

~~Top Secret~~

BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

MEXICO-CUBA: Lopez Portillo's Visit

President Lopez Portillo is likely to be effusive in his praise of the Castro regime and may make critical remarks about US policy toward Cuba in his major address today in Havana.

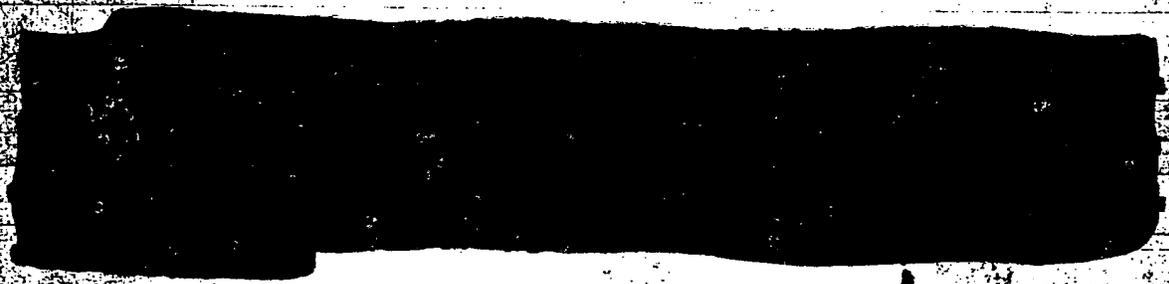
Lopez Portillo

admires Castro's success in challenging the US, and the warmth of the Cuban welcome may lead him to excessive rhetoric.

Before leaving on his Latin American trip, Lopez Portillo told that in his talks with Castro he would be guided by Mexico's longstanding friendship with Cuba. He said Mexico and Cuba are "blood brothers" with deep historical and cultural ties and that the US should understand this special relationship.

The Mexican President was seriously troubled by a US military exercise scheduled at Guantanamo Naval Base last spring, and by publicly identifying with the Castro regime he probably hopes to discourage any US attempts to impose military or additional economic pressures on Cuba. Toward this end, he said on Thursday that Mexico would not tolerate any action against Cuba, because "we will feel it is being done to us."

Lopez Portillo apparently hopes to minimize the damage to US-Mexican relations. He has promised to speak to Castro about the Cuban refugees still in the US Interests Section and says that he will urge restraint on Castro in Central America.



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