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# Cuba and its good neighbor: A microcosm of changing United States policy toward Latin America

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**CUBA AND ITS GOOD NEIGHBOR: A MICROCOSM OF CHANGING  
UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA**

143

**A Thesis**  
**Presented to the**  
**Department of History**  
**and the**  
**Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies**  
**University of Omaha**

**In Partial Fulfillment**  
**of the Requirements for the Degree**  
**Master of Arts**

**by**  
**Thomas Lyle Olson**  
**January, 1966**

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Accepted for the faculty of the College of Graduate Studies of the University of Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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## PREFACE

In the twentieth century, the United States has often been ambivalent toward economic, social, and political changes, which have tended to limit both the powers of the business community and entrenched, conservative, governments, in underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. While the United States has professed belief in self-determination for all nations, its actions have often indicated support for oppressive regimes for the sake of maintaining stability. Beginning in 1933 with the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Inaugural Address and followed by the deeds of the United States after the Montevideo Conference in December, 1933, the United States professed a policy of cooperation, friendship, equality with the nations of Latin America, and non-interference in their internal affairs.

The touchstone of this "Good Neighbor" policy was the relationship of the United States to the Republic of Cuba in 1933 and 1934. Although it may legitimately be argued that the Good Neighbor policy began under Hoover or even

Coolidge, it is not until 1933 that the events of a serious revolution in Cuba, which had been brewing since 1931, and a determined policy of friendship and mutual trust by the United States are hurled together. For the Roosevelt administration, the Good Neighbor policy had to succeed in Cuba by avoiding intervention, displaying friendship, and demonstrating a desire to see Cuba settle its own problems. The purpose of this study is to examine in detail the diplomatic relationship of the United States and Cuba in this trying period of nearly two years.

The emphasis of this study is upon the dichotomy created by the United States trying earnestly to promote the Good Neighbor policy while at the same time exhibiting an unwillingness to allow complete self-determination by promoting a stable and conservative government. The study proceeds only through 1934 because, by that time, although the Good Neighbor policy continued, it had had its effect upon the Republic of Cuba and the relationship between the two countries had been established in a pattern which would continue until the Castro revolution. In addition, after 1934 there is a void in the amount of primary source material available.

There has been a great deal written about Cuba since the downfall of Fulgencio Batista in 1958. Very little, however, has been written about the events of 1933-34, which

provide an important part of the background for the 1958 revolution. There have been only two extensive studies of Cuban-American relations during this period. One is Russell H. Fitzgibbon's Cuba and the United States, 1900-1935. This book, published in 1935, is a thorough study of the first third of the twentieth century and includes a considerable amount of information on the 1933-34 period. The author did not, however, have access to government documents such as the diplomatic correspondence. There is, then, a need for a study which includes documentation other than information issued by the Department of State to the press. The other is Robert F. Smith's published dissertation entitled, The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, 1917-1960. While it is perhaps a more valuable work than Fitzgibbon's, Smith concentrates on trade relations and American investments in Cuba. Where he does deal with diplomacy, his interpretation of several Department of State documents is open to question.

The writing of this thesis has been aided in various ways by others. I take full responsibility, however, for any errors in the factual material contained herein and for any misinterpretations of the sources. I would especially like to thank my adviser, Dr. Paul L. Beck of the University

of Omaha, for his encouragement, advice, and criticism.  
To the Libraries of the University of Omaha, the University  
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Thomas L. Olson

4 November 1965



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## CHAPTER I

### THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE, 1898-1933

The Congress of the United States, by Joint Resolution on 18 April, 1898, asserted in what was to become known as the Teller Amendment:

That the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island /Cuba/, except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people.<sup>1</sup>

Upon receiving word of the Joint Resolution, signed by the President on 20 April, the Spanish government broke off relations with the United States. On 25 April, President McKinley asked for and received a declaration of war.<sup>2</sup>

On 1 February 1899, following the termination of hostilities between the United States and Spain, in order to ready the Cuban people for self-government and in spite of the Teller

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<sup>1</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 55th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1898, XXXI, Part 4, 3954.

