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May 4, 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. GRAY



SUBJECT: Cuban and Dominican Republic Items on the Council's Agenda for May 5, 1960.

1. A partial chronology of events in Cuba and the Dominican Republic covering the period from April 20 to May 4 is attached as background for the Council's discussion of the Cuban and Dominican Republic items. However, as in the case of previous discussions on this subject, the chronology is by no means necessary reading. Items considered to be of special interest have been asterisked.

2. As of now, the DCI plans to brief on Cuba, covering the sharp deterioration in Cuban-Venezuelan relations, expanded Cuban propaganda efforts, increased ties with the Communist bloc and Castro's May Day speech. He also will brief the Council on South Korea, Turkey, Belgian Congo, Somali areas and the Middle East boycott of U.S. shipping.

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DECLASSIFIED
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Partial Chronology of Developments  
in Cuba and the Dominican Republic  
April 20 - May 4



- \* April 20, 1960 - Secretary of State Herter told the OAS Council that the problem of land distribution in Latin America should have the "urgent attention" of the OAS and proposed the establishment of "adequate credit facilities" to buy land or transfer from worn-out to new holdings. The Secretary contrasted his idea of land reform with the program of the Castro regime, and stated that a system involving the subjugation of the individual to a monolithic state "could not be allowed to exist" in the Hemisphere. (Unclassified)
  
- \* April 20, 1960 - Speaking before the American Chamber of Commerce in Havana, Ambassador Bonsal deplored efforts by the Castro regime to give the Cuban people the impression that the U.S. contemplates military, political or economic aggression against Cuba. He said the U.S. would continue to press for justice in the case of Americans whose property has been taken from them by the Castro regime without legal process or "adequate, prompt and effective compensation." He said that if the U.S. is unsuccessful in bringing this about through diplomatic negotiations, then it will utilize "other international procedures appropriate for the purpose". (Unclassified)
  
- April 20, 1960 - CIA reported that Fidel Castro and the officials who run his revolutionary reform program are dissatisfied by the Cuban Supreme Court's recent decision favoring owners of expropriated properties and by its agreement to investigate charges of mistreatment of political prisoners. One report states that President Dorticos will be named president of the Supreme Court in an effort to bring it more closely under Castro's control. Other high level shifts in government officials also were reported to be impending. (Secret)
  
- April 20-May 4 - Throughout this period there were increasing indications that the arbitrariness and inefficiency of the Castro regime was causing situation throughout the Cuban economy to worsen. (Unclassified)
  
- \* April 22, 1960 - In a television appearance, Castro described U.S. policy toward Cuba as "fascist, Goebbels-like, and a betrayal





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of the principles to which thousands died in the past war against fascism. Ambassador Bonsal described this attack as Castro's strongest, most direct and most insulting to date. (Confidential)

- April 22, 1960 - CIA reported that the Cuban Labor Confederation (CTC) was rent by bitter dissension over Communist efforts to control it. CTC Secretary General David Salvador was said to be hiding in Havana, planning to resign just before May Day in order to bring the issue to public attention. Castro in recent months has endorsed the support given the Communists by Raul Castro and Raul's protege, pro-Communist Labor Minister Sanchez. (Confidential)
- April 22, 1960 - CIA reported that a competent observer in Oriente Province insists that support for Castro is declining among all classes; that government intervention in business and agriculture has cut off many sources of private income and has led to an economic recession. He said that all attention is now focused on the economic situation and that the Communist issue is not an important factor in the discontent. (Secret)
- \* April 26, 1960 - According to the New York Times the political and other activities of several thousand Cubans in Florida and of United States citizens who may be involved with them have come under the attention of a Federal grand jury here... The investigations, which began early this month, are the latest in the efforts of the United States Government to control the operations of enemies and agents of Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba... The grand jury investigation was begun by the Internal Security Division of the Department of Justice to punish violations of Federal laws by persons engaging in Cuban political and conspiratorial activities. Cuba has not been specifically mentioned, however.
- April 28, 1960 - According to the New York Times, Trujillo announced that the Dominican Government had sent Congress the draft of a constitutional amendment permitting the legal operation of the Communist party and activities of the Jehovah's Witnesses. At the same time announcing another amendment providing the death penalty for "terrorists activities" in the Dominican Republic. The two moves seemed to be in line with other offers he had made recently to bring opposition into the open.
- Dominican  
Republic
- \* April 29, 1960 - Venezuelan President Betancourt told Ambassador Sparks that he is completely disenchanted with Fidel Castro and is ready to

