervention and cooperation. In May 1933 Ambassador Sumner Wells arrived in Habana and induced President Machado and the organized opposition in Cuba to enter into discussions under his good offices. This effort at mediation failed and Machado was ousted in August 1933. Although the United States did not invoke the Platt Amendment, its existence had provided Ambassador Welles with the necessary leverage to bring about conciliatory talks between the government and the opposition. This Amendment, which had been odious to most Cubans, was abrogated in 1934. Since that date the U.S. has pursued a strict policy of nonintervention in Cuban affairs.

Subsequently, the United States confirmed this policy in Article 15 of the Charter of the Organization of American States wherein it agreed that "no state or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State". Thus the United States policy of nonintervention in Cuban affairs had become part of a multilateral treaty obligation as well as a unilateral policy by the time Cuba's more recent internal strife had begun under Batista. The strict maintenance of this policy, under heavy pressures from certain Cuban

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and United States interests to alter it, constituted one of the Department's principal problems in our relations with Cuba during the last two years of the recent Batista administration. There were a number of political and economic considerations peculiar to our relations with Cuba which made the deteriorating political climate in that country cause for deep concern in the State Department. It feared that a chaotic situation might develop in that island.

2. Cooperation of the Batista Government in Opposing Communism

Our political relations with the Batista government had been friendly and it had consistently given the United States valuable support in the United Nations and in the Organization of American States. Cuba's Ambassador to the United Nations frequently launched verbal attacks against the Soviets and was most ^{vehement} vociferous in denouncing the Soviet action in Hungary. Under Batista, Cuba broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1952 and dissolved the once powerful Cuban communist party (the Popular Socialist Party - PSP) the following year. Subsequently, the Batista government adopted strong legal measures further proscribing communist activities in Cuba, establishing in 1955 a Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities (BRAC). These measures were especially significant when it is recalled that Batista first gave the party legal status in 1938, accepted its support in 1940 (the PSP polled 120,000 votes) and had given the party's president a cabinet in 1941. The Popular Socialist Party had controlled the powerful Cuban Confederation

of

of Labor (CTC) until 1947 and a number of its key organizational posts were still held by communists when Batista came to power in 1952. The CTC adopted severe anti-communist measures under the Batista administration, successfully eliminating communists from the labor hierarchy. While the ERAC proved ineffective in combatting communism, and some suspected communists were known to be employed in government positions, the Popular Socialist Party by being forced underground was weakened considerably. If instability were to continue in Cuba it was recognized that the Communists, who had been reduced to an estimated 8,000 card-carrying members and 25,000 close collaborators and sympathizers, would once again thrive and the party might well regain its position as one of the strongest and best organized communist parties in Latin America.

3. U.S. Strategic Interests in Cuba - Guantanamo and Nicaro

The strategic importance of Cuba to the United States had long been recognized. Our naval base at Guantanamo, leased in perpetuity, is considered vital to the defense of the Caribbean and the Panama Canal and is one of our largest bases outside of continental and territorial United States. The United States Government-owned Nicaro Nickel mines and plant in northeastern Cuba, representing an investment of \$100 million, produce about 10 percent of the world supply of this metal which is so essential to our defense industries. In the operation of these facilities we received the understanding cooperation of the Batista government. Moreover, military missions from all three branches of the armed services were training the Cuban armed forces for hemispheric defense purposes in this

area

area so close to our own shores; Cuba was also one of twelve hemisphere nations which had signed a military assistance agreement with this country.

4. Protection of Economic Interests and U.S. Citizens

Economic factors had an important bearing on our relations with Cuba during this period. Large and diversified United States private investments in Cuba total about \$800 million and are particularly concentrated in sugar, transportation and communications, power, petroleum refining, banking and mining. Cuba continues to be largely dependent upon the United States for its foreign trade with approximately 60 percent of its exports (mostly sugar and tobacco) going to this country and 75 percent of its imports originating in the United States. It ranked third in our foreign trade with Latin America. As our chief foreign source of sugar and with an ability to increase its production rapidly during world emergencies (as happened in World Wars I and II), Cuba had assumed a position of strategic importance as a supplier of this basic foodstuff.

An estimated 5,000 United States citizens were permanently residing in Cuba during the Batista administration, while approximately 200,000 of our citizens were visiting Cuba each year either as tourists or on business.

5. Increasing U.S. Concern over Deteriorating Political Situation in Cuba.

By the end of 1956 it was becoming increasingly apparent that if Cuba were to avoid serious and prolonged turmoil the government and the
opposition

opposition would soon have to compromise their differences. There was substantial evidence to indicate that the great majority of Cubans, though in varying degrees opposed to Batista, preferred a political solution to a complete upheaval which might lead to a long period of instability. The Department considered that the interests of the United States also would have been adversely affected by such an upheaval. With these factors in mind the United States, while maintaining its policy of nonintervention in the internal affairs of Cuba, began to seek ways and means of encouraging the Cuban government to take steps to broaden its basis of popular support and to encourage a peaceful political solution which would be acceptable to the Cuban people.

In formulating its policy toward the Cuban situation, the United States Government was not only guided by its own traditional distaste for repressive regimes but also by an awareness of the growing anti-dictatorship sentiment which was manifesting itself in most countries of the hemisphere. The United States press was particularly vociferous in its denouncement of dictatorial regimes. Increasing amounts of mail were being received from citizens demanding action which would effectively undermine the Batista government. The effective propaganda machine operated by Cuban revolutionists in this country was also beginning to have an impact on our press, our citizens and our Congress.

II. Rapid Deterioration of the Cuban Government Position During 1957

A. Growth of Revolutionary Opposition and Terrorism

During early 1957 the forces of Dr. Fidel Castro repelled special army contingents sent to the area to drive them out. Castro's success gave encouragement to his youthful adherents in other parts of the country, who embarked on a campaign of terrorism and sabotage. The government extended the suspension of constitutional guarantees for 45 days on January 15 but lifted press censorship on February 25 and issued an announcement, which later proved to be without foundation, that the Castro forces had been reduced to 20 in number. The government failed to combat effectively the campaign of terrorism despite the use of increasingly severe and repressive measures. By March as a matter of policy the government began to label all insurrectionary activities as the work of communists or as having been instigated by them. While several of the opposition groups were known to have accepted communist collaboration in the past, available evidence did not support the government's allegations.

On March 2, 1957 constitutional guarantees were again suspended for 45 days and on March 13 a group of some 100 revolutionists staged a fanatical raid on the Presidential Palace in an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate President Batista. Those who assaulted the Palace were under the command of a Prio associate, Manelao Mora, and were believed to have been supplied with arms purchased by the ex-President. Simultaneously, a group under the leadership of Jose E. Echeverria,

President

President of the Federation of University Students, temporarily seized a local radio station and spread a false report of Batista's death. Some 40 revolutionists were killed, including Mora and Echeverría. That evening the body of a well-known Ortodoxo Party leader, Dr. Pelayo Cuervo, was found badly mutilated in a fashionable Habana suburb. There were definite indications that he had been murdered by Batista police, probably as the result of a petition he had sent to the United Nations condemnatory of the Batista regime. The Palace raid created one more chink in the Batista armor. Dr. Pelayo Cuervo's death came as a severe shock to the Cuban citizenry and the opposition demanded a full-scale investigation.

B. Failure of Conciliation Attempts

The "old pros" amongst the opposition politicians began in February 1957 to press, for a unified position on elections in an effort to offset the increasing public appeal of Dr. Fidel Castro. In March the congressional committee of the Autentico Party presented a motion in the Cuban Senate for the establishment of a joint congressional committee to study the opinions of various political leaders on such subjects as general elections, a political and military amnesty and an electoral census. The motion was approved by the Cuban Congress and the joint committee was convened on April 8 to hear the various political leaders. Among those appearing before the committee were ex-President Grau of the

Autentico

Autentico Party, José Ochoa of the "registered" Orthodox Party, Dr. Carlos Marques Sterling of the "unregistered" Orthodox Party and leaders of several smaller parties. In accordance with the report of the committee issued on April 27, the government agreed to hold elections on June 1, 1958 instead of November 1, 1958 and accepted some other demands of the opposition; but refused to consider a general amnesty while lawlessness and terrorism prevailed; or to shorten the terms of incumbent officials. Several of the opposition parties, including those represented by Grau and Ochoa, withdrew from the congressional committee in protest, but despite their withdrawal they announced their intention to participate in the elections. In late August, 1957 the Congress approved legislation to govern the June 1958 elections. The opposition leaders who participated in these deliberations represented ^(see) splinter factions of the former Orthodox and Autentico parties, or other minor parties, and their ability to attract popular support in light of the exodus from their parties of many more popular leaders was dubious.

Labor and business leaders visited President Batista after the Palace raid of March 13 to express their satisfaction over his survival. These visits were climaxed by a large rally of some 150,000 of his supporters in Habana. Constitutional guarantees were restored on April 15 and the government announced that special army troops which had been sent to the Sierra Maestra to subdue Castro's forces had been withdrawn as the campaign was ended. These developments and the political deliberations

deliberations of the joint congressional committee led to some momentary easing of tension although there was considerable public resentment over the ruthless police action which followed the Palace raid and the subsequent discovery of substantial caches of arms in Habana. On April 20 four student leaders including the head of the FEU were killed in a police attack on a Habana apartment building. On May 24 a Prio-financed armed revolutionary force invaded Cuba from Florida on the yacht "Corinthia". Given no quarter, the invaders were almost annihilated when they landed in northern Oriente province. Several days later rebel saboteurs blew up the main electrical conduit in Habana and the city was without lights for 24 hours. Increased terrorism and counter-terrorism followed these incidents and the government attempted to evacuate 7,000 families from the Sierra Maestra in early June in an effort to cordon off the Castro forces and starve them out. This plan failed miserably and only resulted in increased resentment against the government [in that region.] The general public was becoming increasingly apprehensive over the wanton destruction engaged in by the revolutionists and their sympathizers which had included the burning of schools and the explosion of bombs in public gathering places. Their terror tactics had resulted in the loss of many innocent lives. [It exhibited an equal abhorrence of brutal police retaliation.] A group representing the Civic Institutions of Cuba in June issued its third appeal in six months for a peaceful solution, calling upon the government to make the first moves,

and the Catholic hierarchy asked parishioners to pray for peace.

Despite the admonitions of civic and church groups the Batista government made no serious concessions to these in the opposition who favored a peaceful solution other than to advance the date of general elections from November to June 1, 1958. Batista steadfastly refused to accept any opposition plan which could cast doubt on the legitimacy of his government or which would require any shortening of his term of office.

C. The United States Takes Cognizance of Police Excesses and Brutality

On July 30, 1957 two youthful Castro leaders were killed in a private home in Santiago by the police and 200 women demonstrated in front of the Santiago City Hall the following day. Our newly arrived Ambassador, while he was paying a visit to the city's mayor, witnessed the rough treatment given these women by the police and issued a press statement indicating his disapproval of the harsh police tactics applied. He was ^{temporarily criticized} (subjected to some criticism) by certain Cuban Government officials for his statement in Santiago though the Secretary of State in his press conference of August 6 staunchly supported the Ambassador's action. The funeral of the youths, was attended by throngs of Santiagueros, touching off a general strike on July 31 which threatened to cover the entire nation. Constitutional guarantees were on the same day again placed under suspension for a 45 day period. The general strike was successful in Santiago but was averted in Habana largely through the efforts of

Eusebio Mujal

Eusebio Mujal, Secretary General of the Cuban Workers' Confederation, who branded it as politically inspired and contrary to the workers' interest. Communists were active in distributing anti-U.S. literature during the strike in Santiago.

D. Revolt of the Naval Garrison at Cienfuegos

On September 5, 1957 a well-organized revolt broke out at the Cuban naval base in Cienfuegos where rebellious elements were able to seize and control the base. Subsequently they joined armed civilian revolutionaries in taking over control of the entire city for some hours. The revolt was to have been part of a widespread Navy rebellion which was postponed at the last minute without word getting to Cienfuegos. Late the following day order was restored when troops arrived from Habana and Santa Clara and after the Air Force had staged a series of bombing attacks on rebel strongholds. Heavy casualties resulted among civilians as well as naval participants. Total dead were estimated at 300 to 600. The Government claimed that the revolt was essentially civilian, sponsored by Ex-President Prio. However, numerous officers in the armed services were questioned and later court martialed. Though the rebellion was subdued, the regime was shaken by the knowledge that despite a number of purges it no longer was able to count upon the complete loyalty of the armed services. Among those arrested and charged with complicity in the revolt was Dr. Antonio de Varona, an Autentico Party leader who had been Prime Minister under Prio. After his arrest on September 17, 1957 he was released and took refuge in the Chilean

Embassy

Embassy whence he came to the United States. Other Embassies were reported to be brimful of political refugees.

E. Failure of Cuban Army to Suppress Castro Guerrilla Forces

Despite the various announcements issued by the government in 1957 to the effect that the forces of Dr. Fidel Castro had been suppressed or contained, they numbered by the end of 1957 between 500 and 700 men. They had developed a primitive but efficient logistics organization and a good intelligence and scouting system which depended heavily on the support of the peasants living in the mountains. They also received considerable support from the Civic Resistance Movement (Movimiento de Resistencia Civica - MRC) organized in Santiago de Cuba in early 1957 as a non-fighting support organization. It collected money, food, medical supplies and clothing, hid arms and provided "safe houses" for 26th of July couriers. The organization was broken up into cells of 10 members each and consisted of middle-class professional and business men, many of whom could exert a moderating influence on younger activists. In December 1957 Castro announced a scorched earth policy primarily directed at the destruction of sugar cane in the hope that if sufficient economic dislocation would result, pressure on the Batista regime from powerful business interests might cause him to resign. Terror bombings, ambushes, and hit and run attacks were also increased as the year ended. Castro proved unable to prevent or seriously interfere with the sugar harvest and the evidence suggested that his campaign was a tactical error which

which had cost him the confidence of many of his supporters in the United States as well as anti-Batista Cubans who did not subscribe to the crippling of the country's economy in order to bring about the fall of the government.