<sup>2</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 55th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1898, XXXI, Part 5, 4228-9.

Amendment, the governing of Cuba came under the authority of the President of the United States acting through his representative in Cuba, Major-General John R. Brooke. Within a short time, Brooke was replaced by Major-General Leonard Wood whose administration of two years and five months was noted for improving sanitary conditions and public health facilities, the improvement of the education system, the building of new roads, and reforms in municipal government.<sup>3</sup>

Although Cuban leaders were generally satisfied with Wood's administration, there was some agitation that the United States grant complete independence. Because of the growing hostility and in keeping with the promise of the Teller Amendment, General Wood, acting on directions from Washington, issued an order on 25 July 1900 for the election of delegates to frame a constitution for the island. General Wood's order also called upon the Cubans to, ". . ."provide for and agree with the Government of the United States upon the relations to exist between that Government and the Government of Cuba."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Russell H. Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, 1900-1935 (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1935), pp. 30-66; Cosme de la Torriente, "The Platt Amendment," Foreign Affairs, VIII, No. 3 (April, 1930), 364.

<sup>4</sup>Charles E. Chapman, A History of the Cuban Republic: A Study in Hispanic American Politics (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), pp. 131-32.

The result of the convention, which met in November, 1900, was a constitution closely modeled after that of the United States. Although there was some apprehension that the Constitution would not be accepted by the United States, Secretary of War Elihu Root, in charge of matters concerning the military supervision of Cuba, did not object. He had, however, personal misgivings about a few of the provisions. The Cuban Constitution did not provide a framework for future relations with the United States and did not contain features which would transfer the obligations assumed by the United States under the Treaty of Paris for the protection of life, liberty, and property, to the Cuban government.<sup>5</sup>

American statesmen and members of Congress, believing there existed a "special" relationship between Cuba and the United States because of the Treaty of Paris, were unwilling to accept the Cuban Constitution without some provision for this relationship. Harry F. Guggenheim, who became Ambassador to Cuba during the Hoover administration, said that our statesmen were, ". . . fearful of the political inexperience of a country only 100 miles from our shores." He also believed that these men were looking forward to a time when the United States would have vital financial interests on the island. With these considerations in mind, they proceeded to develop a

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-5.

political relationship which was, ". . . unique between two sovereign states."<sup>6</sup>

This relationship found formal expression in a series of provisions, attached to the Army Appropriation Bill of 2 March 1901, known as the Platt Amendments, which were to be embodied in the Cuban Constitution as well as in a permanent treaty between the two nations.<sup>7</sup> Article III of the Platt Amendment is most important for it states:

The Government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the Treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the Government of Cuba.<sup>8</sup>

The Platt Amendment, representing the viewpoint of the administration and drafted primarily by Secretary of War Elihu Root, was strongly defended by Senator Orville H. Platt of Connecticut, who introduced the amendments, when he said,

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<sup>6</sup>Harry F. Guggenheim, "Amending the Platt Amendment," Foreign Affairs, XII, No. 3 (April, 1934), 448.

<sup>7</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 56th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1901, XXXIV, Part 3, 2954. For a complete text of the treaty, see Appendix I.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

"I believe it will settle what may be called the Cuban question satisfactorily to the people of Cuba and satisfactorily to our own people."<sup>9</sup>

Following a brief debate on the Platt Amendments in the Senate on 27 February, in which little opposition was incurred, that body passed the measures by a vote of forty-three to twenty, with twenty-five not voting.<sup>10</sup> On 1 March, the House engaged in a more prolonged debate but finally accepted the measures by a vote of 159 to 134.<sup>11</sup> The following day, President McKinley signed the Army Appropriations Act containing the amendments which were to become much more significant than the original bill.<sup>12</sup>

To a majority of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, however, the Platt Amendment was thought to be a very unsatisfactory document. In an effort to placate their misgivings, Governor Wood conveyed to them a cablegram from Secretary of War Root. The message, addressed to Wood, stated:

<sup>9</sup>Guggenheim, Foreign Affairs, XII, 368.

