

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : MID - Mr. John Topping

DATE: May 26, 1953

FROM : MC - Orray Taft, Jr. *W*SUBJECT: Status of Manuel Garcia.

You will recall that one of the persons whose arrest was sought following the seizure in Mamaroneck, Long Island, New York, of arms and ammunition allegedly purchased for use against President Batista of Cuba, was one Manuel Garcia. It has not been possible to serve the warrant of arrest as he immediately fled to Cuba. You will also recall that he is prominently mentioned in the criminal case report, prepared by the office of the supervising customs agent at New York, in which evidence was accumulated, correlated and set before the United States District Attorney for the Southern District of New York to serve as a basis for a presentation to the Grand Jury in an effort to obtain his indictment as a conspirator to violate the Neutrality Act.

Mr. Garcia had claimed birth in Puerto Rico and he has been documented as a Puerto Rican by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. However, upon his arrest in Cuba during a visit of a Customs agent to Habana he claimed, and established, birth in Cuba. He was questioned by the agent in the presence of Cuban authorities and released. He is apparently living in Vibora, Habana.

It seems strange that the Cuban Government would permit a man so closely involved in an apparent attempt to procure arms to overthrow the Batista regime to live without apparent restraint in the country. One possible explanation is that he was acting as an informant for President Batista. It is also possible that he has purchased his freedom with cash or by the full disclosure of all pertinent information. However, the Embassy at Habana could undoubtedly shed some light on the anomalous situation and it is requested that the Ambassador's views, opinions, and reactions be sought.

RSCA;MC:OTaft:dd

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