The early efforts to oust Castro from his mountain strongholds were left largely to the Army's Rural Guards who were neither trained nor organized to repel Castro's guerrilla-type attacks and usually surrendered at the first sound of a shot. Rural guard posts provided the Castro forces with most of the arms his forces possessed at the end of 1957. Special army units (were) sent to the area in 1957 were content with a holding action which presented Army Commanders with ample opportunity to extort money from property owners under the guise of "protection" and to engage in other practices of self-enrichment.

F. Increasing Concern Over Growth in Castro's Prestige Evinced by Other Cuban Revolutionaries.

Shortly after their landing in Cuba (December, 1956) the Castro forces received several psychological boosts which added to their prestige both here and abroad. Herbert Matthews of the New York Times interviewed Dr. Castro at his mountain hideout in February 1957 and gave his Movement its first extensive favorable publicity in this country. Three American boys in their late teens, dependents from our Guantanamo Naval Base, joined the Castro forces (subsequently), resulting in further publicity. The Columbia Broadcasting Company carried a network television program in the United States showing films taken of the Castro troops in May.

Dr.

Dr. Raul Chibás, former chief of the Orthodox party, and Dr. Felipe Pazos, former head of the Cuban National Bank under Prio, both well known and respected in Cuba, joined the Castro forces in July 1957 and later came to the United States to espouse the 26th of July Movement's cause. While it was apparent that this Movement and its supporting organizations were becoming a prominent if not the dominant factor in the revolutionary opposition, there were other important revolutionary groups completely independent of the Castro forces. In fact, in some instances leaders of these groups were watching the 26th of July Movement with a wary eye, some of them favoring the idea of a military coup to oust the Batista regime in preference to the Castro type of guerrilla operation. They saw in the 26th of July Movement a challenge to their aspirations for power and political leadership ^(which they viewed) while also viewing a military coup as preferable to a long revolutionary war of attrition. Foremost among these groups was the unregistered wing of the Autentico Party (Partido Revolucionario Cubano - Autentico - PRC-A) headed by ex-President Carlos Prio. Dr. Prio, with substantial funds reportedly amassed from the Cuban public treasury, began actively to carry out plans for the overthrow of the Batista regime shortly after his arrival in Miami in May 1956. In addition to providing the original financial impetus for Dr. Castro's invasion from Mexico, he arranged secretly in early 1957 to train Cubans in the Dominican Republic for an armed invasion of Cuba after having recruited them from among exiles in the United States. Because of strong pressure by Batista on the Dominicans he was forced to abandon this project. Also he reportedly was behind the Palace raid

of March 1957, as previously indicated, and the "Corinthia" expedition of 1957. Prio's idea seems to have been to establish a force or forces in being on Cuban soil which could support an attempted coup or other act aimed at Batista's ouster, and his own recruits were largely mercenary types, at least in comparison with the 26th of July forces.

Other Revolutionary organizations operation principally in the United States were the Revolutionary Workers Directorate (Directorio Obrero Revolucionario - DOR), closely affiliated with Dr. Prio; the federation of University students (Federacion Estudiantil Universitaria - FEU) and its affiliated militant wing, the Revolutionary Directorate (Directorio Revolucionario - DR); and an element of the Orthodox Party (Partido del Pueblo Cubano - Ortodoxo - PPGO).

G. Early Attempts to Unify Various Revolutionary Groups

It became apparent to many Cubans who advocated armed revolution as the only means of settling the conflict in their homeland that to be truly effective the various revolutionary groups must present a unified front. With this in mind the leaders of these various groups including representatives of the 26th of July Movement signed a unity pact in Miami on November 1, 1957 and formed a Committee for Cuban Liberation (Junta de Liberacion Cubana - JLC) with the announcement that the demise of the Batista regime was soon to come. The JLC was promptly dismembered however as a result of a letter directed to it on December 14 by Dr. Castro in which he denounced the unity pact and stated that neight ^{multitudo} Raul

Chibas

Chibás nor Dr. Felipe Pazos, who had signed it as representatives of his Movement, had been authorized to do so. He went further, however, and announced in a demagogic vein his plans for a provisional government in Cuba, inviting the participation of those revolutionists who would follow him. Leaders of the other revolutionary groups promptly denounced Castro's letter and some of his followers in this country resigned from the 26th of July Movement. Prior to Castro's action his Movement had been viewed by anti-Batista Cubans primarily as a military one. Many of them now suspected that he intended to install hand-picked provisional president (a little-known Santiago judge, Dr. Mamel Urrutia) and dominate the government until he himself could seek the Presidency. The possibility of reconstructing a unified revolutionary opposition appeared to be lost.

III. Efforts of the United States in 1957 and in Early 1958 Within the Limitations Imposed by our Non-Intervention Policy to Encourage a Constructive Solution to the Cuban Conflict.

A. Review of our Arms Policy

In 1950 and 1951 United States military missions in all three branches of the armed services had been established for Cuba pursuant to bilateral agreements entered into with the Prío government, and three days before the Batista coup of March 10, 1952 the United States signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with Cuba. Cuba was eligible to receive military assistance from the United States because it was a signatory of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, known as the Rio Treaty, of September 2, 1947. One of the most difficult problems our Government faced during the last two years of the Batista regime concerned the supplying of military equipment and training in accordance with these bilateral accords. The Department in treating with these problems was operating on the premise that the military assistance program in the hemisphere is of necessity a long-range program which had to be carried out consistently over a period of time if its objectives are to be realized. On the other hand, it came to realize that as the internal conflict developed in Cuba, continued United States military assistance to that country might work to the detriment of the entire hemisphere program by becoming increasingly controversial.

Accordingly

Accordingly, the Department carefully reviewed pending Cuban Government orders for arms and military equipment and began advising the Department of Defense not to make certain pending shipments of specific controversial items without further clearance from the Department. In addition, the Department quietly deferred action on new Cuban requests for such items.

It was only to be expected that such a policy would soon bring about protests from the Cuban Government. This first occurred in connection with a Cuban army order of May 8, 1957 for 3 medium tanks, action on which had been deferred by the Department. During July and August 1957, the Department was under considerable pressure from the Cuban Embassy for the early approval of this order.

The aftermath of the Cienfuegos revolt of September 1957 brought accusations that aircraft supplied to Cuba under the MDAP Agreement had been used in bombing innocent civilians and brought further public criticism of our supplying arms to the Cuban Government. The Department accordingly informed the Cuban Ambassador on September 17 that the situation prevailing in Cuba and the likely U.S. public and hemispheric reaction to our supplying military equipment of this type made it inopportune for our Government to process the tank order at that time. The Department pointed out further that the delivery of these tanks during the prevailing crisis might seriously prejudice our providing further military grant aid to Cuba and that it was in the mutual interest of both countries

countries that nothing should impair this program. In this connection, it was carefully emphasized that our decision was one of deferral rather than refusal. The Cuban Ambassador termed our action a serious reversal of policy toward his Government and one which would be interpreted by the Government and the Cuban people as a withdrawal of support for Batista. He then added his own interpretation that it constituted an "unfriendly" act. Subsequently, when our Ambassador explained to President Batista the reasons for our action the latter expressed his understanding of our motivations and stated that the order for the tanks would be cancelled. At the same time he stressed Cuba's need for further military assistance and his concern lest our Government defer action on other Cuban orders.

There was considerable evidence to support the accusations of Cuban revolutionary leaders that MDAP-supplied B-26 bombers had been used by the Cuban Air Force in subduing the Cienfuegos revolt in September 1957. The use of such equipment without the prior consent of our Government would be in disregard of the provisions of Article I, paragraph 2 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement signed with Cuba on March 7, 1952. On September 19, 1957 this apparent violation was informally called to the attention of the Cuban Ambassador, who expressed the opinion that his Government had to use the resources at its command to crush the revolt and had had no time to consult. The subject was also mentioned to President Batista by our Ambassador several days later in Habana.

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A Department of Defense report from the MAAG in Cuba for the last quarter of 1957 stated that the entire MDAP-equipped and supported infantry battalion had been moved to Oriente Province to assist in the campaign to put down the insurrection. Again there appeared to be a clear disregard of our bilateral agreement with Cuba. Our Embassy which was requested to supply the Department with complete information on this report, confirmed that this battalion had been in Oriente since May, 1957. Information on the precise deployment of the battalion was unavailable, however. Also, the Embassy was unable to obtain conclusive proof that MDAP B-26 bombers were being used in the campaign against the Castro forces.

On March 3, 1958 the Department addressed a note to the Cuban Embassy calling its attention to the MDA agreement and inquiring as to the truth of the reports the Department had received that the Cubans had been disregarding the provisions of Article I, paragraph 2. After considerable prodding, a formal reply was received from the Cuban Government on June 3 to the effect that Cuba considered it was adhering to the Agreement.

The question may well be asked why the United States did not call the Batista Government to account sooner and more firmly for apparently using grant aid equipment in internal combat without our authorization. The explanation is that we distrusted Castro's motives from the outset and assigned some credence to insistent reports that

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his Movement was being infiltrated if not dominated by communists. In fact, if the Cuban Government had requested our concurrence in their use of the arms, we would have been hard put to it to say no. Moreover, Cuba's vote in the United Nations as well as its support of our position in other valuable ways could not be overlooked. As matters have turned out, it is just as well that we did not force the issue to the point where we would have had to concur, which might have been the case in 1957 as contrasted with 1958. By 1958 the reports on communist penetration of the Movement had been investigated more thoroughly, with the result that communism was believed not to have been the originating or guiding force behind the 26th of July group, although at least a few communist elements were present in its personnel. We would have declined to concur in 1958 in the use of grant arms had we been asked, but when this became known the Castro cause would have received a substantial boost we did not want it to receive. Hence our disinclination to force the issue even in 1958.

The United States military missions in Cuba were under fire from Cuban revolutionists as well as our Congress and the U.S. public in 1957 and early 1958. There was considerable agitation for their withdrawal because of allegations that they were training Cubans to kill Cubans. In answer to this charge the Department explained that these missions were established pursuant to bilateral agreements entered into between our government and the administration of President Carlos Prío Socarras in 1950 and 1951. Their functions were clearly defined

defined and limited to training necessary for cooperation with the United States in hemispheric defense. They scrupulously avoided involvement in the internal Cuban strife. The Department consistently maintained the position that while governments and administrations change from time to time, hemispheric defense represented a continuing and constant problem the solution of which called for a long-term cooperative program; and that such a program could not be successfully carried out unless it maintained a continuity of effort above and apart from the internal Cuban political situation. 1/

B. U.S. Attempts to Halt Arms Smuggling and Other Illegal Activities By Cuban Exiles.

While the Cuban revolutionaries and their sympathizers in this country were decrying what they termed "United States military support for the Batista regime", the Cuban Government was constantly entreating the United States to curb the illegal activities of Cuban revolutionists in this country. These activities proved to be a source of almost continuous problems for the Department and our various national and local law enforcement agencies. They consisted for the most part of violations of our criminal codes governing the unauthorized export of arms and the launching of armed expeditions from our shores. Though the number of Cuban exiles engaged in such activities was perhaps not large, their actions tended to reflect upon many of their compatriots

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1/ See enclosure no. 3 "Resume of Activities of U.S. Military Missions in Cuba (1957-58)"

who were more careful to respect our laws while availing themselves of our hospitality.

Foremost among the exiles engaging in illegal activities were ex-President Carlos Prío Socarras, with his supporters and paid henchmen. Dr. Prío had been permitted to enter this country in May 1956 under parole. His revolutionary activities became the subject of numerous formal and informal protests from the Cuban Government during 1956 and 1957. Our immigration authorities, however, had no proof of his illegal activities which they believed would withstand a challenge from Dr. Prío in the courts, and thus took no action to cause him to be deported. Dr. Prío was active as previously mentioned, in the recruiting and financing of Cuban exiles for training in the Dominican Republic in early 1957; in the sponsorship of the ill-fated "Corinthia" expedition of his armed followers which departed for Cuba from Florida in May 1957; and in the flight of an aircraft from Florida laden with arms which landed near Habana in August, 1957. It having become clear that the activities of Dr. Prío and his followers warranted more intensive investigation, Secretary Dulles addressed a letter to the Attorney General making an appeal to this end in October 1957. The efforts of the Department of Justice and other U.S. law enforcement agencies were thereupon intensified and Dr. Prío (for a second time) and eight of his associates were indicted by a Federal grand jury on February 13, 1958 for violating our neutrality laws. Prío gained some considerable publicity as a "martyr" to the Cuban revolutionary cause when he was subsequently placed under arrest by

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the United States Marshall in Miami. He was released on bail and while he did not entirely cease and desist from fostering further armed expeditions and traffic in arms, his activities of this type were somewhat curtailed.

Dr. Prio's activities became almost an obsession with President Batista. Nearly all revolutionary violence in Cuba during 1956 and 1957 was attributed by the Government to him or to the Communists, Batista having repeatedly told our Ambassador that if our Government would throttle Dr. Prio he could take care of Castro. As it turned out, we were noticeably more effective in dealing with Prio than Batista with Castro.

Groups other than Prio's were also gun-running and encouraging armed expeditions from our shores but to a lesser degree. Castro supporters, with their extensive network of clubs in this country, engaged primarily in providing ^{political} moral and financial support for the 26th of July Movement as well as publicizing it in the United States and, except for creating local and sometime serious disturbances in the Miami and New York areas, showed at least some awareness of our laws. There was circumstantial evidence and at least one or two proven instances to support the contention that Castro followers were smuggling arms out of this country, but the arms reaching Castro from sources within the United States are believed to have been transported in small aircraft and not in substantial amounts.

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1/ On December 4, 1953, Dr. Prio was arrested and indicted on this same charge. He was tried and convicted in September 1954 and fined \$9,000.

By late 1957 the intensive vigilance of our law enforcement agencies began to result in the capture and seizure of substantial quantities of arms which were destined to revolutionary elements in Cuba. Several armed expeditions also were quashed. As indicated above there was considerable evidence uncovered that these activities were largely Pro-financed. Our vigilance over the illegal arms traffic was becoming so effective by mid-1958 that Castro announced that smuggling of arms by his organization from this country was too risky and too expensive, forcing him to look to other sources for arms. 1/ His principal source had been and continued to be capture or illicit purchase from Cuban army units, including the Rural Guards. This point is not generally realized.

