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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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F80004-1492

162

FROM : AmEmbassy, Habana

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

August 26, 1957

DATE

REF : Voluntary Labor Report

20 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	OTHER
	ARA-3	RM/R-2 REP-2 OLI-8 P-1 E-4 ICA-10
	9/2	CIA-12 LAB-5 USA-10 Army-2 Navy-3

SUBJECT: MUJAL CONDEMNS TERRORISM

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 4/28/88

PER Hansen OFFICE CDC

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Terrorism as a tactic of political change was sharply condemned by CTC Secretary General Eusebio MUJAL in two lengthy articles which appeared in the Cuban press on August 17th and 20th.

1. In his first article, Mujal presented a short history of terrorism dating from the nihilists down to the present activities of EOKA in Cyprus. He concluded that it was a futile and ineffective instrument as used abroad.

Turning to the Cuban scene, Mujal described the harsh days of 1930 to 1933 when Cubans "decided to extend a letter of triumph to terrorism". He cited two factors, one internal, the other external, i.e., a local economic crisis and the presence of the "odious" Platt Amendment, which set that period off from the present political difficulties in which the Cuban nation is struggling forward on the difficult road of economic development.

He challenges those Cubans who are opposed to the present government to reject terrorism — a criminal practice signifying lack of political maturity — and to accept the civilized method of the ballot box, "the only method admitted by true democracy".

Finally, Mujal warns that terrorism must stop since the workers will not sit by with "folded arms" and see their jobs destroyed nor can the people see Cuba annihilated.

A translation of Mujal's first article, which appeared in Diario Nacional on August 17, is attached as Appendix 1.

2. In his second article, Mujal concedes that "every day the wave of terrorism grows alarmingly in our country, and its action threatens to destroy the rights of citizens, the conquests of the workers.....". Mujal then launches an appeal directly to the intelligence, pride and dignity of "young Cubans". He reasons that the terrorists are trying (1) to show that the "government is not capable of maintaining order and thus to provoke the interference of foreign powers to overthrow the public power" and (2) to create an "artificial" economic crisis through the paralysis of commercial and industrial activities.

1/ See EmbDesp No. 153, Aug. 21.

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If the terrorists be successful in these objectives, Mujal warns of the deleterious economic and political consequences to Cuba, now and in future.

Restating once more the CTC's "equidistance" from political tendencies, Mujal then calls upon "the young people of Cuba to put a stop to this useless terrorism". He makes it clear that he is "not asking Cuban youth to put an end to their opposition to the Government", he is only exhorting them to seek power through the democratic road, "the only one that can guarantee the peace and tranquility of Cuba".

A translation of Mujal's second article, which appeared in Diario de la Marina on August 20, is attached as Appendix 2.

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COMMENT:

The timing and substance of Mujal's articles indicate the growing national concern over the mounting effectiveness of the current wave of terrorism. If this wave is extended to prevent the opening of schools this fall, the overall atmosphere of tension, uncertainty, and fear will be further increased.

Following the failure of the general strike on August 5, there began in Habana and other towns and cities of Cuba a renewal of bombings, sabotage, and other types of nuisance disturbances designed to embarrass or destroy public order.

The economic impact of these activities has been palpable. The Embassy has reports that retail stores have suffered a 5% to 15% drop in business. The leader of the Woolworth Stores' union told the Labor Attaché that business had dropped over \$1,000 a day after the bombing of the Woolworth Ten Cent Store here in Habana in which there was one death and several wounded.

Picture shows are running into serious trouble and there are confirmed reports that many movies have closed their doors for lack of attendance and others are asking for government subsidies to remain open. Tourism is also badly affected. A report indicates that the Nacional Hotel's business is off 30% from normal for this time of year.

The fall-off in retail business may sooner or later be expected to be reflected in less demand for factory products, and thus create unemployment problems. This may be what Mujal is talking about when he says workers will not sit idly by and see their jobs destroyed. This rather enigmatic statement does not provide guidance as to what action the workers may take; but it does imply that something will have to be done.

Significantly, Mujal in all of his recent public pronouncements keeps repeating that the CTC is "neutral" in the political struggle now going on. Labor's objectives, he says, are concerned only with defense of the economic interests of the workers.

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Further, Mujal takes pains openly to underline the positive aspects of the oppositionists' fight against the government, but he urges them to do it through ballots. If they feel that there are not sufficient guarantees through this method of shifting political power, he advises them to struggle all the harder for those guarantees.

Of course, Mujal's closeness to the government is well known, but some observers are now questioning whether or not he is, in fact, moving toward a more neutral position.

The Government certainly had a demonstration of his power and effectiveness in the labor movement during the recent abortive attempt at general strike. The opposition also felt and recognized the weight of his control over the CTC. Thus, during this brief but significant excursion into the labor field by the oppositionists, Mujal appears to have placed himself in an excellent bargaining position with both camps — the government and the opposition.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

John F. Correll
John F. Correll
Labor Attaché

NOTE: Since the draft of this despatch was submitted for typing there has been a noticeable abatement of terrorist activities.

Att M.M.
Enclosures: (2) Appendices

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APPENDIX 1

Diario Nacional - August 17 - MUJAL CONDEMNS TERRORISM

"It is worthwhile to insist on the dramatic subject of terrorism and we will never tire, due to our profound philosophical conviction and a high sense of humanity, in condemning this evil political practice so foreign to the character and the best traditions of our people.

