

January 17, 1962

Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 17 January 1962

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Summary:

Jelen reports to Krajewski on the Punta del Este, based on conversations with Blas Roca [Caldeiro], [Raul] Roa [Garcia], and [Carlos] Lechuga, about the situation in various Latin American countries: Mexico, Bolivia, Columbia, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Cuba.

Credits:

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Dispatched from Havana on 01.17.1962 at 18:30 and received at 01.18.1962 at 14:04

Came to the Decoding Department at 01.18 at 16:50

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,1 Urgent

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JELEN2

[This report] regarding Punta del Este³ [has been compiled based on] the conversations with, among others, Blas Roca [Caldeiro],⁴ [Raul] Roa [Garcia],⁵ and [Carlos] Lechuga.⁶

Colombia is introducing four draft resolutions:

Calling on Cuba to break its relations with the communist bloc.

The statement saying that the socialist system is incompatible with the principles of the OAS [Organization of American States].

The obligation not to receive military bases of socialist countries by the American nations.

Appointing a permanent inter-American commission for control of communist infiltration and giving it extensive powers in the area of membership applications and executive powers. [This commission would be] analogous to the one which was formed during World War II in 1942. In practice, such a commission would have the authority to limit the sovereignty of the members of the OAS; [however,] especially strong resistance is being expected as far as the formation of such a commission.

The United States and some other participants are expected to introduce corrections to the above mentioned resolution drafts in order to apply sanctions according to Article 8 of the Rio Treaty⁷ as the justification of the report of the International Peace Commission, which will be presented at Punta [del Este] ([these are] consequences of the Peruvian resolution in the OAS, see our previous report).

Argentina's position is still not clear. It is expected that [Argentina will introduce] drafts, stating that the communist system is incompatible with that of the inter-American [system], as well as [drafts] defining the deadline for Cuba to adopt [a political system] of a representative democracy (the latter point is still not completely specified).

Mexico will not introduce its own drafts. It will question, from the legal point of view, the authority of the consultative organ of the OAS in the area of adopting resolutions which are going beyond those of the Rio [Treaty]. Such [resolutions] can only be adopted, according to the Mexican theory, by the same means that the treaty itself was adopted, that is, prior to the pan-American conference whose resolutions still need to be ratified. This approach opens up opportunities for possibly not adopting the resolutions from Punta [del Este]. Sanctions adopted according to the Rio Treaty (except for those in the military area), after all, apply to all of the [OAS] members.

The latest changes within the Bolivian government, especially the [appointment] of their new foreign minister, are unfavorable to Cuba.

It is expected that the following are Brazilian resolutions: the [political] system [which is based on] the principles of Marxism-Leninism, is incompatible with that of the inter-American [system], [but] according to the principle of self-determination, Cuba has the right to adopt such a system. This fact itself therefore justifies the recognition of Cuba as a separate neutral status. Interlocutors (Roa): confirms the exchange of views [regarding this issue] with Brazil. [According to] Roca: they are assessing the Brazilian resolutions as cloudy, but also containing positive aspects, because they oppose [the imposition of] sanctions [on Cuba] and open up a possibility for conducting negotiations; the actual state of Cuba's international relations is neutralism.

Cuban tactics at Punta [del Este]:

[The adoption of an] offensive [position] by pointing out the aggressive aspects of the US; [the adoption of] flexible [tactics] in order to strengthen the trends which are against [imposing] sanctions [on Cuba] and those which are calling for further negotiations, but without compromising [Cuba's] already established internal system. ([Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado] and [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez in the Cuban delegation represent the composed [calm] elements in the discussion, as opposed to the well-known nervous reactions of Roa.)

According to Roca, they are moving the deadline for the massive People's Assembly from January 22 to January 28, because the Second Havana Declaration will be the response to the resolutions at Punta [del Este], and they are not going to be known yet on the 22nd. In addition, adopting the [Second Havana Declaration] could further complicate the negotiating position of Cuba at the [Punta del Este conference].

[This information is based on] the conversation with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto]: his definition of the Brazilian line is overall in accordance with our point 6 mentioned above in this cable. He states that one should not reject the possibility of reaching modus vivendi under the conditions of Cuba's neutrality, and that one should create such conditions which would mold the Cuban system once Cuba is faced with reality. Brazil is not going to break relations with Cuba.

[1] Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

[2] Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

[3] On 5 May 1948, the foundation of the Organization of the American States (OAS) took place in Bogota, Colombia. Cuba was one of its founding members. On 22 January 1962, the OAS held the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Punta del Este, Uruguay. As the result, Cuba was effectively suspended from the OAS from January 22, 1962 until June 3, 2009.

[4] Blas Roca (1908-1987), Cuba's leading communist theoretician and supporter of Fidel Castro.

[5] Raul Roa Garcia (1907-1982) served in the Foreign Ministry of Cuba from 1959 to 1976; he was a lawyer and an intellectual.

[6] A journalist and the Cuban ambassador to Mexico and then the United Nations in the early 1960s.

[7] The reference here is to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (commonly known as the Rio Treaty). Article 8 of the Rio Treaty states: "For the purposes of this Treaty, the measures on which the Organ of Consultation may agree will comprise one or more of the following: recall of chiefs of diplomatic missions; breaking of diplomatic relations; breaking of consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and radiotelephonic or radiotelegraphic communications; and use of armed force." Source: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decad061.asp#art8.