

RESTRICTED

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: September 26, 1952

To: MID - Mr. Rubottom
Through: MID - Mr. Wellman
From: MID - Mr. Topping

Subject: Summary Statement of Relations between the United States and Cuba

Reference: Your memorandum of September 24, 1952.

On March 10, 1952 General Batista with the support of the Cuban armed forces overthrew the constitutional government of Carlos Prío Socarrás and established a provisional government. The United States recognized the new government on March 27. Congress has been suspended, and the regime governs by decrees, originating in an advisory appointed Consultative Council, and approved by the Council of Ministers. The 1940 Constitution has been replaced by similar "Constitutional Statutes" promulgated by the new government. Constitutional guarantees of civil liberties were restored after a temporary suspension; however, the regime has restricted the enjoyment by its opponents of freedom of assembly and speech, although not freedom of press. Elections have been promised for November, 1953, before which date the government plans to revise the electoral code. Political parties existing at the time of the coup have been abolished by government decree but continue limited activity.

Despite efforts to win popular support by establishing a civilian government, restoring civil rights, planning public works and agrarian reform, and courting both capital and labor, the regime is unpopular. The considerable political opposition is not united, however. Rumors persist of plots by elements both in and out of Cuba for armed uprising. The armed forces which are the key to the situation have remained loyal to the regime.

The Governments of Cuba have always been very cooperative toward the United States. Cuba has close ties with the United States as the result of its geographical proximity, United States association in the struggle for Cuban independence, the strategic location of Cuba, the very great volume of trade with the United States and considerable American investment in Cuba. Cuba is a large important market for United States agricultural products and manufactured articles. Cuba is the principal foreign source of sugar for United States consumption and has both a considerable United States sugar quota and a United States tariff preference. Cuba is also a source of strategic minerals, and the United States is operating at Nicaro, Cuba, with the support and cooperation of the Cuban Government a defense plant for production of nickel. A modest technical assistance program, consisting mainly of a fiber project and specialists in mining and agriculture, is being carried on.

The United States has a naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, pursuant to a treaty with Cuba. During World War II the Cuban Government permitted the United States to use her ports and to construct airfields in her territory, and used units of her small fleet in convoy duty. Many Cubans served in our armed forces. As a result of a recent Cuban request, United States military, naval and air training missions are now in Cuba. In March, 1952 United States and Cuba signed a military assistance agreement.

The Cuban Government actively supports and participates in the UN and the OAS. Domestically and internationally it is anti-communist. Diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were broken in March 1952.

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