

November 9, 1962

Danish Newspaper Interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Pelegria Torras

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Summary:

As the first journalist in Cuba since the outbreak of the Cuban crisis, Petersen is received by 1st Deputy Foreign Minister, Dr. Pelegria Torras, for an interview. They discuss the differences between socialism and capitalism; Cuban-Scandinavian relations; Cuban sovereignty; and Cuba's refusal to submit to international inspections.

Credits:

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Original Language:

Danish

Contents:

Translation - English

First free interview from Cuba

Deputy Foreign Minister states the views of the Castro-government

HAVANA, Thursday, correspondent of The Democrat, Jørgen E. Petersen

As the very first journalist [in Cuba] since the outbreak of the Cuban crisis, I have been received by a member of the Cuban government, the 1stt Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Pelegria Torras, a 49-year old former university professor. The prerequisite for the talk was that the statements of Dr. Torras should be seen as reflecting the official standpoint of the Cuban government.

□□ How is the Cuban foreign policy going to look in the future?

□□

□□ Dr. Castro's Five Points form the foundation. The formulation of these points shape the effective guarantees for Cuba.

□□

□□ Will Cuba pursue its own policy or that of the Soviet Union?

□□

□□ Cuba has always pursued its own policy, a policy based on peace and peaceful co-existence. This is not a question of tactics. We desire peace to rebuild our society. Socialism needs peace in order to do its constructive work in agriculture and industry. We also wish to be among the countries who wish for peace because we are a small country. This policy has been clearly formulated by Dr. Castro and it has been formulated in the UN. This policy is almost the same as in the Socialist countries. Our principle is the one of Socialism. Socialism is our foundation, but with a distinct national character.

□□

□□ There are three choices in the world today: the Western bloc, the Eastern bloc and the neutral. Does Cuba want to be in the Eastern bloc or in the Neutral?

□□

□□ Differences, not a division □□

□□ There is a difference between the Socialist camp and the Capitalist bloc. The Capitalist bloc is also opposed to certain neutral countries. The Socialist isn't. The Socialist bloc emphasizes, that it isn't opposed to any bloc in any country. Coincidence has brought us into unison under these principles.

□□

□□ Fidel Castro said in his speech last Tuesday [actually Thursday, 1 November 1962-ed.], that there was a divide between the Soviet Union and Cuba?

□□

□□ Fidel Castro said that there were differences, but not a rift.

□□

□□ Cuba and Scandinavia □□ □□ □□

□□ How does Cuba view Scandinavia?

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□□ There is a difference between the Scandinavian countries, with neutral Finland and Sweden on the one side, and Denmark and Norway as NATO members on the other.

But we appreciate that there is a difference between the politics of the Scandinavian countries and the Imperialist bloc.

□□ □□ □□

□□~~W~~hat about the negotiations with [Anastas] Mikoyan?

□□ □□ □□

□□~~C~~an't give any details, but the talks are conducted in a fraternal spirit.

□□

□□□ □□ □□□The Trade with the East Countries □□ □□ □□

□□~~S~~Cuba going to receive more support from the Eastern European countries?

□□

□□~~T~~here will surely have been trade-policy negotiations these days with Mikoyan and his people.

□□

□□~~W~~hat are the terms for a Cuban reconciliation with the United States?

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□□~~T~~he Five Points, that Cuba demands, are necessary for our sovereignty.

□□

Respect for our sovereignty

□□~~W~~hat if the United States agrees to them?

□□

With a smile: - That would be a complete abstraction. But it would mean a major change in the foreign policy of the United States. In that case we would be willing to discuss the differences. All we want is respect for our sovereignty and the wishes of our people. But the reality is that the United States continues its aggression with the blockade, even though Kennedy has already admitted that the rockets are on their way out. However, this does not prevent Cuba from receiving a lot of friendly support from all over the world.

□□~~T~~he Five Points are recognized, will Cuba then accept the Red Cross inspection of the rocket-dismantlement?

□□

Cannot accept inspection

□□~~A~~t the moment, it is the Cuban government's standpoint, that it cannot possibly accept an inspection.

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□□~~B~~ut if the Five Points are accepted?

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□□~~T~~hen maybe we would allow the Red Cross to inspect the dismantling of the American base on Cuba. In the Cuban terminology, Guantanamo is Cuban territory. If we should allow an inspection of the dismantling, then we would have agreed to an inspection on Cuban territory.

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□□ Might it not be possible to extend this, as a one-off event, to including an inspection that the rockets are dismantled and gone?

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□□□ that eventuality, it should of course be considered. Today, however, the answer has to be no. Cuba prefers negotiation and peace, but only in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The Cuban people today therefore wait with weapon in hand for this right to live in peace.