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JPRS L/8725

22 October 1979

Latin America Report

(FOUO 11/79)



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LATIN AMERICA REPORT

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INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE ISSUE REPORTED BY 'PRELA'

Mari Bras Press Conference

Havana PRELA in Spanish 1527 GMT 6 Sep 79 PA

[Article by Francisco Ramirez]

[Text] Havana, 6 Sep (PL)--U.S. President James Carter will be met with the biggest protest demonstration of his life during his announced trip to Puerto Rico, if he does not release the four imprisoned Puerto Rican nationalists first.

Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) Secretary General Juan Mari Bras made this warning at a press conference here today.

Carter is planning to visit Puerto Rico in March 1980 to start off the Democratic Party primary election campaign.

Mari Bra is currently in Havana heading the PSP delegation to the sixth nonaligned summit which opened 3 September. His organization has been an observer since 1975.

He accused Carter of showing little diligence in implementing his much-publicized human rights campaign in the case of Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores and Oscar Collazo, all of whom have been imprisoned in the United States for more than 25 years.

According to Mari Bras, after a few slight amendments dealing with style, the Latin American group approved the proposal suggesting that the conference adopt the paragraphs on solidarity with Puerto Rico included in the draft final declaration prepared by Cuba, the host country.

In accordance with that basic document, the chiefs of state or of government must reiterate their solidarity with Puerto Rico's struggle and with its inalienable right to self-determination, independence and territorial integrity.

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A resolution to this effect was approved on 15 August, for the second consecutive year, by the UN Decolonization Committee.

The sixth nonaligned summit's draft final declaration also demands that Washington cease all political or repressive maneuvers aimed at perpetuating Puerto Rico's colonial status. The United States has occupied the island since 1898.

According to Mari Bras, this is the first time the Latin American group has agreed to include a demand that the four Puerto Rican nationalists be released.

He announced that his delegation has proposed the inclusion of a paragraph on the occupation of Vieques Island, which the U.S. Navy uses as a target range.

At the press conference he announced that Pedro Baiges, a member of the PSP Central Committee and the Puerto Rican delegation to the nonaligned summit, will be faced with a warrant of arrest upon returning to San Juan for his participation in recent popular protests on Vieques Island.

Mari Bras added that the recent UN resolution constitutes a confrontation between the international community and the U.S. Congress, which a few days ago approved a resolution on Puerto Rico's self-determination.

The pro-independence leader revealed that his party will participate in the 1980 elections in Puerto Rico, even though like those of 1976 when his son was assassinated, they will most probably be characterized by repression of pro-independence and anti-annexationist forces.

The representatives of some 100 countries, who will be in attendance at the Second International Conference of Solidarity with Puerto Rico, scheduled for November in Mexico, must organize a permanent coordinating mechanism for that solidarity, he went on to say.

Mari Bras on Prisoners

Havana PRELA in English 2305 GMT 7 Sep 79 PA

[Text] Havana, Sep 7 (PL)--The first tangible victory of this sixth summit has been the unconditional release of four Puerto Rican patriots imprisoned for over a quarter of a century in the United States, declared Juan Mari Bras, secretary general of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

"It has been precisely the knowledge on the part of the United States Government that the unity of this sixth summit would come out for the release of our four compatriots that has led to the U.S. presidential move in releasing them," he said.

The first speaker at today's morning session, called attention to the escalation of persecutions and repressions in Puerto Rico and asked for solidarity with 21 arrested persons whom he called the "next political prisoners to fall victim to U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico."

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He said that among these 21 persons arrested when they protested U.S. Navy maneuvers on Vieques, Puerto Rican Island Municipality, are nonaligned delegation member Pedro Baiges Chaple and Bishop Monsignor Entulio Parrilla.

He asked for solidarity with those persons and the efforts of Puerto Rico to attain sovereignty and independence.

Mari Bras asserted that the independence struggle deserves the solidarity of those who struggle all over the world since Puerto Rico is the most important imperialist colony in our era and the power of the empire is concentrated there.

"Fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico is fighting modern imperialism at its level," he said.

Mari Bras recalled that U.S. investments in Puerto Rico are four and a half times greater than in the rest of the Caribbean.

"While they invest four billions in the Caribbean, in Puerto Rico they have 18 billion dollars invested, around half their total investment in Latin America," he said.

Puerto Rico, he continued, is a military bastion for aggressions on sister nations of the Caribbean, Latin America and other regions."