On August 21, 1957, the Department, in an effort to reduce the number of Cuban exiles coming to this country to engage in such revolutionary activities as would be in violation of our laws, instructed its missions abroad to exercise extreme caution in issuing visas to Cuban exiles. Also, on various occasions the Department furnished the enforcement authorities with the names of those exiles suspected of law violations.

At the same time, the Department, cognizant of the influential role certain of the exiles might well play in the future of Cuba, kept this in mind when discussing individual cases with the immigration authorities. It also acted to prevent the deportation to Cuba of exiles who might be subjected to severe punishment there.

The desire of the Batista government that the United States continue
shipments

1/ See table 4 - "Illegal shipments of arms confiscated by customs in U.S."

shipments of arms and curb the activities of Cuban revolutionists was later to provide the United States with some leverage in trying to induce the Cuban Government to take measures designed to resolve the domestic political impasse.

C. U.S. Suggestions to Batista for Broadening of the Base of Support For His Regime

On July 24, 1957 shortly after he submitted his credentials, Ambassador Smith issued a statement to the Cuban press reaffirming our traditional policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations. At the same time he expressed the concern of our people and Government over the state of tension and unrest then existing and our fervent hope that the Cuban people would shortly find a peaceful solution to their difficulties. The same thought was expressed on numerous occasions by the Department both in its correspondence with persons in this country and in conversations with supporters of both the Government and the opposition who visited the Department. It was emphasized in each instance that our Government considered the Cuban people to be the only ones who could, as well as the only ones who should, resolve their internal problems.

While maintaining a policy of non-intervention in the Cuban conflict the United States on appropriate occasions sought to persuade the Cuban Government to take steps which would make possible a peaceful transfer of power to the new administration scheduled to succeed Batista on February 24, 1959. It also stood ready to give its informal encouragement to elements outside the Government in any initiative they might undertake towards conciliation.

Toward

Toward the end of 1957 the prospects for any substantial public support for the general elections scheduled for June 1, 1958 had become dim. Constitutional guarantees remained in suspension and the leaders of the public opposition were beginning to express serious doubts about proceeding with the electoral process without the restoration of civil liberties. Batista cast a further cloud over the electoral process as a solution when he put through Congress in November 1957 legislation creating a unified military command. The law provided that ex-Presidents who had retired from the Army with the rank of General would be eligible to serve in the newly created position of Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Dr. Batista's government under the law* This gave the revolutionary opposition backing for its contention that Batista intended to perpetuate himself in power.

Despite the gloomy outlook for general elections, several encouraging factors emerged late in 1957 and early in 1958 giving rise to hopes for an electoral solution. Castro's much advertised campaign to destroy the sugar crop appeared to have fizzled and the first attempt to form a revolutionary opposition unity movement, the JLC had failed.

When the Government of Cuba again suspended constitutional guarantees on December 14, 1957 it announced its intention to lift the suspension at the end of 45 days; President Batista confirmed this to our Ambassador on January 13, 1958. The steady progress made by the U.S. Department of Justice in preparing the case against Dr. Prio and his associates, which was soon to lead to their indictment, was largely responsible for Batista's decision

decision. On January 16, during a visit to Washington, Ambassador Smith made mention of the impending restoration of constitutional guarantees in a press statement, expressing the hope that the general elections scheduled for June 1, 1958, in which four opposition parties had agreed to participate, would justify the approval of the Cuban people.

During his consultation in the Department in January, the Ambassador discussed ways and means of influencing President Batista to hold free elections, ^{under conditions acceptable to the U.S.} The consensus was that a necessary first step would be the restoration of guarantees. The Ambassador was authorized to notify President Batista informally that on the assumption that guarantees would be restored and not reimposed before elections, the schedule for the delivery of 20 armored cars which had been ordered from our Army by Cuba on June 4, 1957 was being adhered to. Other orders for less controversial military items would also be filled on the same assumption. At the time the order for the armored cars was placed, delivery had been indicated at between 9 and 12 months. When the Ambassador was informing Batista of the favorable decision on these arms orders, he was to express the hope that the Cuban Government adopt additional measures with a view to creating an atmosphere conducive to arms deliveries, such as by eliminating police violence and creating the proper conditions for elections on June 1. Deliveries of equipment would probably have to be cancelled if these conditions were not met and even the delivery of the

the armored cars themselves would have to be reviewed in the light of actual accomplishments before final delivery. If President Batista acted in a sufficiently constructive and convincing manner, cognizance thereof might be taken by the Department in a public statement.

Shortly after his return to Habana, our Ambassador on January 23 conveyed the message to President Batista, emphasizing that it was in the mutual interest of Cuba and the United States that his Government create conditions which would minimize adverse reaction in the United States and elsewhere in the hemisphere to further military deliveries. The Ambassador at the same time suggested to President Batista that he take the specific steps (those discussed in the Department) to improve the political situation and bring about a favorable election climate. In reply the President stated he could not make changes in the Army and police force because such action would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. He did agree, however, to incorporate the other suggestions in a speech he was to make the following night at the National Convention of the four-party coalition which supported him.

Batista in his speech announced merely his decision to restore guarantees except in Oriente Province, and instead of incorporating the Ambassador's specific suggestions, he reiterated his plans for elections, promising to turn the Government over to his elected successor and predicting the victory of the official candidate. Subsequently, on February 19, our Ambassador reiterated to President Batista our hope that he would seek a political solution rather than a showdown of force. He

also

also observed that it had been suggested that if free and generally acceptable elections could be held, the government of Cuba might wish to invite the world press and international observers to witness them. While Batista appeared receptive, he maintained that election slates would have to be completed before he could act.

The immediate public reaction in Cuba to the restoration of Constitutional guarantees on January 24 was somewhat encouraging, as was press reaction. While there was plentiful press criticism of the Government it was mainly constructive. Bohemia, Cuba's popular anti-Government weekly magazine, in its first issue following the lifting of censorship (February 2) called for an end to terrorism. It also termed the Government's reiteration of its intention to provide electoral guarantees as "opening, at least in principle and in part, a new way of solving the terrible suffering of the nation, the way of the ballot." Further, it featured an open letter ("Letter to a Patriot") to Castro entreating him to drop his military campaign and thus avoid the useless expenditure of lives. Though the people were yet ^{far from} (to be) convinced that the Government was sincere in trying to bring about a proper political climate for elections and in providing safeguards for free and open balloting, they seemed still to prefer such a solution to the lengthy and bloody revolution which seemed to be the likely alternative.

In what appeared to be an attempt to discourage the electoral process, the National Directorate of the 26th of July Movement in early February made plans for an accelerated campaign of sabotage and terrorism throughout

Cuba

Cuba. In mid-February rebel violence had reached new heights and by the end of the month railroad sabotage had forced the cancellation of night rail service in the eastern part of the Island.

The renewed background of violence in late February was accompanied by pronouncements from the Group of Civic Institutions, the Cuban Catholic Action and the Friends of the Republic (SAR) calling for a restoration of peace and stating that elections could not be held under existing conditions.

Meanwhile, however, President Batista through his Minister of State told our Ambassador of his definite intention to invite the world press and U.N. observers to witness the June 1 elections. Our Ambassador was instructed in the light of these encouraging statements to suggest to President Batista that he announce this intention publicly. Also, the Ambassador was authorized in his discretion to suggest further constructive steps to the President, e.g., inviting opposition political leaders to discuss steps to insure free elections and civic, church, labor and opposition leaders to discuss ways and means of convincing their organizations that honest elections would be held. Before these suggestions could be made, however, the Cuban Catholic Episcopate on February 28, 1958 issued an appeal to the people and Government to restore peace and proposed the establishment of a "government of national unity".

This appeal was immediately acclaimed by Cuban civic institutions and major opposition leaders. Even the powerful pro-Batista Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC) expressed an interest in it and agreed to study it. Batista, while announcing his support for the Christian sentiments

expressed

expressed by the Episcopate, stated that the announced elections would provide the people with the means to solve the internal conflict. There was expectation that when Batista announced his new cabinet on March 6, it would be more representative and partially answer the appeal of the Episcopate but the new cabinet proved a complete disappointment in this respect.

The appeal of the Episcopate was followed by the formation on March 6 of a shortlived four-man Commission of National Harmony (unofficial) which had the backing of the Church and the stated purpose of working out a political formula to solve the existing crisis. It held conferences with Batista and leaders of the political opposition and expressed its desire to meet with Castro and exiled opposition leaders abroad. The Commission's efforts were rejected by Castro on March 10, whereupon it immediately dissolved. Castro as well as revolutionary leaders abroad viewed the members of the Commission as Batista "stooges". Additional efforts by the Catholic hierarchy to bring about a solution produced no results and ^{and} on March 12 the Government again suspended constitutional guarantees ^{and announced} with the announcement that it would expand the armed forces. During an interview with our Ambassador on March 13, President Batista indicated his willingness to grant a general amnesty if Castro and his followers would give up their arms and go to the polls. He was receptive to the Ambassador's suggestions for inviting leaders of representative Cuban civic groups to discuss the creation of a favorable election climate and for publicizing the election laws and the Government's willingness to abide

abide by them. However, his decisions again to suspend guarantees, to postpone elections until November 3, to expand the armed forces and to effect a mass movement of families from the mountainous areas of Oriente in an all out bid to annihilate the Castro forces, left little hope for our further efforts toward influencing a peaceful solution in Cuba at that juncture. The general situation was aggravated by Castro's ultimatum of March 12 calling for an all-out war against the Government, banning vehicular traffic in Oriente, and calling for a general strike to be supported by armed action.

The Group of Civic Institutions composed of 46 leading religious, fraternal, professional, civic and cultural organizations, issued a statement on March 15 calling upon Batista to resign and to turn the reins over to a provisional government. This was followed by a Congressional declaration of a 45-day national emergency on March 31, an extreme measure permitted by the 1940 Constitution, which gave the President and his Cabinet extraordinary powers to deal with internal crises.

D. U.S. Suspension of Combat Arms Shipments to Cuba

In January 1958 when Batista had seemed willing to attempt a solution to the civil conflict, he was notified by Ambassador Smith, as recorded above, that Cuba's pending orders for arms and military equipment under United States reimbursable aid were "on schedule". But his announcement on March 12 that constitutional guarantees were again being suspended and

that

that the armed forces were being expanded, together with Castro's declaration of the same day of total war against the Government, caused the Department to reconsider the question of licensing further arms shipments to Cuba. At that time there was a shipment pending of 1,250 Garand rifles for the Cuban Army. The export license had been issued and the boxes were on the docks in New Jersey ready for loading. The Department decided on March 14 to suspend the license temporarily and in due course announced its decision publicly. It explained that such action was consistent with our established practice of weighing carefully arms shipments consigned to areas where political tensions had developed. The initial reaction of the Cuban authorities was one of discomfiture but the Cuban Army Chief of Staff, General Tabernilla, professed that his government had other sources of arms and would not be hampered. On April 3, 1958 the order for the rifles was unilaterally cancelled by the Cuban Government together with all other pending orders for arms from the U.S. Government. This was done presumably in order for the Government to be able to deny that any pending orders were being help up.

Our action in suspending the rifle shipment was generally acclaimed by public opinion in the United States and in most of Latin America. The violence which erupted in Cuba subsequent to the March 12 suspension of guarantees, and Castro's war-like pronouncement of the same date, left the United States with no alternative but to continue the suspension of export permits for all combat types of arms including those from commercial sources. Selected military items under our MDAP program which came strictly within the definition of "non-combat" equipment, e.g., radio

and communication equipment, were approved for export, however.

IV. Batista's Determination to seek a Military Solution and Resulting Difficulties For U.S. Policy.

A. Failure of the Castro General Strike Called For April 9, 1958.

Castro's much vaunted general strike which was finally called for April 9, while it had some initial success in Oriente, failed almost completely in Habana and other areas, indicating clearly that the 26th of July revolution lacked popular support outside of Oriente, or at least that rival revolutionary and/or opposition elements were not prepared to collaborate with it in that way at that time. This represented a serious psychological setback for the Castro forces and their supporters which could have provided an opportunity for Batista either to extend the olive branch or otherwise take advantage of their failure. Instead, however, he persisted in holding to his ineptly led and poorly conceived military campaign in Oriente Province to extinguish once and for all the Castro threat. His thesis was that as long as this threat remained, the necessary climate for the fall elections could not be created.

B. Batista's Purchase of Arms From Sources Other than the United States after March 14, 1958 and Cuban Army Offensive against Rebels.

When the United States suspended combat arms shipments to the Batista Government on March 14, 1958 the latter had already received certain quantities from this country during the period of 1952-1957, as shown in tables 1 and 2. Subsequent to that date the Cubans obtained arms from the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Great Britain and Italy,

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and Italy, as shown in table 3. If it all be necessary, the U.S. vigilance in enforcing its neutrality laws resulted in the confiscation of quantities of armament destined for the rebels, as shown by Table 4, the Cuban Government seldom intercepted any rebel arms shipments in Cuban waters or in the air, although it possessed a Navy and an Air Force.

The efforts of the Army to suppress the rebels had usually been relatively halfhearted and ineffectual from the start. After the expanded recruitment of March, 1958, numbers of green troops, a high percentage being negroes, appeared in Oriente Province. They were lacking in training and will to fight and were not inspired by their commanding officer, who failed to lead them in combat and were reportedly more interested in the opportunities for graft which the situation presented. Numerous reports were received of rebel supplies being permitted to pass through army lines for a fee, while a steady trickle of army weapons moved to the rebels in return for cash. Earlier purges of many of the better trained (usually in the U.S.) officers, perhaps 500 in total, were undoubtedly reflected in the poor state of command which existed in the Cuban Army.

