Office Memorandum

TO: ARA - Mr. Miller, Mr. Woodward
FROM: CRB - Mr. Price
SUBJECT: Certain Background Information Regarding Martí Incident in Havana.

DATE: July 28, 1949

A memorandum from the Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, dated July 26, 1949, transmitted to the Department encloses a report from the U.S. Naval Attache, Havana, dated March 4, 1946 describing charges made by certain organizations in Cuba to the effect that certain members of the complement of the U.S. aircraft carrier Princeton then in the port of Havana had desecrated the statue of Martí.

These charges, which were completely unsubstantiated, tend to reveal that at least three years ago certain anti-American elements in Cuba were deliberately attempting to arouse feeling against the United States by accusing American Navy personnel of precisely the same acts which were involved in the Martí incident this year. In the thought that this might not have previously been brought to your attention, I am doing so as of interest to you in the appraisal of the possibility that the entire Martí affair was deliberately planned.

ARA: CRB: EDesvernine: arp
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Serial No. 5611

Monograph Index: Guide No. 201-250

From: U.S. NAVY ATTACHÉ

At HAVANA, CUBA

On 6 March 1946

Reference: (a) Havana, R. 24-46, 26 February 1946 (b) Havana, R. 39-46

To: Office Personnel

Subject: CUBA

EXTERNAL ANTIFACIST AND ATTITUDES

Havana

Date: 6 March 1946

Evaluation

B-2 unless otherwise indicated

Enclosure (1) Copy of "Manifiesto" protesting alleged actions of U.S. Navy personnel

Translation:

1. An announcement in reference (a) the anti-United States element among the Cubans capitalized on the recent visit of the USS PRINCETON, USS BAYLOR, and USS PORTER to Havana to start an undercurrent of bad feeling by charging improper conduct on the part of the personnel on liberty. An example of such campaign is shown in enclosure (1), original of which was sent in to the American Embassy by a postman in Havana, and which is forwarded for information. Copies of this "manifesto" were distributed about the city on 26 February, some reportedly (b) having been dropped from an airplane flying over the city on the afternoon of that day.

2. As to the actions attributed to the U.S. Navy personnel, it has been impossible to obtain a completely coherent account of the events referred to in the second paragraph of enclosure (1). Apparently some enlisted man in the vicinity of the Iarto statue did become involved with some Cubans in an altercation concerning the actions of one enlisted man who was accused of the reason for the presence of Iarto by the Cuban people, and who had no intention of insulting the Cuban people.

3. Of the three organizations whose signatures are appended to enclosure (1), "Comité Antipieste de Cuba" is described by the Legal Attaché as one of a number of "small revolutionary groups" of no particular importance. "Juntamiento Martí" is an organization devoted ostensibly to the furthering of the life and work of Jose Martí. The newspaper "Gutierrez" is the publication of the Asociación Revolucionario Gutierrez, reported upon in reference (b). The membership of all three of these organizations consists principally of intellectuals, students, and political extremists, many of whom worked with the Carta Revolucionario Cubana (Authentic) during the difficult period prior to its rise to power, and are still associated with it.

CONCLUSIONS: This is an example of the lengths to which some of the extremists in Havana will go to stir up trouble and promote feeling against the United States, and it is an indication of how any improper act on the part of visiting U.S. Navy personnel is immediately seized upon and played up as much as possible by these extremists. Fortunately, the Cuban police have been most cooperative and have helped to keep most accounts out of the press.

Distribution By Originator

EB (FA. MA) OGDEN. FLAS

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
AL HONORABLE SR. PRESIDENTE DE LA REPÚBLICA.

A LAS AUTORIDADES DE LA NACIÓN.

AL PUEBLO DE CUBA EN GENERAL.

MANIFIesto

Queremos hacer constar nuestra más energica protesta por los hechos HOMICIDIOS y DELIRANTES QUE SIGNIFICAN UNA TERRORIZZACIón y UN ULTRAJE A LA EGOIDAD DEL PUEBLO CUBANO, ocurridos en la noche del domingo 17 del actual, en el Parque Central de la Habana.

Un grupo de MARIAS del Portaviones "Trincomale", de la armada de guerra de los Estados Unidos, después de recorrer las principales Avenidas y Pasos de la Capital, en pleno estado de embriaguez insultando y vejando a las mujeres cubanas con palabras y gestos obscenos y en algunas ocasiones "alimandoales y TOSANDOLES de mala fe", se dirigieron al Parque Central y se cubrieron sobre la EGMATUUS del Apostol -anti, CRISTIANO, EVITA DE HABANA-. Algunos nativos que se hallaban por ahí intervieron para evitarlo, creándose con tal motivo, una fuerte alteración del orden.

Este hecho es un ultraje y la afrenta mayor que se nos puede hacer a los cubanos y que lastima profundamente nuestra moral y nuestro sentimiento.

Llamamos por este medio AL PUEBLO DE CUBA para que se une a nosotros en esta protesta y que DEMANDE DE LAS AUTORIDADES DE LA República EEUU que se INVESTIGUE ESTE CASO y que se proceda, dándole un castigo ejemplar a los CULPABLES, y se evite de este modo que se repitan estos hechos bochornosos en el futuro.

Por el CONTE DEPUTADO DE CUBA,
JUAN CHAVEZ ROMERO,
Secretario General

Por "Alvina-Laribana",
OSCAR V. PALACIO,
Secretario General

Por el Periódico "Guácharos",
ALDO E. GARCIA,
Jefe de Circulación.

Office Memorandum  UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: ARA - Mr. Miller, Mr. Woodward
FROM: CRB - Mr. Desvernine
SUBJECT: Possible Navy Representation at Kartí Ceremonies in St. Paul.

With reference to your inquiry on the above subject, the following brief background information may be of interest:

Following the unfortunate Kartí incident at Habana several months ago, we have done a number of things to amuse Cuban feelings on this matter. In addition to the statements issued and the placing of the wreath on the Kartí statue at Habana by Ambassador Butler, ceremonies were also held in other parts of the Island during the ensuing weeks in which our Navy paid homage to the memory of Kartí. Not long ago at a session of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Flood delivered a long eulogy of Kartí.

In discussions between members of the staff and Ambassador Butler in Habana about two months ago, it was agreed that it might be undesirable to continue to play up this theme, and it was the consensus that we had already gone as far as we should in making amends for an incident for which our Government was not responsible in the first place.

It is my impression that Navy representation at the ceremonies planned at St. Paul on Friday of this week might constitute too pointed a reminder of the Habana incident and that in view of the foregoing consideration it might not be appropriate to arrange for such representation.

I consulted Ambassador Butler on this point today by telephone and, while his first reaction was that it might be a good idea for the Navy to be represented at the ceremonies, he recognized that there were also considerations which might weigh against the desirability of such a move, and he stated that he had no strong feeling about it one way or the other.

After discussing this thoroughly with Mr. Desvernine, I think it would be more graceful and effective to leave the Navy out this time.