The PSP leader reiterated that the basic formulation for independence is grounded on the principles of resolution 1514 (XV) of the United Nations on the unconditional transfer of powers to the people of Puerto Rico.

Mari Bras said that "the time has come for the world to refuse to be deceived by the mechanism created by the already-discredited apparatus of empire."

They are instruments for the perpetuation of colonial rule, he declared.

In addition it must be said that in the case of Puerto Rico the United States does not have to consult with anyone, he said.

Only when the people of Puerto Rico have all their due powers will they be able to enjoy full sovereignty, he added.

Mari Bras spoke of the struggle in process for the independence of Puerto Rico both in the island and in the United States, to which around two-fifths of the Puerto Rican people have been forced to emigrate.

"While there exists in the world a colony like Puerto Rico, imperialism will have a hope and it will still be a threat, which is why we call for solidarity aid for a people who want to be free of the most powerful imperialism in the world" declared the head of the Puerto Rican delegation to the sixth nonaligned summit.

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He reiterated support to the peoples fighting for their freedom, stressed what he called the "dawn of Grenada" and underscored Cuban support for the Puerto Rican cause.

Mari Bras Release Demanded

Havana PRELA in Spanish 1210 GMT 25 Sep 79 PA

[Text] Havana, 25 Sep (PL)--The Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) has urged all progressive forces of the world to demand the release of PSP Secretary General Juan Mari Bras, who has been arrested in San Juan.

The appeal was made by Felipe Circino, PSP delegate to the ceremony to close the activities in Cuba in solidarity with the independence struggle in Puerto Rico.

After noting that for 81 years of colonial domination the Puerto Rican people have been the victims of brutal repression by the U.S. occupation authorities, Cirino demanded a worldwide campaign to obtain Mari Bras' release.

The independence leader was sent to the Rio Piedras penitentiary when he refused to recognize the authority of a U.S. court which imposed a fine of \$5,000 on him.

Cirino said that over 8 decades of conquest and political, cultural, economic and social domination have not abolished his people's right to freedom.

The PSP leader paid tribute to the men who 111 years ago rose up in arms for the freedom of Puerto Rico and in whose memory the new generation is fighting today to achieve final independence.

The withdrawal of the U.S. Marines from the Island Municipality of Vieques has become a decisive goal of the Puerto Rican fighters, he said.

He added that several Puerto Ricans have been arrested on charges of having stepped on the soil of their fatherland in Vieques to protest the abuses to which their compatriots are subjected in that area.

Jorge Lopez Pimentel, chairman of the Cuban committee for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners, hailed the release of Lolita Lebron, Oscar Collazo, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Irving Flores as the result of worldwide solidarity.

Lopez Pimentel added that the solidarity of all mankind and the direct result of a Puerto Rico in arms led to the overwhelming success of that worthy cause.

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"The most shameful imprisonment that can be attributed to any government has ended and the vigorous firmness, the resolute intelligence which has characterized the Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners, as well as their unquestionable daring, remain as banners of the struggle," Lopez Pimentel added.

Referring to the second conference of solidarity to be held in Mexico in late November, Lopez Pimentel said the occasion will be an eloquent testimonial of the extent to which progressive men of the world support the just cause of Puerto Rican independence.

PSP Leader Solidarity Call

Havana PRELA in Spanish 0230 GMT 39 Sep 79 PA

[Text] Panama City, 29 Sep (PL)--Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) Secretary General Juan Mari Bras today asked the WPC to redouble its solidarity with that Caribbean country and denounced a new escalation of repression on the part of the United States.

In a message sent from a maximum-security prison in Puerto Rico, where he is currently imprisoned, the independentist leader indicated that his incarceration and that of 17 other patriots is the direct result of the intensification of U.S. repression against those fighting to bring to an end U.S. bombings and naval maneuvers in the island-municipality of Vieques.

"The struggle to expel the navy from Vieques," he noted, "constitutes a specific and dramatic manifestation of Puerto Rico's increasing national awareness and of the will to obtain full sovereignty and independence for Puerto Rico."

After acknowledging that for the WPC, solidarity with Puerto Rico has been a consistent principle, Mari Bras requested "the utmost solidarity in order to help overcome imperialist maneuvers."

According to the PSP secretary general, he was imprisoned because he refused to turn in his passport or to promise to remain in the country in exchange for his release on bail.

In his message Mari Bras also salutes the WPC's decision to meet in Panama, "a place in Latin America, which to a large extent synthesizes our aspirations for peace, respect for the sovereignty of all peoples and liberation.

