

## FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM

AmEmbassy Ciudad Trujillo

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TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

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SUBJECT: Evaluation of Cuban-Dominican Relations

## SUMMARY:

Viewed in perspective, the Cuban-Dominican attacks and counter-attacks are seen as just another episode in the long standing and continuing Caribbean power play, with influence and prestige (and possibly some economic advantage) as the more immediate stakes, and self-preservation as the basic element.

\* \* \*

The current exacerbated phase in Cuban-Dominican relations, which commenced on October 29, 1956, immediately following the slaying of ten Cuban asylees in the Haitian Embassy, Habana, seems to be drawing to a close. Indications pointing to this conclusion are, on the Dominican side, the abrupt ending of the violent verbal attack on BATISTA by the controlled, through ostensibly unofficial, Dominican press and radio; the continued lack of inflammatory ex-cathedra statements by any Dominican official, even in answer to recent charges by Cuban officials; and the prominent announcement of a friendly invitation to, and a friendly acceptance by, the Cuban Minister of Agriculture to attend the Dominican International Cattle Fair. The Dominican Foreign Minister's mild reaction to our Charge's mention that the Cuban Government has stated to our Embassy in Habana that it wishes friendly relations with all Latin America including a rapprochement with the Dominican Republic, is also indicative. On the Cuban side, our Embassy in Habana has reported that Foreign Minister GUELL has given assurances that Batista's government will desist from new attacks on the Dominican regime and will attempt to influence the Cuban press to follow in the same direction.

The current episode began when the Cubans, in the violent affair at the Haitian Embassy, Habana, provided the Dominican regime with a springboard for attack too good for the Dominicans to overlook. This, coupled with the general unrest in Habana at the time, constituted an unsurpassed opportunity for the unleashing of a major campaign on the part of the Dominicans to denigrate Batista and all his works. A few weeks later, the revolutionary attack led by FIDEL CASTRO provided ideal working conditions in which TRUJILLO could aid and abet the already existing Cuban unrest, by clandestine efforts probably consisting of sabotage, bribery and thuggery. The propaganda campaign came to abrupt halt on December 19, and there is evidence that Trujillo called off his more forceful, though covert, rabble rousing activities at about the same time.

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Speculations as to the reasons why the Dominicans "called off the dogs" at this particular moment are manifold. The more plausible speculations would seem to be the following:

1. Evidence of increasing United States interest in the dispute led the Dominicans to fear that their illegal, clandestine activities might be brought out into the open, and that they would suffer the effects of unfavorable publicity resulting from their meddling in Cuban affairs.
2. The Embassy has shown the Dominicans its serious concern over the disappearance of U. S. citizen pilot, GERALD MURPHY, of Dominican Airlines, who was allegedly involved in clandestine activities relating to Cuban-Dominican affairs. The Dominicans may fear that if their meddling were continued at this time, the United States would discover proof that Murphy was liquidated for his perhaps too intimate knowledge of Trujillo's anti-Batista activities.
3. The Dominicans became convinced that the Fidel Castro attack had degenerated into a fiasco, and with the return of relative normalcy in Cuba, no further advantage could be obtained by continuing agitation at this time.
4. The Dominicans may believe that their activities have been successful in throwing Batista off balance and forcing him to cooperate by silencing the anti-Dominican press and suppressing the activities of Dominican exiles and other leftist anti-Trujillo elements. That is, Trujillo may feel that he has now achieved his immediate objective. In this connection, there is no evidence here that Trujillo ever wished to unseat Batista in favor of any other specific candidate for the Cuban driver's seat. Rather, Trujillo seems merely to want whoever holds the reins in Cuba to keep anti-Trujillo elements in check. In fact, it would seem easier for him to cooperate in these aims with strongman Batista than it would be to gain influence with any of the known alternatives, such as Fidel Castro or PRIO SOCORRAS.
5. The Dominicans want Cuban participation in their International Cattle Fair, beginning January 10. Wide publicity has recently been given to the fact that Cuba will take part. Furthermore, for the Fair to be any kind of success, it is better for it to take place in an atmosphere of at least apparent international amity. As the Fair is principally merely another eulogy to Trujillo, the presence of Cuban and other foreign cabinet members will, in Trujillo's eyes, reflect further credit on him and his works.

Although a less violent cycle in the perennially strained relations between the two regimes seems to be at hand, there are few, if any, grounds for hope that a basis for anything like a long-standing rapprochement will be found in the near future. In the first place, poor relations with Cuba are part and parcel of the character of Generalissimo Trujillo, the "little Caesar of the

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Antilles", who is considered to have a definite long-range, though sometimes, latent, desire for hegemony over Haiti, Puerto Rico and Cuba.

On more than one occasion, Trujillo has made attempts to gain a controlling influence over Haiti. Even today, a candidate for the presidency of Haiti, among whose major planks is that of the unity of the Antilles in cooperation with Trujillo, resides in and has received some quiet support from the Dominican Republic. Although his prospects of success may be very dim, his mere existence is symptomatic.

In Puerto Rico, Trujillo not only encourages opposition to Governor MUNOZ Marin and the Partido Democratico Social, but also supports particularly the Independentista movement, probably with the long range view of achieving the establishment of a friendly regime through the rise of his own Puerto Rican sympathizers, such as Felix BENITEZ Rexach. Trujillo is jealous of the economic progress and development of Puerto Rico, which dulls the lustre of his own achievements. He is rankled by the fact that Puerto Rican progress is attained by and with the protection and help of the United States.

As for Cuba, Trujillo's always festering sore-spots are that country's privileged position with regard to the United States market for sugar, and it's harboring of Dominican exiles and other anti-Trujillo elements. He has striven mightily to obtain a better position in the American quota system for Dominican sugar, at the same time rapidly increasing Dominican production, and consolidating ownership in his own Azucarero Nacional Company. What he seems to consider the scant success of his above-board efforts to gain more favorable treatment for Dominican sugar may be expected to foster his disposition to strike below the belt, by making Cuba appear to the world as a hotbed of unrest. On the political side, Trujillo has always sought to gain each successive Cuban government's cooperation in muzzling his opponents there, and, upon his failure has turned to attacks ranging from blatant propaganda to silent acts of terror. On Cuba's side of the picture, our Embassy in Habana estimates that hatred of Trujillo is so endemic that its manifestations must be expected to continue regardless of any possible conciliatory repressive efforts on the part of the present Cuban regime or any conceivable successor.

In Trujillo's eyes, Cuba's present regime seems to get away with a giant hoax posing as a democratic government with a free press over which it has no control and allowing free entry and unrestricted activity on the part of political exiles. If, however, Trujillo turns the press on against Cuba or harbors any of his neighbor's political refugees, or even thinks of allowing anti-Batista activities on the part of such refugees, he is immediately chastised in the foreign press or even reproached by the American government. He is bull-headed and strong-minded enough to see this as discrimination, and act forcefully on his conviction that "Cuba gets away with it, why can't I?"

It may be concluded, therefore, that agitation between the Dominican Republic and Cuba will continue until Generalissimo Trujillo has completely disappeared from the Caribbean scene. At such time as this event may occur,

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a firm foundation for tranquility in the area might become a real possibility, even though Trujillo may be succeeded by elements apparently close to him at present.

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