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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : U.S. ConGen, Montreal 397
DESP. NO.
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
REF : ConGen's Despatch No. 396, June 5, 1953

June 8, 1953
DATE

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SUBJECT: Declaration of Cuban Opposition Conference at Montreal.

There is attached the complete text in Spanish of the declaration referred to in the last paragraph of the referenced despatch.

Albert E. Clattenburg, Jr.
Consul of the United States
of America

Enclosure 1:
As stated above.

cc: Embassy, Ottawa
Embassy, Habana
Mr. Peterson, BNA

UNION AFFAIRS
JUN 11 1953

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A. E. Clattenburg, Jr./sp
REPORTER

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A LA NACION

El pueblo de Cuba, con invencible voluntad, ha repudiado el regimen de la Usurpacion, demandando la vuelta al orden constitucional y democratico a traves de un Gobierno capaz de celebrar unas elecciones generales libres. Los instrumentos civicos llamados a lograr estos objetivos han mantenido divisiones y aislamientos, favoreciendo asi la permanencia de la Dictadura y restando confianza publica a sus propositos de liberacion.

Ante estas realidades, los Partidos dal Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo) y Revolucionario Cubano (Autenticos), interpretando en toda su hondura historica la decision de la ciudadanía, han resuelto realizar un esfuerzo constructivo de unidad patriotica que logre el cambio reclamado y de al Gobierno Provisional para el exito de sus fines transitorios, el apoyo popular y la garantia de responsabilidad que reclaman los grandes anhelos del Pais.

Y, en consecuencia, estatuyen los siguientes bases:

PRIMERA: Reafirmar que la crisis cubana solo puede superarse mediante el restablecimiento de la Constitucion de 1940, que es producto de la libre voluntad del pueblo y asiento de las tradiciones civilistas que informaron los prinipios de la Revolucion de Independencia, contenidos en los textos de Guainaro, Jimaguayu, la Yaya y 1901.

SEGUNDA: Ratificar las declaraciones de los Comites Ejecutivos Nacionales de ambas partidos en el sentido de que el regimen que presida el General Batista esta incapacitado para llevar al pueblo a unos comicios recuperadores de sus instituciones politicas, no solo por su origen conculcador, sino por su caracter dictatorial y a las reiteradas pruebas que ha ofrecido de violacion de los derechos ciudadanos.

TERCERA: Estimar indispensable la organizacion de un Gobierno Provisional que restablezca el Codigo Electoral de 1943, y garantice, a plenitud, la neutralidad oficial, a fin de celebrar, en termino brevisimo, comicios para todas las magistraturas del Estado. Este Gobierno se ajustara en su origen y desenvolvimiento a las normas de la Constitucion, y cuidara, en su funcion transitoria, en librar a los sectores de la economia, del trabajo y en especial a las clases populares, de los agobios de la honda crisis que hoy sufren por obra de la Dictadura.

CUARTA: Los partidos signatarios rechazan y condenan terminantemente, como forma de lucha, el atentado personal, el gangsterismo y las actividades terroristas.

El Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo) y el Partido Revolucionario

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nario Cubano (Autenticos), al arribar felizmente a este concierto, encaminado al supremo bien comun, nombraran comisiones de contacto, tanto en la direccion nacional como en sus secciones funcionales, a fin de vertebrar eficazmente los esfuerzos indispensables para la consecucion de estos objetivos, aunque manteniendo su individualidad organica y reiterando que no les animan propositos de coaliciones o entendimientos electorales. Al propio tiempo, demandan de los Partidos y sectores nacionales de verdadera doctrina y raiz democratica, en general, de toda la ciudadanía, el concurso solidario que amplie y fortalezca la unidad del pueblo, por la reconquista de sus instituciones constitucionales e imprescriptibles derechos a la Libertad.

Y prometiendo a Cuba, para el dia de su resurreccion democratica, una era de paz y legalidad, limpia el alma de odios y rencores, anhelante por la union y cordialidad de todos los cubanos, e invocando el favor de Dios, firmamos esta carta el dos de Junio de mil novecientos cincuenta y tres en Montreal, Canada.

Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras, Dr. Emilio Ochoa y Ochoa, Manuel A. de Varona y Loredo, Jose Bardo Llada, Guillermo Alonzo Pujol, Isidro Figueroa Bontempo, Carlos Hevia y de los Reyes Gavilan, Jose Manuel Gutierrez Planes y Eduardo Suarez Rivas.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 8, 1953

SUBJECT: Cuban Opposition Groups; Montreal Meeting; Revolutionary Activities; and Visa Cases of Dr. Arango and Jose Pardo Llada.

