

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

837.001 Prio Socarras, Carlos/8-2648

RESTRICTED

Guatemala, August 26, 1948.

No. 439.

SUBJECT: Official Visit of Dr. Carlos Prio Socarrás,
President-elect of Cuba.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF
AMERICAN REPUBLIC AFFAIRS

SEP 7 - 1948

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THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

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Referring to the Embassy's telegram no. 364 of August 25, I have the honor to report further with regard to the official visit of Dr. Carlos PRIO Socarrás, President-elect of Cuba, which took place from August 20 to 25:

Members of delegation

Accompanying Dr. Prio Socarras were: Dr. Ruben LEON, President of the House of Representatives of Cuba, Señor Alejandro COSSIO del Pino, Minister of Government in Dr. GRAU Martin's cabinet, Dr. Alberto OTEIZA, physician and personal friend, the Guatemalan Minister to Cuba, Dr. Angel Arturo RIVERA, and a group of five Cuban newspaper correspondents. Preceding the official party as advance guard were: Juan BOSCH, described as "Advisor" to Dr. Prio and prominent Dominican man of letters, Señor Manuel BRANA, director of the newspaper Luz (organ of the Partido Revolucionario Auténtico), and Señor Eufemio FERNANDEZ, Chief of the President's bodyguard.

Program

The official program was adequate, but not rigorous, allowing the Cuban delegation ample time during the five days' stay for relaxation, informal visits, and tours to the lake region of the country. The party arrived by Cuban military aircraft at La Aurora airport at 12:00 noon, August 20, where Dr. Prio Socarrás was received with full honors, and greeted by President AREVALO, high Government officials, and the Chiefs of Mission of the Diplomatic Corps.

After President Arévalo escorted the distinguished visitor to his Guatemalan place of residence (a private home rented for the occasion), the remainder of the day was free. The program on August 21 included a review of the cadets at the Escuela Politécnica, a tour and lunch at Antigua (about 30 miles distance from Guatemala City), and closed with a

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state banquet and dance at the National Palace offered by President and Mrs. Arévalo. Sunday and Monday were spent on a tour to Lake Atitlán and Chichicastenango. On Tuesday, August 24, Dr. Prío Socarrás was honored by San Carlos University, and visited the various installations of the Institute of Social Security and Public Welfare. The formal program concluded with a reception that evening at the Palace Hotel, offered in honor of President Arévalo and President-elect Prío Socarrás by the Cuban Chargé d'Affaires and Mrs. ABELA.

The Cuban delegation departed about 7:30 the following morning, being seen off at the La Aurora airport by President Arévalo and other high officials, and a good representation from the diplomatic corps.

Public speeches of President Arévalo and Dr. Prío

As reported in the Embassy's telegram no. 364, this visit was marked by public denunciations, both by President AREVALO and Dr. Prío Socarrás, of the so-called "tropical dictatorships and fervent declarations in support of democratic movements in this hemisphere. President Arévalo's formal speech of welcome, and Dr. Prío's reply, delivered at the banquet, set the keynote. Due to their significance, full informal translations are enclosed, and no effort will be made herein to summarize them. For purposes of record, the full Spanish text is also enclosed in single copy.

Reaction to these concerted public statements was varied. Audience response at the banquet was warm. Nevertheless, the general reaction, at least among the diplomatic corps present, was that they implied a common militant attitude and possibly a real threat toward those countries deemed to fall within the category of dictatorships, and possibly foreshadow full Cuban support to Guatemala's present vigorous policy of trying to bring international moral, diplomatic and economic pressure to bear on CARIAS, SOMOZA and TRUJILLO. Typical were the private comments of two Chiefs of Mission of Latin American countries: one remarked "A declaration of war"; another "These people (Guatemala) are bent upon intervening in their neighbors' internal affairs".

