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Chief, New York Field Office

Press Conference of the Cuban Invasion Leaders at the Overseas Press Club in New York: Off-the-Record Remarks of Manuel Arturo Concerning the Cuban Underground

1. On 15 January 1963, the Overseas Press Club of America (OPC), 54 West 40th Street, New York City, held a reception and press conference in honor of the "Cuban Invasion Brigade." The OPC heralded the event, arranged by its Inter-American Affairs Committee, as the first press conference and public appearance of the ex-prisoners since they were released from Castro's prison.

2. An active member of the OPC, a cleared source of the New York Office, attended the event and reported the following to C/O Balog:

a. Manuel Arturo and four other top commanders of the Bay of Pigs invasion attempt answered the questions of the working newsmen and other participants of the reception in a dignified but somewhat cautious manner. They seemed to be anxious to avoid the discussion of any controversial points concerning mistakes made prior to and during the invasion. In a diplomatic manner they thanked "the American people for the generous support given to us and to countless Cuban refugees who found a haven here."

b. The speakers were equally careful in their apparent determination not to be drawn into talking about controversy among the various Cuban rebel factions. When a newsmen raised the question of uniting the various anti-Castro groups under the leadership of a "strong man" such as Dr. Manuel Ray, Arturo remarked that it would be a mistake to rally around one man. Without referring to any Cuban refugee leader, Arturo added that "the battle for a free Cuba will be fought on Cuban soil and not in Miami." Another newsmen wanted to know if the Cuban exiles expected US Government help for another possible invasion of Cuba. Again, Arturo left no doubt about his determination to follow his diplomatic approach. He stated that the Cuban refugees "hope to arouse the anti-Castro, anti-Communist forces in the US and in the entire free world." With the usual hush of those present, he and his comrades are ready to go back to Cuba and fight for the elimination of the Communist beachhead there, even if they have to use razor blades.

Source: [William Forty (A 73805)]

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