In spite of the above situation, mass desertions were never a problem and the Army, after much talk, did manage in late July and early August, 1958, to mount one rather well-planned drive into the

Sierra Maestra

Sierra Maestra from the south, which very nearly overran Fidel Castro's headquarters on Pico Turquino before most of the attacking battalion (the 18th) was cut off, surrounded and eventually surrendered. This attack was supposed to have received coordinated support from naval units stationed offshore and from another attack from the northern side. The naval gunfire is reliably reported to have been inaccurate; the attack from the north apparently began several days late. The rebels after defeating the southern attackers, were able to turn and concentrate their strength against the 11th battalion attacking on the north. A severe action ensued with heavy casualties on both sides, but in the end the army was forced to send two other battalions to the rescue of the 11th battalion. Army losses of men in these engagements are estimated between 500 and 600 men out of an original force of some 12-1500 (4 battalions). Rebel losses in men are also believed to have been substantial, but they were much more than offset by the sizeable quantity of arms and ammunition captured from the army. Very shortly after the end of this fighting a report was received of a rebel column enroute to Raul Castro's second front with a load of captured armament. After the army failure described above, it retired to the cities and garrisons and never again went into the deep Sierras after the rebels.

C. Source and Nature of Rebel Armament.

Fidel Castro has claimed, and the bulk of the evidence available tends to support him, that the Cuban armed forces were the principal

source

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source of his armament through capture, by desertion, or by purchase. At one time the forces of Raul Castro reportedly would not accept a volunteer unless he brought some type of weapon with him. Dud aircraft bombs dropped by the Cuban Air Force and dynamite stolen from various mining operations are believed to have been the source of most of the high explosives used in rebel-made land mines and hand and rifle grenades. Also small shipments of arms and ammunition undoubtedly reached the rebels from the U.S., Mexico, Venezuela and Costa Rica. It seems probable that much of the materiel which may have been shipped from the U.S., judging from that captured by the U.S. customs, was purchased by agents of ex-President Prío Socarrás and was destined for the separate forces he supported in the Sierra del Escambray.

The U.S. Army Attaché in Habana on April 7, 1958 gave his estimate of the relative capabilities of the two forces as follows:

26th of July

Figure 1200 in R-41-58 probably true. Forces ragged and not well-armed. Deemed incapable decisive military action but excellent harrassing and guerrilla force. Without aid thousands civilians throughout Island cannot hope win.

Army

Army fully capable (in numbers and equipment) eliminating Castro except not tactical brains or will to close decisively with rebels.

Another American observer who visited the Sierra Maestra in March 1958 made the following comments and estimates regarding rebel armament:

Fidel Castro

Fidel Castro and every member of his staff claim that they have received no arms shipments as such, and no aid of any sort, from any other Republic. Outside of the ammunition produced by Castro's own ordnance men in the field, all ammunition and weapons used by the Castro forces have been confiscated from Cuban Army and Navy posts, patrols, and in encounters with Cuban military personnel. The twelve original survivors of the Castro expedition captured their first arms from a small Army post at the Plata River, where they killed three men and confiscated an automatic rifle and two M-1 Garand M-1 rifles. From that time on, the Castro forces adopted as their tactic to attack according to the armament yield. Each member of the 26 of July Movement forces began to be regarded as another rifle, shotgun, or pistol, rather than as a man or a soldier.

Our Consul in Santiago had the following to write on this subject after his visit to a rebel stronghold in July, 1958:

Various conversations with rebels gave the impression that any action was evaluated pretty much on the basis of whether or not more ammunition was captured than was expended, and how many useful arms were captured. The rebels claimed that most of their arms had been taken from the Cuban Army.

The rebels claimed to have captured 550 weapons in defeating the Army offensive in the Sierra Maestra in August 1958, including two armored cars, mortars and bazookas.

Reports of rebel units armed chiefly with shotguns and sporting rifles were received as late as October, 1958. However, during October, November and December, 1958 numerous small Army garrisons of from 10 to 250 men were attacked and surrendered to the rebels, providing them with a substantial total of arms and much needed ammunition.

D. Establishment of Additional Fighting Front by Raul Castro in Oriente and by the Other Revolutionaries in Las Villas Province.

The rebels under Raul Castro on March 12, 1958 had successfully established a second front in the Sierra Cristal Mountains to the

northeast

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northeast of Fidel Castro's zone of operations in the Sierra Maestra. The forces under Raul grew rapidly and as the Army retreated to garrisons the rebels from both fronts spread their control over the entire countryside of Oriente Province. By September, 1958, the Army could only move during the daylight hours and was confined to the roads.

To add to Batista's woes, the Revolutionary Directorate (Directorio Revolucionario - DR) had established a separate rebel fighting front in January 1958 in the Sierra del Escambray in southern Las Villas Province with a force of about 100 men under the command of Rolando Cubela Secades. The Revolutionary Directorate had been established in 1954 by the Federation of University Students (FEU) as a student-led fighting group. The FEU was the first active revolutionary group opposing Batista and was largely responsible for the acts of terrorism and riots in Cuba in the early days of the Batista regime. It then had the close collaboration of Dr. Fidel Castro. Historically the FEU had always been subject to considerable Communist infiltration and influence as well as being involved in common gangster activities.

Shortly after the opening of the Escambray front, which became known as the Segundo Frente Nacional de Escambray - SFNE, the force was joined by Faure Chomon, the Secretary General of the Directorate, who had been a leader in the attack on the Presidential Palace in March 1957. The military wing of the Autentico Party, the Organizacion Autentica, also had forces on this front.

In September

In September 1958, Fidel Castro sent a force under his best field commander, Ernesto ("Che") Guevara, across the province of Manzanillo to Las Villas province to join the Revolutionary Armed Force and the Organización Auténtica forces in the Sierra del Escambray. Reportedly his force was caught and badly battered by the Cuban Army, but Guevara got through and eventually became commander of a joint force composed of 26th of July, Directorio Revolucionario, and Organización Auténtica men.

E. New Unity Pact Signed by Cuban Revolutionary Opposition in Caracas.

Following the dissolution of the Junta de Liberación Cubana (JIC), the Miami opposition unity group, as a result of Fidel Castro's letter of December 14, 1957, the various Cuban revolutionary groups drifted their separate ways with little coordination existing between them. Even though Castro's 26th of July Movement emerged as the strongest of these groups, he, along with the leaders of the other groups, recognized the growing need for more unified action. On July 20, 1958 in Caracas, the various groups became united in a loose confederation known as the Civic Revolutionary Front (Frente Civico Revolucionario - FCR). Dr. Jose Miró Cardena, exiled Dean of the Habana Bar Association, was chosen as the Secretary of the FCR and as such was its coordinator. He fled from Cuba in late April 1958 after having succeeded to the leadership of the Society of Friends of the Republic (SAR), an organization which had made earlier efforts to conciliate in the Cuban political struggle.

Among the revolutionary groups, other than the 26th of July Movement, which made up the FCR was the Civic Resistance Movement (Movimiento de Resistencia Civica - MRC), mentioned previously as the original non-fighting organization

organization supporting the Castro movement. The FCR later lent its encouragement to the formation of a Castro labor wing known as the National Labor Front (Federación de Obreros Nacional - FON). Dr. Prio's Organización Auténtica (OA), and the Revolutionary Directorate (DR), the Federation of University Students (FEU), the Orthodox Party (PPC-), the unregistered wing of the Auténtico Party (PRC-A), one faction of the Democratic Party, the Workers Unity (Unidad Obrera), the Fourth of April Military Organization, and the Montecristi Group were also members. The last named group was founded in 1952 by well-to-do Cuban professional and businessmen who individually had no political ambitions but dedicated themselves to the overthrow of the Batista regime and the restoration of democratic government. It collected over 1 million pesos for the revolution and had considerable influence over the FCR because of the prestige of its members. Two of its important leaders were Dr. Justo Carrillo, former head of the Economic Development Bank, and Dr. Lopez Fresquet, formerly a high-level economist in the Prio regime. The Fourth of April Military Organization and the Unidad Obrera were composed of exiled military and labor leaders respectively.

The principal stumbling block to the formation of the FCR was Dr. Fidel Castro, who insisted on the acceptance of his provisional candidate for president, Dr. Manuel Urrutia Lleó, and other conditions before joining. While the general distrust of the Castro Movement by many of the members making up the FCR made its efforts at unified action somewhat ineffective, the FCR did command some respect from its membership, mainly because of the prestige of its Secretary, Dr. Miro Cardona, who often proved to have a tempering effect on some of the more volatile revolutionists.

F. Protests

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F. Protection of Medical Professional Groups Against Repressive Acts of Batista Authorities.

Background

As the revolutionary opposition increased its sabotage and terroristic activities and the Government retaliated in kind with increasing brutality, the doctors in Cuba found themselves subject to persecution and open hostility by the police, who seemed to regard the medical treatment of wounded rebels as an act unfriendly to the regime. On September 29, 1957 Dr. Augusto Fernandez Conde, an official delegate to the World Medical Association General Assembly meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, presented a protest from the Cuban Medical Association to that body. The World Association expressed its sympathy for the Cuban doctors and instructed its Secretary General to form a committee to visit Cuba and investigate conditions there. On November 7, 1957, Dr. Louis H. Bauer, Secretary General of the World Medical Association, wrote to President Batista^{1/} and asked his permission to send a commission of doctors to Cuba to investigate the situation as reported at Istanbul. In this letter he stressed the fact that his organization would not concern itself with the political aspects of the problem. Receiving no reply, Dr. Bauer cabled on November 18, 1957, transmitting a copy of his letter of November 7th. About two weeks later he received a reply to his original letter which stated that the Minister of Health had been asked to consider the request. Nothing further was ever heard from the Cuban Government but Cuban doctors reported that conditions did improve after the

^{1/} See enclosure No. 1 for copy of letter.

after the publicity attendant upon Dr. Bauer's request. Dr. Bauer reported to the Department that after hearing numerous reports of patients being taken from doctors by police, some even from the operating table, and after seeing a coroner's report on a doctor which showed that he had died from the effects of a beating by the police, he was personally convinced that an investigation by the World Medical Association was warranted.

Meanwhile, on October 24 and 26, 1957, respectively, Drs. Jorge Ruiz Ramirez and Antonio Pulido Humarán were murdered by government security forces together with rebel patients who were receiving treatment from them. As a result of these cases the Association appealed to the Cuban Supreme Court, asking that doctors be given at least minimum guarantees to practice their profession. In addition the Group of Civic Institutions representing almost all of the civic groups throughout the island, appealed to the Prime Minister in regard to the cases, requesting that the government take action to put a stop to such incidents. The Cuban Government, however, countered these moves by accusing the Executive Committee of the Medical Association of exceeding its powers and by withdrawing the association's franking privilege. On December 21, 1957, the electoral delegates of the Medical Association, in a vote of 99 to 1, reelected the organization's entire Executive Committee. This was interpreted as a resounding vote of confidence in its leadership vis-a-vis its policies toward the Cuban Government.

Judges

In early March 1958 a group of 11 judges of the Audiencia (Court of Appeals) of Habana sent a strongly worded statement to the

Supreme Court

Supreme Court denouncing Cuban Government obstruction of the judicial process. The judges cited instances of intimidation of judges and disregard for writs of habeas corpus. The group (did not call for specific action but left it up to) the Supreme Court to "adopt the measures considered advisable." In response to this plea, the Attorney General, in May, initiated proceedings against a number of the signatories of the statement under decree-law approved by the cabinet pursuant to) the Law of National Emergency. Separation proceedings were instituted against seven judges for having signed the document; action to dismiss Judge Enrique Mart Ramirez on the ground that he had sheltered his two revolutionist sons was started; and proceedings were initiated against retired Judge Manuel Urrutia Lleó, now President of the present provisional Cuban government, to deprive him of his pension. By early June, action reportedly had been completed on four of the judges which resulted in their summary dismissal. Although on October 1, 1958 the Cuban press carried a news item that the Supreme Court had rejected the petition to deprive Urrutia of his pension, many Cubans alleged that the Government was able to exercise control over a sufficient number of the older members of the Supreme Court, who comprise its Administrative Chamber, to have the Batista administration's autocratic decisions carried out in most cases by the judiciary itself against its own members.

Lawyers

In early 1958 the Bar Association of Habana became increasingly concerned with the almost complete disregard being shown by the security forces for the right of habeas corpus. Cases were reported of prisoners being brought

Being brought to the door of the jail to satisfy the technicality of being freed under a writ of habeas corpus, whereupon they were immediately re-arrested and jailed on new charges. More serious incidents occurred in violation of this legal right. Embassy Habana reported the following incident on March 11, 1958:

On March 4 the Chief of the National Police, General Hernando Hernandez, issued a public statement indicating that President Batista has given him 'specific instructions to take the necessary measures to prevent the continuation of cowardly assaults which subversive elements have been carrying out against members of the armed forces as well as persons not connected with politics'. He added that henceforth the police 'would use every measure within its reach to suppress these futile blood-lettings'. The morning following release of the statement, the bullet riddled bodies of two young men, who had been in police custody since mid-February and for whom writs of habeas corpus had already been issued by the Courts, were found in different sections of Habana.

On April 28, 1958 Dr. José Miró Cardona, Dean of the Habana Bar Association and an outspoken critic of the Government, sought asylum in the Mexican Embassy in Habana, whence he was given permission to leave the country and came to Miami, Florida. In an address to the Florida Bar Association on May 15, 1958 he cited many alleged abuses of the normal and customary rights of lawyers in Cuba. He described the case of a lawyer named Jorge Cabrera Graupera who on April 11, 1958 was arrested when he attempted to present a petition to the 11th National Police Station on behalf of a client. Cabrera was reportedly tortured and beaten and died two days after his release was obtained through the efforts of the Bar Association.

On October 31, 1958, the Inter-American Bar Association approved the following resolution which was directed at the exercise of the legal profession in Cuba:

Whereas the Executive Committee of the Inter-American Bar Association has received with concern reports of disregard of

the Rule

the Rule of Law in some of the countries of the Americas,
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Committee re-express
its support of the principle of the Rule of Law and its solidarity
with those who would maintain individual and constitutional rights,
the freedom of the courts appropriately to administer justice,
and the freedom of lawyers to exercise their historic role to
that end.

Neither the Habana Bar Association nor the National Bar Association
felt that this resolution was sufficiently strong and both had in-
dicated their intention to resign from the Inter-American Bar
Association as the year ended.