<sup>10</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 56th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1901, XXXIV, Part 4, 3037-42, 3146, 3148.

<sup>11</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 79.

<sup>12</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 56th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1901, XXXIV, Part 4, 2954.

You are authorized to state officially that in the view of the President the intervention described in the third clause of the Platt Amendment is not synonymous with intermeddling or interference with the affairs of the Cuban Government, but the formal action of the Government of the United States, based upon just and substantial grounds, for the preservation of Cuban independence, and the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and adequate for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the Treaty of Paris on the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Not satisfied with this explanation, the Convention, on 13 April 1901, voted to send a committee, headed by Dr. Mendez Capote, to Washington to learn in detail American attitudes regarding future Cuban-United States relations. After conferring with the President, Secretary Root, members of the Cabinet, and members of Congress from 24 April until 6 May, the committee returned to Havana. In regard to Article III of the Platt Amendment, Secretary Root had assured the Cubans that, "Intervention in Cuban affairs will be resorted to only in case of great disturbances, similar to those which occurred in 1898, and with the sole and exclusive object of maintaining Cuban independence unimpaired."<sup>14</sup> The Secretary of War went

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<sup>13</sup>Report of Leonard Wood, Military Governor of Cuba (November 27, 1901), Annual Reports of War Department for fiscal year ended June 30, 1901, pp. 7, 48, quoted in U.S., Foreign Relations of the United States, 1933, V: The American Republics (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), 283.

<sup>14</sup>de la Torriente, Foreign Affairs, VIII, 370.



still further when he stated:

Intervention will only take place to protect the independence of the Cuban Republic from foreign attack, or when a veritable state of anarchy exists within the republic. Intervention always and in all cases would be in favor of independence, even should it arise from some serious failure on the part of the Cubans to form their government. The Third Clause is equally binding upon the United States to respect and preserve the independence of Cuba.<sup>15</sup>

Senator Platt upheld the Root interpretation of the Amendment when he said:

. . . the Amendment was carefully worded. . . to avoid any thought that acceptance of it by the Constituent Assembly would tend to establish a protectorate or a suzerainty, or any form of meddling with the independence or sovereignty of Cuba.<sup>16</sup>

After the return of the committee to Cuba, debate continued throughout May on whether or not the convention should accept the Platt Amendment as a part of the Cuban constitution. On 28 May, the convention finally agreed to accept the Amendment when the president of the Convention cast the deciding vote. Although the exact reasons of the delegates who voted for acceptance are unclear, it is thought that a vague promise from the United States on a reciprocal trade agreement may have been a deciding factor. The acceptance of

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 371.

the Amendment was, however, qualified as the delegates imposed their own interpretation of some of the provisions. When President McKinley and his advisors disapproved of the acceptance with reservations, Wood informed the delegates that acceptance had to be unqualified. Finally, on 12 June 1901, the convention agreed to approval without reservation.<sup>17</sup>

A treaty incorporating the amendments, as provided for in Article VIII of the Platt Amendment, was eventually signed at Havana on 22 May 1903. Ratifications were not exchanged until 1 July 1904.<sup>18</sup> The treaty thus placed in effect was to remain in force until modified, rescinded, or replaced by the mutual consent of the two countries.<sup>19</sup> By accepting the terms of the treaty, the Government of Cuba had, in fact, permitted intervention in her affairs. Ostensibly, it was for the purpose of guaranteeing the absence of such intervention that the treaty was signed.