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play a leading role in bringing hemisphere attention to bear on the Cuban situation provided Dominican dictator Trujillo is ousted beforehand. Betancourt insisted, however, that any effort to bring the issue before the OAS prior to Trujillo's elimination would not have the support of more than 3 Latin American members - Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Betancourt's long-standing hatred of Trujillo has been intensified by Dominican support of the recent abortive military uprising in Venezuela. (From CIA Bulletin - Secret)

- April 29, 1960 - According to the New York Times the Cuban police announced the arrest of leaders of an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the Castro regime. The military chief of the conspiracy--The Movement of Revolutionary Recovery (MRR) was formerly a pro-Castro major.
- April 30, 1960 - The New York Times reported that the Cuban revolution had completed the process of isolating itself from the major liberal and democratic figures of Latin America. Havana's official propaganda media have attacked Venezuela's President Romulo Betancourt, former President Jose Rigueres Ferrer of Costa Rica, and Gov. Luiz Munoz Marin of Puerto Rico; all of whom were earlier pro-Castro. Also attacked were President Arturo Frondizi of Argentina and President Alberto Lleras Camargo of Columbia. President Jorge Alessandri Rodriguez of Chile and Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, leader and founder of Peru's left-wing People's Party, have also come under sporadic Cuban attacks.
- April 30, 1960 - A United States official in Miami was reported by the New York Times as saying that the U.S. government had put a virtual end to bombing, leaflet-throwing and other illegal flights from Florida to Cuba. Two planes were said to have eluded the control system in recent months.
- \* May 2, 1960 - The U.S. Embassy in Havana commented the following on Castro's May Day speech: "Embassy officers who followed speech closely were left with impression of a person beset by difficulties, badly worried, and unsure of his ability to overcome opposition. Embassy Conclusion: (1) May Day did nothing to add to Fidel Castro's prestige or popularity. While those who are not in sympathy with Castro and his policies are doubtless relieved at his not having announced any of several new steps which they feared he might, such as urban reform and ban on

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exit permits, many of adherents must feel let down by his uninspired performance yesterday as well as increasingly anxious at the direction he is leading them. (2) Castro's speech reveals more than ever the immensity of the gulf between Cuban revolutionary government and the United States today. Although there was heavy emphasis on Yankee imperialism and aggression, this met with little response from the crowd. Threat to security of Americans in Cuba appears to have diminished for the present. (3) Castro's stand on elections and his definition of what really constitutes democracy should further alienate several Latin American governments and the thinking public, since it carried strong implication that their brand of democracy is a travesty of term."

- May 2, 1960 - The U.S. Ambassador in Havana reports that the Cuban Foreign Minister informed him that the Government of Cuba has decided to send a delegation to Washington as soon as possible to discuss possible purchase of the U.S.-Government-owned nickel plant in Nicaro. The Cuban Government has also informed the U.S. Embassy in Havana that it will allow the shipment of nickel oxide now pending provided an export bond covering the mining law taxes is posted as a guaranty of the payment of such taxes pending U.S.-Cuban discussion of the tax issue. (Secret)
- May 3, 1960 - The Cuban Government asked the State Department to accept Dr. Jost Miro Cardona as the new Cuban Ambassador to the United States. Cardona served as Premier during the first month and a half of Castro's rule in Cuba. He has the reputation of being basically friendly to the United States. His predecessor went to Havana in December and never returned to his post. Cardona has an international reputation as a lawyer. He was Cuba's Ambassador to Spain before being recalled in January after Castro expelled the Spanish Ambassador in Havana. Cardona's assignment to Washington was interpreted by some as representing Castro's response to the return of Ambassador Bonsal. (New York Times)
- \* May 4, 1960 - Recent attacks against Venezuelan President Betancourt by the semi-official Cuban press and radio, reinforced by Castro's indirect slur in his May Day speech, may presage influential pro-Castro groups in increasingly sharp division over policy toward Castro. Cuba has maintained

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close contacts with dissatisfied elements in Betancourt's Venezuelan Communists, and may be giving them financial aid and guidance. (From CIA Bulletin - Secret Noform)

May 4, 1960 - According to the press, the Dominican Republic ordered a U.S. diplomat out of the country because he allegedly gave out information displeasing to the Trujillo regime. The State Department protested this action to the government of the Dominican Republic. (Washington Post)

Dominican  
Republic