Press reaction was one of polite to warm approval. The independent press, which from time to time is extremely critical of Guatemalan foreign policy in respect to the "dictatorships", complimented both speeches as significant expressions of the democratic aspirations of the American people, but, at the same time, noted that Dr. Prío's words contrasted by moderation with those of President Arévalo.

Other deviations in theme also were noted. Prío

Socarrás

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Socarras included a warning against the danger of communism in America; and Arévalo took occasion to attack Great Britain for allegedly supporting the Trujillo dictatorship through recent arms sales.

Prio's press interview

Dr. Prio received an excellent and enthusiastic press. This, in large measure, resulted from the cordial and informal manner in which he received Guatemalan press representatives, and to his wisdom in including several Cuban newspaper men in his official party. The Guatemalan press did not fail to contrast Prio's cordial press relations, with the aloofness of the Guatemalan Government toward the independent press here, none of whose representatives, for example, was invited to the banquet and reception for Dr. Prio.

4/ Enclosed as of possible interest to the Department is a brief summary of Dr. Prio's remarks at a press interview shortly after his arrival. In another press interview, answering a leading question on the Belize issue, he responded that while he personally sympathizes with Guatemalan aspirations, his Government has not adopted an official position.

Other aspects of the Prio visit mentioned in the Embassy's telegram no. 364 will be covered in separate despatches.

Respectfully yours,

Milton K. Wells
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

File no. 800
MKWells/moh
Parohment to Department

Enclosures:

1. Translation of President Arevalo's speech
2. Translation of Prio Socarrás' speech
3. Spanish text of both speeches
4. Summary of press comments

COPIES TO: Guatemalan Desk Officer
American Embassies at: Habana, Ciudad Trujillo,
Tegucigalpa, Managua, San Salvador and San
José

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Enclosure #2 Embassy despatch #439, August 26, 1948,
Guatemala on; Official Visit of Dr. Carlos Prío Socarras,
President-elect of Cuba.

SPEECH BY DOCTOR PRIO SOCARRAS

I have set foot on Guatemalan soil with the devotion and affection with which every Cuban holds for this land so beloved by Jose Martí. For us Cuba has one single heart and its name is Jose Martí. That which lives in this heart is sacred to my country. Martí loved and admired other countries of America but Guatemala held the highest place in his affections.

There was more than enough reason for it to be this way. If anyone doubts that the martyr of Dos Rios was mistaken in pouring forth the rich stream of his emotion let him look clearly at the accomplishments of this country in so few years; let him seek beneath the calm smile of today, the profound sorrow of yesteryear, and let him see how Guatemala with singular bravery has succeeded in lifting itself from the shame of tyranny to the dignity of democracy. It is no implacable and grim dictator who governs this land of lakes and volcanoes, but an illustrious educator, pride of the American school of thought; not double-fisted generals who guaranteed national institutions, but revolutionary military men, at once soldiers of the people and teachers in the barracks; not terrified journalists who inform the masses but writers whose right to criticize and express an opinion is respected.

When Martí praised among the qualities of the people of Guatemala their affectionate character he lamented the fact that their spontaneous American kindness could not be seen everywhere. At that time Guatemala and Cuba could not express their mutual affection because in the latter there was a regime of terror which prevented it and only in the struggle for liberty could a Cuban like Martí and a Guatemalan like Fermin Valdes Dominguez come to know and like each other. On other occasions we have been free and you here have been in slavery. Like a wall of hatred deserving the wrath of every honest man, tyranny has prevented the free understanding and the generous union of our people which is so necessary to the high interests and noble purposes of humanity.

Cuba and Guatemala today speak to the world in the same language and insist on guaranteeing to their majorities the enjoyment of a better and more just life in a social climate of civic liberty. Cuba and Guatemala, the former under the Government of Dr. Grau San Martín, the latter under your own Doctor Juan José Arévalo have

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raised

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raised and upheld against every obstacle the banner of revolutionary democracy. It is not strange therefore that I should be here tonight receiving so generously your unforgettable affection and courtesies. The wall of hatred of the dictators no longer separates us. To-day the august figure of Martí must be smiling for he dreamt of a common destiny lighted by the torch of liberty for both his countries, Cuba and Guatemala.

