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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Embassy Habana
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
REF : Embtel 674, March 24, 1952
SUBJECT: RECOGNITION: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH
DR. MIGUEL ANGEL CAMPA, MINISTER OF STATE

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I have the honor to enclose a memorandum of my conversation with Dr. Miguel Angel CAMPA, Minister of State of the Batista regime, which took place in the afternoon of March 22.

As reported in the telegram under reference, I consider that our conditions for recognition have been met by the new regime and that we should proceed to recognize.

Willard L. Beaulac
Willard L. Beaulac

Enclosure: *at*

✓ Memorandum of conversation,
Ambassador/Minister of State,
March 22, 1952

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March 22, 1952

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Dr. Miguel Angel CAMPA, Minister of State
The Ambassador

I saw Dr. Campa at the country home of Pedro RODRIGUEZ CAPOTE, Assistant Chief of Protocol of the Foreign Office.

Dr. Campa looked worn out. He immediately asked me to tell him frankly, based on our old friendship, why the United States hadn't recognized Cuba.

I reminded Dr. Campa that he was familiar with American practice so far as recognition was concerned. We took a good look at the new situation, we submitted it to the conventional tests, and then we made a decision concerning recognition. We had to think not only of the country involved but also of all the other American Republics. There were countries where revolutions and upsets might be encouraged by a precipitate act of recognition by the United States. We had to think of all those things. Furthermore, two weeks had not yet passed since Batista's coup d'état. This might seem a long time to the Provisional Government in Cuba, but it was not a long time to the rest of the world.

I told the Minister that I was going to ask him certain questions and raise certain points; not that I had any doubt about them, but because other people might have doubt about them and therefore it was good for the United States and for the Provisional Government of Cuba to have them on the record.

I asked him whether the expression "in accordance with the Constitution or emanate from the laws" contained in his note No. 662, March 11, to the Embassy was intended in any way to limit the international obligations that the Cuban Government was prepared to fulfill. He said that it was not intended in that way at all. It was a perfectly conventional phrase. He could tell me formally that Cuba would fulfill its international obligations.

I reminded Campa that General Batista used to have close relations with the Communists. I asked whether we might expect that these close relations would continue. Dr. Campa said that the Provisional Government and he himself would do what could be done under the law to eliminate the freedom and privileges which the Communists were now enjoying in Cuba.

I asked Dr. Campa whether he had anything to say on the treatment of private capital. I said I had in mind the situation deriving from Article 77 of the Constitution, which made it nearly impossible for a company to discharge a man and which therefore discouraged foreign investment and which led to such things as "interventions," which in my view amounted to expropriations. I referred to the case of the United Railways, a British concern, and to the case of the Orange Crush Company, which included American interests.

Dr. Campa said that he could not predict in detail what the Government would do in the field of private investment, but he thought General Batista's statements concerning private capital had been excellent. They had been very well received, and I doubtless knew that business men were among the most enthusiastic supporters of the new regime. He said he was confident that the new regime would do everything reasonable and practicable within the law to attract and protect private capital.

I asked Dr. Campa whether we could expect that there would be any steps taken in the near future toward more constitutional forms. I asked particularly whether the Congress might resume its functions or whether a Provisional President might be named.

Dr. Campa said that he did not think any steps of the kind suggested in the press would be taken at this time. He thought most of the suggestions were being made by people trying to confuse the situation. He said he thought Batista would instead concentrate on calling elections at the earliest possible moment. He said the press speculation had caused the regime a lot of trouble so far as recognition was concerned. If a Provisional President were named it would not be a case of a new regime. It would be the same regime.

I told him that my information was that Batista had offered the Provisional Presidency to Saladrigas the day of the coup, but that Saladrigas had not accepted it.

Dr. Campa then said he thought the events of March 10 were of importance to the United States. He said that an intolerable situation had developed in Cuba. Graft, gangsterism, and favoritism had made a travesty of democracy. He himself had been particularly worried about the interventions in which Cuba, together with Guatemala and other countries, had engaged. He said that the kind of government the Dominicans had, for example, was no business of Cuba's, and Cuba had pledged itself not to intervene in the Dominican

Republic; but it had intervened, nevertheless. He said the results of all the activities of the former Cuban Government and its accomplices in the Caribbean had been so damaging to the cause of democracy and friendly relations among the countries of the Caribbean that he would not help asking himself whether our enemies were not behind all these activities.

Dr. Campa said that, as I knew, he was not a politician himself. He was sixty-nine years old, had been a career diplomat most of his life, and this was going to be his last service to Cuba. Batista once before had brought order out of chaos and Dr. Campa thought he was going to do it again. Batista was in even a stronger position this time because he had no commitments with the army or any one else. His civilian supporters didn't even know about the coup until after it had occurred. The military, instead of being induced to follow Batista, had asked Batista to assume the leadership. The initiative had come from the officers, and not from Batista.

I asked Dr. Campa if he was sure of this and he said that he had been given to understand that that was the case.

Campa said that Cuba intended to respect its international obligations. It intended to restore normal relations with countries toward which the former Cuban Government had had an attitude of hostility. He mentioned Spain and the Dominican Republic in particular. He said he thought the United States should recognize promptly; that it was in our interest that the situation should develop in an orderly way. I reminded Dr. Campa that our Government had not been consulted about the coup d'état and that Cuba could not expect automatic recognition from us. I asked whether our failure to recognize so far constituted a threat to the stability of the regime. Dr. Campa said that it did not.

I told Dr. Campa that I would transcribe faithfully what he said to the Department of State in Washington. I was sure our conversation would be helpful to my Government, and I hoped it would be to his.