

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~Confidential~~ September 8, 1967

NOTE FOR WALT ROSTOW

About a year ago the Mexicans managed to repatriate a couple of plane loads of Americans from Cuba.

After this initial run, the Cubans cut off the flow. Renewed Mexican efforts to resume flights failed.

Coincidentally the Mexican Ambassador seemed to lose *entree* with Castro.

The Mexican Government is now replacing him with a new Ambassador.

Tony Freeman's report on his conversation with the new man (attached) tells what he is prepared to do to spring more Americans loose.

White
WGBowdler

Attachment

Mexico's Embtel 1041, 9/7.

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By *if*, NARS, Date 5-23-79

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REF: DEPYEL 31864.

1. BEFORE RECEIPT REYTEL, I HAD ALREADY ARRANGED THROUGH ALFONSO MARTINEZ DOMINGUEZ FOR PRIVATE MEETING AT HIS HOUSE SEPTEMBER 6 WITH NEWLY APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO CUBA MIGUEL COVIAN PAREZ. IN CONTINUED ABSENCE FONSEC CARRILLO FLORES AND WITH POSSIBILITY IN MIND LATTER MIGHT NOT RETURN PRIOR TO COVIAN'S DEPARTURE FOR HAVANA I DECIDED DISCUSS SUBJECT REPATRIATION OF AMCITS DIRECTLY WITH COVIAN.

2. AFTER OUTLINING PROBLEM ALONG LINES REYTEL, I DISCOVERED COVIAN ALREADY CAREFULLY BRIEFED BY FONOFF ON SUBJECT AND HAD FORMED "PERSONAL OPINIONS" RE CUBAN REJECTION UNTIL PRESENT, OF COM'S EFFORTS TO RENEW REPATRIATION MOVEMENT. THESE CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS.

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A. CASTRO HAD AGREED IN 1966 TO INITIAL TRIAL REPATRIATION NOT ONLY AS FRIENDLY GESTURE TOWARD MEXICO BUT ALSO IN EFFORT DERIVE POSITIVE BENEFITS VIS A VIS U.S.
B. MISLEADING STORY REPORTED IN MEXICAN PRESS, FOLLOWING FIRST FLIGHTS, THAT REPATRIATION REALLY RESULT OF EFFORTS OVER

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EXTENDED PERIOD BY SWISS AMBASSADOR TO CUBA RATHER THAN GOM EMBASSY, NOT APPRECIATED BY CASTRO.
C. ALTHOUGH U.S. EFFORTS TO PREVENT OUTBURST OF CRITICAL STATEMENTS BY REPATRIATES QUITE SUCCESSFUL, CASTRO HAD PROBABLY LOCKED IN VAIN FOR INDICATIONS OF SOME POSITIVE RECIPROCAL BENEFITS AS QUID FOR THE QUO OF PERMITTING REPATRIATION. (COVIAN QUITE VAGUE AS TO BENEFITS CASTRO MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED, BUT HE MENTIONED NEGATIVE INFLUENCE EXERTED BY U.S. ON POSSIBLE TRADE DEALS WITH CANADA AND L.A. I COUNTERED WITH ASSERTION OUR INFLUENCE OVER SUCH MATTERS WITH CANADA MINIMAL, AND CUBA CAN STILL OBTAIN PRACTICALLY ANYTHING IT REQUIRES FROM EASTERN OR WESTERN EUROPE AND ENGLAND.)
D. DURING PAST FEW MONTHS INFLUENCE IN HAVANA OF AMBASSADOR PAMANES HAS DEOPPED TO NEAR ZERO (FOR REASONS NOT SPECIFIED BY

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COVIAN) AND HE HJZAUNOP#INABLE TO SEE SINGLE HIGH CUBAN OFFICIAL. THIS PRINCIPAL REASON WHY COVIAN NOW REPLACING PAMANES, AND GOM HAS HIGH HOPES HIS MISSION WILL ACHIEVE FAR GREATER DEGREE SUCCESS.