G. Continued Cuban Government Disregard of Mutual Defense
Assistance Agreement

It was on June 3, 1958 that the Cuban Government, in reply to the
Department's note on the subject stated that it considered it was
adhering to the terms of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. On
that same date, however, news reports carried the story that the Cuban
Army MDAP battalion was being used in eastern Cuba. An inquiry of our
Embassy revealed that 750 out of 800 of the men in the battalion were
in Oriente, and had been dispersed with their equipment amongst the
various infantry units engaged in fighting the rebels in the mountains.
On the basis of the latter report and after consultation with the
Department of Defense, the Department decided to express to the Cuban
Government our belief that it had failed to adhere to the MDAP agree-
ment and should immediately withdraw MDAP trained personnel, as well
as equipment, from combat activities. A formal communication on the
subject was to be withheld until our Ambassador could inform the
Cuban Government that if it did not comply with the Agreement, a
formal note would be sent. The Ambassador, following instructions,
made an oral request of the Cuban Minister of State in June 1958 for
the withdrawal of all MDAP equipped and trained personnel from

integral combat.

internal combat. He then reported to Washington the Cuban reluctance to comply and pointed out that our insistence on strict compliance would seriously jeopardize our position in Cuba and could easily result in a Cuban request for the withdrawal of our military missions. The Department then began consideration of a plan whereby we would formally consult with the Cuban Government under Article XI, paragraph 2, of the Agreement with a view to arriving at an equitable solution on Cuban compliance. This process was soon interrupted by the kidnapping of some 47 American citizens and servicemen in Oriente Province by the Cuban rebels beginning on June 26. The reports from our consular officers who effected the release of the kidnapped Americans after penetrating deep into the mountains and carrying on discussions with the rebel leaders including Raul Castro, indicated the possibility of Communist influence in the forces of Raul Castro which controlled that area. This factor and the unqualified support which the Cuban Government was giving our Government in the United Nations on our anti-Communist stand on the crucial issues before that body at the time, kept the Department from insistently pressing the Cuban Government to comply with the MDAP agreement, ~~in that~~ it would have been difficult to refuse if the Government had observed the terms of the agreement by asking our concurrence in their use of the arms and trained units.

H. De-emphasis of Activities of U.S. Military Missions After March 14, 1958

As the internal military conflict in Cuba became more intense, pressure within the United States grew for the recall of our military missions. Many Cuban revolutionaries seemed certain, moreover, that if we were to take such action, the Batista regime would summarily collapse. Criticism of our missions stemmed principally from the
publicity

publicity given to the attendance of our mission officers at Cuban military training or social functions. The controlled Batista press reported such events in what appeared to be an obvious attempt to demonstrate United States support for the government. With this in mind our Ambassador in Habana subsequent to our suspension of arms shipments to Cuba emphasized to the Mission Chiefs the necessity for discretion in their activities in the light of the possibilities for willful or unintentional misinterpretation. In line with this policy, Ambassador Smith in May arranged to call off the U.S. Armed Forces Day celebration which had been scheduled for that month.

In August, 1958, shortly after the Cuban Government publicized a 10-minute U.S. Army Mission demonstration of how to fire an 81 mm mortar which was only a small part of a 2-hour demonstration of field kitchen equipment and field sanitary measures, Ambassador Smith called a meeting of the Country Team. He discussed this and other instances where it appeared that both the Cuban Government and the revolutionary elements were, each for its own purposes, attempting to play up routine activities of the Military Missions or the presence of U.S. Military officers at protocolary functions, as evidence that the U.S. was supporting the Batista regime. Therefore, he again directed the Mission heads and other members of the Country Team to avoid to the extent they could, situations which might be misrepresented as implying U.S. support for any of the contending groups in the Cuban political conflict.

On September 26, 1958, the Department expressed to Ambassador Smith its emphatic concurrence in the instructions to the Country Team described above and

above and requested that he continue to watch carefully this aspect of the 'Missions' operations. All of the Mission personnel, as well as the Service Attaches, were particularly directed by Ambassador Smith to stay away from field operations and from combat areas.

A summary of the training functions performed by our military missions in 1957 and 1958 is contained in enclosure No. 3 "Resumé of the Activities of U.S. Military Mission's in Cuba (1957-1958)", which stresses the point that they did not advise the Cuban General Staff on combat operations against the rebels nor did any member ever visit the scene of military operations.

V. Harassment of U.S. Citizens and Properties in Cuba by Rebels and Failure of Cuban Army to Provide Protection

A. Property Losses Suffered by U.S. Firms Early in 1958

In early 1958 our Naval Base at Guantanamo, our Nicaro Nickel installation and various properties owned and operated by private United States companies began to feel the pressure of the civil conflict in Eastern Cuba. Both the Cuban army and the rebels were requisitioning equipment and supplies from U.S. companies and our Nicaro Nickel installation. As the rebels began to dominate additional areas in the region, they appropriated large quantities of heavy machinery and equipment, particularly vehicles, fuel, and other supplies valued at millions of dollars, and hampered and in some cases paralyzed company operations through sabotage and theft. Table 5 presents a summary of losses incurred from January to October 1958 by the various United States firms with properties in Eastern Cuba, including Nicaro. Because the Castro Movement did not have belligerent status, the Department had to look to the existing government to provide the protection necessary to avoid such losses to U.S. interests. Numerous

representations

representations were made to the Batista regime to provide such protection but with decreasing results.

B. Rebel Kidnapping of U. S. Citizens

Rebel harassment of United States properties and citizens reached its height in July 1958 when 47 U. S. citizens and three Canadians were kidnapped in Oriente province in the area under control of Raul Castro beginning on June 26. Those kidnapped included 29 U.S. Naval and Marine personnel who were enroute from Guantanamo city to the Base. The others were male civilians employed by American-owned sugar and mining companies in the area. The kidnapping occurred as a result of a rebel military order (No. 30) issued by Raul Castro calling for the detention beginning on June 27 of "all North American male citizens" in his sector. The preamble to this order spoke of intensive bombardments carried out against rebel positions by Cuban Government aircraft provisioned with bombs at our Guantanamo Base and to the failure of the U. S. Government to stop supplying arms to the Batista government despite repeated rebel demands.

A complete summary of these rebel kidnappings and the Department's success in obtaining the release of the captives after three weeks of intensive effort is contained in Appendix "A". During the entire process, our government carefully avoided any action which could be construed as intervention in Cuban affairs despite the pressures for such action in our own country as one day followed another without our negotiations yielding results until the climax. Instead it relied upon moral persuasion and the impact of the U.S. press and public opinion to

opinion to convince the rebels that they should free these Americans who were in any case, completely innocent of any involvement in the Cuban internal conflict. Also, the Department attempted to convince the rebel leaders that the motivation for their actions was based on erroneous information. Our consular officers in Santiago, who were sent to the mountains to bring about the release, provided one means of applying moral suasion directly on the rebel leaders. They took pains to impress upon the rebels that the United States was not treating with them diplomatically, but strictly in accordance with their internationally recognized status as consuls whose duty it was to afford all possible protection to U. S. citizens under any circumstances. The Department applied the same arguments in its informal conversations with rebel agents and other revolutionists residing in this country. The danger to their cause from the adverse publicity in the United States over these kidnappings was naturally more apparent to them, however, than to their fellow revolutionists in Cuba. Their quick action in getting their views to Fidel Castro had much to do with his denunciation of his younger brother's action and the eventual release of all of the captives.

On October 20, two American technicians and eight Cuban employees of the Texas Company Refinery in Santiago were captured and held by the rebels in that region for three days, after having encountered a rebel ambush near the refinery while they were repairing a water well the rebels had blown up only a few days previously. At the time of this last kidnapping the rebels had begun to indicate an almost complete disregard

disregard for American persons and property in Oriente Province and their actions had become a source of extreme concern to our government.

The Department's press officer made it plain on October 23, before the Texas Company men were released, that our government was tired of having its citizens kidnapped in Cuba. He also referred to our revulsion over other irresponsible rebel acts which occurred at about the same time such as their depredations against American-owned properties, including the U.S. Government-owned Nicaro Mickel properties, and their hijacking of a Cuban airliner. The plane left Miami on October 22 and crashed in Cuba after being forced to attempt a landing at a rebel airstrip far from its original destination at Havana. Four U.S. citizens were known to have perished in this crash.

C. Rebel Threat to Guantanamo Base Water Supply - Use of U.S. Marines For Protection

A further test of our nonintervention policy came in connection with the threat posed by the rebels to the pumping facilities and pipeline in Cuban territory which is the sole source of water for our Guantanamo Naval Base. The pumping facilities owned by a private Cuban company are located some 4.5 miles from the Base limits. As early as March 1958 the Cuban army troops guarding them came under armed harassment. The Base authorities received reports that the rebels actually intended to sabotage the installations. As this water supply was vital to the Base's operation, to say nothing of the health and welfare of its personnel, the Department gave immediate attention to the Base Commander's request that he be permitted to train Base technical personnel in the operation of the plant so that they might supplant company personnel should they be forced to leave. The

Commander

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Commander also recommended that U.S. Marines be authorized to guard the plant in the event the Cuban Army guards should withdraw. The considerations which led to the temporary utilization in July, 1958 of U. S. Marine guards from the Base to guard the pumping station and their withdrawal four days later as well as subsequent threats to the installations and the actual cutting off of the water supply for brief intervals in November by the rebels are discussed in detail in Appendix "B".

Our initial decision to use U.S. Marine guards was made subject to the approval of the Cuban government in advance. President Batista had given his personal approval in April, although the Marines were not moved in to guard the installations until July 28 after the Cuban Army units had departed from the area. The immediate reaction from Cuban oppositionists as well as throughout the hemisphere was one of deep resentment despite the fact that the Department had received advance permission from the Cuban Government and had publicly emphasized the fact that the water supply was vital to the health of the Base personnel (including many Cubans) and their dependents. Also, the Department announced on July 30 that the action was only a temporary measure and that if more satisfactory arrangements could be made they would be ^{undertaken} ~~undertaken~~ without delay. Cuban oppositionist and rebel representatives in this country stated that they would get assurances from the Castro forces that they would not disrupt the water supply if the Marines were removed. These assurances were obtained, enabling the United States to withdraw the Marines and leave the pumping facilities unguarded. Fidel Castro in a rebel radio broadcast on August 2 stated that he was prepared to guarantee that the water supply to the Base would not be cut off if our government unconditionally

ordered the Marine withdrawal. Several days after the Marines had been withdrawn, the Cuban Army returned its protective forces in what appeared to be more of a face-saving gesture than a genuine desire to provide protection.

Further complications arose, however, after November 9, 1958 when the Cuban troops at the plant site suddenly departed without notifying our Base Commander. The latter reported that the rebels controlled the surrounding territory but he was prepared to assume that the plant would continue to operate unmolested. President Batista informed our Ambassador that the Cuban army guards would resume their duties at the plant but they did not return and on November 23 the rebels cut off the water supply for one hour, on November 25 for two hours and two days later for four hours. After the first disruption, the Base Commander asked for permission to utilize Marines to furnish security for the plant. President Batista granted permission on November 28 to use Marines until Cuban troops could be flown in to replace them on December 1, but he also wanted to use the Base as a point of departure for his troops when they were enroute to the pumping station. Ambassador Smith recommended against this.

In dealing with this new situation, the Department resorted again to leaders of the Cuban opposition unity movement in this country to impress upon them the gravity of this rebel action. They quickly understood the implications and made their views known to Fidel Castro. The Department also issued a press release reminding the rebels of their assurances of the previous August that the water supply would not be molested,

molested, indicating our concern over the progressive disruption of the water supply, and referring to the patience we had exercised over the past week when confronted with this action. Fidel Castro responded by stating that the shutoff was necessary for "tactical reasons" but that he did not intend to harm the Base or restrict its supplies of water. He also expressed the hope that further disruptions "would not be necessary" and later gave assurances that the Base would not suffer from a lack of water.

Though President Batista informed our Ambassador on November 29 of his intention to return Cuban troops to the water facility he did not fulfill this commitment. He even seemed relieved when the Ambassador informed him that we did not feel we could grant the Cuban Government permission to utilize our Base to land troops on their way to protect the water station under the circumstances then prevailing in the area.

There were no stoppages of water subsequent to November 27. It seemed apparent that the informal representations made to members of the revolutionary opposition and our strongly worded press release had done much to deter the rebels from further irresponsible acts of this nature, thus relieving us from the necessity of again employing our Marines for guard duty outside the Base.

Each time that a crisis arose involving the safety and security of the Base's water supply, the Department, as may be seen, was faced with the prospect of having to approve the use of Marines for guard duty in Cuban territory, well outside the treaty limits. It was therefore necessary to prepare the ground in terms of public relations for the possible use

possible use of the Marines in the event that other means of providing security should fail. Statements to the press, not that of November 29, 1958, were drafted with that end in view.

D. Advice to U. S. Firms on Paying Rebel Tax Levies

Beginning in late August 1958, the Castro forces began to levy taxes on sugar mills in Oriente and Camaguey Provinces at the rate of 15 cents per 250 lb. sack and based upon their previous year's production. Under this levy the United Fruit Company, for example, was presented with a tax bill of about \$186,000. Other U. S.-owned sugar mills in the area received similar tax notices with the stipulation that payment was to be made by October 15. The rebel officials who presented the tax notices threatened reprisals if payments were not made on or before the due date. These same companies also had been discreetly requested by government supporters to contribute to the forthcoming political campaign, and faced a threat by the Batista regime that if they paid tribute to the rebels, the taxes levied on them by the Government would be doubled.

The U. S. companies involved requested guidance from our Embassy and the Department. They were advised that while the Department sympathized with their predicament, the responsibility for the decision in each instance must lie with the individual company and not the U. S. Government. However, in an attempt to alleviate the pressure on the U. S. companies to pay tribute to either or both of the contending parties in the internal Cuban conflict, the Department authorized the Embassy to make the following statement which was released in Havana

on October 2, 1958:

on October 1, 1950:

A number of American companies operating in Cuba recently have been approached by revolutionary groups and representatives of various Cuban political parties for financial contributions. Some of these approaches have been accompanied by threats of retaliation if contributions are not forthcoming by a certain date.

