

November 14, 1962

**Letter from Mexican Ambassador to the
Organization of American States (OAS) to Mexican
Foreign Minister**

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Summary:

Letter from Mexican Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) to Mexican Foreign Minister describing a recent meeting with Mr. Edward Martin, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs and the various Cuba-related items that were discussed.

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C. Manuel Tello
Secretary of Foreign Relations
General Directorate of International Organizations
Mexico, D. F.

Yesterday at 5:30 in the afternoon, Mr. Edward Martin, Assistant Secretary [of State] for Latin [i.e., Inter-] American Affairs, met with the Ambassadors to the White House and the OAS [Organization of American States] to continue the exchange of views, initiated by the Secretary of State, about the Cuban crisis.

On this occasion, the summary of the most recent events, which is the way that this type of meeting invariably starts, was so cautious that it did not even include the news, that we have just read in the Evening Star, that the International Committee of the Red Cross had decided not to take charge of the inspection of boats that leave Cuban ports. Mr. Martin also did not refer to the "slight progress" that, according to newspapers this morning, North American and Soviet representatives have achieved in the negotiations that are taking place in New York.

The central idea of Mr. Martin's presentation was the futility of making concrete plans while the results of the conversations between [Anastas] Mikoyan and [Fidel] Castro are not known. He emphasized the importance of the IL-28 airplanes being removed from Cuban territory as well as an effective system of inspection being established that assures Cuba will not return to being a base with aggressive capabilities.

Regarding this last item, Martin gave his opinion that the UN is the ideal organization and that perhaps the draft, co-sponsored by Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile for denuclearization [of Latin America], is indicating the path towards a solution.

□Regarding the internal conditions in Cuba [parts missing-trans.]

He finished his presentations, assuring us that the Department of State would inform us of the development of negotiations and that our governments would be consulted regarding the solution to concrete problems such as:

the removal of IL-28 airplanes;

Effective inspection; and

Measures to increase pressure on the Cuban regime. Unfortunately, he did not offer us his ideas on this last point and it did not appear to me to be convenient to ask for clarifications.

In my view, the interesting part of the meeting revolved around the interventions of the Ambassadors who, with the exception of the Brazilian and Costa Rican [ambassadors], appeared to have previously agreed to participate in a marathon of senselessness and lack of dignity.

This part of the meeting began with the acting Representative of the Dominican Republic at the Council, who declared that he had instructions from his government to declare its opposition to any draft [resolution] of denuclearization in Latin America "because Castro still has atomic bombs in Cuba and for other reasons." He added

that, according to his government, Castro is equally dangerous with nuclear arms as without them "among other reasons because they have discovered links between Cuba and subversive activities in the Dominican Republic and will very probably present these complaints and evidence [for them] before the [OAS] organ of consultation soon" (quotation).

Ambassador [Guillermo] Sevilla Sacasa [of Nicaragua] repeated the extraordinary intervention that, on the 5th of this month, he made to the [OAS] Council (paragraph 4 of my airgram 146 and my annex to today's oficio 1004), although this time he was less violent and his declaration did not lack humor. He asked if the Department of State considered that Castro without "rockets" was no longer a danger and he maintained that "communist penetration is the most deadly of its weapons." He finished saying that when in his country communists are not pursued his government is accused of being unfriendly to the United States and when "we apprehend communist agents the New York Times accuses [us] of being a dictatorship."

Mr. Martin limited himself to answering that the United States has not changed its position regarding Cuba and that, for the moment, it had only been able to refer to the problem of denuclearization.

The Ambassador of El Salvador referred to the conversations in New York to inquire if they have been limited to denuclearization. He seemed to suggest he was worried they were discussing some points of friction between the United States and Cuba. Martin replied that the Soviets had mentioned Fidel Castro's five points but that the North American [i.e., US] negotiators had refused to take these into account.

The Ambassador of Guatemala to the White House referred then to the rumors that the re-entry of Cuba to the OAS was being prepared and said that the Cuban regime, with or without atomic bombs, is incompatible with the Organization. He gave the impression that his government did not attribute importance to the problem of denuclearization. By contrast, it does appear to be very worried about the activities of communist agents, with the Ambassador having informed us that last Saturday [10 November], two Guatemalan communists had arrived from Cuba in Guatemala, and "attacked" a radio transmitter. "With luck we will find proof of this, and in this case, we will present it to the Organ of Consultation."