I am here among you because we are bound together by these common ideals and destiny. It is not chance, not a desire to travel or rest that carries me on this visit to American countries, here democracy as we revolutionaries understand it, is now casting its kindly shade on the people--no. The reason is that having witnessed the countless benefits which Cuba today enjoys thanks to the regime of political liberty and social justices which we have attained there, I wish to see the same edifying spectacle in sister countries and above all in those which suffered as we did the oppression of dictatorship in the years of our struggle.

I have wished even more; I have wished to become convinced that there where the revolution has put down roots, it shall not become disheartened. Because as much joy as it gives me to see a Guatemala, a Venezuela free, I am sorry to see their democratic conquests in danger.

And not only would it pain me because it is part of the dignity of each one of us, the dignity of all American men, and part of our liberty is your liberty, but above all, Doctor Arevalo and illustrious officials and diplomats who listen to me, because I believe that for the greatest benefit of my coming government, for the greatest happiness of the Cuban people, for the best interests of our hemisphere and of the world, the leader of a people who has been able to establish democracy as an institutional regime, has to preach that regime outside his boundaries if he does not wish to expose himself to having to defend it within them.

I am a revolutionary whom circumstances of the Cuban battle educated in action in order to impose a doctrine, not in the words which impelled it. I have heard you, President Arevalo, manifest with the vigor of honest leaders your preoccupation for the durability and extension of democracy in America. I accept as my own your admonitory voice. I agree with you that the anachronous existence of dictatorships in our continent retards our progress, humiliates our beliefs and serves

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interests foreign to America. But among your words I take special note of those in which you assert that "to-day there is an international political conscience which points the accusing finger at the rulers and political groups which perpetuate themselves in power by virtue of electoral frauds". It is true that this conscience exists now; and tends, with impetuous growth, to consider as perturbors of the juridic society of nations the regimes which lack legal authority, without mentioning the moral, in order to call themselves representatives of their people and in order, as such, to maintain themselves as equal among those who are the legitimate expression of popular will.

Your Presidency, Doctor Arevalo, is the result of national vote expressed in the elections of December, 1944; a few months before national vote carried Doctor Grau San Martin to the head of the Cuban Government; the people's vote has selected me to govern in Cuba during the next four years. The most tenacious adversaries of Doctor Grau, yours and mine know of the reticence of the elections in which each one of us has been chosen to direct and defend the interests of our respective countries. I am sure that I am not mistaken if I say that neither you, nor Doctor Grau San Martin or I would have accepted a falsification of the popular will. Thus for sincere directors, for those of us who consider power as a means of being useful to the high ideals which our peoples have been looking for since the days of the emancipatory battle, the same root of sovereignty is the desire of the people, and he who violated it is not worthy of serving in the height of power. Moreover, he who violates it does not wish to serve, but to profit.

Well, there are just causes of satisfaction for those of us who study the progress of America in its battle for the extension of democracy in the Hemisphere and in the world. Not the least among these is that a leader suffer anguish upon seeing oppressed peoples, such as happens to you, citizen President. Nor of lesser degree is the exemplary agitation of the peoples against their oppressors, a heroic answer to the electoral mockeries which you denounce.

Yes, we must help strengthen this spirit which now rises in the New World. In that sacred bond with history, I feel more obligated than you, President Arevalo. Because like the present governor of my country, you came to power on the road of glory. Doctor Grau was an eminent doctor and a well beloved university professor

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when he entered, with such an estate, into the revolutionary battle; you are an illustrious professor, who has honored the name of your country with your well-known studies on adolescence and personality, when the Guatemalan instinct chose you to lead your democratic era.

