No. 8548
Habana, January 9, 1945

Subject: Forthcoming visit of ex-President BATISTA to United States

SECRET

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that during my long conversation with President GRAU and Ambassador BELT on December 28 both of these officials expressed their grave concern lest ex-President BATISTA on his arrival in the United States be accorded a cordial reception, which might have its political repercussions here. The President said the thought had been expressed by plotters now at work against the Government that the time to strike would come when Batista reached the United States since he would be acclaimed on all sides there, and this would be made to appear as an endorsement for Batista and a disavowal of friendship for Grau. The Legal Attaché in the Embassy has received similar reports.

I pointed out to Dr. Grau that while it might be possible to hold official entertainment to a minimum, we would have no control over various societies, organizations and individuals who would desire to appear before the public eye as entertaining a former Chief of State. I said I would, however, undertake to communicate the President's fears to the Department, at the same time requesting that everything possible be done to reduce the number and the scope of any entertainments which might be given for Batista after he arrives in the United States.

It is indeed unfortunate that so little of the truth about Batista is known outside of Cuba and that so few people realize what he is, the evil he has done and how deep-seated is his animosity for the United States.

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There is a rather widely circulated rumor to the effect that former-Ambassador CONCHESO has recently arrived in the United States, passing en route through Mexico City, where several Batista adherents are now. He apparently left the Batista party somewhere in South America. Ambassador Belt said that he believed this story to be accurate. This development has led to speculation here as to the purpose of Concheso's advance arrival and it is feared by Grau and his followers that the former Ambassador will try to work up a cordial reception for Batista in the United States.

So sensitive to any tale or rumor, no matter how fantastic, is the Cuban public that accounts of homage paid to Batista in the United States could in fact cause disturbance here. Therefore, I recommend that the Department heed President Grau's request.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

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Original (Ozalid) to Department.
In despatch no 8548 of January 5, 1945 the Embassy at Habana reports grave concern on the part of President Grau and Ambassador Belt of Cuba that ex-President Batista might receive a "cordial reception" in this country which might have serious political repercussions in Cuba. This is a possibility of which we are all well aware, and Mr. Rockefeller has, I believe, made his plans accordingly.

George F. Scherer