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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : ARA - Mr. Cabot *for OK*

DATE: June 16, 1953

FROM : MID - Mr. Neal *gon*

SUBJECT: Position of the Cuban Government with respect to Communism

The information furnished by Carlos Hevia which Senator Hickenlooper forwarded with his letter to you of May 28, 1953, has been carefully studied by this office.

Carlos Hevia is a distinguished Cuban citizen, and has held many high posts in that country, including the Presidency. He was again a candidate for the Presidency in the elections which were scheduled to be held on June 1, 1952, running as the choice of a coalition of the incumbent Cuban Revolutionary Party, of which he is a member, and several smaller groups. Batista was also a candidate in that campaign, running as the head of his own Party of Unitary Action. Since the coup of March 10, 1952, as a result of which the elections were postponed, Hevia has continued in opposition, and was one of the signers of the "Montreal Manifesto" of June 2, 1953, along with seven other leaders of factions of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and the Party of the Cuban People. Other important leaders of those parties are not in agreement with the signers of the Manifesto.

Mr. Hevia alleges that Batista has maintained close relations with Cuban Communists, that he has aided the Communists in various ways, and that there are Communists in important positions in his present government. He covers the period from the time Batista first became prominent, in 1933, to the present. This is a popular tactic, designed primarily to influence the attitude of the United States, and the charges are hurled with equal vigor by Batista at his opponents. In that connection, one of the parties in the coalition supporting Hevia's candidacy for the Presidency was the Cuban Nationalist Party, whose leader, Nicolas Castellanos, publicly accepted the support of the Communist Popular Socialist Party in his candidacy for mayor of Habana in 1950, and campaigned for the position together with leaders of that party. Mr. Hevia accepted the support of the Cuban Nationalist Party without known objection.

The charges made by Mr. Hevia have been made by various opponents of Batista, and have been carefully considered both at the time of the coup and subsequently by the Department. They are felt to deserve particularly close attention in view of Batista's former friendship for known communists such as Juan Marinello, and the fact that persons who were formerly communists but who now claim to have abandoned that ideology have achieved positions of a certain prominence and influence in the present government, particularly in the Ministry of Labor. In view of the radically changed world situation

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since Batista was last in power in 1944, our consideration has been limited to statements and events since the date of the coup, March 10, 1952.

It is the opinion of this office that the evidence available to the Department does not support the allegation that Batista is pro-Communist. Among the factors influencing that conclusion are the following:

1) The Batista regime gave satisfactory public and private statements concerning its intentions to take steps to control international communism in Cuba prior to recognition by the United States on March 27, 1952.

2) Since that time, Batista has continued to take an anti-Communist position in public utterances. In a broadcast on June 12, 1952 he stated that he would "fight Soviet ideology with the same energy as that with which (he) previously fought the Nazi-Fascists". On March 10, 1953, he called for vigilant activity "against Communism that receives orders from Russia", and against those who abet its agitation and encourage dissension within the country.

3) The Cuban representative to the United Nations has consistently aligned his country solidly with the United States against Communist attacks, and has been prominent in the refutation of many communist allegations. Following Batista's speech of June 12, 1953, he stated (in the United Nations) that in the event of a new world war "Cuba will occupy her place of honor" on the side of the free nations, and that Batista is fighting with all his energy to eliminate Communism in Cuba.

4) The breaking off of relations with the USSR on April 3, 1952 was forced by the Batista administration in refusing to permit diplomatic couriers of the USSR to enter Cuba with diplomatic pouches on March 21, 1952, at a time when the USSR had not recognized the Batista administration. The note of April 3, 1953 from the Cuban Ministry of State to the Legation at Habana of the USSR denied that the couriers had had the right to any other treatment.

5) A bill to establish a committee to investigate communist activities in Cuba was introduced at the first session of the Consultative Council, on May 22, 1952. The bill was unanimously approved in plenary session of the Council on August 14, 1952. In February, 1953, a three-man commission of the Cuban Cabinet was designated to draft a law controlling communism in Cuba. It is understood that such a law has been drafted and is now under consideration by the Cabinet. The reaction of the communist press against this activity has been violent.

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6) The administration has so altered the electoral code that the communist party will almost certainly be unable to qualify for the elections, now scheduled for June 1, 1954. The electoral code of 1943 (which Mr. Hevia wishes to see restored) required that a party have 2% of the registered voters as party members in order to participate. In the last general elections, those of 1948, the Popular Socialist Party polled 2.54% and thus qualified. The code, as modified on March 7, 1953, requires that a party obtain 4% of the registered electorate, which is almost certainly a larger figure than the PSP can achieve.