Article III of the Platt Amendment was officially invoked twice in the next thirty years. When a political controversy

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<sup>17</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 85.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 56th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1901, XXXIV, Part 3, 2954.

threatened American property in 1906, the American Consul General, Frank Steinhart, requested intervention. Theodore Roosevelt was reluctant to send troops and instead sent a commission headed by William Howard Taft to attempt mediation of the dispute. When President Tomás Estrada Palma and his cabinet resigned in September, however, Taft proclaimed himself provisional governor and American ships and troops were ordered to the island.<sup>20</sup> Charles E. Magoon succeeded Taft as provisional governor and served in that capacity until January, 1909 when the intervention was ended.<sup>21</sup>

In 1917, an armed revolt was begun against the government of President Mario Garcia Menocal, the insurgents claiming that the government was violating their constitutional rights. After a period of vacillation on its course of action, the United States Department of State took a firm stand in support of the Menocal government. The chief basis for this support was the Wilson policy of recognizing only those governments which had achieved power by constitutional means. When reports began to arrive in the United States claiming that the rebels were burning sugar cane in Oriente Province, the United States

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<sup>20</sup>The best account of the intervention from 1906-1909 may be found in Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, pp. 112-144.

<sup>21</sup>Robert F. Smith, The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, 1917-1960, (New York: Bookman Associates, 1960), p. 25.

landed a force of 220 marines at Guantánamo on 26 February. Subsequently, several hundred more were landed at Santiago de Cuba and at other strategic centers. During March, the United States reiterated its support for the Menocal government and denied reports that it was even in communication with the rebels. By April, the insurrection had subsided and by June had been entirely quelled.<sup>22</sup>

Following World War I, American investments in Cuba began to expand rapidly. Although there had been some investment by Americans in sugar and to a lesser extent in tobacco and minerals during the colonial period, a phenomenal increase in investment was noted after 1917 when Bethlehem Steel Corporation, the United Fruit Company, the American Tobacco Company, the Cuban-American Sugar Company, and several other large corporations, including banks such as the Chase National Bank, established themselves on the island. It is estimated that American investment in Cuba increased 540 per

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<sup>22</sup>On the 1917 intervention, see "U.S. Intervention Possible Under the Platt Amendment," N.Y. Times, February 12, 1917, p. 9; "U.S. Offers Arms to President Menocal," N.Y. Times, February 14, 1917, p. 1; N.Y. Times, February 20, 1917, p. 1; N.Y. Times, February 25, 1917, III, 1; "Admiral Mayo Ordered by President Wilson to Protect U.S. Citizens, Marines Sent to Town Near Guantánamo," N.Y. Times, March 1, 1917, p. 12; N.Y. Times, March 17, 1917, p. 5; N.Y. Times, May 21, 1917, p. 10; Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, pp. 153-160.

cent in the years between 1913 and 1928. After 1920, when the price of sugar dropped sharply from a high of 22.5 cents a pound in 1922 to 1.6 cents a year later, the American banks which held the defaulted loans began to enter the sugar industry on a large scale.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1924 Cuban Presidential election, at the height of American investment in Cuba, official Cuban opposition to the Platt Amendment began. Although the incumbent, Alfredo Zayas, sought re-election, he had made a one-term pledge. Because of his unparalleled nepotism and personal use of the public treasury, however, he was thoroughly discredited. The Conservatives nominated former President Mario Garcia Menocal after the unstable Conservative alliance of 1924, The National League, had disintegrated. Menocal, however, enjoyed little more support than Zayas because of the hostility he had aroused during his years as President prior to 1917. The Liberal candidates were Colonel Carlos Mendieta, who made the tactical error of campaigning for the nomination on a platform of co-operation with the United States at a time when anti-American feeling was beginning to run high, and General Gerardo Machado y Morales, who capitalized upon his stand against the Platt

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<sup>23</sup>Wyatt MacGaffey and Clifford R. Barnett, Twentieth Century Cuba: The Background of the Castro Revolution (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., 1965), pp. 212-13.

Amendment. Machado won the party nomination, and with it, the election. Machado carried every province in the nation except Pinar del Rio, a traditional center of conservative strength.<sup>24</sup>

Although Zayas had exhibited some strong anti-United States sentiment while in office, his attitudes were mild in comparison with those of Machado. Two and a half years before his election, Machado stated publicly:

The Platt Amendment does not, . . . entail a limitation upon our independence or upon our sovereignty. . . .