The use of Latin American soil by the United States and its armed forces, against the will of the peoples, constitutes a flagrant violation of the most elemental human rights of those peoples and a constant threat to world peace, he added.

Juan Mari Bras was slated to begin a tour through several Latin American countries to organize and promote the second international conference of solidarity with Puerto Rico's independence to be held shortly in Mexico.

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INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

NICARAGUAN EDUCATION GROUP BEGINS TALKS WITH AUTHORITIES

Havana PRELA in Spanish 2231 GMT 24 Sep 79 PA

[Text] Havana, 24 Sep (PL)--The Nicaraguan education delegation visiting Cuba today initiated an intense program of discussions with Cuban authorities. These discussions will culminate with the signing of cooperation agreements between the two countries.

The Nicaraguan delegation, totaling 18 persons, is headed by Fernando Cardenal, national coordinator of the literacy campaign, and by Mariano Fiallos, rector of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAM).

Cardenal told PRENSA LATINA that Nicaragua is committed to a literacy campaign called "heroes and martyrs of the liberation." Other delegates have stated that they have come to Cuba for the purpose of seeking advice and support in the fields of higher education, literacy and primary school education. During their stay in Cuba, that began yesterday and will end Saturday, the Nicaraguan delegation and the Cuban authorities will put the final touches on the cooperation agreement talks that were initiated last month in Managua when Cuban officials visited that capital.

Part of the Nicaraguan delegation is from the university's political committee and is made up of two UNAM officials, two professors, two students and two workers. This group initiated its work sessions today at Cuba's Higher Education Ministry.

Today the representatives of the Nicaraguan literacy campaign were briefed throughout the day on a similar campaign carried out in Cuba in 1961.

Meanwhile a third group, composed of members of the National Association of Nicaraguan Teachers, will hold meetings with Cuban leaders of the National Union of Education and Science and of various schools of the University of Havana.

Cuba will give Nicaragua advice in the fields of literacy campaigns, educational programs and structures and functioning of higher education, and approximately 1,000 primary teachers will go to Nicaragua to contribute to the education of children in rural areas.

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ARGENTINA

'YOMIURI' REPORTER INTERVIEWS ARGENTINE PRESIDENT VIDELA

Tokyo YOMIURI SHIMBUN in Japanese 13 Sep 79 Morning Edition p 2 OW

[Article by Correspondent Otaka]

[Excerpts] Buenos Aires, 11 Sep--Argentine President Videla, who is scheduled to make an official visit to Japan in early October, granted an interview to the Japanese Press Corps in Buenos Aires on 11 September. Concerning the purpose of his forthcoming visit to Japan, he stressed: "I intend to hold direct talks with Japanese officials in the political, economic, social and cultural fields and discuss ways to promote understanding and strengthen co-operative relations between our two countries." With respect to economic relations in particular, Videla emphasized: "On the occasion of my visit, I want to bring our mutually dependent and complementary relations to perfection." As a concrete example of such efforts, he said, Argentina wants Japan to introduce its technology and capital into the country in order to develop agriculture and livestock, Argentina's two major industries. As regards Japanese cooperation, he enumerated the following three projects that require early settlement: 1) expansion of the state-run (SOMISA) iron works; 2) fisheries off Patagonia; and 3) electrification of the (ROCA) railway.

Concerning the significance of his visit to Japan, Videla said: "Traditionally, Argentina has leaned toward Europe. But, since interrelationships have deepened among nations in the present world, we want to promote good relations with all nations."

Argentina, Videla said, wants Japan to play a complementary role in developing transportation and communications, which are needed to increase productivity in agriculture and livestock. He said: "Argentina has abundant natural resources such as food and energy, and it is obligation to provide these resources to the whole world. We would like Japan to cooperate in the development of our industry so we can discharge this obligation."

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ARGENTINA

CURRENT LEFTIST TRENDS FORCING NATION TO STAND ALONE

Buenos Aires CARTA POLITICA in Spanish 23 Aug 79 pp 78-79

[Article by Mariano Grondona, editor of Carta Politica]

[Text] Here is a list of facts whose joint appearance on the political scene, demands some type of explanation:

