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22

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~Secret~~ Thursday - June 15, 1967

Mr. President:

This first-hand account of the
situation inside Cuba

[Redacted]

1.5 (b)

has some interesting insights.

W.C.R.
W.C.R. Rostow

Attachment

SANITIZED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 95-361

By isp, NARA Date 11-8-96

AIRGRAM

POL 17 CUBA-MEX
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A-1255

SECRET

NO.

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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JUN 12 8 10 AM 1967
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
JUN 14 1967
RS/AN
ANALYSIS BRANCH
DATE: 10 JUNE 1967

FROM : AmEmbassy MEXICO D.F.

SUBJECT : Conversation between Embassy Officer and Mexican Ambassador to Cuba

REF :

1. Transmitted herewith is a memorandum summarizing a conversation between Mexican Ambassador to Cuba, Fernando PAMANES Escobedo and Embassy officer Francis Sherry. The conversation took place on June 2 while Ambassador Pamanes was in Mexico on consultation.

2. The fact of Mr. Sherry's meeting with Ambassador Pamanes and the attached memorandum should be given maximum security protection.

DEARBORN

Enclosure:

Memorandum.

Repro
JEC

noted: Sherry
ARA/CCA 6/14

SECRET
GROUP 2

FORM 4-62

DS-323

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In Out

Drafted by:

POL: WWStuart: mls 6/9

Contents and Classification Approved by:

Clearances:

P/R - Mr. Scott

Handwritten signature

Handwritten initials

1967 JUN 12 AM 11 49

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SECRET

Enclosure No. 1
A-1255, Mexico D.F.

MEMORANDUM

Mexican Ambassador to Cuba, Fernando Pamanes Escobedo, made the following comments to Embassy officer Francis Sherry on June 2, 1967.

1. Ambassador Pamanes feels popular discontent in Cuba is now stronger than ever. The main cause is food and clothing shortage with milk, meat and leather items in extremely short supply. Ration coupons are not being honored. Further discontent is caused by bad public administration and disruption of family and business life by partial mobilizations and compulsory work in the fields. Discontent has not reached the point where active resistance has started, but it is the Ambassador's opinion that discontent is now dangerously close to the point where people might express dissatisfaction in much stronger terms than they have up to now.
2. The Ambassador explained that the recent partial mobilization was for political as well as military reasons. Following the landing incident in Venezuela, components of the regular Cuban Army were deployed along Cuba's southern coast, particularly in Oriente province. Reservists were not called but Cubans activated numbers of vigilante and guard groups which in turn freed the regular Army troops from guard and other duties. Based on reports made by various people who had visited the southern part of Cuba, Pamanes estimated that more than 30 thousand troops were freed for defensive duties along the southern coast by placing guards and militiamen on alert status. This type of partial mobilization allowed Castro to further tighten the grip of the regime on the people although the Cubans also appeared genuinely apprehensive of possible Venezuelan reprisals backed by the United States. Without mentioning his name, Pamanes said that he was told by a Cuban official speaking privately that the Cubans foresaw the extreme possibility that the Venezuelans might bomb or shell Cuban installations or attempt limited commando raids along the Cuban coast.
3. During one of his travels to the port of Mariel in April 1967, Pamanes observed the unloading of an unidentified Soviet ship from a distance which included large, long boxes which he felt probably contained small to medium-size ground to air missiles. Four to six were being loaded on trailers of about 30-ton capacity each. Pamanes spotted 8 such trailers which were hauled away under strong escort. This is the only unloading of missiles observed by Ambassador Pamanes since his arrival in Cuba.

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Enclosure No. 1
A-1255, Mexico D.F.

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4. In the course of a social function Ambassador Pamanes was recently told by two members of the Soviet Embassy in Havana that the Soviet Cuban relations are deteriorating. The Soviets took exception to the recent declaration by Castro that the only way to establish a Socialist system in Central America and South America is by violent subversive action. They also hinted their country is getting tired of paying to support a country which apparently has little faith or trust in the USSR.

5. The Ambassador was recently advised by a member of the Cuban Government that a new group of U.S. citizens would probably be allowed to leave in the not too distant future. Pamanes said he had not seen the Castro brothers since the winter of 1966. While Pamanes did not endorse the suggestion that the Cubans are using the eventual release of U.S. citizens still in Cuba to better their relations with Mexico when frictions occurred between the two countries, he admitted there is little doubt in his mind that the Cubans are using the issue of the release of U.S. citizens as a "political card."

6. Ambassador Pamanes confirmed that the Mexican Embassy in Havana was practically emptied of Cuban asylees at the time of the first group of U.S. citizens were freed from the island. Only 4 remain from that group, but another 13 have since joined them.

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