

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

957

December 12, 1951

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. enc.

Air pouch

REF : Habana's 925, Dec. 4, 1951

SUBJECT : Cuban Press Reports on the Quetzal Case

Cuban press clippings of news items, editorials and cartoons relative to the Quetzal case are enclosed.

The press of December 9 headlined reports of an interview granted by the ex-Cuban Chargé d'Affaires to the Dominican Republic, Dr. Gustavo SOTOLONGO, wherein he gave his version of his last conference with President TRUJILLO. According to Dr. Sotolongo, President Trujillo insulted Cuba and its highest officials including President PRIO. Trujillo reportedly ended the conference with a bellicose statement that he was a "real he-man" ("macho muy macho") capable of anything. This has been received with indignation in Cuba, and has given rise to considerable anti-Trujillo publicity including the publication of cartoons depicting Trujillo as a pig (a play on the word "macho" which in Cuba is a slang term for "pig").

It was also reported on December 9 that the Ministry of State had been placed under a special guard of soldiers in field uniform (helmets, etc.) to avoid any attack by Trujillo agents.

President Trujillo's reported statement that he was not disposed to release the Cuban members of the Quetzal crew because they would be used in further Cuban propaganda attacks against him has set off several local reactions not calculated to smooth relations between the two countries. The National Federation of Maritime Workers (FOMN), composed of port laborers, has announced a boycott on the handling of freight to or from the Dominican Republic. It has called, with the support of the PAU Youth, the "National Bureau of Sindicalismo Revolucionario" (an offshoot of the A.R.G. - Acción Revolucionaria Guiteras) and other groups, for a "gigantic" meeting to be held Sunday December 23 at Central Park in Habana under the slogan "Guerra a Santo Domingo". This slogan has been used as a sensational headline by lesser Cuban newspapers.

Papers of the tenth reported that Cuba might break relations with the Trujillo Government. Others reported the contrary.

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The Minister of State, who has announced that Cuba will "exhaust all the resources of international law" in seeking a just settlement, has formed a special committee under his general supervision to study the Quetzal case. It is headed by Ambassador Enrique CAMEJO Argudín, Under Secretary "en comisión" 1/ who will preside in his capacity of Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs. It includes Ambassador GUELL, Minister 2/ Joaquín MEYER, Dr. Pablo F. LAVIN, Director General of the Pan American office; Dr. Francisco GARCÍA Amador, Plenipotentiary Delegate to the Inter American Juridical Committee at Rio de Janeiro; Dr. José F. PIMENTEL, First Secretary and "Jefe de Negociado" of the Ministry; Dr. Pedro A. QUINTANA, Second Secretary; Dr. Gabriel BRETON, Second Secretary; and Dr. Mario RIVA Patterson, Secretary of Legation and "Sub-Jefe de Despacho".

On December 11 the Minister of State reportedly announced in a press interview (apparently on the basis of the Dominican Republic's reply to the Peace Committee, and immediately following a conference with President Prío) that Trujillo would accept the Committee's decision in the case and that Ambassador Guell would leave for Washington that same day to deliver to the Committee a Cuban note "in accordance with the reply made by the Dominican Republic". However, the Minister of State informed the Ambassador today that he (the Minister) had been misquoted and what he had actually said was that the Dominican Government had "agreed to appear before the Peace Committee in connection with Cuba's complaint".

Editorial comment is outlined below:

La Ultima Hora (Communist): "...the Cuban Government has lost a great opportunity to demand justice with the energy which the case demands."

Mañana: "...Dominican exiles in Cuba...protest the Truman-Trujillo...guided missiles agreement...which constitutes the total and shameless delivery of Dominican sovereignty by the tyrant to his imperialist masters." This article then quotes anti-U.S. statements taken from Max HENRIQUEZ Ureña's "Bajo la Garra", written in August 1922, and inquires as to what he has to say now.