1. In Quito, the presidents of Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador and the foreign ministers of Peru and Bolivia have just signed the so-called Quito Declaration, which is nothing more than a call to crusade for the immediate implantation of democracy in all Latin America. In this way, the Andean Pact, which until yesterday was only an economic collection of nations of diverse political leanings--civilian Venezuela and Colombia, military the rest of those named and Chile which no longer belongs to it--becomes an ideologically belligerent political alliance.
2. The Andean Pact had anticipated this new vocation by leading support for Sandinism in Nicaragua. As is known, Sandinism is an unstable, explosive mixture of three currents: pro-Soviet Marxism, independent Marxism and social democracy. The fact is that by bringing about the replacement of Somoza by the Sandinist Front in Nicaragua, the Andean Pact nations, Mexico, Panama, Brazil, the United States--that is, the bulk of the inter-American system--clearly marked their preference for a Marxist risk if it is the alternative to authoritarianism of the right.
3. As a consequence of the events in Nicaragua, the other Central American anticommunist autocracies--El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala--which are still deprived of American military aid by President Carter's decision, will have to evolve rapidly and perhaps catastrophically, toward hurried elections or face shortly considerable guerrilla challenges with inter-American support.
4. Carter is dying politically and the success of the democrats in the American presidential elections of November 1980 is no longer probable in view of the progress of the center right in Western developed countries that has already been verified in recent elections in the United Kingdom, Canada, the European parliament and the Italian parliament. Therefore, it is expected that those sectors of the State Department and the American

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Congress which have pushed the strategy of destabilizing autocratic and anticommunist regimes will speed up their actions in the coming months in order to utilize to the fullest what could very well be their last stretch of power.

5. The destabilization campaign which President Carter started in Latin America under the protection of human rights has already produced the following results:

(1) In Santo Domingo, the strong man, President Balaguer, was replaced by social democrat Guzman;

(ii) In Brazil, the so-called "decompression,"--a gradual procedure of controlled political opening by the military power--runs the risk of becoming an "uncorking," in the Spanish style, insofar as it could get out of hand as a result of the military power's efforts to be included among the continent's democratic nations and not become a target of the destabilizing campaign;

(iii) In Ecuador, Jaime Roldos' populism has succeeded over the military regime;

(iv) In Peru, the political parties are confronting the withdrawing Armed Forces with a constitution the latter do not accept, with general elections being forecast for the coming year;

(v) In Bolivia there has been a succession of presidential elections, without any solution in sight (one last year, another one this year, a third one next year), with possibilities of success for Siles Zuazo's leftist front;

(vi) In Nicaragua the optimists grant some possibility to the social democrats. The pessimists assure that all Carter can expect there is that the communist victory "will not be evident" before the American elections;

(vii) As we said before, the fate of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala is uncertain;

(viii) Mexico, like Brazil, manages to be admitted among the block of democratic nations despite its being in no way a democracy through a marked turn to the left, especially in the international field;

(ix) Finally, corresponding reports draw attention to Paraguay's future, stressing the recent declarations of an Argentine subversive in Nicaragua, who said that the proximity of a "sanctuary country" is essential for the guerrilla. Costa Rica was the "sanctuary country" for Nicaragua. Well informed sources suppose that the Bolivian "chaco" could soon become the sanctuary country for Paraguay. Situated in the heart of the last great anticommunist area of Latin America, Stroessner's Paraguay could be, according to these stories, the next objective of the destabilizers. Obviously we must point out, in addition, the proximity of the Paraguayan and Argentine "chacos."

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6. The by-no-means innocent mention of Argentina among the countries which could have incidents with the United States in the report informing of the new American aggressiveness in other countries' territorial waters, as well as the imminent arrival of the OAS Commission on Human Rights would seem to direct the pressure toward our beaches.

As far as what is important, essential, the list stops here. Certainly there are few countries that do not find themselves driven in one way or another by this "wind toward the left" which in Latin America, as opposed to the developed West tries to become dominant. Should we enumerate them? Uruguay, Chile, Argentina...

The situation is similar in more than one way to that of the forties when western democracies chose to work with (Soviet) communism rather than cooperate with the authoritarianism of the right (nazism, fascism), putting nations such as Argentina in a delicate situation. At the beginning of the forties, Argentina wanted to maintain its neutral position despite the American pressure in favor of a war against the Axis powers. There were also ideological undertones: after all, Ramon Castillo's government, being a civilized western regime, was closer to authoritarianism of the right than to communism. Today, Jorge Rafael Videla's government is, in turn, a western and civilized regime which is very far from the personal, lifetime and dynastic dictatorships of the Caribbean or Central America. There is no doubt, however, that for the Argentines of today the main enemy is the left. Its image is the ERP /Revolutionary People's Army/, the Montoneros, and for this reason it would be very difficult to approve of a policy which would choose to risk communism in our region as a lesser evil than an authoritarianism of the right. Their option would rather be the opposite.

