

SECURITY :

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AIR POUCH

To: Department of State

From: HABANA 945 October 28 1950

Ref:

Subject: BOHEMIA INTERVIEWS, DOMINICAN REVOLUTIONARY LEADER  
GENERAL JUAN RODRIGUEZ

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 DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 BUREAU OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
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Bohemia of October 29, 1950, has published an extensive interview with the Dominican revolutionary leader, General Juan RODRIGUEZ, reporting his views on the negotiations for the return of Dominican exiles to their native country and on the inefficacy of O.A.S. intervention up to the present time. Rodriguez also expressed complete lack of confidence in President Trujillo's amnesty laws and guarantees.

The article commenced by referring to reports that have been circulating that Rodriguez had 1) sold out to Wall Street and White House policies lending himself to a maneuver to strengthen Trujillo by weakening his opponents in exile, 2) surrendered unconditionally, 3) promised to return to the Dominican Republic, accompanied by all who would follow him, for a reported payment of four million dollars, and 4) animated by purest patriotism, had sought a specific formula for the democratization of his country.

In the interview Rodriguez denied he had negotiated with Trujillo for his return to his country, for the return of his property, or for the departure of his family from the Dominican Republic. What he had done, he said, was to consecrate himself to the Cause of his country.

Rodriguez explained he had been unable to defend himself during the past six months since he had given his word to do nothing during that period that might disrupt any pacific solution to the Dominican problem. He gave his word, he said, since it suited the interests of the Cause due "to obstacles of an international character which we all know." He added that he was now free of his commitment and free to talk.

"The truth of the matter," said Rodriguez, "is that I did not initiate negotiations; they initiated with the American Ambassador to Cuba, Mr. Robert BUTLER. I was called in by that distinguished diplomat who asked me not to attempt any armed invasion of my country, offering to help, with his government and the Organization of American States,

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to settle the matter by means of free elections." Rodriguez explained that in spite of his doubts with respect to Trujillo, he wanted to prove to the world he was not a trouble-maker, his only objective being the substitution of the regime of tyranny in his country by one that was genuinely democratic.

Rodriguez stated he had no objection to accepting Ambassador Butler's good offices since he would accept anything not infringing on his honor for the liberation of his country. He added that he was not negotiating with an enemy nor with a person regarding whose capacity and good faith there could be the slightest doubt. He said he interpreted Ambassador Butler's interest in the matter as that of a good citizen of his country who spared no effort to defend democracy either within or outside of his own country.

Rodriguez stated he had written to Ambassador Butler outlining his views on the changes that the "tyrant Trujillo" should make in his government for the good of the Dominican people. He explained that these changes involved no innovations but merely compliance with the Constitution and International Agreements undertaken by the Trujillo regime on the signing of the various documents in defense of democracy and the peace of the world. He said that this letter reached both Trujillo and the Organization of American States. He added, however, that Trujillo sought to confuse the issue and had failed to make any direct commitment to respect democracy in the Dominican Republic. He said that Trujillo had limited himself to sending to the O.A.S. a document presenting his views on the causes for discontent in the Caribbean and on the question of amnesty for all the exiles; "an amnesty which is no such thing since it contains clauses dangerous to the security and liberty of those accepting it."

Rodriguez then stated that Trujillo did not appear to be inclined to change his ways and in this connection referred to the assassinations of Porfirio RAMIREZ and his eight companions. He stated that the Dominican Chargé d'Affaires in Cuba, Sr. Felix BERNARDINO, had acknowledged that General Federico FIALLO, occupying one of the highest positions in the Dominican Army and recently designated Minister of Public Works, had perpetrated the deed and that it was well known in his country that nothing could be done except on the orders of the tyrant.

Rodriguez felt that a great responsibility weighed on the Dominican people and that the Dominicans themselves were guilty for their failure to change the situation in their country. He thought the American States also bore a stigma for having tolerated the Trujillo regime, to say nothing of treating it on a basis of equality with the "legitimate and

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decent governments of the continent." He stated that under the principle of non-intervention, once a government was recognized, it apparently enjoyed equality with other governments whether or not it had come into power on the basis of a coup d'État. Discussing the principle of non-intervention, Rodriguez held that it was immoral to recognize governments which came into power by force against the will of the people or to prevent them from being overthrown in the same way in which they seized power. He stated that to prevent a people from liberating itself by whatever means available constitutes an intervention against the liberties of that country.

Turning to the Investigating Committee of the Organization of American States, the General stated that it had operated improperly. He saw no reason why Cuba and Guatemala should have been held guilty of having aided the exiles. He said that had there existed no exiles such alleged aid would not have been given. There are exiles, he said, because there are tyrannies such as Trujillo's. He thought that for the O.A.S. to "recover its prestige" it would have to convince the dictatorships that it is an effective organization. He denied the "O.A.S. declaration that the problem of the Caribbean had been solved." He added that the situation was worse than ever since the dictators had now realized they could continue their disruptive and anti-democratic activities with complete impunity. He asserted that if any positive action is to be taken it must be clear that the disease lies with the tyrants who are the cause and not with the exiles who are the result thereof.


Concluding his remarks, General Rodriguez pointed out that the principal problems facing the Government of the United States and the U.N. concern Korea and the peace of the world; adding, however, that the following great truth should not be forgotten: To people suffering the horrors of tyranny their world is composed of their own country which they also wish to see free. "When one's own house and that of his neighbor burst into flames one first puts out the fire in his own home since no one can be asked to take greater interest in the affairs of others than in one's own problems." He called on the Organization of American States, the UN, "or anyone else who so desires", to help the exiles in restoring democracy to the Dominican Republic, since "it ill becomes one to speak of democracy in Europe or in Asia when we do not have it here in America."

Comment:

It would appear from the foregoing that General Rodriguez

may have abandoned, at least for the time being, any intention he may have had to accept Trujillo's proffered amnesty and return to his native country.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:



Earl T. Crain,  
First Secretary of Embassy.

cc: Amembassy Ciudad Trujillo  
Ambassador Daniels  
Ambassador Butler

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