The hour has come for our people. . . to restore and reestablish the original meaning of the Platt Amendment and make it an organ without functions, a dead-letter law, that can be laid away in the tomb, a relic among the annals of our sovereignty and independence.

I have always thought that the Platt Amendment does not reserve, concede or authorize to the government of the United States any intermeddling in our domestic affairs.<sup>25</sup>

After his election, however, Machado's denunciations of the United States were no longer as outspoken as those of other Latin Americans. Jesús Semprúm, for example, had characterized Americans in 1918 as, ". . . rough and obtuse Calibans, swollen by brutal appetites, the enemies of all idealisms, furiously

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<sup>24</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 184

<sup>25</sup>El Dia, May 9, 1922, quoted in Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 185.

enamored of the dollar, insatiable gulpers of whiskey and sausages--swift, overwhelming, fierce, clownish."<sup>26</sup>

While Machado continued to denounce the United States in tempered statements, he intended only to arouse Cubans and not seriously to antagonize the United States.

Machado's cautious approach to the problem of the Platt Amendment was reflected in an article written by Rafael R. Altunaga for Current History in 1927. Speaking for the Machado government, Altunaga, the Counselor of the Cuban Embassy in Washington, explained that the requirements of the Platt Amendment had all been met by the Cubans, i.e., good sanitation facilities and fiscal responsibility. All that remained of the Permanent Treaty of any consequence, he said, was the intervention clause. Altunaga then praised the United States for never having intervened in Cuba for selfish reasons and because even when intervention had taken place it was with the greatest reluctance. He argued further that the existence of the treaty only served to humiliate the Cuban people and dishonor the nation. He believed the world

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<sup>26</sup>Jesús Semprún, "El Norte y el Sur," Cultura Venezolana, Caracas, I (November and December, 1918), 132, quoted in Donald Marquand Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors? Three Decades of Inter-American Relations, 1930-1960 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1959), p. 4.

considered the island as semi-independent and a protectorate of the United States. If a situation were to arise in Cuba in which life and property were destroyed by civil disorder, the United States would not need the Platt Amendment for the world would expect intervention in the name of humanity and morality.<sup>27</sup> In speaking of Machado's position, he said:

Confronted by this situation, . . . Machado, the real reconstructor of the Cuban republic, a warm and admiring friend of the United States, convinced of the need of mutual intelligence and cooperation to solve many problems which affect both nations in equal measure, insists more and more on the necessity of abolishing the Platt Amendment.<sup>28</sup>

The contention that Machado was trying to keep Cubans disturbed about the Platt Amendment and yet not antagonize the United States is well supported. While Machado again denounced the Platt Amendment in his 1928 campaign for re-election, the Legislature, which he dominated, in that year refused to strike the Platt Amendment from the Cuban Constitution.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Rafael Rodriguez Altunaga, "Cuba's Case for the Repeal of the Platt Amendment: The Views of President Machado," Current History, XXVI, No. 6, (September, 1927), 926.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 927.

<sup>29</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 185.



Following Machado's re-election in 1928, the falling price of sugar was paralleled by deteriorating political conditions.<sup>30</sup> Poor economic conditions and an increasingly oppressive government helped to create political agitation led primarily by three political parties to which were added other semi-political groups. The orthodox or non-cooperating Conservatives were led by former President Menocal; the opposition wing of the liberal party was oftentimes referred to as the Miguelistas and was headed by Miguel Mariano Gómez. The other major opposition force was the Union Nacionalista which, while not formally recognized as a political party, functioned as such and was led by Carlos Mendieta.<sup>31</sup> After 1931, another opposition group gained in prominence. This was the A.B.C. (Authentic Cuban Revolutionary Party). The idealistic A.B.C. was strongly supported by students after President Machado closed Havana University indefinitely in 1929. The closing of the University was an effort to end the opposition to his regime coming from that center of

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<sup>30</sup>The problem of the interrelationship of the economic situation and political unrest will be dealt with more fully in a discussion of the reciprocal trade program of 1934 in Chapter IV.

