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FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

March 12, 1953

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SUBJECT: Further Reaction to Stalin's Death

File J-1

While Cuban official reaction was still lacking, all except the outright Communist press continued to paint Stalin in a wide range of hues as a bloodthirsty tyrant and generally considered Malenkov a still unknown quantity but probably of the same school of world conquest as the man he succeeded.

The well-known international commentator Juan Luis Martín, writing in El Mundo of March 12, devoted 600 words to describing Stalin mercilessly as the "assassin of more people than all other tyrants together... He exterminated peoples; formed a clinical system for the practice of crime; falsified history. He was an incredible criminal, poisoner, paranoic, autocrat, a perverse, arrogant, ambitious beast..." Martín said it would be naïve to suppose that Malenkov, a protege of Stalin, would follow any other course.

Even Rolando Masferrer, director and columnist for Tiempo en Cuba, who rarely attacks communism, devoted his column of March 7 to an unsparing lashing of Stalin as the author of "a shameful epoch for the human race." Masferrer said that "the incredible despotism of Stalin, his contempt for human life, his brutalities, and his horrible crimes eclipsed all the horrors of the Middle Ages." Masferrer said that the high price of the suffering, privations, persecutions, and slavery in the Soviet Union under Stalin has negated in the eyes of the world any technical advances that may have been made.

Excelsior, morning newspaper of largest circulation in Cuba, said in a page one editorial on March 7 that the ascension of Malenkov to supreme power "does not furnish us with much optimism in the world picture" and that the "presence of Molotov in the Foreign Ministry and Vishinsky in the United Nations tells us that there will be no significant change in Soviet foreign policy."

Información on March 7 carried a column by Francisco Pares which said that Stalin must have died a disillusioned man because

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of the "complete failure to win Yugoslavia ideologically and the failure to force the Soviet colonization of Western Europe."

José María Capó, in Diario de la Marina of March 7, described Malenkov as another Stalin. "Nothing is changed for the moment. Malenkov could even be more dangerous for the West than was Stalin. We must realize that the spirit of Stalin is now transferred to a man of less intellectual capacity."

Diario de la Marina on March 8 said that as a bulwark against communism it has been asked by many readers what the consequences of Stalin's death might be. Diario de la Marina replied by quoting a Spanish phrase which means "A bad man with whom we are familiar is better than a good one we know nothing about."

"Stalin was not good; there is no such thing as a good Communist," said Diario de la Marina, "but still, to our mind, he was not the worst. We knew more or less what we could expect from Stalin; we don't know what to expect from Malenkov. We do not think that these internal changes in Russia will change the world picture. The worst thing about communism is communism itself, even though we accept the fact that Stalin's death creates a world political question."

Excelsior on March 8 termed Malenkov the logical heir to the dictatorship since he is the best example of the type of man the Soviets like--hard working, cruel, and sage. "We cannot say yet whether Malenkov will be equal to Stalin," said Excelsior. "Because he has always lived in the shadow of Stalin he never has maintained relations with the West and with non-Communists. It is quite possible that he may continue in the path followed by Stalin, with the same inclination toward class difference and a greater deviation from the Communist Utopia." Excelsior added that the gravest danger to the democracies is Malenkov's ignorance of the world outside Russia and his super-anxiety to demonstrate his independence."

In an editorial-page column in El Mundo on March 10, Raúl Roa ridiculed the confusion in the press over the death of Stalin, and its implications. "Let's not deceive ourselves," he wrote. "Stalin has died; but his policies live on. The Soviet State is alive, with its satellites in clenched fist; the Communists throughout the world are waiting for orders; the dogmas of the Kremlin are deeply rooted in the conscience of millions of people. Malenkov will follow, inflexibly, the line of Stalin..."

For the Ambassador:

Richard G. Cushing
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Information Officer