

3 NT 11/28/64

Cuba Coexistence Bid Reported

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Castroite Cubans are reported to have held conversations recently in Madrid, Rome and Mexico City concerning the need for Cuba to move toward a neutralist position in the Cold War and peaceful coexistence with the United States.

In Madrid, according to reliable sources, high Cuban army officers discussed with exiled members of the Castroite 26th of July movement the possibilities of replacing the government of Premier Fidel Castro with a more moderate leftist regime.

In Rome, high Cuban personages reportedly told several Latin American intellectuals that the Castro regime has to go if the Communist revolution is to be saved.

Talks in Mexico City

And in Mexico City, "friends" of Castro are believed to have been meeting with unofficial representatives of the Mexican government for talks on how to bring Cuba back into the hemispheric family of nations.

The results of these talks, the informants said, have been passed on to U.S. agents.

Although there is no evidence to indicate these conversations are part of any coordinated movement, the fact that such talks, involving important Cuban personalities, should be held at all has given rise to speculation that the Castro regime may be less firmly entrenched than previously believed.

U.S. officials said they had no information regarding any of these conversations. They would neither confirm nor deny that the Mexicans had given the United States briefings on the reported talks in Mexico City.

The feeling of the Cubans

stopping off in Madrid and Rome was that Castro has fulfilled his function as a "first stage" revolutionary leader and should now step down to permit Cuba, under less emotional and more practical leadership, to consolidate its gains within an Algeria-type neutralist framework.

Coexistence Seen Needed

They have become convinced, firstly, that Cuba must achieve peaceful coexistence with the United States if there is to be such consolidation; and secondly, that Cuba must loosen its ties with the Soviet Union in order to make peaceful coexistence possible.

The Cubans in Rome, the informants said, believed that the United States and Russia, following the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, had reached an understanding whereby those two powers would cooperate in determining Cuba's future.

They are understood to have expressed anxiety lest the U.S. and Russian governments eventually make a "deal" selling out Cuba. Cuba's only real security, they said, can lie in neutralism and peaceful coexistence.

The Cuban army officers in Madrid reportedly maintained that if any new Cuban government came to power, Cuban exiles should not be permitted to return home. For one thing, they felt the exiles had been too identified with U.S. interests. And for another, they would probably try to rid the government of all people who have been working with Castro, even those who might ultimately oust him.

The talks in Mexico City, the sources said, have been held periodically—at least 10 have been held so far—for about 8 months. The Mexicans have been urging the Cas-

troites to get Cuba to offer compensation to American firms whose property has been seized, liberate all political prisoners, return to constitutionality, and permit the existence of opposition political parties.

Authority Uncertain

It is not clear whether the Cubans in these Mexican discussions have simply been indulging in "intellectual exercises" or whether they are participating on Cuban government orders. But their frequent visits to Mexico have tended to suggest that Castro is not unaware of the conversations.

The Cubans appeared to be mixed in their ideological thinking. Those in Rome wanted to maintain a Marxist-Leninist government of the Titoist variety. And the officers in Madrid appeared to be thinking more in terms of Algerian socialism, though informants gathered that, in the event of a military takeover of Cuba, the chances were about even that the leaders would simply be traditional Latin militarists without ideological inclinations.

Fulbright View Cited

The Castroites in all the talks have been encouraged to believe that the United States is seriously considering peaceful coexistence by statements issued several months ago by Sen. William J. Fulbright (D-Ark.) suggesting such a solution to the Cuban problem. They think, the sources said, that Fulbright might have been speaking for the Administration.

The conversations have underscored the worsening economic conditions in Cuba and the growing strain on Cuban relations with Russia, which is spending about \$1 billion a year in Cuba with-

out getting many benefits. Russia, it is believed, would be only too happy to see Cuba go neutralist and thereby open the doors for non-Communist countries to trade more freely with her.