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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA MAY 1954 1322

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

April 30, 1954  
DATE

REF : Despatches 1130 of 3/18/54 and 1144 of 3/22/54

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.	OTHER
	REC'D		
	ARA-4	DC/R-2 OLI-6 EUR/A-1 P-1	
	3/4	CIA-7 USIA-10 NAVY-3 ARMY	

SUBJECT: Cuban Leaders Issue Call in Defense of United States  
Against Attacks From Hemispheric Communists and Leftists. AIR-3

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The Habana press for April 29 carried prominently a manifesto signed by a group of leaders in Cuban intellectual and public life headed by the distinguished soldier, statesman, lawyer and writer, Cosme de la Torriente, which is a call for a hard-headed appraisal of the present international situation and for American solidarity behind the United States in dealing with it. The manifesto is in fact intended as an alert against attacks on the United States and continental solidarity launched by Communists and reenforced by those liberals who play the Communist game by criticizing our country's policy on ill-considered and frequently Communist-chosen grounds. A copy and translation of the manifesto are attached.

The manifesto brings out the danger to the Western world, its civilization, and its values posed by the threat of international Communism, led by and working for Russia, and particularly the role that the United States is taking in meeting that threat. At such a time there is no room for equivocation or vacillation, the manifesto says. American unity becomes essential. The Kremlin's policy is to isolate the United States. In this hemisphere it raises the bogey of imperialism to achieve its purpose. The danger would not be so great were it not for "elements, who, without being avowed Communists, place themselves more or less wittingly in their service because of a false conception of democracy and liberty." Unity is threatened when "there is proposed the interference of some (countries) in the affairs of others." The manifesto refers to the policy that Russia has followed in the post-war world after being helped to victory by the United States. In calling for unity in the Americas, the manifesto brings out graphically that unity in this hemisphere is an entirely different matter from unity in the Communist orbit.

It is largely because agitation of the Guatemalan question is beginning to fall into the pattern of Communist strategy that the manifesto under discussion was issued. In despatch 1130 of

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March 18, 1954 the Embassy reported that a Pro-Guatemala Committee had been established in Cuba, whose initial declaration had been signed by Communists and others consistently identified with Communist fronts, as well as by prominent intellectuals. On March 23 this Committee held a public meeting from which people had to be turned away for lack of space. It has been reported upon elsewhere by another government agency.

Shortly before the holding of this meeting the Embassy's Public Affairs Officer, Mr. Jacob Canter, ran into Francisco Ichaso, of Diario de la Marina, who in reaction to the pro-Guatemala movement had just written a very sensible article on anti-Americanism in his paper (despatch 1144 of March 22, 1954). They chatted over the interest being generated in the Guatemalan cause and its accompanying anti-Americanism; and Mr. Canter in congratulating Ichaso on the soundness and timeliness of his article expressed the opinion that it would be a good thing if the article and its point of view could receive wider publicity. Within the week Mr. Ichaso had arranged for a meeting of writers and intellectuals to draft the manifesto that is the subject of this despatch.

The manifesto received extensive front-page coverage in the Habana papers, the most important of which published it in full. (Apart from its intrinsic merit, the manifesto was, of course, signed by the editors of Diario de la Marina, El Mundo, Excelsior, and El Pais.) Some of the front-page headlines were:

El Mundo: "Cuban Intellectuals Condemn the Insidious Campaigns Against the United States."

Diario de la Marina: "Manifesto on the Present World Juncture and the Way Ahead for Free Peoples and Free Men."

Información: "The Promotion at This Time of Anti-American Campaigns is Demoralizing."

Mañana: "To Public Opinion."

Alerta: "The Agents of Communism Must Be Watched."

El Pais: "America is Exhorted to Remain United Before the Red Stratagems Against Democracy."

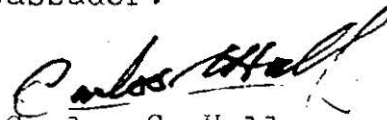
Excelsior: "Cuban Intellectuals Demand American Unity Against the Soviets."

Editorial reaction has so far been entirely favorable. Clippings of editorials on the manifesto from Diario de la Marina, El mundo and Información for April 30 are attached. They catch and reflect faithfully the spirit of the manifesto.

It would have been better if among the signers there had been a few more readily identified with liberal causes. The manifesto may not go far in winning retractions from those already converted to pro-Guatemala, pro-Soviet or anti-American points of view; but it has real value as putting into the field a forceful exposition of the case against their arguments.

Action Requested. It is requested that the Department supply copies of this despatch and its enclosures to USIA, Washington.

For the Ambassador:



Carlos C. Hall  
Counselor of Embassy

Enclosures: 11

1. 4 clippings
2. Translation of manifesto

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Statement by a Group of Leaders in Cuban Intellectual and Public Life from the Habana Press of April 29, 1954.

TO PUBLIC OPINION:

The present world crisis requires unequivocal decisions, especially by those persons and institutions that watch, orient and interpret the course of public opinion. Confusion of mind and of conscience is one of the most serious dangers facing our threatened civilization.

In normal times ambiguity and ideological instability may be justified by an attitude that is relativistic and skeptical in the last instance or by that tendency to a multiplicity of shadings which characterize speculative thought. But humanity is living today in one of the most agonized epochs of its history and this unavoidable fact makes it necessary to define concepts and to clarify attitudes in order to serve the present as well as to discharge responsibility to the future.

