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| **FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES1961-1963Volume XCuba, 1961-1962**DEPARTMENT OF STATEWashington |



**Cuba, 1961-1962**

**339. Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Goodwin) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Martin)**

Washington, May 24, 1962.

//Source: Department of State, ARA/CCA Files: Lot 66 D 501, Cuban Project-1962. Top Secret.

SUBJECT

Cuba

The growing evidence of strains within the internal power structure of Cuba seems to me to offer an opportunity for a tentative probe designed to test the possibility of splitting the Castro revolutionaries from the old line communists (those who did not participate in the early stages of the revolution).

I will not bother to summarize the intelligence information which you have seen. My judgment of that information is that there is strain between the revolutionaries and the old-line communists; a strain based much more on rivalry for power than on ideological differences. The key figures in this struggle are probably Raul Castro and possibly Che Guevara, although Che is very much behind the scene. I would guess that these people fear that the old-line communists, with tacit Moscow-backing, are trying to moderate the power of Fidel and consequently of their group, and that they have transmitted these fears to Fidel.

Although it would be foolish to speculate that these relations are at the breaking point, I have always felt that putting an end to Soviet control in Cuba would more probably come (if it comes at all) from a split in the top leadership than from a popular revolution. Of course, the greatest obstacle to this is the complete dependence of Cuba on the Soviet Union for subsistence and the undoubted feeling that were the Soviet Union to be antagonized Cuba would have no place to go for support.

Therefore, I would suggest an approach to Castro along the following lines: that whatever our past policies we are sympathetic to the original stated aims of the Cuban revolution--social reform and an end to dictatorship--and we are confident that the questions of property which emerged from the revolution can be amicably negotiated; that the reason for our concern is and has been the Soviet control over Cuba which we have always believed is inimical to Castro's own desires and to the aims of the revolution; that were Castro to disengage himself from the communists we would be willing to re-establish normal commercial relations with his revolutionary government and welcome participation in Inter-American efforts including the Alliance for Progress.

This is a brief summary of the sort of approach I believe we should consider. There are two critical items in this proposal:

1. The content of the approach: It must be moderate and face-saving for Castro. It must work to eliminate all fears that we would try to throw out Castro and his revolutionaries or would insist on return of properties, etc. It must offer a way to disengage with dignity and with minimum fear of the consequences. This deserves a great deal of thought including the possibility of some multi-nation guarantee offered to Castro. Once he has broken we would, of course, reconsider this policy.

2. The method of approach: The best method, I believe, would be through a European embassy or through the Cuban Ambassador to the UN, who we have reason to believe is loyal to Fidel and not to communism. Of course, the Cubans should not be able to prove a US initiative but the contact must have credibility. I like the UN idea because of our capacity to monitor communications between New York and Havana.

I strongly believe that our contacts should not be through other Latin American nations. The temptation to play internal politics with such a "mediation" role now or in the future will be enormous. In addition, Latin American sincerity and concepts of security are notoriously poor. I believe we would be really asking for trouble, in the form of future exposure, were we to rely on Latins for this project; especially the Brazilians.