Not I. Cuba has elected me because I am a revolutionary. By making me its next President, Cuba has proclaimed in a decisive manner that its will is to maintain in the Government the principles of the revolution to which I have dedicated the best years of my life. And the revolution is not Cuban. The revolution has no nationality. It is a human aspiration, which now boils with vigorous pressure, in American lands; it is an uncontrollable force, which accelerates progress in our lands and carries the great national majorities to higher planes of economic well-being, of liberty and dignity, of culture and health. To the revolution thus dedicated, I have consecrated my efforts. I should, therefore, serve with all the energy of my heart the wish of my people. You can be sure, with the guarantee of my past, that I will do honor to the pledge which signifies my election.

Be sure, President Arevalo, that in your fight for revolutionary democracy, Guatemala and Cuba will not travel separated. Together we shall help to build the American world of the future. It is time for us now that the maxim of Martí be converted into action; "Our nations must save themselves together or they will perish together".

President Arevalo; I do not know how to thank you for the opportunity you have given me to visit your beautiful country and to offer you the fraternal friendship of Cuba, now renovated in liberty. I beg you not to accept as polite phrases the wishes which in this moment I make for the luck of Guatemala and for the good success of the government over which you preside. In these traditional words, President Arevalo, there really go the sentiments of Cuba and of myself.

I have spoken.

Guatemala, August 21, 1948.

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Enclosure no. 4 to Despatch no. 439,
dated August 26, 1948, from American
Embassy, Guatemala, on subject of:
Official Visit of Dr. Carlos Prío
Socarrás, President-elect of Cuba.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS IN PRESS MADE BY
Carlos Prío Socarrás, President-elect of Cuba.

The four fundamental points of the press conference of President-elect Prío Socarrás were: 1) Communism; 2) Freedom of the press; 3) Attitude of the Government toward dictators; and 4) Economic Development of the Americas.

The Communist Problem

He denounces communistic infiltration. He fought strongly with the Communist party of Cuba which was run by an international organization. Prío stated that he had known the Communist Party for 15 years, its strategy and tactics. In reply to a question by a member of El Libertador, asking whether he believes that Guatemala leans toward Communism, he stated that some foreign governments accuse others (which rule their country with a national revolutionary course) of being communistic.

Asked whether he is certain that the Popular Socialist Party is the determining factor for the existence of a true democracy in Cuba (which question was asked by a member of PAR, Pazo Fernandez), the Cuban President-elect indicated liberty of organization of all political parties and the respect for all ideologies and opinions were indispensable for the security of democratic regimes.

Freedom of the Press

In Cuba, he states, there exists absolute freedom of the press. There are no scheduled press conferences; however, when the newspaper men request an interview such is granted by the present President Grau.

Dictators of America

In making known his attitude toward dictators, he said the Cubans would see the liberation of the people who now are subjected to dictatorships. He was asked if his Government would take any belligerent action against any of the American dictatorships. To this he stated that he considered no country, including his, would declare war on another, but that each country which was opposed to dictatorship would take part in its own liberation. "Besides" he added, "it is not advisable ever to threaten or to caution the enemy".

Economic

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Economic Development

He states that he is anti-imperialistic. The problems which arose after Roosevelt were others. There are possibilities now which before may have been a dream "during the imperialism of the dollar". He advocates industrialization for each country; that is to say, at least 51 percent industrial development within each country.

The Clayton Plan

In reply to the question of whether he believes that the Clayton Plan would destroy America, he states: "If it is applied in unison and in agreement with the production of each country, without pursuing an international policy, I believe that the Clayton Plan will not destroy America, but Pan Americanism is necessary, and this is not possible if the countries are not democracies."

The Marshall Plan

He believes that the Spanish American countries will benefit by the Marshall Plan, because it provides dollars to the European countries who will be in a position to buy products from these countries.

Belize Question

With regard to Belize, he stated that he recognized the justice of the cause of Guatemala in its territorial dispute with Great Britain, but that the question was not thoroughly understood by the Cuban people owing to the lack of effective propaganda.