The United States Government is opposed to American nationals involving themselves in the internal political affairs of any foreign country. Accordingly, the United States disapproves of contributions, whether forced or voluntary, by American citizens or firms, to any faction or political party within Cuba which would violate that principle.

At the same time the United States condemns any efforts to force such payments from American citizens or companies, whether in Cuba or elsewhere.

The Department also attempted in particular to impress upon rebel representatives in the United States and members of the Civic Revolutionary Front its increasing concern over these rebel demands for tribute which were tantamount to extortion. It was pointed out that public reaction in this country, could have far-reaching consequences. Emphasis was placed on the impartial nature of our Embassy's statement and the fact that our Government discouraged contributions by U. S. companies operating in Cuba to any political faction in that country, regardless of its nature and background. *The controlled press will be unable to report*

Subsequent to the levies placed on the U. S. sugar companies, other U. S. firms operating in eastern Cuba (began to be) confronted with similar demands. The major U. S. companies apparently refused to pay. Certain of them subsequently suffered from rebel sabotage and seizures. Whether their plight was worse than that of Cuban companies operating in the

same area,

same area, many of whom were understood to be paying the rebels for "protection", is not entirely clear, but it may have been worse.

E. Increased Damages to U. S. Properties as Rebels Expand Area of Control

Table ___ shows damages and losses suffered by U. S. firms operating in Cuba for the period January to October 1958, which totalled over \$2-1/4 million. Losses between October 1 and the collapse of the Batista regime on January 1, 1959 probably equalled or surpassed this figure and consisted for the most part of damage from sabotage of transportation and communications equipment as well as plant equipment. Several important U. S. firms in the area were forced to suspend or curtail operations, including the U. S. owned Nicaro Nickel plant and the new Texas Company refinery on the outskirts of Santiago, because of destruction of key facilities. In the case of the Texas Company refinery the rebels blew up the pumping facilities at the refinery's water wells, forcing the company to rely on supplies of water from the city of Santiago which proved to be uncertain. A number of U. S. - owned sugar companies were approaching the grinding season with important mill facilities completely destroyed. Telephone and power lines owned and operated by United States companies were likewise destroyed. Any attempt to repair damaged facilities usually met with armed rebuff by the rebels. As the rebel zone of operations spread westward more U. S. companies began to feel the brunt of rebel sabotage and degradations.

F. Public Opinion in U. S. Cools Toward Rebels Because of Their Disregard for Life and Property

Until late June 1958, the Castro Movement enjoyed a remarkably

favorable

favorable press in this country. U. S. public opinion was generally led to the view that Fidel Castro was a Robin Hood, fighting against odds to rid his country of a tyrant and return it to democratic processes. While the U. S. press had mildly voiced its disapproval of Castro's sugar cane-burning campaign which began in late 1957, it did not denounce the action of his Movement until our citizens were kidnapped by Raul Castro. This action alarmed U. S. public opinion and began to offset the favorable impression the 26th of July Movement had previously created. The outcries from some members of our Congress calling for U. S. armed intervention to effect the release of our citizens were indicative of some of the feeling developing in the United States even though most of our press cautioned against our taking such precipitous action, properly emphasizing that the primary consideration should be the safe return of the captives. At the same time, they expressed their abhorrence of Castro's disregard of the safety of American citizens and applauded the Secretary's statement of June ___ that we would not pay "blackmail" to free our citizens.

While criticism of the Castro Movement somewhat subsided after the kidnapped U. S. citizens were safely returned, the rebel cause did not regain its former prestige and, in fact, when it engaged in further acts of brigandage in late October and November 1958 and continued its disregard for U. S. lives and property, further adverse reaction resulted in this country. Such feeling was particularly strong following the hijacking of a Cuban airlines plane by Castro followers in early November as it departed from Miami. Though the U. S. Press remained generally opposed to the Batista regime, it
did not

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did not envision the Castro Movement as offering much improvement and
initially supported the hope that Cuba could find a way to internal
peace without having to accept Batista or Castro as the only alterna-
tives.

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VI. Character and Leadership of the 26th of July Movement and Extent of its Communist Support

A. Difficulties in Assessing Movement and Its Leaders

As soon as it became apparent in early 1957 that Fidel Castro and his forces in the Sierra Maestra might avoid defeat by the Batista forces, the Department again assayed the potential and possible future role of the 26th of July Movement in Cuba. The lack of convincing information (i.e. "hard intelligence") about the character and motivation of its leaders proved a grave handicap. Though the Department did obtain additional information concerning them, by the end of the Batista regime, it had not been able to form more than tentative conclusions about the top rebel leaders. The fact that most of them were youths with nebulous political and revolutionary backgrounds, and many had in the past some connection with persons and groups of dubious ideologies and moral concepts made the task of assessment particularly difficult. There was also the virtual isolation of Castro and the other leaders of the Movement during the military campaign.

Although Fidel Castro demonstrated definite qualities of leadership during the struggle in Cuba there was little in his background which inspired confidence in his character or sense of responsibility. While at the University of Habana, he had been a member of a terrorist organization known as the Union Insurreccional Revolucionaria (UIR) and was arrested several times following political murders perpetrated by this group. Castro left the UIR

in 1957

In 1957 and in that same year took part in the active activities of the invasion of the Dominican Republic. In 1958, he was an UNW delegate to the Communist-inspired student conference at Bogota, Colombia and later was accused of participating in the famous "Crotazo" and of having associated with Communist student participants in the riots which took place at that time. His participation in the "Crotazo" was fairly well established but his exact role was not. As a campus politician, he was considered an opportunist and though he had flirted with Communist student groups he seems to have eschewed membership in them and instead joined the Orthodox Party. He chose politics over practicing law after graduation and married the daughter of a Batista supporter who later divorced him on grounds of deserting her and their infant child. His supporters consistently maintained that he had matured and left the wild student days behind but his early life no doubt left its imprint on his character.

Background information on Fidel's younger brother, Raul, was even more limited. He appeared always to have been in the shadow of his older brother. Raul is alleged to have made a trip to an iron curtain country in 1953, an allegation neither he nor his brother have denied.

Ernesto "Che" Guevara, an Argentine doctor, who was a member of the Castro expeditionary force, had the reputation of being a revolutionary adventurer with extreme leftist leanings who at one time had worked as a medical doctor for the Urbens regime in Guatemala. He possessed much of the same leadership qualities as Fidel Castro.

The visit

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The visit of our consular officers to Fidel Castro's social front headquarters in June and July 1959 provided the Department with its first reliable, first-hand intelligence estimates of the Castro Movement. The political beliefs of the leaders in that area appeared to be very hazy but with at least a strong nationalistic and anti-American overtone. The ideas expressed by them regarding economic and social changes suggested that they were susceptible to radicalism, if not communism. There was little about these leaders or others to inspire confidence that they would show the qualities of moderation and responsibility which were needed to restore order and tranquility to Cuba.

B. Lack of a Program and of Wide Public Support

The 26th of July Movement as a whole appeared to lack any clear-cut ideology beyond its hatred of Batista and his regime. Originally its principal objective was to force the government from power but later it began to speak of a "free revolution" including social, economic and political changes. Its vaguely defined terms, however, appeared to be more reformist than revolutionary in scope. Its leaders repeatedly mentioned abolishing graft and the spoils system in government and often spoke disparagingly of politicians, many of whom were in the non-26th of July revolutionary opposition, who had engaged in such practices. There was also talk of reorganizing, reforming and modernizing the educational system. Fidel Castro repeatedly denied any intentions of nationalizing public utilities and other industries though he at one time had
openly

only directed such action. Instead he sought for basic or regulation of public utilities. He also sought, for example, crop diversification, and a increased and improved social services.

The early membership of the Castro Movement and the First Civic Resistance Movement was essentially of the middle and upper classes, educated in the professions. His economic program proved to have little direct appeal to the laboring classes as evidenced at least in part by their lack of response to Castro's efforts to mobilize general strikes. In addition, his campaign of terrorism and sabotage begun in late 1957 and his famous letter of December 14, 1957 denouncing the JLC opposition unity movement led many Cubans who were opposed to Batista to see strong absolutist tendencies in Castro which alienated many of those who had formerly aided his Movement. His guerrilla successes, the "Robin Hood" type of legend surrounding him, and the hope that his Movement could eventually overthrow the Batista regime probably attracted to him more followers than did any positive expectation of improved economic or social conditions.

C. Communist Infiltration and Moscow Support

Shortly after the Castro invasion in December 1956, the Department began to receive unconfirmed reports of possible communist penetration and influence in his organization. That Castro had had contacts with certain communists in Mexico was believed probably true, as were his connections with communists elsewhere in the past. Many of such reports, however, were

Furnished

Furnished by unreliable sources to the Cuban Government. According to our Embassy in Habana, the Cuban Government, as a matter of policy, began in mid-1957 to brand all rebel opposition as communist.

Constant attention was also given to all indications of a possible communist role in the 26th of July Movement by the various intelligence elements within our government. In the first detailed study of the 26th of July Movement the Department's Division of Research and Intelligence (DRI) reached the following conclusions on this point:

The Cuban Government has persistently claimed that Castro and many of his followers are Communists and that they are receiving aid from the international Communist movement. While there are reports that some members of the 26th have connections in Communist circles and that in the past at least one top leader (Cuevara) belonged to Marxist-oriented organizations, there is no evidence that the Movement as a whole is Communist inspired or that its top leaders are Communists.

In the visit of our consular officers to the Raul Castro front in July 1958, they found no clear evidence of Communist penetration into the Castro Movement but some phrases uttered by certain rebel leaders were so anti-American in tone as possibly to be of communist inspiration. There was outward evidence, however, that the Movement had rejected offers of communist support on various occasions. The Cuban Communist Party (PSP) for example made strenuous but unsuccessful efforts to affiliate with the Frente Civico Revolucionario (FCR) in Caracas, supported by the Venezuelan Communist Party which tried to obstruct FCR activities in an

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... the 26th of July Movement ... indications that it had obtained ... particularly immediately ... general strike of April 1958 ... line closely paralleled that of the 26th of July Movement ... asked the United States for ... of the 707 Series General ... no. 20 ... for the kidnapping of ...

One important Cuban Communist leader, Dr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, was reported by anti-Castro oppositionists to have had several interviews with Fidel Castro in the mountains in the fall of 1958. Subsequent to the departure of Batista it was established that Rodriguez definitely had been with the Castro forces but that he accomplished, if anything, was not established. In its final analysis of this subject prior to the fall of the Batista government the U.S. Intelligence Community stated:

While we have insufficient evidence to establish the degree of Communist influence in the 26th of July Movement at the present time, the situation is open to Communist exploitation. A few alleged Communist sympathizers hold moderately important positions in the movement, especially among the troops led by Paul Castro. Some Communists have penetrated the lower levels of the movement. Moreover, the nationalistic and antidictatorship line of the 26 of July Movement is a horse which the Communists know well how to ride (e.g. Venezuela). Fidel Castro's control over his far-flung guerrillas is not so firm that he can prevent Communist

infiltration

infiltration. If the revolution fails to reach beyond the limits of the Tlatista regime, both Castro and the MVR will be under increasing pressure to accept any help they can get.

Subsequent to this analysis our Embassy in Havana learned that the Movement's propaganda chief, Emilio Franqui, was a Communist, that according to reliable sources he had never been regarded by his fellow-newsmen as a Communist or even a sympathizer. Franqui has consistently denied this accusation but there have been recent inconclusive reports that he was at one time a Communist party member. While he was in charge of Radio Rebelde broadcasts, much of the anti-United States propaganda had a distinct Communist flavor. Although Franqui was a member of the National Directorate of the 26th of July Movement, he was not considered an important figure in the Movement.

There was a notable indifference within the Castro Movement itself towards the dangers of Communist infiltration and the Department in its conversations with rebel spokesmen never hesitated to express the hope that the Movement would guard against Communist penetration.

Radio Moscow frequently referred to the Cuban situation and in its propaganda broadcasts it condemned the Batista regime and alleged that the U.S. was endeavoring to bolster Batista through military aid and other acts of intervention in Cuba's internal affairs. It carefully refrained from mentioning the Castro

Movement.

Movement by name in expressing his support for the revolution, however, until late in 1958.

Continuous and exhaustive intelligence investigations failed to provide proof that 26th of July Movement was Communist dominated, controlled or heavily infiltrated. Fidel Castro himself once admitted that there were undoubtedly communists in his Movement as in any broad organization of this type but added that he was not aware of them personally.

VII. Efforts to Make Clear to Revolutionists U.S. Policy Regarding Cuba's Intervention and Our Hopes for an Early Peace in Cuba

1. Conversations with Cuban Revolutionists

During the course of the Cuban internal conflict, hundreds of Cuban oppositionists visited the Department. Many of them had been active in the rebellion against the Batista regime. They were given a courteous reception and careful attention was accorded their views. With rare exceptions, they held that the United States should take some form of unilateral action which would have the effect of weakening the Batista government. Some few even advocated open intervention by the United States to bring peace to their country. As the internal situation deteriorated, there were more suggestions in the latter vein. The Department invariably pointed out in reply that although the United States maintained normal official relations with the Cuban Government, this according to firmly established inter-American doctrine did not imply either approval or disapproval of that government or of its acts or policies. It emphasized the U.S. determination to adhere to the non-intervention policy in keeping with its hemisphere commitments, and hoped that the Cuban people themselves would soon find a solution to their internal conflict. The Department also found many of the revolutionary leaders who visited the Department helpful in solving problems caused by certain rebel acts, such as the June-July kidnappings. The Department, for example, established informal liaison with Dr. Mario Cardona, Secretary of the PCR and found him to be cooperative and

always

always willing to use his influence to promote peace and moderation and responsibility in all international relations.

B. Political Asylum in U.S. of Refugees and Political Exiles

From the start, the United States followed a consistent policy of issuing visas to political refugees if they were found to be completely admissible under our immigration laws. The Government also on occasion made informal inquiry of the Cuban Government about the welfare of respectable opposition political leaders in Cuba when it appeared that serious harm might befall them. In some instances such action resulted in their safe exit from Cuba. Responding to humanitarian considerations, our Naval Base at Guantanamo also provided haven for Cubans in that area who fled oppression. Doctors at the Base hospital treated and saved the lives of many wounded or ill.