7) Since March 14, 1952, the Batista administration and the militantly anti-communist leadership of the Cuban Confederation of Labor have mutually supported each other. The alliance has at times appeared shaky, but is still in existence.

8) At the time of the coup, Communist publications in Cuba attacked Batista violently, calling him "a fascist puppet of Yankee imperialism" among other things, and those publications have continued in the same vein since that time.

9) Principal leaders of the Communist Popular Socialist Party, such as Blas Roca, have publicly and repeatedly attacked Batista. They have endeavored, so far without success, to form a "united front of the masses" in opposition.

10) Communist headquarters and publishing establishments have repeatedly been raided, and in some cases damaged.

11) Communists and communist sympathizers have repeatedly been arrested and detained for questioning by the authorities.

12) Communist, and communist-infiltrated, meetings have been broken up, and requests for permits to hold meetings denied.

13) Many former communists and alleged communists who had joined Batista's Party of Unitary Action, particularly the workers' division of the party, were left out when the party was reorganized in December, 1952 as the Party of Progressive Action. That group has since organized another Party of Unitary Action, in May, 1953, thus becoming completely separated from the administration.

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ARA:MID:JLTopping:dc

~~MID/c - Mr. Zepherino~~ ~~ARA~~

Hotel Lexington
48th Street & Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y.
July 31, 1953

Mr. Jack Moors Cabot
Assistant Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

direct to Habana
drafted 8/4/53
MID: H RW file
Letter drafted 8/19/53
MID: JLT
DC/R

Dear Sir:

I am writing you because I know of your deep concern for Cuban affairs, and in the realization that in a difficult situation it is not easy to gather all the facts and see them in proper perspective.

The Cuban newspaper "El Mundo" on the front page of its issue, Sunday, July 19, 1953, carried a story under the headline: "U.S. Denies that Batista is pro-Communist." It then goes on to say that Congressman Lantaff has released a letter he received from the Department of State to that effect.

Of course I believe that the letter was written according to the information at hand at the moment it was signed. And I know that the American people and their President believe in Democracy and do not like to support Dictators.

But the Cubans who do not have the knowledge of the American people and of this country that I have, will consider the letter a defense of Dictator Batista at a moment when the most prominent Americans are speaking of the need to defend liberty and Democracy in the world.

The Cubans know that Batista gave legal status to the Communist party in 1938; that he was elected President in 1940 in a coalition where his name appeared under the emblem of the "hammer and sickle"; they know that he gave the Communists complete control of Cuban organized labor; they know he designated prominent Communists for his Cabinet; they know that in 1950 when he organized the "PAU" (a political party), Communists helped him and obtained control of all of the labor organizations of that party; they know that in the last free elections for Mayor of Havana on June 1, 1950, Batista allied his party, the "PAU", to the Communists "Popular Socialists"; they know that there are Communists in Batista's present government; they know that the Communists are coming back into power in labor unions. This last fact has just been published in the Havana papers "El Mundo", "Pueblo", and "Prensa Libre", after the letter to Mr. Lantaff was sent. For the first time in 8 years Communists have been elected to the Executive Committee of a National Labor Union, and under a Dictator this cannot happen without instructions.

The Havana newspaper "Pueblo", has called this fact "the come back of the Communists" and it also commented that when

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someone abandons the Communist Party he is charged with all kinds of crimes; yet the Communist party in Cuba has been silent about all their important members that now appear to have joined Batista's party. "Pueblo", the 1st of July, 1953 states: talking about the Communists "first they infiltrate the "PAU" (Batista's party), then they trans-ship to the "PAP" (Batista's new party). Now they have taken positions in the C.T.C. (Cuban Confederation of Labor)".

About these facts the newspaper "El Mundo" in an editorial on July 2nd, 1953, says, answering an explanation of the "National Tobacco Labor Union:" "in agreement with that opinion, then Communist leaders should be admitted to Union leadership, to strengthen funds of the Worker's organizations, and pretty soon we will have the phenomenon that Moscow agents would have gained control of the laboring movement of Cuba, as it happened during the former Government of the actual President of Cuba" (Batista).

It must be realized that these newspapers were writing under a Dictatorship, that many newspapermen have been brutally beaten, and that they had to write at least with prudence, fearing retaliation and full censorship as has now been enforced.

The Cuban people have not only always been allies of the Americans but also their friends; anti-american feeling has no fertile ground in Cuba.

