

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

This document consists of 2 pages
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March 14, 1958

To: Acting Secretary
Through: S/S
From: ARA Mr. Snow
Subject: Order to Stop Shipment of Rifles to Cuban Army

Discussion:

On March 23, 1956 the Government of Cuba through its Embassy in Washington expressed through a formal note its interest in obtaining a purchase quotation on 5,000 Calibre 30, M-1 rifles for use by the Cuban Army under the provisions of Section 408e of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949. The Department, in accord with existing practice, notified the Department of Defense by a memorandum dated April 30, 1956 that it had no objections to the sale of these rifles to the Cuban Government. Under a letter of offer of June 8, 1956 the Department of the Army sent to the Acting Cuban Military Attaché in Washington an "assistance request" which included these rifles and indicated that they would be available for delivery on or about October 1, 1956. This offer was accepted by the Government of Cuba and export licenses were issued to cover delivery installments with 1,000 being authorized in Calendar Year 1956 and 2,000 in 1957. The export license for the remaining 2,000, less 50, was issued by MC on March 7 of this year a short while after concurrence had been obtained from ARA. These 1,950 rifles are presently in New York ready to be loaded in a Cuban vessel destined for Habana.

At the time ARA concurrence was given to MC for the export of these rifles, arms shipments to Cuba were being considered in accordance with a recommendation made by Mr. Rubottom in his memorandum to the Secretary of January 17, 1958 (TAB A) which received the Secretary's approval. Our Ambassador in Habana implemented this recommendation by informing President Batista, in accordance with a Department instruction, that requests for purchase of arms in this country were being approved. At the same time the Department informed the Ambassador that he should emphasize to President Batista the necessity of his cooperating in creating conditions which would minimize adverse reaction in the United States to sales of arms.

On January 24, subsequent to the Department's instruction to the Ambassador on this subject, President Batista lifted the suspension of

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