The philosophic basis for the Quito Declaration could be stated in two sentences: first, "democracy now;" second, "anything rather than autocracy of the right." Those propositions are vulnerable. Counter to the idea that democracy is an all or nothing "bet" played in the elections following a military coup, Argentines of 1979 are developing the thesis that democracy is a construction, a way, which is followed gradually and carefully. This is because we come from not one but several experiments of "democracy now." We do not want to repeat them. We are not for this less democratic. Maybe we are more: this time we want to be sure. As far as the anti-authoritarian fobia expressed in Nicaragua by the total support of a front whose major component is Marxism, Argentina defines its main enemy in the opposite way. For those signing in Quito, the main enemy is "dictatorship," that is, the autocracy of the right. For Argentina, it is "totalitarianism." From the first one, which is also condemnable, one can return, however. The autocracy of the right leaves in private hands culture and production. There is no irreversible, totalitarian and "total" dictatorship other than Marxism.

The waters are divided and we remain on this side of a developing ideological frontier. We remain, in addition, in a minority, almost alone. We do not know for how long, since for the center right which has been succeeding in the developed West, communism again become the principal enemy.

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This is not the time, it seems, to relent. Perhaps it will never be the time, because a nation such as ours cannot accept lectures in political life from leaders who are the product of occasional situations or passing crises. Must we listen in silence to the democratic lecture of those who cannot even show a tradition in this matter similar to ours? No: to each his own. Argentine perseverance must become even more entrenched with the suspicion that this sudden flurry of the center left and the left will speed up, like music, in its finale. In a year, perhaps the picture will have changed decisively.

In the forties inter-American pressures led us to two mistaken attitudes. One, submission. The other, exploitation. Argentina was finally led to sign a declaration of war in an act better left forgotten. Right after, however, a certain politician turned this pressure into a banner which he used in domestic battle--"Braden o..." Neither the one nor the other, or better, the opposite. This time let us be firm and prudent. Let no one dictate to us our own rhythm toward democracy. On the other hand, let nobody turn into a party or personal banner what will be, like the guerrilla, the World and the Beagle, another providential opportunity for domestic cohesion. While she remains with us, let us treat Mrs Loneliness simply like gentlemen.

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CUBA

CARLOS FRANQUI DISCUSSES POLITICAL PRISONERS

Milan L'EUROPEO in Italian 6 Sep 79 p 87

[Text] Fidel Castro sends his political prisoners to Puerto Boniato, the same prison to which he was sent by Batista in 1953.

Puerto Boniato is an old prison, from the colonial period, in Santiago di Cuba. It has the reputation of being the darkest and most sinister prison on the island. One hundred political prisoners have been sent there after being imprisoned previously in the Combinado del Este, the new socialist prison in Havana. They were chosen from among the most important prisoners. Among them is Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, the former guerilla commander (of whose hunger strike we spoke in L'EUROPEO No 27, in this same column): of Spanish nationality, he comes from a family of anti-Fascists, with two heroic fighters killed in battle; the first one against Franco and the second against Batista, while he was leading the assault on the presidential palace. And now he is in Puerto Boniato, the same prison where, according to data gathered by Amnesty International, several prisoners have died while being tortured and where the Catholic poet Armando Valladares also was transported and mistreated, even though he was sick.

It is a prison which gives Cuba a very sad reputation, so numerous are the people who have been imprisoned there and in some cases who have died there. In July 1953, the then dictator Batista ordered that the still young Fidel Castro, who had led the assault on the Moncada barracks, be imprisoned there. And there he tried to assassinate him. He was saved by a lieutenant, Yanez Pelletier, who was later to become his aide de camp in 1959. This is how Castro recalls his days of prison, in the book "La Storia Mi Assolvera" [History Will Absolve Me]: "Although absent, I was able to follow the trial, in all its details, from my cell, through the collaboration of the entire community of Boniato prisoners, who, despite every threat of severe punishment, demonstrated every kind of ingenuity to deliver to me directly gathered news and information of every type. They avenged themselves in this way for the abuse and immoralities committed by the director Toboada."

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The prisoners of Puerto Boniato are invincible: they do not acknowledge their guilt, they have not confessed, for years they have resisted the "reeducation" imposed by the jailers. Almost all of them fought against Batista, are fighting against Russification, militarization and the lack of freedom under Russo-Castroism.

On the eve of the Conference of Nonaligned Nations, which is being held in Havana, the regime decreed operation "cleanup," repainting the city, reorganizing the streets, filling the empty shop windows and, naturally, cleaning up the city of protestors, arresting them en masse. Castro himself admitted recently that "nothing is working, neither labor nor schools, neither the hospitals nor the economy nor the administration."