Prensa Libre on December 7 published an article by José Agustín MARTINEZ pointing out that since the Quetzal is not Cuban, Cuba has nothing to protest in connection with the ship itself and that, as regards the Cuban crew members, Cuba's delayed reaction has been too weak. He says Cuba prepared the way for the mess it is now in

1/ Dr. Raul RUIZ is still Under Secretary of State.
2/ Personal rank.

through previous aggressions and association with international communism. He criticizes Cuba for the poor state of its relations - or lack of relations - with Peru, Venezuela, Argentina, Spain, Santo Domingo and "half of humanity".

On December 9, Nestor SUAREZ Feliú wrote (also in Prensa Libre) that "Pearl Harbor had been avenged by the Americans...but the infamy of Chapita [Trujillo] remained pending". He called for firm action, stating that the slogan should be "Let us remember the Cubans of the Quetzal". On December 11 the editor of Prensa Libre accused the Government of "panic".

Alerta on December 10 ridiculed Trujillo's reported statement that he was a "macho muy macho". VASCONCELOS, author of the article in question, said Trujillo's "machismo" consisted of "jailing Dominicans and joining up with the interests of US captains of industry who associate with him to exploit business in Santo Domingo where wages are miserable and social progress unknown, where disagreement is a grave crime and where criticism means suicide or expulsion".

El Crisol demanded that Congress speak out and, if necessary, demand the breaking of relations with Santo Domingo.

Diario de la Marina on December 11 approved the Cuban Government's actions, so far, in the Quetzal case and warned students, laborers, and others against irresponsible activities prejudicial to Cuba's present favorable position in this case.

El Mundo of December 11 strongly supported the Ministry of State's "high tone of dignity with which it demands justice".

Alerta of December 11 expressed the view that the committee appointed to "study" the Quetzal case would be completely ineffective.

The Havana Herald said on the 11th that "the boys who are hollering for blood in this instance are, curiously enough, those same persons who could but won't volunteer for any scrapping in the major league fight now going on in Korea..."

Comment

Despite pressure from irresponsible groups the Cuban Government appears determined to negotiate settlement of

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the Quetzal case on the bases of conciliation and continued diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic (if possible).

The Cuban Government is extremely sensitive to the more or less justified criticism of the conduct of its foreign relations in recent years and of Cuba's present unsatisfactory relations with countries such as Venezuela 1/, Peru, Spain, et cetera.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

/ Cuban press clippings.

Copies to:

Amembassy C. Trujillo
Ambassy Caracas

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
JAN - 1961
OFFICE OF REGIONAL
AMERICAN AFFAIRS

1/ Questioned by reporters, Minister of State SANCHEZ Arango stated on December 11 that there was "certain diplomatic tension" between Venezuela and Cuba, but that "no break was contemplated".

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UN TANTO PARA PRIO

Por Rolando Masferrer

Los amigos que el ridículo sátrapa vecino tiene en esta insula, no le han fallado esta vez.

No se había apagado el eco de la viril denuncia que hicieron los representantes de nuestro país ante los organismos internacionales de las escandalosas violaciones de ley cometidas por el "benefactor-generalísimo" Leónidas Trujillo, y ya, una docena de plumíferos de alquiler estaban haciendo la apología del tirano, cuya garra homicida no tiene fronteras.



Proliferaron los articulejos mal hilvanados en loa de la vergüenza de América que es el déspota ad-perpetuam de Santo Domingo.

Casi todos los diarios habaneros increíblemente, han dado cabida en sus columnas, a algún material que en solidaridad con el bandido-loco de Quisqueya atacan al Presidente Carlos Prío.

El espectáculo es de los que producen náuseas.

Estamos en presencia de un peligroso brote de canallería política que se produce como un contraargumento dirigido a debilitar la posición de nuestro país, que ha puesto en la picota del derecho internacional al sangriento chacal del Caribe que nos insulta y provoca a ciencia y paciencia del gran policía del hemisferio en que se han erigido los Estados Unidos.

En realidad Trujillo y su ergástula son niños mimados de Washington.

