

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF
AMERICAN REPUBLICAN AFFAIRS
FROM
Havana
DATED: June 29, 1945
RECEIVED: June 30, 4pm.

RESTRICTED

Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

1319, June 29.

The Minister of Health, accompanied by Mariblanca SABAS ALOMA of the local newspaper AVANCE, called today, with the approval of President GRAU, offering to make available to the armed services of the United States Topes de Collantes Sanatorium which is located in the mountains of Santa Clara Province about eight miles from Trinidad. The Minister stated this offer was being made in confidence and that he would send me shortly photographs and a memorandum fully describing the hospital and its environments. There is an airport situated 20 kilometers from the hospital and a road is being completed from the hospital to the airport. The altitude is 2500 feet. It is cool there and blankets are required at night. However, the climate is at times damp. The hospital is not entirely completed and not yet furnished despite the fact that the Cuban Government has spent \$5,000,000 on the project. A preliminary estimate is that close to \$1,000,000 additional would be required to put it in condition for patients. I presume Cubans would expect us to furnish the hospital were we to accept it. It is the President's and the Minister's idea that the hospital would be ideal for ferrying wounded from Florida for stays of varying lengths in an atmosphere of complete rest and quiet where they could regenerate and have a change of surroundings.

I thanked the Minister cordially for his generous offer, saying I had no idea what were the plans of the War and Navy Departments; I understood, however, that progress had already been made in this connection and probably also available funds had been submitted; I would report his kind offer to the Department and would forward to Washington the descriptive material when it is received.

The newspaper

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC SECURITY CONTROLS
SEP 1 1945

4-war
2-navy
1-03
SEP 20 1945
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EST. 047/0-2245

OS/MAJ 637.247/6-2945

From

HABANA

A-1319

-2-

The newspaper woman who accompanied the Minister took pains to make the point of what a fine impression it would make in Cuba and throughout Latin America were the United States to accept the offer. She spoke at length on the desire of Cuba to do more for the war and how this offered a solution.

The idea has political appeal if it is technically feasible.

WRIGHT

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MONTREAL

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DIVISION OF
GENERAL SERVICES

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JWW/hmt

AIRGRAM SENT

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Department of State

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A-1283

NO. ~~1283~~

Washington,

TIME _____

AMEMBASSY,

HABANA.

Aug 21, 1945

With reference to the Embassy's airgram A-1319 of June 29 regarding the use of the Topes de Collantes Sanatorium, the Department transmitted copies of the Embassy's airgram to the Departments of War and Navy, in order to obtain their views and comments.

The Department has received a memorandum dated July 24 from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department reading textually as follows:

"1. In reference (a) the views of the Navy Department are requested concerning the tentative offer of the Cuban Government to make available to the armed services of the United States the uncompleted Topes de Collantes Sanatorium in Cuba.

"2. The Navy Department has given consideration to this offer and has determined that the use of the Sanatorium in question would not be feasible in the Navy Hospitalization Program.

"3. It is requested that an appropriate expression of appreciation for the offer of the Sanatorium in question be extended to the Cuban Government on behalf of the United States Navy."

The Department received a memorandum dated July 25 from the War Department, Military Intelligence Service, reading textually as follows:

"In answer to your letter FC 837.247/6-2945 of 10 July 1945, same subject as above, and enclosed copies of Airgram A-1319 of June 29, from Havana, attached is a copy of a letter to Dr. Ramiro Collazo, dated 21 October 1944. The reasons for declining this former proposal are applicable to the current proposal."

The letter

837.247/6-2945

837.247/6-2945

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NO. _____

Washington,

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-2-

The letter of October 21, 1944 addressed to Ramiro Collazo, referred to in the War Department's memorandum of July 25, reads as follows:

"Dr. Ramiro Collazo
"First Vice President
"Lion's International
"O'Reilly 108
"Havana, Cuba

"Dear Dr. Collazo:

"General Hines, Administrator of Veterans Affairs, has forwarded to me your letter of 19 September 1944, offering recreational and recuperative facilities in Cuba to convalescent service men of the United States.

"You may be assured that this most generous proposal of the Havana Lions International Club is received with warm appreciation. Your gesture of friendship and your manifestation of interest in the soldiers of our Army are indeed indicative of the good will which the people of Cuba have demonstrated, again and again, toward the people of this country. The exceptionally healthful climate and the rare scenic beauty of the Island of Cuba have been a source of benefit and delight to countless thousands of our citizens.

"You will appreciate that there exists a natural and understandable desire on the part of our soldiers who have served overseas for many months to be near their loved ones. We attempt to gratify that desire to the fullest extent possible by placing our convalescent soldiers in facilities located reasonably near their homes. At the present time at least it appears that the centers which we have established in this country will be sufficient to care for these soldiers.

"In view

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NO. _____

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-3-

"In view of these considerations, we feel it necessary to forego the many advantages inherent in your proposal. This decision was reached only after long and painstaking consideration of all the factors which tend to promote speedy recovery. However, if in the future such a need should arise we hope we may feel free to discuss the proposal with you again.

"We profoundly regret that the circumstances are such that we may not avail ourselves of the benefits of your splendid offer of assistance at this time.

"Sincerely,

"George F. Lull

"Maj. Gen. U.S.A.

"Deputy Surgeon General"

The Embassy is authorized to inform the Cuban Minister of Health of the decisions of the Army and Navy Departments and to make a suitable expression of appreciation for the friendly offer which he was kind enough to make.

Byrnes *(Signature)*

(Signature)
CCA:WFB:arber:DVH
8/14/45

FC *(Signature)*

OR
AUG 21 1945 P.M.