

Mexico and The Cuban Revolution

by Arthur K. Smith

-- Manuel Tello was Foreign Minister of Mexico

-- Cardenas-Mateos rift at beginning of his term

50 The Soviet Embassy in Mexico City is credited with having been the focal point of Moscow's efforts in Latin America well before Castro moved Cuba into the Soviet orbit. The Embassy staff is far larger than that required by the volume of business it conducts, and no Mexican nationals are employed. The wives of assigned Soviet diplomatic agents perform the necessary clerical work in Embassy sections that normally are open only three or four hours each week. A majority of the assigned staff are said to be KGB operatives, assigned tasks in maintaining liaison with Communist groups throughout Latin America. [Eric looking into source for this information.]

104 Early July 1961, four tons of Soviet, Cuban, and Red Chinese propaganda material scheduled for Caribbean area distribution were seized by Mexican authorities.

113 Two former officers of the Mexican army were responsible for some coordinated attacks on government buildings and sympathies for Castro were creating serious divisions and increased political activity within the officer corps.

148 The big debate: 1) The Castro regime must somehow be placed at arm's length without being entirely abandoned to outside intervention; and 2) the appearance of giving into U.S. pressure or of expediently sacrificing traditional principles of Mexican foreign policy must be avoided.

152 Carlos Troyet -- prominent industrialist in Mexico who financially backed demonstrations against Castro/communism.

177 Kennedy's visit in June 1962 -- The PRI has mobilized its disciplined labor sector in Mexico City to ensure a good public turnout for the Kennedys' arrival, and advance press accounts of the visit had contributed to building an aura of good feeling. Moreover, some of the more radical and unpredictable student agitators were quietly placed in protective custody during the visit and federal police ransacked the office of *Politica* on the eve of the visit, temporarily jailing its editor and seizing the metal plates prepared for the July 1 issue, which finally appeared on newsstands after Kennedy had departed the country.

177 Carlos LeChuga replaced Jose Antonio Portuondo in April 1962 as Cuban Ambassador to Mexico.

180 Kennedy's visit to Mexico was in many respects a turning point for Mexican policy toward

Cuba and for the domestic security of the Lopez Mateos government. The new confidence shown by the U.S. strengthened the hand of Mateos against dissidents of both the left and right and sparked new growth in foreign private investment and tourism in Mexico.

198 Mexico forcefully opposed a request made jointly by the United States and three Central American countries that either the newly created Special Consultative Security Committee or a special committee of the OAS Council be authorized to conduct studies of methods to counter Cuban subversion. [would OAS have meeting minutes of such committees?]

200 The Missile Crisis became a decisive factor in promoting progress toward the eventual denuclearization of Latin America and Mexico's leading role in the movement.

223 The MLN's First National Convention was convened in Mexico City on October 4, 1963.

223 El Dia was probably funded by the government and the editor was close friends with Mateos.

231 During Mateos' good will visit to Europe in 1963, he went to Poland and Yugoslavia.

232 Ambassador Mann made diligent efforts to reach an agreement between U.S. and Mexico regarding the El Camizal (Colorado River problem).

235 Mexican Interior Ministry justified Duran's arrest and interrogation on grounds that the Cuban Consulate had never registered the subject as in its employ, nor had Duran requested official permission to serve a foreign power.

240 Mexicans feared that the initial weakness and indecision of the Kennedy administration might tempt the Soviet leadership to rashly exploit the situation to the point where pressures within the U.S. for some military response would be unbearable.

241 Mexicans' perception of the "Cuba problem" and solution to the problem were very different than those of the U.S. Mexico believed that Cuba's actions did not justify the use of collective sanctions under existing inter-American agreements.

260 Mann said, "the U.S. government recognized that Mexico's attitude was a defense of juridical principle and not of Fidel Castro."

260 July 26, 1964 - resolution providing the application of mandatory sanctions against Cuba in accordance with Articles 6 & 8 of the Rio Treaty. Mexico voted against in all cases.

264 Mateos stated, "I resolved that the Mexican government would continue maintaining relations with the Cuban government."

275 The January 1962 meeting of OAS Foreign Ministers at Punta del Este became the major turning point for Mexican foreign policy.

281 Lopez Mateos must be given credit for considerable political skill for his overall handling of the problems posed by Castro's Cuba. The President was able to reconcile his leftist constituency to accept a symbolic defense of Cuba, while at the same time he forged a new center-right coalition to support substantive political cooperation with the United States.

284 American policy-makers may even have discovered certain advantages in Mexico's continued relations with Cuba. -- Cubana Airlines flights continue to link Havana with Mexico City, providing Castro a convenient pipeline for propaganda and funds to implement his limited Hemisphere objectives. But the Mexico City terminal of this pipeline remains under the tightest surveillance by Mexican security police, who cooperate closely with United States intelligence agencies in providing information regarding its use.

287 In the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the prestige of Castro was seriously tarnished while that of President Kennedy was in steep ascendance.

294 Mateos' policy toward the Cuba of Fidel Castro preserved the fundamental integrity and independence of Mexico without sacrificing his country's vital accommodation with the United States.