The overall impression of these interventions is, undoubtedly, that the governments in question will not be satisfied while the United States, directly or indirectly, does not overthrow the Cuban regime. The method that they use for this, does not interest them, given that all their attention seems focused on the time factor.

Ambassador [Roberto] Campos, of Brazil, elevated the tone of the meeting. In effect, in a brief and perfectly ordered presentation, he described the draft regarding denuclearization, clarifying that it is not aimed at bringing about the re-entry of Cuba into the OAS nor at bringing the Cuban and North American governments closer together. It is an effort, he said, to avoid the [nuclear] proliferation and all possibility of future competition over nuclear arms in Latin America.

The Ambassador of Costa Rica said that his government studied the draft with "great sympathy" and that the lines it pursued are, in his view, exactly those that Ambassador Campos had just mentioned.

The meeting ended with the following question from the Acting Representative from Uruguay at the Council, that is not lacking interest: "Will the North American possessions in the geographic zone known as Latin America also be denuclearized, like those in Puerto Rico?["] Mr. Martin said that it was premature to get into this problem; that the United States would hope that it would be invited to a corresponding conference, "not about denuclearization but so that it agrees not to install nuclear weapons in the zone that is agreed." According to him, it would not be

until the document that was going to be signed was made known that "on which side Puerto Rico was, if with those that had nuclear weapons or those that had agreed never to have them" could be determined.

It is my opinion, that we should connect the presentation made by Venezuela before the Organ of Consultation (my airgram 146 on the 9th of this month), the interventions, summarized above, of the representatives of the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, and Martin's declaration about the "measures to increase the pressure on the Cuban regime."

Among a considerable number of Latin American representatives there undoubtedly exists unrest over the possible repercussions of a North American agreement not to invade Cuba. In effect, many of my colleagues have been talking, both in the Council and in conversations with me, about the neutralization and "Finlandization" of Cuba.

It is my understanding that, until now, the Department of State has limited itself to reassuring them that this would not be the result of an agreement not to invade, that this is the quid pro quo for the removal of offensive weapons and nothing more. But as this explanation has not reassured these governments, nor those of Honduras and Panama, and as all these make a common cause with those of Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, and Colombia, there is various evidence that the Department of State is trying to find a way of pleasing its most dedicated allies in the battle against the Cuban regime.

I do not think that what they are doing now in the OAS will be sufficient. All the representatives of the cited governments, have shown themselves to be happy with the important role that Ambassador Lavalle, from Peru, has been given in the collective struggle against communist penetration and subversive activities. They hope, as well, that the Commission for Cultural Affairs, under the dynamic direction of Ambassador [deLesseps] Morrison, of the United States, will be able to begin a big campaign of propaganda. But they believe, perhaps with reason, that this will not achieve the overthrow of Fidel Castro and this is their sole purpose.

The violent reaction to any suggestion that the Cuban people are the only competent ones to resolve this problem is also symptomatic of the current mood of these representatives. They maintain, for example, that far from discrediting Castro the way that the crisis is being resolved is strengthening him and they refer to the lack of progress in negotiations regarding inspection as a Cuban "triumph." The day that the United States ratifies its agreement not to invade, my colleagues' complaints will only be comparable to those that continental [mainland] China seems to have directed at Khrushchev for having given way in its confrontation with the United States.

A new Meeting of Consultation could very well be an escape valve. It would admittedly be a way "to increase pressure on the Cuban regime." But the certainty is that the course of future events - holding another Meeting of Consultation included - is not being determined, in any way, at the OAS. Ours [the OAS] is a ring for light-weights [compared] to those locked in the so-called cold war and the capacity of this ring decreased even more with the exclusion of Cuba. At the moment, all events of real importance for the solution of the Cuban problem have as their stage, like yesterday, Cuba in first place and, in second, the place that the United States and the Soviet Union choose to hold their negotiations.

However, the reaction of the majority of the Latin American governments to these events will create growing problems for us in the Council. I will continue carefully observing the direction they [events] take, I will endeavor to reduce their proportions, and I will keep you informed of any new development that presents itself.

Very attentively,

Vicente Sáñez Gavito
Ambassador