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SUBCOMMITTEE ON CUBAN SUBVERSION

SACSA-M 156-63
14 March 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Coordinating Committee on Cuban
Affairs

Subject: The Movement of Propaganda Materials

Reference: Memorandum Establishing Sub-Committee
on Cuban Subversion, dated 27 February 1963

Attached is a paper which outlines the problem of
the flow of propaganda materials from Cuba to and within
Latin America, and which presents a sequence of actions
contemplated to meet the problem.

For the Sub-Committee

V. H. KRULAK
Major General, USMC
Chairman

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CUBA

THE MOVEMENT OF PROPAGANDA MATERIALS

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CUBA

MOVEMENT OF PROPAGANDA MATERIALS

I. Introduction

The actions proposed herein are designed to impede the movement of Communist propaganda materials from Cuba to and within Latin American countries. They complement the basic actions relating to control of movement of subversive trainees to and from Cuba, which actions are generally applicable in the solution of this problem as well. As in the companion measures for control of the movement of subversive trainees, successful execution of the actions proposed below will reduce the flow of propaganda materials but will not eliminate it entirely.

Communist Cuba has many legitimate outlets through which propaganda materials flow. As these legitimate outlets are blocked by the initial steps herein proposed, it will be necessary for the Cuban propagandists and their sympathizers elsewhere to turn from the mass exportation of materials to the production and dissemination of the same materials in a clandestine environment within the several Latin American countries. Of the two threats, the illicit production of propaganda materials in each country will be by far the more difficult to abate.

In combatting these threats, one of the most powerful factors is the influence of our own information and counter-propaganda efforts, which USIA and CIA have increased greatly during the past two years. This paper, however, is concerned wholly with direct actions; actions designed to impede the movement of propaganda materials to and within Latin America.

II. Nature and Scope of the Problem

While the Castro image has faded somewhat in Latin America, and the attraction of Cuba as a model has diminished, the susceptibility of the Latin American people to communist propaganda remains high. The basic social and economic factors which have made this true in the past have not greatly altered, and the variety and quantity of propaganda materials with which the Latin Americans are now beset are impressive, as exemplified in the ~~one hundred~~ million dollars which the communists are estimated to be investing in the project annually. It is a large program and it presents a continuing threat to the tranquility of Latin America.

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Many millions

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Our efforts to combat the problem, moreover, are complicated by the fact that freedom of thought, expression and press are generally highly regarded in Latin America, albeit not universally honored, and any proposals to reduce the flow of Castro-Communist subversive materials must be influenced by this fact. Otherwise the United States may find itself indicted for fostering police-state methods, a charge which could alienate many of the Latin Americans we seek to influence.

For the purpose of this paper, propaganda materials include radio program scripts, tapes and recordings, printed materials, (posters, pamphlets, magazines, leaflets, books, newspapers, news service output), motion pictures, duplicating or reproducing equipment, electronic communications equipment, and printing resources, particularly paper stock-piles.

However, to be complete, "movement of propaganda materials" must extend also to publications which are hand-carried into a country by legal or illegal travellers for subsequent reproduction. It must also include materials transmitted through Cuban and Soviet Bloc diplomatic channels, shipments via postal channels, quantities introduced through smuggling operations, oral transmission of propaganda guidance by individual travellers or by Radio Havana, and the dissemination of communist oriented news by Prensa Latina, the official Cuban news agency, for reproduction by local outlets. Finally to be considered are thematic guidance, which can be reproduced and exploited locally by returning trainees, front groups and sympathetic publications and, in some countries such as Mexico, Argentina and Uruguay, the products of those commercial establishments which regularly print or broadcast pro-Castro-Communist materials as a matter of policy or ideological conviction.

Press and Publications

There are 326 Communist and pro-Communist newspapers and periodicals in Latin America, and infiltration of the democratic press, coupled with the non-critical attitudes of some newspapermen, increases greatly the diffusion of the Cuban propaganda line. There are 228 Communist-oriented publishing houses and bookstores in Latin America, serving as outlets not only for 30 different Cuban periodicals, but for a large variety of other Communist printed material.

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Every Latin American country except the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Nicaragua, and Venezuela permits these bookshops to operate. Many of them offer publications at very low prices or give away several books with the purchase of one, and easy credit terms are available.

Excluding TASS and the New China News Agency (NCNA), Prensa Latina is the principal Communist news agency in Latin America. It operates openly, although not entirely without restriction, in ten countries -- Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay. While most users of Prensa Latina releases are covert or overt Communists, some non-Communist media make unattributed use of Prensa Latina releases. This is especially true of radio broadcasts.

All of this publication activity is essentially overt. However, decrees banning Communist propaganda have not prevented the clandestine publications and distribution of periodicals and books in some countries, and propaganda materials continue to seek entry through the mails. In Panama, for example, postal and customs authorities destroy an average of 12 tons of Cuban propaganda per month. Another ten tons per month is seized and destroyed in Costa Rica. This suggests the further quantities, perhaps larger, may be finding their way into these and other countries.

Radio

Short wave radio is the principal direct mass audience medium used by Cuba to carry subversive propaganda to Latin America. The Castro regime has constantly increased Radio Havana's short wave broadcasts to Latin America to a current level of 115:30 hours per week.