<sup>31</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, pp. 190-191.

perennial discontent. While the A.B.C. often resorted to terroristic methods, it was perhaps the most constructive of the opposition groups for it had developed an extensive program for social, economic, and political reforms.<sup>32</sup>

Another group of importance which opposed the Machado government after the mid-1920's was the Cuban Communist party which had been founded in 1925. During the 1920's it concentrated on establishing "front" organizations of which the Anti-Imperialist League was the most important. The Communist party was active, for example, in denouncing the Pan-American Conference held in Havana in 1928 and in publishing an illegal weekly newspaper entitled, El Comunista. The Communists were also active in the Workers' Trade Union Movement (M.S.O.). They organized revolutionary factions in many of the trade unions including those of the railwaymen, the textile workers, and the tobacco workers. They were also influential in the formation of the National Cuban Workers' Confederation which had been established in 1924 by anarchist-syndicalist groups. It was not until after 1930, however, that they had become well enough established to threaten Machado.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>International Commission of Jurists, Cuba and the Rule of Law (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1962), p. 28; New York Times, July 23, 1933, VIII, 4; Carleton Beals, The Crime of Cuba (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1933), pp. 309-11.

<sup>33</sup>International Commission of Jurists, Cuba and the Rule of Law, p. 31.

Although a condition of anarchy was rapidly developing in Cuba, a changing attitude in the United States forestalled any direct intervention. The Coolidge administration, although indicating a slight modification of American policy, had insisted that the property of United States nationals, anywhere in the world, was a part of America's domain.<sup>34</sup> This attitude, charged Sumner Welles, who would become Ambassador to Cuba in 1933, did nothing but create an unfortunate attitude toward the United States throughout South America.<sup>35</sup> In Latin America, the Coolidge administration's position was perhaps most ably criticized by the Mexican nationalist Isidro Fabela in 1926 when he said, "Every dollar that crosses our frontiers not only has stamped on its reverse the North American Eagle but carries also in its hard soul the flag of the stars and stripes, which is today the most imperialistic in the world."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Harry Hersh Shapiro, "The United States and the Principle of Absolute Nonintervention in Latin America with Particular Reference to Mexico" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania), p. 141; Sumner Welles, The Time for Decision (New York: Harper & Bros. Publishers, 1944), p. 189; This is a valuable source for comparing Welles's comments with his telegrams to the Department of State while he was Ambassador to Cuba in 1933. The two sources do not always agree.

<sup>35</sup>Welles, The Time for Decision, pp. 188-89.

<sup>36</sup>Excelsior, Mexico City, 1927, reprinted in Cuadernos Americanos, LXXIX, (January and February, 1955), pp. 56-60, quoted in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 4.

Soon after his inauguration in 1929, President Hoover began a moderate and restrained retreat from the policy of intervention in Latin America. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, for example, insisted that the retention of United States Marines in Nicaragua was to protect lives, not necessarily property. As Harry H. Shapiro states:

Hoover recognized that when the United States had acted as trustee for other nations in the hemisphere, particularly the weaker, geographically adjacent nations to the south, hostilities had developed which redounded to the disadvantage of the stronger, rather than the weaker nation.<sup>37</sup>

While Hoover and Stimson had recognized the seriousness of the Cuban situation in October, 1930, they maintained that the United States ought not intervene by force to protect the property of American citizens in foreign countries. In addition, the United States should not land troops to maintain an incumbent administration unless complete anarchy were threatened. The Hoover administration retreated still further when Hoover and Stimson abandoned the practice, initiated by Woodrow Wilson, of withholding diplomatic recognition from Latin American governments which had achieved power by revolt.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Shapiro, "The United States and Nonintervention," p. 141.