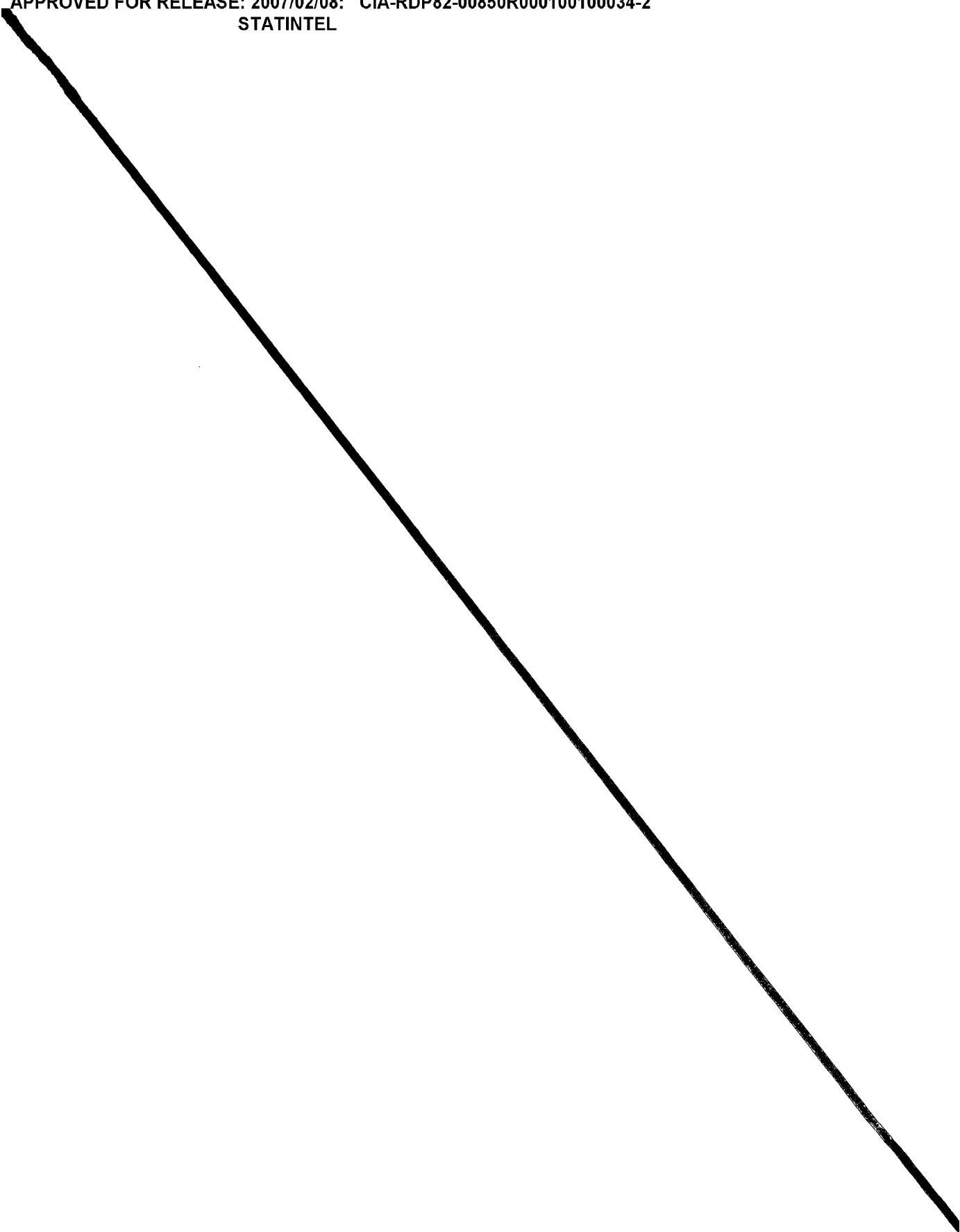
Two years have passed since Castro promised the release of political prisoners. Why now, on the eve of the conference, does he send them far away from Havana? Why does he separate men who have gone through years of imprisonment together, like Hubert Matos, Valladares and still others?

The regime is afraid of protests. The crime of the revolutionary prisoners is that of being witnesses to the regime's crimes. And Fidel Castro does not want them, not on the island nor abroad. The prisoner of Boniato has become the jailer of Boniato. What will history do now? Will it absolve him?

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