Como se sabe, un grupo de marinos cubanos fué secuestrado en alta mar cuando se dirigía a Centro América en un barco de bandera guatemalteca.

El acto de piratería, que no tiene precedentes en esta época, fué llevado a cabo por fragatas de la propiedad privada de este heredero grotesco de los bucaneros de la Tortuga.

Desde el escandaloso atraco, nuestros compatriotas han estado encerrados en las mazmorras de la fortaleza de Ozama y sometidos a las más bárbaras torturas y maltratos.

Ahora, para acentuar el escarnio, en un país que no funciona sobre otras bases jurídicas ni otra ley que la voluntad de un demente que se proclama a sí mismo "un enviado de la Providencia," un tribunal-titere condenó a largas penas a los cubanos secuestrados.

La reacción de nuestro gobierno fué enérgica y rápida. Interpretó cabalmente los mejores sentimientos de nuestro país que son de honda repulsa para Trujillo.

Los hombres más responsables de nuestra prensa, de toda la vida política y social del país, deponiendo por un minuto las querellas políticas menores, han expresado su solidaridad con la posición decorosa del Presidente Prío y su gobierno.

Así, el miserable croar de algunas ranas de la charca hedionda del trujillismo y el franquismo en nuestra nación, no han hallado eco.

Ellos, que han lanzado su baba en loa al amo que les paga y que dicen es generoso con sus criados cuando prodiga el dinero ensangrentado de su dádiva, tratan de ridiculizar la posición de Cuba en la organización de Estados Americanos.

Ya la tralla cubana de perros trujillistas

Estados Americanos.

Ya la trailla cubana de perros trujillistas ha logrado reproducir en la inescrupulosa gran prensa norteamericana, con la que Trujillo se muestra especialmente atento, algunas de sus diatribas.

Es a su país a quien humillan.

Nosotros nos complacemos en descubrir que ni uno solo de nuestros periódicos ha puesto su criterio editorial al servicio de tan mala causa. Todos han condenado, sin andar escogiendo las palabras, a un ofensor del derecho de gentes, que a la cara de veinte naciones, se conduce como un pirata del siglo XVII, con el mismo descaro conque masacró a veinte mil trabajadores haitianos hace veinte años.

Pierden su tiempo los agentes de Trujillo como los de Franco, que es un Trujillo con pretensiones de Jefe de Estado y corte de moros y curas, cuando arremeten contra las valientes y justas palabras del Presidente Prio en el reciente congreso de su partido, denunciando la tolerancia y aun el apoyo de Estados Unidos a las situaciones de opresión e ilegalidad que padecen muchos países del hemisferio.

Esta posición de Carlos Prio se ganó la adhesión unánime de las fuerzas más progresistas de nuestro país, que se han nutrido en el ejemplo de solidaridad americana con la libertad, que hemos heredado de Bolívar, de Sucre, de San Martín, de O'Higgins, de Máximo Gómez, de Martí, de Hostos, de Narciso López, de Eloy Alfaro, de Morazán, y más recientemente de Roosevelt, de Lázaro Cárdenas y de Arévalo.

La participación de voluntarios cubanos en la pelea contra el fascismo en España y en mil nobles aventuras de liberación americana, es algo que llena de orgullo a nuestra juventud.

Puede aducirse que nuestra posición de decencia internacional, que no es sino de lealtad a la buena historia americana, compromete nuestra cuota azucarera.

Pero ¿quiénes de nosotros estamos dispuestos a cambiar nuestro derecho, a poner la ceniza en la frente de los tiranos, por unas toneladas de aumento en nuestra cuota azucarera para los yanquis?

La dignidad nacional no está en venta.

Por unos centavos no entregamos Isla de Pinos, ni las bases de San Julián y San Antonio. Ni renunciamos a la gloria revolucionaria y nacionalista de haber abrogado la Enmienda Platt a la vera de los cañones de los acorazados del Tío de las barbas.

¿Qué éste es un lenguaje que no entienden los lacayos?

Peor para ellos.