C. Refusal to Criticize Castro or his Movement on Political Grounds

Despite many provocations, the United States deliberately refrained from criticizing the Castro Movement politically. It also kept from expressing opinions for or against the existing government. In cases where the United States found it necessary to consult rebel representatives in this country on rebel actions, such consultations were confined to protecting the interests of the United States or its citizens.

VIII. Deterioration of Political Situation Prior to November General Elections and Their Failure to Provide Acceptable Solution

A. Lack of Electoral Climate and Castro's Efforts to Sabotage the Elections

Following the restoration of constitutional guarantees on January 23, 1958 the Batista regime faced a supreme test on the electoral issue. Had Batista been willing to take further positive measures, he might have won substantial public support for a peaceful solution through satisfactory elections and neutralized the 26th of July and other movements. Batista stood firm and was soon forced to resort again to the suspension of constitutional guarantees and to take other drastic measures to combat the growing revolt. Also, he postponed elections from June 1 to November 3 soon after Castro's renewed declaration of all-out war. The failure of the Castro strike in early April provided Batista with another opportunity to seek a solution that would find popular support. He chose instead to continue his attempts to eradicate the Castro threat and thereby leave the nation free to pursue his version of a constitutional change of government. During the period between the postponement of elections on March 26 and the new election date of November 3, there was an almost complete lack of a free electoral climate. Many political leaders were in jail, hiding or exile. Suspension of guarantees which included strict press censorship, restrictions on the right of assembly, and rebel control over an important part of the national territory, made it impossible to carry out anything approaching normal electoral campaigning. In addition, Castro warned citizens

to abstain

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to abstain from voting and threatened the loss of civil rights to all candidates. Specifically with regard to the areas under rebel control, he announced over the radio that "a candidate for any electoral post who is captured in the operations zone of the free territory will be given a sentence varying in accordance with the degree of responsibility, between 10 years' imprisonment and death." At least one congressional candidate of the Government coalition was assassinated by rebel sympathizers and several candidates for mayor in Oriente Province were intimidated into resigning. Campaigning was very limited and in Oriente Province almost non-existent.

The three major presidential candidates who actually ran for President either lacked public appeal or political support or both. President Batista's hand-picked candidate, Dr. Rivero Agüero, was generally considered a faithful Batista "yes man" who would not be capable of carrying out an independent policy or bringing peace to his country. Ex-President Grau, the Autentico Party candidate, was thoroughly discredited in the eyes of many Cubans because of the graft and corruption in his 1944-48 administration. However, he did have some support from the small farmers and the backing of an organized though splintered political machine, but the weakened state of his health and his advanced age left considerable doubt in the public mind over his ability to govern, if elected. Dr. Marques Sterling, the candidate of the Free Peoples Party, while a man of prestige and ability had no organized political machine to support him.

It was

It was a widely accepted rumor in Cuba that his party received some of its campaign funds from the Batista government.

B. U.S. Efforts to Encourage an Electoral Solution

Though the prospects that the November elections would be acceptable were far from hopeful, the United States, in the immediately preceding months tried informally, through its Ambassador in Habana, to encourage Batista to recognize the true nature of the situation. Our Ambassador, for example, expressed from time to time in his talks with the President, and with leaders of the political opposition who had agreed to participate in the November elections, our hope that certain measures would be taken prior to the elections which would make them acceptable to a majority of the Cuban people. Among the measures suggested to Batista were those proposed earlier, i.e., the restoration of constitutional guarantees and invitations to the world press, and UN or OAS observers to witness the elections. He also sought tactfully to encourage the two major opposition parties to unite on a single presidential candidate to oppose the hand-picked choice of President Batista, Dr. Rivero Aguero. While Dr. Marques Sterling of the Free People's Party was amenable to the suggestion, Dr. Grau, the Autentico Party candidate, was adamant in his refusal to step down in the interest of opposition harmony. His refusal left the way even clearer for the ultimate election of Dr. Rivero Aguero. The Government did not request the presence of UN observers as

Batista

Datista had indicated, waiting until October 17 to announce that it was transmitting to that organization such a request made by Dr. Grau. This was transmitted to the United Nations by the Cuban Delegate on October 20 under cover of a letter extending a somewhat qualified official invitation to the United Nations to appoint three of its members to observe the elections. The letter explained that in the interest of expediency the UN was requested to send member observers rather than to submit a panel of private names as was the customary procedure. In reply, the United Nations Secretariat stated that it could not accede to such a request. An open invitation to the world press to observe the elections was issued only a few days prior to the balloting.

C. Failure of Elections and Charges of Fraud

Election day, November 3, 1958, proved very quiet with a light turnout at the polls. Participation in person appears to have reached between 35% and 40% of the registered voters except in Oriente Province where it totaled about 5%. The official returns showed a voter participation of between 50% and 60%, the higher figure, if accurate, perhaps resulting from the voting "in absentia" of identity cards (voting carnets) which had previously been collected from their owners by the political parties (this is permitted in Cuba).

Andrés Rivero Agüero won as expected, with Marquez Sterling a distant second and Grau San Martín a weak third. Rivero Agüero immediately announced his intention to seek an acceptable formula which might reestablish peace in Cuba. However, he further stated
that

that President Batista and the armed forces were his best allies in reaching a solution, and Batista himself was noticeably non-committal on Rivero's talk of a "national solution" to the Cuban conflict. Embassy Habana on December 15, 1958 summarized the general results of the election as follows:

Despite the lack of a proper electoral climate, a substantial number of voters maintained to the end the hope that the Government would not interfere with the balloting. Unfortunately the indications are that the Government resorted to various devices to insure the victory of its candidates in overwhelming numbers. The elections appear to have disappointed the majority of Cubans, who had hoped to find through them an end to the civil strife and violence.

Dr. Grau charged that the elections were fraudulent. In a petition to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal he asked that the election results be set aside and new elections scheduled. He listed a series of illegalities to support his case, which included ballot-box stuffing and altering the results in the counting or reviewing process. On December 2 the President approved a law passed by the Congress terminating the right to appeal the electoral results even though the final returns had not been announced. This terminated any legal attempt at nullification.

D. U.S. Efforts to Encourage President-Elect Dr. Rivero Aguero to take Conciliatory Steps

Despite the unacceptability of the elections to most Cubans, there seemed a slight hope that a peaceful solution might yet be found as a result of certain post-election pronouncements of the

President-elect.

President-elect. He informed our Ambassador in a personal interview on November 15 of his intention to call during the first year of his term a constituent assembly to discuss steps which should be taken to restore full guarantees. Such an assembly would decide whether to shorten his term or hold new elections. However, he hastened to add that Castro must be destroyed, and appealed for U.S. weapons to aid him in carrying out this task. Later, in his first press announcement, Dr. Rivero Agüero stated his intention to "try all avenues, regardless of political affiliations, to find an acceptable and dignified formula to establish peace". While he did not announce his cabinet, he indicated that it would be formed with a "national solution in mind". Our Ambassador visited the Department on November 22 to discuss the President-elect's indicated desire to bring about a compromise, and Dr. Rivero Agüero's request for our support, particularly a renewal of arms shipments. In the ensuing discussions it was agreed that our Government could consider the resumption of arms shipments and other "support" only if Dr. Rivero Agüero were successful in winning wide support in Cuba for his peace efforts. To have any success it was felt the President-elect must initiate constructive steps so that by the date of his inauguration (February 24, 1959) the way would be prepared for the establishment of a government of reconciliation. The complete retirement of Batista from the political scene was believed to be essential to such efforts.

Even

Even the slight prospect of our influencing the President-elect to effect a political reconciliation with the opposition groups was effectively dashed on November 25 when he informed our Ambassador that his plans were contingent upon successful military operations to reduce the rebel threat between then and his inauguration. He added that if the rebel threat were not overcome by the beginning of his term, Batista would have to continue to play an important role as head of the army.

B. Breakdown of Economy in Eastern Cuba Threatens to Paralyze Economy of Entire Nation

One of the key factors which had enabled Batista to maintain his position was the general economic prosperity of the island. For many months the activities of the rebels seemed to have little effect on business in general, but after the failure of the Army's summer offensive of 1958 and the consequent rapid expansion in Oriente Province of the area controlled by the rebels, commercial activity was gradually brought to a standstill. Trains from Habana were attacked and turned back; trucks were blown up or burned; buses were fired upon. By October, transportation in Oriente was confined to the daylight hours and then only under heavily armed escort. Many sugar mills, especially those refusing to pay taxes to the rebels, suffered from serious depredations and sabotage. Large numbers of cattle and horses were driven off the ranches for use by the rebels - some paid for and some not. The effect on commerce was cumulative spreading to Camaguey and Las Villas Provinces.

In November

In November serious concern about the future of the 1958-59 sugar crop and the general economy was voiced in U.S. and Cuban business circles. Many American business interests in Cuba had suffered extensive losses, mostly from rebel actions, and foreign investors in general began to experience difficulties in obtaining insurance. The Nickel Processing Company at Nicaro felt obliged to evacuate most of its American staff on October 24, 1958, and later was faced with the problem of over 1000 refugees who crowded into the plant premises as fighting in the area increased. By December reports were received of serious food shortages in Oriente Province. The City of Santiago was being supplied largely by ship.

This situation brought like pressures to bear on both Government and rebels. The rebels gave general assurances that they would permit the sugar crop in their area of control to be harvested and exported, while the government likewise declared that its forces would protect and insure the harvest in the rest of Cuba. The Cuban Ambassador in Washington stated to the Department that the sugar harvest, although perhaps delayed, would not be greatly lowered in quantity, citing as one of his arguments that Cuban tradition shows that even Cuban rebels would not wish to destroy their country's patrimony.

Nevertheless, the rebels had it in their power to do so and this left many Cubans with the uneasy feeling that economic chaos might transpire. Leaders in the sugar industry had for the most part been
strong

strong Batista supporters in the past but many of them were abandoning the Batista ship rather than face economic ruin.

IX. U.S. Efforts to Interest the Inter-American Community in the Cuban Situation

A. Reluctance of OAS and American Community to Intervene in Cuba because of Nonintervention Principle

At various times during the civil conflict in Cuba, the idea of some action by the inter-American community, notably through the OAS, was explored. Some consideration was given to this at the time, for example, of the kidnapping of American citizens by the forces under Raul Castro in the summer of 1958, but the problem was solved through direct contact with the rebels. It was, however, realized that the doctrine of non-intervention on the one hand, and the incapacity of the recognized Government of Cuba to protect the rights and safety of U.S. citizens on the other, left a gap in the effective protection of the legal rights of foreigners.

As the Cuban conflict became more bloody and destructive, increased demands for action by the OAS were heard. Cuban rebels through their agents abroad urged that the Council of the OAS adopt a resolution protesting on humanitarian grounds the bombing of villages and other cruel retaliatory measures of the Batista forces. Thought was given to the possible intervention of the OAS to mediate the political conflict in Cuba and bring about a cease-fire. These ideas were, however, widely opposed by the Latin American governments and their representatives in that they would run counter to the non-intervention policy of the OAS. Moreover, it was generally realized that the Charter of the OAS did not contain authority for that body to take cognizance of a purely internal political situation.

On December 8

On December 8 the Department circularized our Embassies in Latin America asking them to seek out informally the views of leading members of the respective governments on the Cuban situation, and particularly to find out whether, in the light of the United States policy of nonintervention, there was any feeling of hemispheric responsibility in dealing with a situation which had created humanitarian problems. Replies to this circular indicated a wide variety of reactions. Humanitarian considerations were recognized, and some countries reflected interest in some form of multilateral action. Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and Guatemala suggested specific measures to prevent aggravation of the already bloody conflict. Chile and Mexico and to a lesser degree several other countries expressed doubts on juridical grounds as to the possibility of intervention by other governments or agencies. No practicable course of action for the OAS emerged as a result of this exchange of views.

Two initiatives nevertheless emerged which would, had they prospered, have involved the inter-American community as such in the Cuban conflict.

B. Proposal for Mediation by Ex-Presidents

Ambassador Ricardo Arias of Panama was approached by a representative of an American business firm having interests in Cuba with the suggestion that he personally, as an ex-President who had brought the Chiefs of State of the American Republics together in

Panama

X. Final Days of the Batista Regime

A. Last Efforts of Batista to Obtain Military Solution

Following the elections the Government began talking again of a new offensive against the Castro forces. The strategy appeared to be to withdraw the isolated smaller garrisons and guard detachments from the various sugar centrals to the larger cities in the expectation that the rebels would be lured into making frontal attacks to capture the cities, whereupon they could be smashed by the Army's superior fire power. Meanwhile the rebels were stepping up their attacks against the Army's outposts in Oriente Province and succeeded in capturing a number of them. Some of these victories, at least, may have been the result of the Army's withdrawal strategy mentioned above; in any case the rebels nevertheless captured a considerable quantity of arms and munitions.

On November 27, 1958, a serious army plot against Batista was allegedly uncovered by Batista's Military Intelligence Service (SEM) resulting in the arrest of between 40 and 60 officers ranging in grade from Lt. Colonel down thru Lieutenant. As a result of this discovery one of Batista's top generals, Martin Diaz Tamayo, G3 of the Army General Staff, was relieved of his command. Embassy Habana reported on December 2, 1958, that the above conspiracy was symptomatic of the discontent over the lack of effective leadership being demonstrated by the higher echelons of command in the Army, and the increasingly difficult position in which the army found itself in the three eastern provinces.

In addition

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Panama in 1956, offer to mediate the conflict in Cuba. Ambassador Arias consulted the State Department and was encouraged in this idea. Discussions with him developed the thought that he might associate with him two or four other ex-Presidents of American Republics in an offer to Batista and Castro to lend their good offices in the interest of resolving the political situation. Their approval would rest on a humanitarian desire to help bring about an end to bloodshed. It was also thought that if such an offer were made, a parallel move might be initiated in the Council of the OAS for the adoption of a resolution couched in strictly humanitarian terms which would express the hope of the sister republics that Cuba would find a way to resolve its political conflict and bring about an end to human suffering.

