

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE IN FULL 1997  
D R A F T

13 February 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM 12-61 (Internal O/NE Working Paper - CIA  
Distribution Only)

SUBJECT: Attitudes of Other Latin American Governments toward  
Cuba

1. Official opinion in Latin America has by now generally crystallized against the Castro regime, and for the most part Latin American governments are somewhat less fearful of stirring up pro-Castro opposition at home than they were initially.\* How far individual governments might be prepared to go in manifesting their opposition to Castro would depend very heavily on circumstances.

\*This subject is to be re-examined in the forthcoming NIE 80/90-61, "The Impact of Castro on Latin America and the Caribbean Area," for which we have requested extensive reports from the field as well as the usual agency contributions. The estimate is scheduled for completion at the end of March.

~~SECRET~~

2. In general, however, the 19 Latin members of the OAS (with the obvious exclusion of Cuba) would appear to fall into the following categories:

a. Eight (Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela) are avowedly anti-Castro and would welcome, if not throw their full weight behind, collective measures against him.

b. Five (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Haiti, and Uruguay) are generally anti-Castro but in varying degrees less militantly so; they would probably go along with less extreme OAS moves against Cuba.

c. Four (Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Mexico) now appear for domestic reasons either unwilling or unable to come out openly against Castro.

d. Two (Dominican Republic and Brazil) are special cases. The Trujillo dictatorship is fundamentally opposed to Castro and Castroism, but in its present beleaguered condition is erratic and unpredictable. Brazil's new president has reserved his position on Cuba.

3. Attached is a summary of the present position of each Latin American country.

ATTACHMENT

ATTITUDES OF OTHER LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS TOWARD CUBA

The First Category

1. Colombia. President Lleras Camargo is convinced that Castro must go, but he prefers that this be provoked by OAS action and that the anti-Castro effort be supplemented by measures to bring down Trujillo. He is under increasing pressure from the leading political parties, the press, business people and others to break with Cuba unilaterally and soon.

2. The provisional government of El Salvador, in the throes of reestablishing order after overthrowing a pro-Castro junta, probably would be in favor of an OAS airing of the Cuba issue. In the meantime, there is a good chance that it may break or suspend relations with Cuba.

3. Guatemala. The Ydigoras government, which broke relations with Cuba last year, is aggressively anti-Castro. It would participate in an OAS condemnation of Castro or stronger measures.

4. Nicaragua is a determined opponent of Castro and the Somoza government's relations with him are suspended. It can be counted on to support almost any OAS solution on Cuba.

5. Panama has been hit hard by Castro activists and the government there, under strongly pro-US leadership, is one of Castro's implacable foes. President Chiari has withdrawn Panama's top diplomat from Cuba and is dealing with agitators effectively. However, he is hesitant about doing more alone, probably for fear of appearing to be under US pressure.

6. Paraguay. The Stroessner dictatorship, whose domestic trials have for some time included attacks by Cuban-influenced guerrillas, has suspended relations with Cuba. This government would back collective measures on Cuba.

7. Peru. The Prado government, fearful of growing Castro-Communist agitation, broke with Cuba before the US did and is firmly against Castro. It is repressing Castroites at home and would take part in an OAS procedure against Cuba.

8. Venezuela. President Betancourt and his colleagues are unequivocally committed to a policy opposing pro-Castro (and other extreme leftist) elements within their country, and have withdrawn their ambassador from Havana. However,

Betancourt is dedicated in the first instance to the elimination of Trujillo and the lengths to which he will go on Castro depend on whether or not the US (and perhaps other members of the OAS) commits itself to assisting him in his primary mission.

The Second Category

1. Argentina. The Frondizi administration, however sympathetic it has been with the US on Cuba and regardless of its refusal to tolerate excessive Cuban agitation, is not itself ready to break with Cuba. Most officials in the administration probably feel that something should be done about Cuba. Nevertheless, feeling somewhat removed from the dangers of the situation and able to control pro-Castro elements at home, they are inclined to await a collective OAS solution or some blatant transgression by Cubans in Argentina before severing ties with Cuba.

