

October 16, 1962

**Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on
Cuban President Dorticos' Trip to New York**

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Summary:

Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim Erzsébet Görög reports on Cuban President Dorticos's trip to New York and speak at the United Nations. Görög opens her report describing the Cuban delegations travel from Havana to New York—she adds that the confusion may have been planned for political purposes. Görög records her impressions of Dorticos's speech and the Cuban public's receipt of the Cuban delegation upon return.

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Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

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Three to Center
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Havana, 16 October 1962.

Subject: The New York Trip
of President of the Cuban
Republic Dorticos

As I have already reported in another form, Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa informed the heads of the missions of socialist countries about the New York trip of President of the Republic Dorticos and his speech at the UN in advance of the announcement in the Cuban press.

All the chiefs of mission of the diplomatic corps were present without exception at Dorticos' and Roa's departure. It was conspicuous that Fidel Castro was not present.

As we learned from the press the day after, half-an-hour after take-off, the plane carrying the president of the republic, the foreign minister, and their entourage turned back so that some technical defects could be repaired, and the defect in the engine was fixed at the Havana airport. Prime Minister Fidel Castro arrived in the meantime and he had a long conversation with President Dorticos and Roa and the plane left only afterwards, now definitively, for New York.

Of course, the above sparked a great sensation and provided an opportunity for further guessing within the diplomatic corps, too.

During my visit with him, the Polish Ambassador [Bolesław Jeleń-ed.] expressed his deep disapproval about the case, bringing it up as an example of the carelessness and hot-headedness of the Cuban leaders. According to him, what happened was the following: as usual, Fidel Castro arrived late, the plane could not be held up because of the presence of the diplomatic corps, so he ordered the plane, already on its way to New York, to return so that he might give his final instructions to the delegation.

According to the above-mentioned comrade, Fidel Castro did not pay attention to the danger that the plane should pass certain points at given times, nor did he consider that it was dangerous for the plane, which was loaded with the fuel needed to reach New York, to land with the tank almost full. He considered the return order to have been given at random and without responsibility.

I inquired of some leading functionaries of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the causes of the return of the plane. They all referred to the minor technical defects also published in the press, which could not be fixed in the air and the plane [i.e., the pilots] did not want to make a forced landing before New York on the territory of the USA.

On the basis of these different opinions, I consider it likely that Prime Minister Castro wanted to have some talks with the delegation after the official farewell and it is possible that the recall took place on purpose and knowingly-but not because of the delay and out of hot-headedness.

President Dorticos' speech of October 8 at the UN was broadcast on Cuban radio and television. The television [broadcasts] grasped very skillfully those moments when American delegate [Adlai E.] Stevenson produced his notebook and took notes.

When returning to Cuba, President Dorticos was again welcomed by the chiefs of mission of all the diplomatic corps at the airport. All the chiefs of mission, including the papal legate, were present. So was Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

At the mass rally following the arrival, on the balcony of the presidential palace, however, I could see only the chiefs of mission of friendly and neutral countries.

The general assembly made an unforgettable impression on me. The square in front of the presidential palace, and the side-streets leading there, were black with the immense, unbelievably enthusiastic crowd, which fêted their returning president. Prime Minister Fidel Castro's speech (we have published its essence in a press review) was such an expression of faith in Soviet-Cuban friendship, the crowd shouting "Never" frenetically when Fidel Castro asked, "Can we give up friendship with the Soviet Union?" was so deeply sincere, the sight of the two flag-bearers cheered by the crowd, who raised the Soviet and Cuban flags and intertwined them, was so moving that whoever saw it-and probably the observers of the Americans were present-could not doubt for a moment that this crowd, these leaders would rather choose "Fatherland or Death" proclaimed in their slogan but would never leave the road of alliance with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

Erzsébet Görög
Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim