

Cuba Broils as Mexicans Seek Answers on Oswald

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MEXICO CITY—Relations between Cuba and Mexico became strained as never before as a totally unexpected result of the late President John F. Kennedy's death.

The tension was over the questioning of a Mexican secretary in the Cuban consulate here the day after the tragedy in Dallas. Mrs. Silvia Duran was picked up and interrogated at length about Kennedy's pre-

sumed assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, who had gone to the consulate in late September.

The Cuban foreign office in Havana issued a furious protest.

THE ARREST, it said in a formal note, was a "flagrant complicity of Mexican police and those who perfidiously intended to involve our country with the despicable crime." Mrs. Duran, said the protest, "was subjected to violent and coercive interrogation, undignified

treatment, dastardly humiliations and physical violence.

This was strong language, but nothing to what followed. "Mexican police," said the note, "seem to be involved with the plan of U.S. reactionaries who planned the assassination."

What Mexicans could stomach, however, was the complaint that Mrs. Duran's arrest "reflected a complete ignorance of the minimum guarantees all officers and employes enjoy in any consular office."

FOREIGN MINISTER Manuel Tello, just back from Washington where he had been Mexico's official representative at the Kennedy funeral, looked over the note and snapped: "It is unacceptable."

He ordered the Mexican ambassador in Cuba to reject it. "We are perfectly willing to consider the protest," he said,

"provided its language is in keeping with diplomatic protocol."

He told reporters that Mrs. Duran, as a Mexican, could enjoy no diplomatic immunity. "She is at all times subject to Mexican jurisdiction."

FROM THEIR questioning of Mrs. Duran, Mexican police learned that Oswald, when told his transit visa to Cuba would take ten or 12 days, flew into a rage and walked out, slamming the door behind him. He had sought the visa because he said he planned to go to Russia via Cuba.

Checking border entry lists, authorities confirmed that Oswald had come to Mexico on Sept. 26, apparently as a hitchhiker in a car with U.S. tourists. He tried to get his Cuban visa the next day, and on Sept. 28, went to the Russian consulate. Again, he left in disgust when he was told it would take from four to five months. Nobody knows what he did for the rest of the week he spent in Mexico. He checked back through the border at Nuevo Laredo on Oct. 3.

FIDEL CASTRO took a dangerous risk in popping off about the arrest of Mrs. Duran. Mexico, for him, is the most valuable of the five Latin American countries still on speaking terms. If relations should break it would mean the end of the twice-weekly flights that Castro has to the western world. The Cubana de Aviacion

planes that leave Havana and Mexico City carries hundreds of Communist leaders and Latin American students; it hauls precious cargoes of machinery and automobile parts to keep the economy of Cuba function-

Despite great pressure, Mexico has stubbornly maintained relations with Castro, on grounds that to do otherwise would be to go against its traditional policy of noninter-

BUT IT IS NOT fond of Castro and what he stands for. Every time the Cubana plane comes in, Mexican authorities make things a little rougher for the passengers. They have to wait longer, they have to go through more red tape, their baggage is searched more carefully for propaganda, they are photographed for police files.

Even bona fide travelers, such as journalists and diplomats, are given a bad time on their return to Mexico from Cuba. When a Canadian government television producer protested that it shouldn't take three hours to stamp his passport, an immigration man looked at him and said: "That's what you get for going to Cuba's side."