

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action

Control: 3681

ARA

Rec'd: December 6, 1961
11:35 pm

Info

FROM: Mexico City

029

TO: Secretary of State

SS

NO: 1634, December 6, 5 p.m. (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

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Embassy telegram 1633

Many Mexicans, including influential officials, displeased with Mexican vote in OAS and there is outside possibility their views and recognition dependence Mexican economy on US will bring about some modification before MFM January 10. There have even been rumors Tello is to be replaced. We hear also that some GOM officials said December 5 that President Kennedy's visit "cancelled", fully expecting cancellation following Mexican vote. These are some of the pressures on GOM and some modification its position may result. But in my opinion we should not count on substantial change in Mexican position at MFM as expressed by Tello (Embassy telegram 1633). My opinion influenced by fact Embassy twice made personal appeal to President Lopez Mateos on this issue. As late as December 2 he told me he would call Tello and left me with impression he would try arrange abstention rather than negative vote. As reported, we never hoped for more than abstention. Either Lopez Mateos agrees with or was indecisive with Tello.

In any case, while Lopez Mateos is by our standards considerably left of center, vote should not be interpreted as Mexican Government sympathy for Castro regime. GOM officials, on contrary, privately hope Castro regime will fall of its own weight. Mexican policy is dictated to an almost incredible extent, sometimes in opposition to what seems to me to be clear Mexican national interests, by rigid juridical concepts described as "principle".

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5(b)

Department of State Guidelines

By MMK NARA, Date 12/29/93

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In this case there is reason suspect Lopez Mateos influenced by this tendency, sometimes submerged but always present, to maintain "independent" position in cold war. For example, Mexico City press of December 5 quotes him as having said: "In an epoch in which world is separated into two blocs, my government has made every effort to keep Mexico free of this world controversy". Mexico City press December 6 quotes from PRI Deputy Vargas Macdonald's speech; "Our President and with him the nation maintain that the Mexican state is divorced from either of the blocs of countries that give fuel to the cold war, because to form part of either of them, or of a third which oscillates between the two, would imply a grave contradiction of Mexico's foreign policy by contribution to increasing divisions between states, thus breaking the concept of a single international community. Our code is independence not neutrality since we are militants for peace and law".

These quotes are as accurate a description as any of the theses behind Mexican position. There is a little of Nehru in it and also some of Mexico's desire to diminish US position of leadership in Latin America. Also this thesis consistent with determination prevent defection of left and right wing elements PRI by waving flag Mexican nationalism.

Nevertheless Mexican decision of Cuban issue precipitates policy issues which while not new merit the Department's careful consideration:

If we simply acquiesce in Mexican position, do we not take first step toward admission OAS, conceived as organization to protect hemisphere against predatory European powers and to promote new-world democratic principles, is incapable of defending itself against communist subversion? And do we not give Mexico free hand to consolidate a Latin American bloc committed to Mexican thesis?

On other hand, if Department feels as I do that consequences

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of Mexican position are so far reaching as to be unacceptable to US, are we willing with steady nerves and as privately and tactfully as we can to demonstrate to Mexico that this kind of behavior does not pay? In doing so, we must face possibility that this would mean at least a temporary strain on our relations and increase the risk that emotional Mexican leaders will turn further to the left.

Mexican position also raises these more immediate questions:

On assumption current Mexican position will be unchanged at MFM, should President Kennedy go through with plan to visit Mexico January 27? In my opinion this depends largely on answers to broader policy questions already posed. In context above assumption, visit would be interpreted by many as US approval of Mexican policy of "independence" of both blocs with its appearance of softness toward Castro-communism. GOM would almost certainly seek utilize visit to foster interpretation of US acceptance Mexican position. Result would be weakening of Mexican elements both within and without PRI who want more forthright Mexican opposition to Communism. Visit would strengthen those elements leading Lopex Mateos to the left and tend to justify Tellos position. On other hand, postponement visit may arouse considerable GOM annoyance and resentment as it may interpret this as "pressure" from US end react accordingly.

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Control: 3680
Rec'd: ,December 6, 1961
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FROM: Mexico City
TO: Secretary of State
NO: 1634, December 6, 5 p.m. (SECTION TWO OF TWO)
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In view of these factors, I recommend that we postpone decision on announcement of President Kennedy's visit and hold open the question as to whether the visit itself should be postponed. Various pressures are at work here to modify Mexican position on Cuba and can be most effective while visit remains un-announced.

We must, of course, avoid any overt or apparent interference by the US, which would end to rally Mexican opinion behind Lopez Mateos to the detriment of US-Mexican relations. Rather we should avoid commenting publicly in any fashion about the visit and at all costs avoid directly relating the question of the visit to the Cuban issue. If necessary we may inform the Mexicans that because of meeting Congress in January and need President's personal leadership at that time we are in no position to make firm commitments now.

Should the Mexicans assure us they are ready to modify their position prior to the MFM, we should then announce the President visit. Should this not occur, and if as I hope Department is prepared to push for meaningful OAS action against Cuba even though some of the larger states do not accompany us I would recommend an indefinite postponement of the President's visit itself.

Until we can judge with some degree of certainty probable

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Mexican role at MFM, I further recommend that we should delay action on any loans to Mexico and that we should influence international lending institutions to hold up consideration of current Mexican loan applications. Such action, however, must be taken in most courteous and indirect manner, and not be related to the Cuban issue and Mexican attitude.

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