

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Cuban-American Community Leaders

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
William T. Pryce, Senior Director, Latin
American Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 135262011-2784-NA
9/1/2014 MMArmando Perez Roura, Co-owner and General
Manager of Radio Mambi
Andres Vargas Gomez, Well-known Writer and
Radio Personality in Miami
Armancio Suarez, Co-owner of Radio Mambi
Antonio Maceo, PhysicianDATE, TIME AND PLACE: May 6, 1992, 9:45 - 10:00 a.m., DST
Oval Office

Dr. Vargas Gomez: We have to recognize the right of people to fight for the end of the Communist rule. We reject the Kennedy-Kruschchev agreement, we don't think that Castro will go by himself. There is a new firmness in his repressive actions. And we think that the Mexicans and Venezuelans are helping Castro, as are some members of the European Community. We think there is recent evidence of Soviet approval for military help. They said publicly at one point that they would cease but we do not think that is so. We think the only way to get rid of Castro is to develop support from within and the only way to get at him is from other countries. If we wish to succeed against Castro by fighting we are in conflict with U.S. policy. We think that there is a change in Castro's situation and that now is the time for Cuba to be free. (S)

The President: I'm more optimistic about the fall of Castro. I don't think that there is a threat of Russian nuclear involvement, but you follow the situation closer than me. If there is anything that even looks like Russians returning I would be surprised. They say that they would not. (S)

If I have even a hint that they might have kept nuclear weapons there, I would take that very seriously. You think that Mexico and Venezuela and the European Community are shipping to Castro. I have not heard that. Let me look at this thing. I am very respectful of where you are coming from. I think we all want to see the decline and fall of Castro. (S)

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2

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We assuming some of the conversation we'll need to check as soon as possible: (1) Whether there is any kind of a missile deal; and (2) whether other countries have supported Castro. I have had assurances that they will be cooperative (other countries). (e)

General Scowcroft: Mexico agreed to suspend subsidies on oil after you talked to them. You stopped the Mexican subsidies. (e)

The President: I am disappointed that you think he is not getting weaker. In Europe there have been great changes. We were pessimistic earlier but great changes took place. (e)

Mr. Vargas Gomez: But he has his horses in place. (e)

The President: I guess it is sort of like Iraq. He feeds the elite and establishes very repressive measures. But there have been more disasters in his economy. I would hope that he would fall from internal pressures without bloodshed. I think you will agree that this is the best manner in which to see him fall. I think that the people of Cuba would respond with aid and economic development assistance from the private community in a greater manner than any other group. (e)

If the Kennedy-Kruschchev accords are not in place, we don't have as much protection from possible Russian nuclear activities in Cuba. (e)

Mr. Suarez: We all agree with your general policy. We have over 250,000 signatures and we could have had more, but we want to say that we are with you. We are big supporters of President Bush. (e)

The President: We don't want to defuse that message. We want to help if there is any way we can. (e)

Mr. Suarez: If anybody makes announcements at this moment, if they could do something that would say we have been more active because of this Cuban movement for exile. They know the Kennedy-Kruschchev agreement does not stop the Cubans from rebelling against Castro but people below that use the agreement to give Castro protection. What about something we can get to take back to Miami? We know what you did with the ships. Maybe you can do it as much with an announcement that will show we are doing more. (e)

The President: I am in favor of anything to tighten the screws on Castro, but I don't want to promise something that I cannot deliver. President reads from section of letter -- I don't know whether this will be helpful. (Copy attached) (e)

Mr. Perez Roura: It's difficult to understand. One finding in 1973 talks about how our obligations will prevent action by any U.S. citizen in other countries. (e)

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3

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The President: This rules out other countries. (Ø)

General Scowcroft: It is not a security guarantee for Cuba. If Venezuelans want to invade, there is no problem with the Kennedy-Kruschchev agreement. (Ø)

The President: Only the U.S. is constrained by the Kennedy-Kruschchev agreement. (Ø)

We will express appreciation for this. We want to express appreciation for you and what you have done. We have to stop short of what you want but it may help. (Ø)

I don't mind discussing this whole problem with my Russian experts. I will talk to the Intelligence people. I don't want to go against the experts, but I don't think he can sustain himself in the face of all the difficulties he is now experiencing. (Ø)

Mr. Vargas Gomez: Castro is weak but he has a strong security system. (Ø)

The President: I want to visibly elicit support against Castro. You could say the President supports peace and prosperity in Cuba. You might say that the President is a little more optimistic regarding Castro's downfall.

Mr. Suarez: If we can say that we are in agreement with your psychology. Don't know if you know we have a most powerful radio station. (Ø)

The President: Do you get a reaction? (Ø)

Mr. Suarez: Yes. Castro is blanketed with our news. (Ø)

Mr. Perez Roura: Raul Castro, when we initiated our programs actually issued threats to us in a military ceremony and said publicly that they threaten violence to our lives. (Ø)

The President: Is TV-Martí doing any good?

Vargas: No, there is nothing in Cuba. TV-Martí is costing gasoline that's all.

Mr. Pryce: (In response to the President's look of query) It's the gasoline that Castro uses to run his jamming generators. (Ø)

Gomez: That's a lot of gasoline.

The President: Well, that's a lot of money to spend that can't be seen.

Mr. Gomez: I don't mean that it's bad but it is not effective. We want to try to find a way to demonstrate our support for your policy and also encourage our people.

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4

The President: I very much appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and respect all that you are doing. I hope the letter we have given you will be helpful. Before you go I want to give you each a little souvenir.

Attachment

Tab A Letter from President to Messrs Roura & Gomez

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