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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

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DISP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

July 1, 1953
DATE

REF : None

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SUBJECT: Miami Herald Interview with President Batista

Managing Editor George Beebe of The Miami Herald spent Sunday, June 27, with President Batista aboard the presidential yacht and published, in the Herald's edition of July 1, a lengthy interview quoting Cuba's chief executive on a broad variety of subjects. The interview, picked up by the American wire services, was published prominently in most Cuban newspapers.

Beebe's story said that "if President Fulgencio Batista is concerned over rumors that a Cuban revolution is imminent, you would never know it from spending a leisurely day with him at sea. If there is any dissatisfaction among the populace with the Batista regime, it was not evident on the surface..... I had the assurance of Batista that revolution was mainly in the minds of his exiled enemies, and not in Cuba."

Asked point blank whether he feared a revolution in Cuba, President Batista was quoted by Beebe as replying that there will be "no major revolt" since "I know with certainty that I have the Army, Navy, police, and the people united against any uprising." Batista said his enemies are always predicting a revolution in order to stir up unrest and keep his administration from functioning smoothly.

Batista said that he was not sure whether his opposition was building an invasion army in Yucatan, as reported, but that he considered an invasion of Cuba a foolish move since he has "adequate protection" throughout the island.

President Batista said that he had not decided whether to be a presidential candidate in 1954. "My party wants me to run again," he was quoted by Beebe. "Before I step aside I want to make sure that others seeking the presidency are sincere and will protect the rights of the people and the government economy." He added that he thought he would win an election were it held now.

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Page 2 of
Desp. No. 4
From Ambassy, Habana

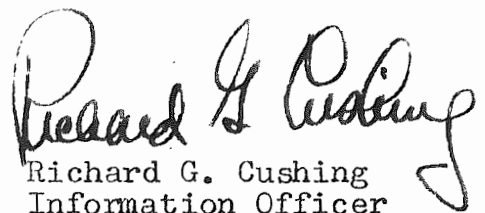
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Page _____ of
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Batista was quoted as saying that he had the Communists "under control in every corner of the country" and that they constitute no danger to Cuba.

Clippings from The Havana Post, carrying the Associated Press story of the interview, are attached.

For the Ambassador:


Richard G. Cushing
Information Officer

att.
Enclosure:
✓ 3 copies of Havana Post clipping

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9/11/60

page 4 Havana

Exiles Not Cuban People Plan Coup, Says Miami Editor

President Batista Denies Seditious in Armed Forces

MIAMI, Florida, June 30. (AP)—A revolution against Cuba's President Fulgencio Batista is "mainly in the minds of his exiled enemies, and not in Cuba," according to George Beebe, managing editor of The Miami Herald.

Beebe spent Sunday with Batista aboard the presidential yacht off Varadero Beach.

"If President Fulgencio Batista is concerned over rumors that a Cuban revolution is imminent, you would never know it from spending a leisurely day with him at sea," Beebe wrote in The Miami Herald's Wednesday issue.

"If there is any dissatisfaction among the populace with the Batista regime, it was not evident on the surface," he added.

Beebe's report, in question and answer form:

Q. In the United States, we hear reports that a revolution against your regime is imminent. Do you fear such an uprising?"

A. My enemies have been predicting such a revolution every since I took over the government on March 10, 1952. By these rumors they hope to stir up unrest and to keep my administration from functioning smoothly. But there will be no major revolt. A revolution needs the help of the people. I know with certainty that I have the Army, Navy, Police and

the people united against any uprising.

Q. Do you think there is any truth that your enemies are building an army in Yucatan for a Cuban invasion?"

A. I am not sure. An invasion needs bases, planes, boats and soldiers. My enemies have no such bases in the United States. They tried to establish them in Canada and Mexico, but failed. Central America does not want to be a part of any trouble with Cuba. We have adequate protection all over our island. An invasion would be a foolish move.

move.
Q. Is it true that some arms caches have been uncovered in Cuba?

No, not that I know of. But I do know that my enemies have been spending freely over the world in an effort to accumulate arms. It is regrettable that Prio (Carlos Prio Socarras, the President Batista overthrew) and his friends have got more millions to spend on armament than has the Cuban government.

Q. Carlos Hevia (candidate for President when Batista took over) said in Miami last week that some of the generals of the Cuban Army and officers of the police force and navy are planning a coup to throw you out. Is this true?

A. Hevia is crazy. Our Army, Navy and Police are strong units. I think I know my generals better than he does.

Q. Have these rumors of revolution hurt Cuba?

A. Definitely. These rumors are circulated by my enemies in the hope of jeopardizing the economy of Cuba. Predictions of revolution scare away tourists and other business so badly needed by our growing population.

Q. Will you be a presidential candidate next June?

A. I have not fully decided. My party (Progressive Action) wants me to run again. Before I step aside, I want to make sure that others seeking the Presidency are sincere and will protect the rights of the people and the government economy.

Q. If the election were held today, what do you think would be your chances of winning?

A. I think they would be very favorable to me. The other parties are pretty badly split apart and I think the masses of the people are satisfied with my administration.

Q. What is the general economic situation in Cuba today? Has it improved in the last year?

A. As soon as we can correct the ills created by Prio's mismanagement, I think Cuba will be better off than ever before in history. The Prio administration set Cuba back many years. He permitted the production of 7,300,000 (Spanish long) tons of sugar when he knew that 5,000,000 tons was all that we could possibly market and keep the price up. Cuba had to pay \$120,000,000 to keep this surplus off the market. We had to pay \$8,000,000 to destroy one year's tobacco surplus—another Prio error. Until we stabilized the market, every Cuban grower, farmer and worker stood to suffer financially.

Q. Who masterminded the sale of surplus sugar to Great Britain, France and Japan?

A. Officers of my government. Thus we returned money to the Treasury that we had borrowed to buy the surplus and stabilize the market.

Q. What are some of the major projects you have in mind for Cuba?

A. One of the main things is to

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A. One of the main things is to improve our educational system that has been so badly neglected during the two previous administrations.

Q. What do you consider Cuba's greatest need?

A. We need new industries to provide employment for our fast-growing population. There are just not enough jobs being created. We are a progressive people and a fairly prosperous nation. But we have to buy from the United States everything from television sets to washing machines to women's dresses. Thus most of our money goes out of the country. We have got to create more industries that will keep our money at home.

Q. What industries have been launched recently?

A. We have stepped up our fiber production. We hope soon to be making our own radio and television sets. We have a system similar to FHA (Federal House Authority) in the United States that will provide thousands of Cubans with housing they can afford. This will create many construction jobs.

Q. It is true then, that Cuban business men are concerned with the money being spent abroad?

A. Yes, but their greatest concern is the million being invested abroad by Prio and officers of the last two administrations.

Batista said his administration is increasing public works all over the island and defended new taxes levied "to help alleviate misery among the poor people."

He said there is no danger from Communists in Cuba and that there are fewer party members now than when he took office in 1940. Batista said Prio charged he was courting the Communists but added his (Batista's) administration closed the Russian Embassy and threw its staff out of Cuba.