<sup>38</sup>Julius W. Pratt, Cordell Hull, 1933-44, Vol. XII of The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1964), p. 139; Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Latin American Policy of the United States (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943), p.280.

Foreign policy was metamorphized further when the Department of State published, in 1930, Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine, which had been prepared two years earlier by the Solicitor of the State Department, J. Reuben Clark. Although the document repudiated the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, the basis for justification of intervention in Latin America since 1904, it did not entirely eliminate the possibility of intervention. Clark stated:

. . . the Monroe Doctrine is not an equivalent for 'self-preservation' and therefore the Monroe Doctrine need not, indeed should not, be invoked in order to cover situations challenging our self-preservation but not within the terms defined by Monroe's declaration. These other situations may be handled, and more wisely so, as matters affecting the national security and self-preservation of the U. S. as a world power.<sup>39</sup>

Most of Latin America seemed, however, to be optimistic about the course of American foreign policy as evidenced by the Clark Memorandum. LaPrensa, the leading newspaper of Buenos Aires declared on 3 May 1931, that Hoover's policy, ". . . constitutes a decisive step toward bettering the relations between the U. S. and Central America and toward the consolidation of continental confidence."<sup>40</sup> In the absence of any

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<sup>39</sup>J. Reuben Clark, Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine, Department of State Publication No. 37 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1930), p. xxi.

<sup>40</sup>La Prensa (Buenos Aires), May 3, 1931, quoted in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 13.

specific acts of good will to reinforce the change in the direction of policy, however, there continued to be a good deal of criticism directed toward the United States. El Diario Ilustrado of Santiago Chile criticized the economic power of the United States and said it, ". . . is a colossus whose financial might has no equal in history."<sup>41</sup> Dr. Carlos Saavedra Lama of Argentina characterized the United States as the "gendarme fabuloso"<sup>42</sup> and a liberal leader in Nicaragua charged that the United States was trying to establish an "imperialistic hegemony" in Latin America.<sup>43</sup>

The increasing violence in Cuba, and the oppressive measures taken by Machado to combat it, led such prominent Cubans as Cosme de la Torriente to comment upon the uselessness of the Platt Amendment. Writing in Foreign Affairs in 1930, he expressed the idea that while the Platt Amendment had restricted the sovereignty of Cuba and reduced it to a

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<sup>41</sup>El Diario Ilustrado, (Santiago, Chile), June 26, 1930, quoted in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup>La Nacion, (Buenos Aires), June 1, 1931, quoted in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup>Francisco J. Medina, Managua, Nicaragua, May 1, 1930, "Memorandum on Present Conditions in Nicaragua," enclosure in I.B. Sutton, Chairman, Finance Committee Rotary International, to Secretary of State, August 24, 1930, Department of State Archives, Washington, quoted in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 4.

position of a United States protectorate, the rights given to the United States by the Permanent Treaty had done nothing to prevent revolutions, insure constitutional rights, and maintain stable government. On the contrary, he argued:

The possibility of American intervention has been exploited by unscrupulous politicians for selfish purposes . . . occasionally to destroy a good government, and now and then to strengthen governments which . . . violate the Constitution.<sup>44</sup>

Prominent Americans were also arguing during this time for more decisive change in our philosophy toward Latin America. Franklin Delano Roosevelt articulately expressed this attitude in 1928. Roosevelt, however, had not always been anti-imperialist. During the years he spent as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, in the Wilson administration he exhibited a strongly paternalistic attitude toward the Caribbean nations. It appears he would have favored the acquisition of additional territory and the maintenance of stable government through armed intervention.<sup>45</sup> Within a decade his attitude had changed considerably.<sup>46</sup> In an article written

<sup>44</sup>de la Torriente, Foreign Affairs, VIII, 374-75.

<sup>45</sup>Foster Rhea Dulles and Gerald E. Redinger, "The Anti-Colonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt," Political Science Quarterly, LXX (March, 1955), 2.