"Historically, terrorism has never solved any political situation. Neither the Russian Nihilists who tried to overthrow the Czarist regime nor the Italian Carbonarios of the XIX century who tried to liquidate absolutism; nor the Catalanian anarchists who dreamed of setting up a new social regime by destroying capitalism; nor the combative members of the Irish Republican Army who struggled to unify that country and convert it into a free and democratic republic, independent of the yoke of the British crown.

"And in our days little progress has been made by the valiant Cyprus gladiators of EOKA and the soldiers of the Algerian Army of Liberation.

"However, in this country, we Cubans since 1930 have decided to extend a letter of triumph to terrorism.

"In the struggle from 1930 to 1933 this reached a crisis not due to the action of the terrorists but to well known internal and external factors. To a terrible economic crisis which forced the Cubans to tighten their belts to the last notch there was joined a foreign circumstance which was the guardianship under the Platt Amendment. Under that odious constitutional appendix our great neighbor to the North had free hands to intervene openly, and not for sentimental reasons, but because it understood that its huge economic interests in Cuba were guaranteed neither by the Government nor by the terrible terroristic insurgency.

"Thus we reached the execrable mediation (mediación) — admitted by a few persons who took advantage of it and rejected by all the people — which made evident the political inability of the Cubans to find a solution to a political crisis through our own action.

"But today's terrorists, those who seek to overthrow the Batista Government not caring one bit whether Cuba sinks in chaos and social and economic anarchy that the circumstances, are very different from those of the 30's.

"Today we have neither a Platt Amendment nor an economic crisis. The picture that presents itself to the Cubans is that of a nation struggling hard to go forward in the difficult road of economic development, that wants to carve out its own destiny and achieve its definitive national liberation.

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"That the Cubans are not satisfied with the Government that rules them? Very well, they are free and sovereign in that respect but they should choose the decent and civilized method of the ballot box which is the only one admitted by true democracy. If they believe that the Government does not offer them the necessary guarantees, let them discuss the matter and fight that Government until they obtain them in the assurance that in the end Cuba and its people will be the ones to win.

"But to adopt terrorism means not only the wiping out of innocent lives and the bringing of so much death, but shows that those who make use of that criminal practice have no culture and political maturity, gifts that are essential for the possession of public power.

"Terrorism would destroy for us the very foundations in our civilized life; and would destroy the institutions of our free society and consequently would bring to an end our republican form of government. The CTC is not giving this series warning to put fear into the terrorists but with a clear conscience and with the most absolute knowledge of the factors that move in the painful national scenery.

"Let us put a stop to terrorism because neither the workers can stay with folded arms seeing how our places of work are being destroyed nor can the people see how Cuba is being annihilated".

Translation: Dr. Gonzalez

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APPENDIX 2

Diario Nacional - August 19 - THE WAVE OF TERRORISM ONLY HURTS INNOCENT VICTIMS

"Every day the wave of terrorism grows alarmingly in our country and its action threatens to destroy the rights of the citizens, the conquests of the workers, and the whole institutional and economic structure that has cost our people so much to erect.

"The CTC has repeatedly proclaimed its opposition to terroristic action not only because it is foreign to the method of struggles put into practice by our forefathers to obtain the freedom and independence, but also because no people civilized and politically mature have ever reached their historical objectives through such an underhanded method.

"The CTC has condemned and will always condemn terrorism, not only because it is contrary to the ideology and principles of the working class but because in its futility it brings death indiscriminately without respecting pacific citizens foreign to the contest that is being waged.

"Old people, women and children are the victims of this irresponsible tactic. Innocent people fall and also many sympathizers of the cause of those who practice terrorism are killed or terribly mutilated.

"What is sought through terrorism? Where does this atrocious and criminal action lead?

"If what is sought is to show that the government is not capable of maintaining order and thus provoke the interference of foreign powers to overthrow the public power, the intent and the objective are condemnable by any one who feels proud to have been born in this country.

"To provoke foreign intervention regardless of the means used is to have lost all national decency and dignity and I refuse to admit that the young men who aspire to govern the destinies of our nation have lost the most beautiful qualities that can adorn any citizen. The great pride of the heroes of our fight for emancipation was to keep their dignity, their decency, and their pride of being Cubans above every other consideration.

"If, on the other hand, what is sought is another objective and not to provoke foreign interference, then it must be admitted that the terrorists are more irresponsible than we believed.

"Then too, there may be another objective of the terrorists: to bring about economic inaction through the paralization of economic and industrial activities in order to create an artificial economic crisis and bring about the downfall of the government.

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"Let us discuss this matter frankly. The terrorists may inflict such great harm on the national economy at this precise time when it is in the stage of development to the extent that all the efforts and progress achieved after long years of hard struggle maintained in all the sectors of the economy, internal as well as external, may come down with a crash.

"In this event if the terrorists succeed in taking over the public power of the nation what they would receive would be a terrible state of material and moral misery. Cuba's credit would be destroyed and no investor, Cuban or foreign, would ever have faith in this nation. The money that awaits in the vaults of the banks the better conditions and opportunities would definitively emigrate.

"We do not know, as responsible persons, how many years Cuba would need to recover its economy from the moral and material destruction in which terrorism threatens to place it.

"The CTC which is equidistant from both political tendencies, whose only objective is the defense of the workers, to struggle without rest for the economic development of Cuba, for the felicity of our people and the prosperity of our country, ardently calls upon the young people of Cuba to put a stop to this useless terrorism, to think of Cuba, not one day alone, but always, throughout their whole life.

"We do not ask them to put an end to their opposition to the government but that they seek power through other means. We have the democratic road, the only one that can guarantee the peace and tranquility of Cuba. Otherwise we will end by making Cuba a sub-country, merely a geographical nation."

Translation: Dr. Gonzalez

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