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Ramiro Arango
Sr. José Alvarez Borges
ARA - Mr. Thomas C. Mann
MID - Mr. John L. Topping

COPIES TO: MID (2) ARA - Miss Keany
AmEmbassy Habana (informally)
Mr. Paul J. Reveley, AmEmbassy Habana
VO

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Dr. Arango said that he had just come from the Montreal meeting where an understanding had been reached between the Ochoa branch of the Ortodoxo Party and Prio's Autenticos in regard to the opposing of the Batista regime. He said that they had called for the restoration of the 1940 constitution and the holding of elections and that if Batista did not comply they would then consider taking other steps - the implication being that they would then consider ways and means of bringing about a forcible overthrow of the Cuban Government.

Dr. Arango inquired what the policy of the U.S. was. I replied that our policy was one of non-intervention but by this I did not mean to say what the attitude of this Government would be in the event of a change in the Cuban Government, since obviously the attitude of the U.S. Government would be decided by the facts and circumstances existing at the time.

With respect to activities designed to bring about the overthrow of the Cuban Government, I said that as he knew we had laws which made certain activities a penitentiary offense and that I wished to emphasize to him that illegal activities in this country included conspiracies or agreements of any kind designed to overthrow any friendly government. I said that I also wished to make it very plain to him that our laws would be applied impartially to everyone who violated them.

Dr. Arango

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Dr. Arango then said that he wished us to know that Emilio Ochoa and José Pardo Llada were in New York City and that they wished to come to Washington to establish an acquaintanceship with Mr. Cabot and with me. I said that while we were always glad to receive friends from Latin America that I did not believe it was an opportune time for them to visit Washington inasmuch as it might erroneously appear to the public that Washington was a party to the Montreal meeting and to the decisions that he had described as having been taken there. I suggested that these gentlemen consider postponing their visit until a more propitious time.

Dr. Arango then raised the question of his difficulty in obtaining a visa and described in some detail his anti-communist and pro-U.S. attitude many times publicly taken in Cuba. He referred to Professor Boris Stanfield of Columbia University and that he had been instrumental in getting the Professor to make anti-communist lectures in Habana. He described the difficulties which he had while serving as Cuban Chargé d'Affaires in Norway and admitted that he had sought to introduce nylon stockings illegally into that country. I inquired as to whether he had discussed the case with the Consul General in Habana and he said that he had not discussed the episode in Norway with him. I then suggested that he discuss it with Mr. Reveley and ascertain from him whether a complete written or verbal explanation would clear up his status to the satisfaction of the Consul General.

Dr. Arango then mentioned the visa case of José Pardo Llada. I told him that I did not have any personal knowledge of the facts but that I assumed that it followed the pattern of many Latin American politicians who thought it was perfectly all right to associate with communists so long as they did not become members of the Communist Party. I said that while I recognized that this view was widely held in Latin America I hoped he understood that we held a different view, namely, that association with communists and serving communist ends (as by signing of peace petitions, etc.) made them ineligible for entry into the U.S. Dr. Arango said that our point of view was not generally appreciated in Latin America. I said that while I was aware that many people in the area had become annoyed it seemed to me that the alternative of approval of questionable conduct was even more undesirable in the long term. I said that he could tell Mr. Pardo we wished to be friends with all anti-communist elements in the hemisphere; that we did not wish to offend his dignity in any way; that we did not wish to tell him what to do; and that our laws do not even require that a person agree with U.S. policy in particular situations in order to be eligible for a visa. At the same time Mr. Pardo must realize that if he elected to engage in questionable activities regarding communism, he will not be eligible for a visa and that in view of his past identification with communist-controlled activities, it seemed to me that the first step would be for him to admit his error and avoid equivocal positions in the future. If Mr. Prado did not wish to clarify his position in regard to communism, I would not recommend that he discuss the case further with the Consulate General in Habana; on the other hand if he wished to clarify his attitude and position, I thought it might be worthwhile for him to call at the Consulate General and make his attitude known.

June 8, 1953

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cc. MID - Mr. Topping

Dear Jeff:

Enclosed is a self-explanatory memorandum of conversation. This is only the second time that I have seen Arango and I know little or nothing about his case except that he vigorously protests that he has a long and public anti-Communist record and a record of friendship with the United States.

I am equally ignorant of consular regulations and hence do not know whether the attempted smuggling of nylon hose into Norway is considered to be a crime involving moral turpitude and, if so, whether it would be worthwhile to apply for a waiver. These are questions for the Consul General and the Visa Division rather than this Bureau. If it is true that Arango is an effective anti-Communist and if it is true that he is in a position to influence policies and attitudes of the opposition groups in Cuba, I think we might consider whether it would be in our interest to alienate him. In any case, I made him no promises of any kind and told him that we could not intervene since a Consul General was autonomous. I did tell him that I would report to you what he had said.