3. COVIAN EXHIBITED FULL APPRECIATION CRITICAL NATURE OF ASSIGNMENT AND PARTICULARLY OF TIMING HSI ARRIVAL FOLLOWING OLAS CONFERENCE AND PRECEDING MFM. HE FLIES TO HAVANA FEBRUARY 11 (FOLLOWING FINAL CONFERENCE WITH CARRILLO FLORES) AND EXPECTS PRESENT CREDENTIALS TO DORTICOS TWO DAYS LATER. HE ALSO EXPECTS HAVE PRIVATE INTERVIEW WITH CASTRO SHORTLY THEREAFTER AND PRIOR TO MFM. HE DOES NOT MINIMIZE EFFECT LATTER MAY HAVE ON TEMPERATURE GOM-GOC RELATIONS, BUT APPEARS TO BELIEVE THAT CONTINUED CUBAN-MEXICAN DIPLOMATIC TIES CARDINAL OBJECTIVE GOC POLICY.

4. COVIAN BELIEVES IT IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH FROM OUTSET THAT HE IS EXCLUSIVELY GOM AMBASSADOR TO CUBA AND NOT "UNOFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF U.S.". THEREFORE FIRST PRIORITY OBJECTIVE WILL BE EXCLUSIVELY GOC-GOM PROBLEM: EVACUATION OF REMAINING S. LEES WHICH NOW NUMBER 12. COVIAN STATED PAMANES HAS BEEN UNABLE TO



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ARRANGE FOR EVEN ONE SUCH EVACUATION THIS YEAR.)

5. ONCE THIS MATTER ARRANGED, OR APPROPRIATE ASSURANCES OBTAINED, NEXT PRIORITY OBJECTIVE WILL BE RENEWAL REPATRIATION AMCITS. IN MEANTIME COVIAN WILL BE ENDEAVORING ASCERTAIN WHETHER HIS ESTIMATE OF REASONS GOC OB DURACY (PARA 2 ABOVE) CORRECT AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, CASTRO MIGHT HOPE TO GAIN THROUGH RENEWAL AMCIT REPATRIATION PROGRAM. HE ASSURED ME HE WOULD REPORT ALL DEVELOPMENTS PROMPTLY TO FONSEC FOR TRANSMITTAL TO ME, AND THAT HE WOULD ALSO MAINTAIN INFORMAL AND UNOFFICIAL CONTACT WITH ME VIA ALFONSO MARTINEZ

DOMINGUEZ.

6. COMMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT AFOREMENTIONED PRIORITIES HAVE FULL CONCURRENCE FONSEC AND GOM AND THAT WE THEREFORE CANNOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE FAVORABLE ACTION RE AMCITS FOLLOWING COVIAN'S ARRIVAL.

CUBA. I DO NOT CONCUR, HOWEVER, IN JUDGEMENT EXPRESSED PARA 3 REFTEL THAT "MEXICANS HAVE TAKEN CASTRO'S STALLING WITH EQUANIMITY" REPLACEMENT OF PAMANES BY COVIAN ONE OF DIRECT RESULTS GOC STALLING, AND HE GIVES EVERY EVIDENCE OF POSSESSING YOUTH, VIGOR, IMAGINATION, INTEGRITY, INTELLIGENCE AND TOUGHNESS THAT SITUATION

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DEMANDS. HIS SUCCESS IN THIS MATTER, HOWEVER, MAY DEPEND TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT ON RESULTS FORTHCOMING MFM. I TRUST DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE THIS IN MIND WHILE PRESSING MEXICO TO ADOPT TOUGHER ATTITUDE TOWARD VENEZUELAN RESOLUTION, AND WILL UNDERSTAND SHOULD GOM DECIDE IT MUST ABSTAIN FROM ANY RES WHICH SPECIFICALLY CONDEMNS CUBA (AS DISTINCT FROM OLAS) AND CALLS FOR SANCTIONS.

7. I WILL OF COURSE DISCUSS WHOLE MATTER ALSO WITH CARRILLO FLORES FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM ASUNCION THIS WEEKEND.
FREEMAN

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