



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Handwritten signature/initials

No. 783
711.37/9-2048

American Embassy
Habana, Cuba, September 20, 1948

CONFIDENTIAL

Handwritten initials

Subject: University Professor Claims American
Interests in Cuba Urge Establishment
of Dictatorship

Rec'd
Sept. 30

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The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Handwritten initials: Fer, Cof

Sir:

I have the honor to report that El Mundo on September 15, 1948 carried a United Press despatch from Madison, Wisconsin, dated September 14, indicating that Professor William STOKES, member of the faculty of political science of the University of Wisconsin, had told members of the Civic Club of Wisconsin in an address that American industrial enterprises in Cuba were favoring the establishment of a dictatorship in Cuba.

The article indicates that Stokes had just returned from Cuba where he has been studying the government of Cuba during the summer. He is quoted as saying that Americans condone the corruption in Cuba, consider Cubans inferior, and "from day to day Americans corrupt Cubans with shady practices." He is also quoted as saying that he knew wealthy industrialists in Cuba who preferred dictatorship to democracy.

Professor Stokes first came to the Embassy's attention this summer when he communicated with the Public Affairs officer on August 18, 1948 and asked for assistance in obtaining an interview with President Grau. At that time he said he was on leave from the University of Wisconsin studying electoral processes of Cuba, and that he had interviewed the heads of the various political parties in Cuba. He was recommended to the Public Affairs officer by Dr. Herminio PORTELL Vilá, professor of history at the University of Habana and director of the Cuban North American Cultural Institute.

It had been noted, however, that Stokes, whose full name appears to be William Sylvane Stokes, had a guest

card

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SEP 21 1948

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RETURN TO DO/R FILES WITHIN 14 DAYS, WITH A NOTATION OF ACTION TAKEN.

DNR

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September 20, 1948
Embassy at Habana.

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card at the American Club, giving his home address as 743 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin. Allegedly he was born February 21, 1916 in Wilcox, Arizona. He is married and gives as his clubs and affiliations the University Club, Memorial Union, American Political Science Association, American Society of International Law, Foreign Policy Association and Pi Sigma Alpha. Suspicion was aroused at the American Club because he had been seen lunching there several times with prominent Cuban politicians, including the President of the Communist Partido Socialista Popular (PSP), Dr. Juan MARINELLO. It was determined at that time that Stokes had spent several years recently travelling in Central America, Mexico and Cuba.

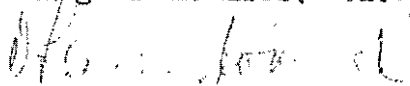
The Embassy's files further indicate that one William S. Stokes, Ph.D., instructor in political science at Northwestern University, had written the Embassy in April 1944 asking for copies of the Constitution of Cuba, electoral law and laws relating to the judiciary system and its procedures, alleging that he needed this material in connection with a course he was giving in government and politics of Latin America.

Although William KRIEHN, who, it is understood, is well known to the Department, uses the alias William Stokes, it seems quite clear that he is not one and the same person as the Professor Stokes who visited Habana.

Professor Stokes was probably guilty of misinterpreting the sentiment among those American businessmen in Habana whom he might have met at the American Club. Very few American businessmen in Cuba really favor dictatorship as a political method of government. However, the lack of respect for law and order, gangsterism, lawlessness, inefficiency of the Government and difficulty of doing business in Cuba make many businessmen, both American and Cuban, long for a more responsible government. Professor Stokes' error is not so much in incorrectly reporting as it is in failing to interpret what he heard. Despite the invitation extended to Professor Stokes by two officers of the Embassy to visit the Embassy and discuss his work in Cuba, he did not call at the Embassy or talk with any Embassy officials.

Respectfully yours,

For the Chargé d'Affaires, .i.:


V. Lansing Collins r.
Second Secretary of assy

File No. 710
VLansing Collins, Jr./dts

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