Cultural Activities

Penetration under the guise of cultural activities is a favored Communist propaganda technique in Latin America, where there are now some 64 Cuban binational centers and Friendship Societies.

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Films

Feature films and short documentaries produced by the Cuban Institute of Motion Picture Art and Industry play a direct propaganda role. These films are shown primarily in binational centers, pro-Communist labor and student groups, and in private or clandestine meetings.

It will be seen from this brief review that Latin America is the target of a broad-scale propaganda program, comprising not only propaganda materials but including also the ideas, the knowledge and the resources which are necessary to make those materials effective.

III. Direct Actions to Impede the Legal Movement of Propaganda Materials

Presented below is a summary of actions contemplated to impede the legal movement of propaganda materials from Cuba to and within Latin American countries. For the purpose of this paper, legal movement is defined as movement by recognized private and governmental carriers and communications, as well as postal systems and diplomatic pouching.

These actions offer promise of achieving early and effective results in some Latin American countries, but they do not have universal application, and those which may be feasible in one country may not be necessary or feasible in another.

1. Political Actions

a. Induce newspapers in countries in which Prensa Latina operates to cancel their subscriptions to the service.

b. Persuade those governments which receive Cuban and Bloc diplomatic missions to maintain close surveillance over the propaganda activities of the Communist embassies with a view toward prohibiting abuses of diplomatic privilege for subversive purposes.

c. As applicable and feasible, induce Latin American countries to:

(1) Adopt adequate internal security legislation to provide severe penalties for any person engaging in dissemination of Cuban-Communist propaganda which inspires terrorism or proposes the overthrow of the legal government by force and violence.

(2) Preclude attendance of Cuban delegates at international meetings held in Latin America. (Delegates are propaganda disseminators.)

2. Intelligence Actions

a. Continue U.S. intelligence efforts in each country to identify individuals, organizations and facilities involved in propaganda importation, reproduction and/or dissemination; make available to each country selected intelligence concerning these individuals, organizations and their activities. No

b. Encourage each country in which the Communist Party is illegal to offer rewards for information leading to interception of Castro-Communist propaganda and, in countries where the Communist party is legal, for conviction of persons supplying or disseminating propaganda materials considered dangerous to the country's tranquility.

c. In separate diplomatic approaches to each country, urge full and effective cooperation, with the appropriate organs of the OAS and bilaterally among the several nations, in the interchange of information concerning movement of propaganda materials.

d. Persuade Latin American countries to report promptly to the diplomatic mission of the country concerned, the identity of any national of that country who arrives from Cuba and who is discovered to have been carrying Communist propaganda materials.

3. Covert Actions

a. Disrupt the reproduction and distribution of propaganda materials, and the procurement and delivery of related supplies and equipment.

b. Seek opportunities to induce Latin American printing craftsmen to deface, destroy, or misprint Castro-Communist propaganda in the process of reproduction.

c. Disrupt Castro-Communist sponsored labor and youth congresses, industrial and agricultural exhibits in Latin American countries.

d. Maintain or increase pressures on media owners, local advertising agencies and film producers and/or distributors who accept Communist materials.

e. Dissuade U.S. and local business firms from advertising in Latin American media which carry pro-Communist materials; prepare and circulate to U.S. firms, for information, lists of such media in order to encourage their support of a non-Communist press.

f. Inhibit the spread of Cuban and Bloc binational centers and Friendship Societies in Latin America by an active program to expose their subversive activities and objectives.

g. Provide financial support to selected non-Communist news media requiring assistance in order to compete with Communist-aligned publications which have significant circulation or impact.

h. Induce Latin American countries to organize surveillance over in-country sources of newsprint and related supplies, and deny or inhibit the use of these supplies for printing Communist materials.

IV. Direct Actions to Impede Illegal Movement of Propaganda Material

Many of the actions outlined in Section III related to the legal movement of materials will serve also to restrict illegal movement. Additional measures designed specifically to impede clandestine traffic are enumerated below.

1. Intelligence Actions

a. Use penetration and other intelligence techniques to identify efforts to move propaganda materials from Cuba to and/or within Latin American countries; determine routes and methods employed; report selected information, consistent with requirements for protecting our own intelligence program, to the governments concerned.

b. Utilize the U.S. intelligence community to determine the nature and extent of clandestine aircraft and small boat traffic between Cuba and other countries in the Caribbean and Central American area, giving particular attention to Mexico, Honduras, Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Use the evidence obtained to induce the governments concerned to initiate surveillance and other control measures aimed at interception of propaganda materials.

2. Surveillance and Reporting Action

Exploit the mechanism of the Caribbean surveillance system, approved by the President in the study on movement of personnel, for discovering and impeding the movement of propaganda materials by illicit means.

3. Political Action

Where legally feasible to do so, induce each Latin American country to improve its police procedures designed to expose the subversive Communist propaganda apparatus in that country, and to detect and eliminate corrupt officials who permit illicit shipment of propaganda materials.

4. Technical Assistance Actions

a. Provide technical assistance, where requested to enable Latin American governments to locate clandestine transmitters.

b. Assist in the accelerated improvement of the capabilities of Latin American internal security forces, especially those patrol and intelligence activities whose function is the prevention of clandestine propaganda activities. Provide equipment, training and advice as required.