2. Chile. The Alessandri government is firmly anti-Castro, but there is some feeling among political leaders that Cuba is a US problem. Certainly in Chile there is little interest in unilateral measures against Cuba, at least until

some incident justifies this; Chile hopes for collective action. In any event, because the national leadership fears pro-Castro sentiments among many voters, it is not likely to take any strong stand on Cuba before the 5 March congressional election.

3. Costa Rica, widely respected for its democratic government and stability, is against Castro; pro-Castro elements are relatively unimportant there. President Echandi prefers the multilateral approach to the Cuba problem and would break relations if this could be handled through the OAS.

4. Haiti. Castroism is not an issue of any dimension in Haiti; Cuban meddling ended last year in a break in diplomatic ties. Because the Duvalier regime counts heavily on US assistance and is wary of Castro's overseas operations, Haiti probably will continue to follow the US lead on Cuba.

5. Uruguay. The plural executive here has been disturbed by the use of the Cuban diplomatic establishment as a focal point for propaganda and subversive activities. It has withdrawn its ambassador from Cuba and caused Cuba to pull out a high official in Montevideo. However, Uruguay, like Argentina, is

not willing to sever ties with Cuba unilaterally although it would almost certainly go along with the OAS on this matter.

The Third Category

1. Bolivia. President Paz has also had difficulties with Cuban and other pro-Castro agitators, but his position is such that he probably calculates it is in his best interest not to be openly anti-Cuban. Paz led the drastic reform revolution of 1952 and is now under much pressure to follow through from extreme leftists in the official party, most of whom admire the rapid changes wrought by Castro and are Communist-influenced. Vice President Lechin has been in the forefront of a number of pro-Castro rallies. While Paz is beholden to the US for its considerable assistance over the years, he apparently now feels that he must accept Communist Bloc aid and this is also contributing to Bolivia's soft policy on Cuba.

2. Ecuador. President Velasco Ibarra has relied upon foreign policy issues -- such as the border dispute with Peru -- to divert attention from his own shortcomings. He has tended

to see the Castro issue in terms of how he can use it to advantage. Also, while Velasco dislikes Castro, he probably hopes to avoid trouble with the local Castroite minority unless this becomes necessary. He has attempted to initiate inter-American community mediation of US-Cuban differences; his reaction to any collective effort initiated elsewhere is uncertain.

3. Honduras. The government here seeks to carry on friendly relations with Castro, even though it has displayed considerable irritation over Cuban pressures. Its soft policy on Castro even at home can be attributed to the effectiveness of pro-Castro operations in a country where there is disillusionment with the government's failure to press ahead with rapid reform. Nevertheless, the Honduras leadership would probably bend with the majority decision in the inter-American community on Cuba, particularly if the Central American states were all in favor.

4. Mexico. Leading officials here would like to see the Cuban dictator done away with, but they are careful to keep their sentiments submerged. In this they are influenced by Mexico's leftist revolutionary heritage, the nation's traditional

policy of staying out of inter-American disputes, the extreme political liability of seeming to follow the US lead, and the strong sympathy of a few weight-swinging politicians for things Cuban and Communist.

The Special Cases

1. Dominican Republic. The dictatorship here is in trouble at home and is a target of many countries on Latin America, the OAS, and the US. It is reacting to this situation with erratic and often unpredictable measures. Hence, how Trujillo will choose to deal with Castro will depend on the situation at a given moment; he no longer has any clear cut policies.

2. Brazil. The new president's feeling about Cuba is uncertain, nevertheless, it seems unlikely that Quadros would sacrifice what he conceives to be Brazil's reputation as an emerging world power by too close an identification with Castro's small country revolution. Nor will he be likely to tolerate much pro-Castro activity at home if it comes to interfere with his program. On the other hand, Quadros visited Cuba early last year, probably with a view to attracting the

~~SECRET~~

leftist vote by demonstrating sympathy for Cuba and his independence of the US. Moreover, while Quadros in his inaugural address complained about Communist interference within his country and elsewhere in the hemisphere, he reserved his position on Cuba.

*Robert R. Hendon*  
Robert R. Hendon

- 10 -

~~SECRET~~

11/10/60