The Cuban people are now suffering the economic stagnation produced mainly by the lack of guarantees caused by the discarding of the Cuban Constitution. This can be shown by the drop of the U.S. exports to Cuba from \$199,220,000 in the first four months of 1951 to \$145,000,000 in the same period of 1953, a drop of \$54,700,000 or 30 per cent. This cannot be explained by sugar, because exports decreased in 1952 when the sugar crop increased. The 11 per cent difference between 1953 and 1951 crop cannot account for a drop of 30 per cent in the exports; besides there is always a certain time lag between a reduction in the crop and its effect on commerce.

The Cubans are suffering the oppression of a dictatorship; the scrapping of their liberties; the humiliation of losing their right to elect their Government. They see their institutions toppling over, their road to higher achievements blocked.

They know that gold reserves and assets of their National Bank have decreased; that by the Dictator's orders 8 changes have been illegally made in the basic law that regulates the Cuban National Bank; and that also by the Dictator's orders 46 new taxes have been established.

It is natural that under these sad circumstances, Cubans are deeply resentful of Dictator Batista, and any statement that they think tends to defend him is not helpful in the long run to their good will.

You may recall that in March, 1950, there were three candidates for President of Cuba. On March 9 of that year, the Communist newspaper "Hoy" called for a "popular front" to defeat me, as the

candidate of "imperialism" and the "reactionary middle class." They did not attack Batista. I have copies of that issue in case you would like to examine one.

I am taking the liberty of enclosing herewith clippings of the New York Times of Sunday, July 26th and the World-Telegram, Wednesday, July 30th, with a statement I have made.


At this very moment, hundreds of Cubans have been killed under the pretext of mopping up. Hundreds more are in prison.

A few young Cubans, not connected as far as I know with the large political parties, took it upon themselves to liberate their country; many of them gave their lives for liberty and democracy, a strong idea as yet in the hearts of many men.

I believe that if you carefully check, you will find that when Batista thought he was in danger, he threw in prison only the leaders of the large Cuban political parties that believe in democracy. He was not afraid of the Communists, and I have not heard of a single one of their important leaders being placed behind bars.

I know this has been a long letter, but I am sure you can understand my abiding concern for the welfare of my people. My sincere hope is that these notes may serve to fortify your background on the situation as your country becomes involved in it from time to time.

With my highest consideration,


Carlos Hevia
Former President of Cuba

World-Telegram - July 29/1953.

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Patriots Set Off Revolt, Batista Foe Asserts

By FREDERICK WOLTMAN,
Staff Writer.

Sunday's bloody revolt against President Fulgencio Batista of Cuba was inspired, not by the Communists, but by youthful army and navy officers and patriotic young civilians, a prominent Cuban statesman said here today.

In fact, it was President Batista's policy of accepting support from and building up Cuba's Communists that partly caused the revolt which took 60 lives, charged Carlos Hevia.

Except for Gen. Batista's military coup last year, in which the government was seized with the aid of tanks, Mr. Hevia would be president of Cuba today. A former minister of state and agriculture and briefly provisional president of Cuba, he was a six-party coalition candidate for the presidency in the 1952 elections which never came off.

Called Smokescreen.

He dismissed as "a smokescreen" the raid on Communist headquarters in Havana and the closing down of its newspaper, Hoy, on charges of complicity in the revolt in eastern Cuba.

"The dictator clamped a censorship on Havana's four leading newspapers," Mr. Hevia said at the Hotel Lexington. "To have passed over the Communists would have been a complete giveaway. It would have proved charges that Batista has been playing with the Communists all along.

friendship with President Theodore Roosevelt, Mr. Hevia was the first Cuban to be admitted to Annapolis by a joint resolution of Congress.

"Of all Latin-American countries, Cuba is one with no bitter, anti-American feelings," he said. "It would be a pity if the Communists, working with the dictatorship, could change that."

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"The fact is when Batista was elected president in 1940, he named a Communist party leader to his cabinet, brought Communists into his government and put all organized labor under control of the Communists.

"When he returned to Cuba in 1950 to organize his PAU party, he asked the help of the Communists. They infiltrated his party.

'Arm in Arm.'

"The day before he seized the government on March 10 last year, the Communists devoted the entire issue of Hoy to demands that Carlos Hevia, not Batista, be defeated in the national elections. In his entire political career, Batista has worked arm in arm with them.

"Only last month, five important Communists were elected to

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REGIME OF BATISTA ASSAILED BY HEVIA

Exiled Ex-President Calls Head
of Cuba a Dictator Ruining
the Country's Economy

Carlos Hevia, who was President of Cuba in 1934 and a candidate for the Presidency last year, said last week that disturbed economic and political conditions in Cuba were of "the type that have always produced revolutions in the past."