That is the purpose of this statement as the persons signing it understand it. It does not intend to refute other opinions nor to open the way to unnecessary controversy: it is limited to an exposition, with an affirmative spirit, of the viewpoint of a group of Cubans who are worried by the course of international events and concerned with the need to react properly to them.

It is an undoubted fact that Western civilization is at this time threatened somewhat as it was in 1940 when the Nazi-Fascist powers, after a series of unjustified aggressions, provoked the Second World War. At that time America, with the United States at its head, was a decisive factor in the defeat of the Axis. The victory obtained at the cost of great efforts, great sacrifices, and great material and human losses, did not bring Peace along with it. It was very soon noted that the defeated totalitarianism was substituted by another no less despotic, aggressive and unscrupulous. The Soviet Union took advantage of its military power, which to a great extent had been facilitated by the Democratic powers and very specially by the United States, to invade and subject free nations of Europe and Asia, converting valiant but defenseless countries into satellites, and imposing puppet governments upon them, directed from the Kremlin. In the meantime the fifth column of the local Communist parties, scattered everywhere, blindly obeyed the Soviet orders to undermine the Democratic regime from within, thus preparing the way for the so-called "world revolution", which is nothing other than the conquest of the world by Russia.

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America is one of the strongest bulwarks of Western culture and of the Democratic system of social organization. In spite of the differences that characterize this hemisphere, all of the countries that are contained therein have the firm will to conserve the nucleus of spiritual values which is their Graeco-Latin inheritance and which, upon being merged with others of native and other origins, formed American civilization, which in some aspects is an extension of European civilization and in others adapts and enhances it. This decision is so definite that we would never abandon the custody of that spiritual treasure, not even in the improbable event that Europe should renounce its sacred defense.

The success of this enterprise does not require a rigid uniformity of the countries of America under the same creed, the same ideology, or the same social, political and economic principles. Neither does it require subordination of any kind nor the abdication of the respective national characters and systems. Let us leave that to the Soviet system, which imposes Communism by blood and fire without considering traditions, the history and the idiosyncrasy of the "liberated" communities and regiments their people according to the whims and conveniences of the metropolitan power. But continental security and efficiency in the struggle against aggression do require a certain strategic unity which is perfectly compatible with the independence and peculiar characteristics of the life of each American republic.

That unity becomes endangered when conflicts arise among our peoples, when the interference of some in the domestic affairs of others is encouraged, when movements are developed that tend to export political or other ideologies, when watchwords which Communism used on other occasions, now being again brought forth to incite some countries against others and especially against the United States, are anachronistically used, and when ingenuously or through bad faith the Soviet threat is underestimated and the man of the middle class of our Continent is led to believe that the present situation is the result of a quarrel between two great powers, the United States and Russia, in which the other nations of America have no reason to feel involved.

It is evident that the policy of the Kremlin seeks to isolate the United States, separating it from the countries of Europe as well as from those of America. As to the former, it makes use of the fear of atomic warfare. As to the latter, it brings forth the old slogan of anti-imperialism, picturing the American nation as if it were a replica of the Soviet Union in this part of the world. The local Communist parties are the

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instruments of this divisive maneuver. Its effort, however, would not be so dangerous if it were not supported by the diffused sub-columns of other elements which, without being declared Communists, place themselves more or less unknowingly at their service through a false concept of Democracy and freedom.

In the present great struggle the United States, due to historical necessity, marches at the head of the free nations. To deny this would be useless. If yesterday, before the threat of Nazi-Fascism, its intervention was decisive, today, before the not less peremptory threat of Communist totalitarianism, we would be lost were it not for its exemplary organization, its armed power, its economic potentiality and the almost unanimous decision of its people to prevent that "government of the people, by the people and for the people" shall not perish from the earth.

It seems to us that to recognize this fact is fundamental for the defense of the Continent. To ignore or try to weaken it due to old or new resentments or by reasons that have no connection with the real facts of the common danger, is to make things easy for the Soviet fifth column in its undermining task, in its persistence in weakening the American bulwark.

The recognition to which we are referring strengthens, rather than compromises, the free determination of each one of our countries and therefore does not imply any waiver, abandonment or subordination in the sphere of the interests and aspirations of each republic. The existence of an urgent and common objective in the struggle against totalitarian aggression is compatible with the maintenance of the individual and national rights and with other objectives, which may be realized through the processes of our regional system.

Union does not mean subordination. It is legitimate to point to mistakes and ask that injustices be remedied. If there is any country that is open to criticism, that is respectful of the opinion of others and ready to correct its mistakes, that is the nation of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln. What we do consider demoralizing and self-defeating at this time is to promote anti-American campaigns on the pretext of local frictions, the settlement of which is more easily achieved through reasonable arbitration than by thoughtless violence or an unjust attack.

The defense of the civilization to which we belong, the moral and material protection of our countries, is such an

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important and urgent matter that it does not admit equivocal attitudes and much less those that unwittingly aid the divisive policy of the Soviet Union in its efforts to put the free nations of America against each other by using worn-out arguments, untruths or common principles of a politico-social philosophy that is discredited. We believe we are doing our duty as Cubans by denouncing this scheme and by exhorting all the men of free America, without sterile suspicion or antagonisms, to keep united in this crusade for Democracy, freedom, justice and the dignity of peoples.

Translated by: L. L. González

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