Cuba and Guatemala

He declared spontaneously, and without any solicitation on the part of the newspaper men, that there was a certain equality between the regimes of Guatemala and his country, and he believed that in this day the two countries understood and will continue to understand one another.

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Enclosure no. 1 to Despatch no. 441, dated August 27, 1948, from the American Embassy, Guatemala, on the subject: Vigoreux Public Speech by Cuban President-Elect Denouncing Former United States Diplomats for Alleged Intervention in Cuban Internal Affairs.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Guatemala, August 24, 1948

Report on Prío Socarrás

At 11:00 o'clock I went to the University in the company of Mr. Wells, to attend the University function honoring President-elect Prío Socarrás of Cuba. At about 11:15 the Cuban President-elect arrived accompanied by the Rector of the University, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, cabinet ministers, et cetera.

The Rector of the University read a prepared speech praising Prío Socarrás for the part he played while a student, in the Cuban revolution which overthrew the Machado regime and emphasizing the high quality of leadership which had brought him to the position he now holds. Emphasis, but not undue stress, was laid by the Rector on Prío Socarrás' social consciousness.

The President-elect of Cuba then arose and read a prepared speech of thanks which ended with his stating that he would describe the background of the Cuban revolution and the part the University of Habana had played in bringing about the fall of the tyrant. Laying aside his papers he then spoke for 45 minutes. At first he gave a description of the Machado regime, dictatorial and uncompromising toward the University. He pointed out that this regime was upheld by the "country to the north". In fact, he said, Cuba only gained partial independence in 1902, all governments up through Machado's regime having followed a policy of entreguismo. Reference was made to Mr. Sumner Welles, then Ambassador, to the effect that he supported the Machado regime. When the 1939 movement triumphed, Machado left for the United States under the protection of the American Ambassador. Emphasis was laid on the allegation that Sumner Welles had then supported a mediation government that was unpopular with the people. His successor, Jefferson Caffery, said the President-elect, had tried in every way possible to break Grau San Martín. Grau San Martín's government lasted a brief four months, thanks to the intervention of Sumner Welles, but had left behind over a hundred socially important laws, such as minimum wage, social security, etc., etc. These laws have been upheld by succeeding governments because of the will of the people. It was University students, said the President-elect, who had shown the way to the people. He then said that when people are convinced that they are working for a common good

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against a common evil they should go ahead and rebel - history would vindicate them.

Mr. Prio Socarras stated that Cuba has every consideration for American diplomats who truly represent the will of the people and the government of the United States, but that she cannot tolerate American diplomats who serve as mouth-pieces for private United States interests. This statement, given in a passionate manner, elicited "vivas" and heavy, lengthy applause.

Communism, he said, brought about as bad a slavery as any other subservience to a foreign power, because those who follow communism take their orders from a foreign country. He said he stood for Cuban nationalism. America, said the President-elect, must become economically independent and must show the worn out countries of the old world the way to a new life and hope.

President-elect Prio Socarras' speech was indicative of an ever-growing trend in Latin America today. His general theme was economic independence of the United States, industrialization and social reform. I have heard the same ideas expressed by Dr. Garardo Molina, Rector of the University of Colombia and Foreign Minister Parra Velasco of Ecuador.

J. A. Ba rrett

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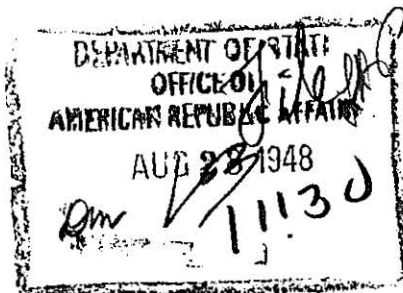
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Rec'd August 27, 1948
6:57 p.m.



FROM: Habana

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 627, August 27, 5 p.m.

Belt told me today President-Elect Prio had asked him to inform me that in his speech at San Carlos University, Guatemala, he had no intention attacking Welles, Caffery or the US and that he had been misquoted in press.

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