Ambassador Arias approached Cuban Ambassador Arroyo who in turn sent a representative to Habana to sound out President Batista on the mediation proposal. In the meantime, Foreign Minister Andrade of Bolivia arrived in Washington with an idea that Bolivia might usefully offer to mediate the Cuban conflict. He was referred to Ambassador Arias and it was agreed that ex-President Paz Estenssoro of Bolivia, currently Bolivian Ambassador to London, might be one of the ex-Presidents to participate in the Arias initiative.

Ecuador had also indicated a positive interest in doing something of this sort. The Department had encouraged the Ecuadoran Foreign Minister, Tobar, through our Embassy in Quito, to sound out the Cuban Government on the possibility of mediation, which he proceeded to do. An answer came back from Batista expressing appreciation

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appreciation for the offer and suggesting that Foreign Minister Tobar get in touch with Ambassador Arias in Washington on this matter. Ambassador Chiriboga of Ecuador was thereupon put in touch with Ambassador Arias.

On December 30, Ambassador Dreier met with Ambassador Arias, Foreign Minister Andrade and Ambassador Chiriboga at the Arias residence and went over the full plan with them. It was generally understood that it would not be wise for the United States to participate in any activity of this sort, but that the United States would offer encouragement and support to such an initiative once it had been taken. Various details of the whole operation were considered with the final conclusion that Ambassador Arias would invite ex-Presidents Paz Estenssoro of Bolivia, Galo Plaza of Ecuador, Aramburu of Argentina, and finally Ruiz Cortines of Mexico, to come to Panama to discuss with him what they might do in the interest of a humanitarian approach to the conflicting forces in Cuba. The representatives of Bolivia and Ecuador virtually guaranteed the willingness of their ex-Presidents to participate. Ambassador Arias was to sound out ex-President Aramburu through the Argentine Ambassador in Washington and if he accepted, Arias would then sound out ex-President Ruiz Cortines of Mexico. The following day, Ambassador Barros Hurtado of Argentina who expressed himself as enthusiastic over the idea and communicated at once with President Frondizi with a view to sounding out General Aramburu.

The plan

The plan was in this stage when the news of Batista's flight and Castro's victory came through.

3. Uruguayan Initiative for a Resolution by the Council of the OAS

Wide spread sympathy for the Castro Forces was manifest in Uruguay. It was not a surprise, therefore, when the Uruguayan Government advanced the suggestion that the Council of the OAS adopt resolutions which would, in addition to achieving humanitarian ends, constitute one however minor step in the interests of democratic government.

On December 30, Ambassador Iacarte of Uruguay mentioned this subject to Assistant Secretary Rubottom and then discussed it at length with Ambassador Dreier. His thought was to have the Council of the OAS adopt a resolution using as a precedent Resolution 6 of the First Meeting of Foreign Ministers in Panama, 1939, which constituted a "fervent appeal" to the European countries who were at war to abstain from a series of military measures which were viewed with deep apprehension.

Ambassador Dreier expressed the view that some action by the Council was desirable but that it would not be possible to justify a resolution on any grounds other than strictly humanitarian. Furthermore, it would be very difficult to adopt a resolution condemning certain specific military acts without having it interpreted as intervention by one side or another. For example, a resolution protesting the bombing of cities would be clearly pro-Castro since

only

why the Batista Government had signed it and were carrying out such
acts.

After consulting further in the Department, Ambassador Broder
subsequently told Ambassador Lacarte that we could support a strictly
humanitarian resolution provided a satisfactory text could be agreed
upon in advance of any meeting of the Council concerning it.

Ambassador Lacarte was at the point of consulting a few other members
of the Council whose governments might be considered sympathetic
to the idea when the conflict in Cuba ended.

In addition to the dissension in the army ranks, there had been evidence for many months of a growing disenchantment with the Batista regime among its more respected civilian supporters, some of whom had at one time held important positions, including cabinet posts, in the government. They were particularly critical of brutal police tactics and of Batista's reluctance to seek anything but a military solution. While most of them refrained from actively opposing the Batista Government, and at times defined it as the only alternative to complete chaos, they did not hesitate to express privately to our Embassy officials and others their growing concern over the turn of events in Cuba and the signs of governmental disintegration. In addition to their abhorrence of the increasing government atrocities, they expressed their alarm over the mounting evidence of large-scale graft even by government officials whose reputations for honesty had not been previously questioned.

In December 1958 numerous changes were made among the top army command, culminating in the appointment of retired General José Eleuterio Pedraza as Chief of the Army General Staff. Pedraza, a former sergeant who had fought beside Batista in 1933, had the reputation of being tough and able, but also had been in disfavor with Batista for having plotted against him during the latter's 1940-44 administration. Meanwhile a shipment of some 5000 Italian-made Carand rifles arrived and on December 18-20, 15 Comst Mark I British medium tanks and supporting munitions were unloaded in Habana. Prior to this, 12 British Sea Fury fighter planes had
been

been received together with large supplies of food, uniforms, blankets and other munitions for their armament. The report on the military situation prior to the flight of Batista from Massy Habana described the situation as follows:

The most important development of the past week is the decision which Batista appears to have taken to shake up the high command of the Armed Forces and follow a tougher policy in military operations against the rebels. First indication of this was the appointment of retired General José Eleuterio Pedraza to the Army General Staff. This coincided with a change in command in the Province of Las Villas where the military situation was becoming critical for the Government. Other indications of the change are the public announcement of an offensive in Las Villas, reports that the Army for the first time is carrying on night operations, and a more optimistic attitude among the officers of Camp Columbia.

B. Flight of Batista and Top Supporters on January 1, 1959

The exact circumstances of former President Batista's resignation and decision to flee the country accompanied by most of his top supporters are not yet known. The Army had not suffered a crushing military defeat; on the contrary, under Pedraza it reportedly showed the first signs in months of an ability to beat back the rebels. It appeared nonetheless to collapse when Batista and General Pedraza fled, and offered little if any support to General Elogio Cantillo who had been left in charge of the government by Batista. General Cantillo had had negotiations in Oriente Province with Fidel Castro in the previous week. It appears probable that a majority of the army command had determined that the country and the army had had enough of fighting. The sudden collapse of the Batista regime and of the army caught Castro by surprise, but the

26th of July Movement moved quickly to seize its advantage, first achieving complete control of Santiago de Cuba and Oriente Province and then moving rapidly to consolidate its control over the rest of Cuba.

From his refuge in the Dominican Republic, Batista has offered various reasons for his ultimate downfall. Among them are (1) his soldiers' lack of training in guerrilla warfare; (2) the refusal of the U.S. to supply him with arms; (3) the ready access by the rebels to arms from the U.S. and other sources. Though his first point had some validity his second and third points, as has been clearly demonstrated, had little basis in fact except from the psychological standpoint. Batista's Ambassador in Washington during the fall of 1958 consistently expressed his government's wish to resume arms purchases in this country. When queried as to why his government was so anxious to obtain arms here in view of its large purchases elsewhere he explained that the actual need was not so great but the favorable psychological effect of a resumption of U.S. arms shipments to Cuba would be of tremendous benefit, especially in view of the large quantities of arms he assumed were being obtained here clandestinely by the rebels.

C. Assessment of Atrocities and Irregularities under the Batista Government

The extent and nature of the atrocities deliberately committed by the Batista government as well as the graft engaged in by many
of its

of its members will probably not be revealed for some time if ever. Although the figure of 22,000 casualties cited by the revolutionists as having occurred during the internal struggle reportedly include the deaths of partisans of both sides as well as innocent bystanders, and although it may be an exaggerated total even then, the censorship of the press and other news media which was in effect for most of 1957-58, and the suspension of the other constitutional guarantees undoubtedly served to conceal a large number of casualties. Battle casualties were understood to have been particularly heavy during the last half of 1958, especially in the ranks of the Cuban Army. Figures cited by both the army and the rebels are deemed unreliable, though the army, which often was defeated, had more reason to minimize its losses. When the rebels engaged in campaigns of terrorism, innocent victims were apt to be killed in the process either as a direct result of the individual terroristic acts or the repressive police reaction which followed. The police in Habana, for example, apparently felt compelled to demonstrate that rebel acts of terrorism and sabotage were not going unpunished. If the instigators could not be readily found, persons unconnected with the incident were likely to be victims of police reprisals. As the internal struggle increased, there was a tendency for the Government more often to appoint officers known for their tough tactics to positions of responsibility within the armed forces and the police. While the appointment of such officers sometimes

had

had the effect of reducing terrorism in a specific area, such as Habana, the ultimate result was to breed further terrorism and desire for vengeance.

To what extent casualties among the revolutionists resulted from provocation is not known, though they must have been considerable. Rebel attacks and sneak raids on small police and army detachments resulted in deaths on both sides. The rebels usually claimed, however, that captured members of their raiding parties were killed in cold blood. In like manner, the rebels executed numerous "chivatos" who were accused of being informants of the Batista police or army and on rare occasions persons innocent of involvement in the internal conflict, but when government forces resorted to the same methods they were usually accused of the wanton killing of innocent Cubans.

Officials of our Nicaro installations which were located in an area in Oriente of heavy fighting were witnesses to excesses by both sides to the conflict but generally agreed that the army was guilty of more wanton killing than the rebels.

The extent of torture and brutality short of killing again was difficult to assess because of the cover of censorship and closed doors. There were enough eye-witness accounts, however, to lend much substance to the accusation of the revolutionists that a number of Batista's army and police officials were engaging in outright sadism.¹ It was not, however, until after the departure of the Batista regime that the

¹ See enclosure two "Atrocities Allegedly Committed by the Batista Government".

that the excesses of the police and army could be brought to light and the mystery surrounding the disappearance of hundreds of Cubans was dispelled. There is no evidence at hand that the rebels engaged in torture or treated their prisoners with brutality.

The Revolutionists, while admitting that graft had been endemic in Cuba under a succession of government, charged that it had reached new heights under Batista. A Cuban economist who later was to become Minister of Finance in the Urrutia government, once remarked to a Department official that "Batista and his high officials were not only taking the government's current income but were dipping into the capital." Though it had been evident for some time that Batista and a number of his close henchmen, particularly in the army, were enriching themselves at the expense of the public, the filching of the public treasure became more evident as the end approached. Cabinet members and other high officials who hitherto had been considered to have reputations for reasonable honesty were being linked with scandalous monetary and business operations. It probably will take many months of investigation before the extent of the graft and corruption in the Batista administration can be computed. There is not much room for doubt, however, that it was widespread, extending well down into the lower echelons of the government.

XI. Conclusions

1. The recent regime of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba never lost the stigma of the illegal act by which it was created in 1952 and the election which renewed it. From beginning to end it rested primarily on the support of the military and organized labor, and the various efforts made by Batista to gain broader support were unsuccessful. In the last two years of his regime Batista resorted increasingly to police measures to maintain himself in power. His actions showed that he either had no real intention, or lacked the understanding, to take the steps necessary to broaden the base of his government and reach an accommodation with the non-revolutionary opposition. His efforts to fight terror with terror and lawlessness with lawlessness reinforced the determination of the educated and politically articulate middle class elements of Cuban society in their determination to overthrow him; over the years it changed the apathy of the popular classes to antipathy if not open hostility to his regime. In the end his overthrow responded to the popular will of the great majority of the people of Cuba.

2. At no time in their struggle to overthrow Batista did the revolutionary opposition possess an overall military superiority in manpower, weapons, or equipment. Even more important than terrain, the principal advantage which the rebels possessed was their strong motivation and forceful leadership as contrasted with the lack of motivation and ineptitude of command in the government forces. The Castro forces claim, and the available evidence strongly suggests, that

that the chief source of rebel arms and munitions was through capture or purchase from government troops.

3. Although the former Batista government has alleged a lack of arms as one of the main reasons for its failure to defeat the rebels, and is critical of the U.S. suspension of arms shipments from March 14, 1958 onward, the facts show that it obtained large amounts of combat material from other sources after this date and resolved to seek a purely military solution of the Cuban conflict after the failure of the revolutionary opposition in its call for a general strike in April, 1958.

4. The U.S. was aware of the dictatorial nature of the Batista regime from its inception. It was careful never to express approval of the regime per se although it recognized and appreciated the cooperation and support which the recent Cuban government gave the U.S. in the U.N. and in the international field in general. When possible, particularly in 1957 and 1958, it used its good offices to urge upon President Batista and upon opposition elements the desirability of seeking a constructive solution to the Cuban conflict which would bring peace to the country. It delayed certain arms shipments in late 1957 contingent upon general measures which Batista might take to achieve broader support, and when he failed to take them, it suspended indefinitely all shipments of combat equipment.

5. In its desire to bring peace to the Cuban people the U.S. explored the possibility of utilizing the OAS, but had not found a way in which this organization could take any initiative in the matter.

Intervention,

Intervention, whether unilateral or collective, even in the cause of peace or for humanitarian motives, is repugnant to most members of the OAS.

6. The Department was always aware of the possibility that the developing revolution in Cuba might permit a resurgence of communism and militant, anti-U.S. nationalism in Cuba. With this in mind it made a continuing attempt to obtain information regarding the ideology and program of the rebels and the possible degree of communist influence or penetration. This consideration, also, was an important factor in U.S. efforts to encourage a constructive solution to the Cuban conflict which would ensure that Cuban society and institutions would not be completely demoralized and disrupted by a violent and bloody revolution.

As in Venezuela, the Communists associated themselves with the efforts of the revolutionary opposition even though rejected by the Civic Revolutionary Front as a party. Radio Moscow, beginning in early 1958, indicated USSR support for the anti-Batista forces and accused the U.S. of intervention on behalf of Batista. Some effect from this propaganda is to be expected. At the same time there is little evidence to indicate that the Communists played a significant role in the revolution. With regard to the eventual position of the Communists it is considered fortunate and hopeful that the rapid denouement following Batista's departure was not accompanied by the violence and destruction which might have been expected.

7. The policy

7. The policy which the U.S. has followed in Cuban internal affairs has been widely recognized and approved of throughout the Western Hemisphere and within Cuba itself. In spite of many problems, provocations and pressures the U.S. did not intervene, and an internal Cuban conflict has been resolved by the Cuban themselves. It has also enhanced its stature within the inter-American community.