Señor Hevia in an interview charged President Fulgencio Batista with being a "dictator" who was destroying Cuba's internal economy, ignoring the country's Constitution and depreciating its gold reserves. In addition he said General Batista formed an alliance with Communist elements that had restored them to strength both in the labor unions and in the Government.

"The Cuban people are against Batista," the former President said. "They are restless because of their lack of freedom and the absence of government according to their Constitution. Cuba today is a country without law. What foreign investor will invest money if he does not know what the law is, and if Batista and his Government can change the law overnight?"

Backed by Several Parties

Señor Hevia was backed for President last year by a coalition of several parties in the election that was to be held on June 1. By a coup in March, 1952, General Batista overthrew President Carlos Prío Socarras, whom he charged with planning to establish a dictatorship. The coup resembled General Batista's first seizure of power in 1933.

In the year beginning in March, 1952, Señor Hevia said, the total gold and foreign assets of the National Bank of Cuba dropped from \$531,000,000 to \$470,000,000.

"This is due not only to sugar, but to the fact that the dictator by his capricious rule has established forty-six new taxes by decree, and has changed the National Bank and monetary law of Cuba nine times," Señor Hevia said. "Cuban commerce is collapsing and the retailers in the country are going bankrupt. Cuba is dropping in importance as a great market for American products and services."

Señor Hevia said Cuban imports from the United States dropped about 30 per cent in the first four months of this year, compared with 1951. He attributed the reduction to General Batista's "discard" of the Cuban Constitution and Congress.

In 1951 Cuban imports from this country aggregated \$539,750,000, Señor Hevia asserted. In the first quarter of this year, he said the Cuban market bought \$59,700,000 less than it purchased in the same period two years ago. Señor Hevia contended the cut in United States exports could not be attributed to the Cuban sugar crop, since the 1952 crop was much larger than in 1951.

Señor Hevia served as Cuban Minister of State from 1948 to

1950, as Minister of Agriculture in 1950-51 and as President of the National Development Commission of Cuba in 1950-52. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy. His father, Col. Aurelio Hevia, fought in the Cuban War of Independence from 1895 to 1898.

He declared that former President Príosocarras, as Minister of Labor in 1946, had taken Communist control away from labor. By incorporating Communist elements into the Government parties, Señor Hevia said, General Batista had restored Communist strength in Cuba.

"Both the Cuban people and their army are restless," he continued. "The Cuban people have always turned out more than 80 per cent of the vote. As great believers in freedom and democracy the Cubans want a return to constitutional government. I have information that many army officers and soldiers are unhappy over the present situation with its distress to their families and friends. Civil unrest is so pronounced that something is bound to happen."

Señor Hevia added that democratic government would not return to Cuba until the constitutional provisions for the election of a President and Congress were reinstated.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION

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per E.T. AUG. ARA
9/20/53
FOI 820723
RABASA

PRIORITY

NO.: A-68 August 5, 1953

SUBJECT: Letter from Carlos Hevia re Communist Influence in Batista Government

TO: The American Embassy, HABAMA

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There is enclosed a copy of a letter dated July 31, 1953, from Mr. Carlos Hevia to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Mr. Hevia repeats the allegation that the Batista Government is pro-communist and under communist influence, and cites what he believes to be evidence of this. He also implies that the Department's letter to Congressman Lantaff, which commented upon similar allegations received by the Congressman from one Eliseo Riera-Gomez, is considered a defense of the Batista regime and consequently resented by the Cuban people.

It is believed that, in view of Mr. Hevia's standing in Cuba and ~~former~~ high official positions, the Assistant Secretary should acknowledge this communication. It is requested that the Embassy inform the Department promptly what reply should be made in its opinion.

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Enclosure: *W 8-5-53*

From Carlos Hevia,
July 31, 1953.

Stamp box with handwritten numbers: 20, 1, 4114

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DRAFTED BY: *ARA* APPROVED BY: *W. Wellman*
ARA:MID: *W. Wellman*:dwm 8/5/53 AUG 5 1953 AM

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In reply refer to
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My dear Señor Hevia:

Upon my return to my office after visiting the countries of South America with Dr. Milton Eisenhower, I found your letter of July 31 containing your evaluation of the present situation in Cuba and have read it with great interest. Your comments and observations have also been brought to the attention of those other officers of the Department interested in Cuban affairs.

Sincerely yours,

John M. Cabot
Assistant Secretary

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His Excellency
Carlos Hevia,
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48th Street & Lexington Avenue,
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