I am greatly obliged to you for your letter of June 4 and I will pass the word on to the Flemings. I assume that the girl was admitted since I have heard no yells and screams in the neighborhood lately.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Mann

Paul J. Reveley, Esquire,
American Embassy,
Habana.

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HRW.

Cuba
Mr. Tolson
Mr. Egan

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:

June 8, 1953

SUBJECT: Cuban Opposition Groups; Montreal Meeting; Revolutionary Activities;
and Visa Cases of Dr. Arango and Jose Mario Llada.

PARTICIPANTS:

Dr. Ramiro Arango
Sr. Jose Alvarez Borges
AMA - Mr. Thomas C. Mann
MID - Mr. John L. Topping

COPIES TO:

MID (2) AM - Miss Heany
AmEmbassy Habana (informally)
Mr. Paul J. Reveley, AmEmbassy Habana
VC

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 8, 1953

Mr. Tolson
DE/R
FILE

SUBJECT: Political Situation in Cuba; Meeting at Montreal of
Opposition Groups

PARTICIPANTS: Ramiro Arango Alsina
José Alvarez Borje

ARA - Mr. Mann
MID - Mr. Topping

COPIES TO: MED - Mr. Neal
- BI - Mr. Somerford
ARA/I - Miss Keany
Embassy, Habana
DRA
ARA Board

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During the course of their conversation with Mr. Mann and me, and in subsequent conversation with me, Messrs. Arango and Alvarez made several observations on the political situation in Cuba, the gist of which follows. A separate memorandum has been prepared on the bulk of their conversation.

Dr. Arango said he is a member of the provincial executive committee of the Ortodoxo party for the Province of Habana. Dr. Alvarez says he is simply a party member, close, as is Arango, to Emilio Ochoa. The Ortodoxo party is now in three groups: The "do nothing" group of Agramonte, the "take active steps in cooperation with others" group of Ochoa, and the "fence sitters and restore party unity" group of Fernandez Casas. Only the Ochoa group was represented in Montreal. The Montreal meeting did not lead to an alliance, but to the Ortodoxo scheme of working toward a common end of restoring the 1940 Constitution, and holding early elections for all offices including the Presidency under a caretaker government. At the time of elections, the Ortodoxos will act with complete independence. They have the people; Prio the money; and it seemed the most natural thing to make common cause. The movement agreed upon at Montreal was to be headed by a committee, not by one man (Prio). The movement was the first really

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- 2 -

serious threat to the Batista regime. Revolutionary activity would only be considered if the peaceful efforts to be undertaken as a result of the meeting failed.

The men said that Batista has less popularity in Cuba at present than at the time of the coup. They said that this was largely due to the economic recession which, justifiably or not, the masses of the people blamed on him. They both insisted that there was growing dissatisfaction among the military. Arango said that in December 1952, General Cantillo had dinner in his home, expressed concern with the situation, and said that he might wish to have conversations with leaders of the opposition. Arango had offered to arrange such meetings, either openly or in secret. The dinner had not been secret. Cantillo had not approached him since. Col. Perez Gujil (phonetic), military commander in Matanzas, was meeting openly with local leaders of the opposition.

Ramon Grau is playing a double game at present. He tells Batista that he (Grau) is Batista's only salvation; that if he comes to power no vengeance will be taken on Batista or his family or followers; but that if anyone else does Batista can expect violence. On the other hand, he presents himself to the opposition as the only feasible bridge to a return to constitutionality. Grau is intelligent, capable, and unscrupulous.

Sanchez Arango has a Narcissus complex, and pictures himself as the bold, courageous leader of a fighting revolutionary group. He still has great influence over Prio, who is intellectually and morally small. However, Sanchez' talk of a huge group of armed followers within Cuba, ready to rise when he gives the word, is just wind. He now calls that group the AAA, for reasons unknown.

Cuba suffers from a lack of competent leaders. This is especially true of Batista's group. Some act like wise men, like Saladrigas, but it is just a pose. They have the trappings and the mannerisms, but there is nothing underneath.

Arango claimed to be a former student and close friend of Professor Boris Stanfield of Columbia, who wrote the President and Secretary Dulles offering to furnish information as a result of his visit to Cuba last fall, which Arango says he arranged. He says he has always been strongly anti-communist, and that he inspired Stanfield's "anti-communist speech" at Habana University. He said that during Stanfield's visit to Cuba he had seen virtually all leaders of the opposition, including Sanchez Arango, then secretly in the country.

The men

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- 3 -

The men left the impression that they, particularly Arango, were attempting to further their own interests and increase their importance in the eyes of their compatriots and of the Department. This impression was strengthened by a subsequent telephone call from Mr. Maine of International News Service, who had been visited by both men after leaving the Department. They had given him an account of their conversation in the Department and had quoted (inaccurately and without permission) Mr. Mann.

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ARA:MD:JLTopping:am o:6-10-53