<sup>46</sup>Willard Range, Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1959), p. 53.

for Foreign Affairs, he stated:

The time has come when we must accept not only certain facts but many new principles of a higher law, a newer and better standard in international relations. We are exceedingly jealous of our own sovereignty and it is only right that we should respect a similar feeling among other nations.

Single handed intervention by us in the internal affairs of other nations must end; with the cooperation of others we shall have more order in this hemisphere and less dislike.<sup>47</sup>

The shifting of American policy away from intervention (at least unilateral action) and the movement toward a strict adherence to the Root Interpretation of the Platt Amendment was clearly seen during 1931 and 1932. When disorder in Cuba culminated in a near full-scale revolution in August, 1931, Acting Secretary of State, William R. Castle, stated (10 August 1931) that the United States was not contemplating sending troops to Cuba. The purpose of the United States, he said, was to avoid any armed intervention. Under the Root Interpretation, he explained, only complete anarchy would justify direct action.<sup>48</sup> Apparently, the Hoover administration was at this time making a careful distinction between internal disorder and anarchy. In attempting to maintain strict

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<sup>47</sup>Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Our Foreign Policy: A Democratic View," Foreign Affairs, VI, No. 3 (July, 1928), 584-85.

<sup>48</sup>N.Y. Times, August 11, 1931, p. 8.



neutrality, the United States did not even go as far as to place an arms embargo on Cuba in favor of the duly elected, albeit oppressive, Machado government.<sup>49</sup>

Although the Machado government was successful in putting down the insurrection of 1931, the Cuban political scene continued tense throughout 1932 as Machado suspended all constitutional guarantees, declared martial law, resorted to the use of military tribunals instead of civil courts, imposed strict censorship of the press, and brutally assassinated or imprisoned his political opponents.<sup>50</sup> These efforts were unsuccessful in ending the campaign of terror being waged by his opposition. As the new year of 1933 began, the disorder in Cuba was increasing and the administration in Washington, with only two months remaining of Hoover's term, was seemingly unwilling to act.

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<sup>49</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 193.

<sup>50</sup>711.37/178a, The Secretary of State (Cordell Hull) to the Appointed Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, May 1, 1933, U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1933, Vol. V: The American Republics (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 282.

## CHAPTER II

### ABORTIVE MEDIATION: JANUARY-AUGUST, 1933

Throughout January and February, while it was reported that the United States was supplying Machado with aircraft,<sup>1</sup> the activities of the United States government in trying to bring peace to the troubled island were limited to friendly negotiations. These were carried out between the United States Ambassador in Cuba, Harry F. Guggenheim and the Cuban Secretary of State, Orestes Ferrara, and between the State Department in Washington and the Cuban Charge d' Affaires, Mr. Barón. When the United States mentioned reports of political atrocities committed by the Machado regime or complained about the strict censorship being imposed upon the press, spokesmen for Machado replied by claiming ignorance of any such conditions. Cuba assured the United States that most reports coming to the American Embassy were false and that

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<sup>1</sup>N.Y. Times, February 13, 1933, p. 6.

if anything such as had been reported had actually occurred, the United States could be assured that no additional murders would be committed and that censorship would be eased. During the last few days of the Hoover administration, the Cuban government was not nearly so willing to deny the conditions prevailing on the island and, instead, concentrated upon claiming it was impossible to deal with the opposition and that drastic measures therefore had to be taken.<sup>2</sup>

The unwillingness of the United States Department of State and the administration to act positively to bring peace to the island brought comments in the United States Congress. Most active in criticizing the administration were Senator William E. Borah of Idaho and Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr. of New York.<sup>3</sup> Congressman Fish, in particular, thought that if the President would not act, perhaps Congress could force him to. Although he did not urge direct intervention, on 12 January 1933, Representative Fish introduced a concurrent resolution in the House of Representatives urging

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<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1933, Vol. V: The American Republics (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 270-74.

<sup>3</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 72nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1932, LXXV, Part 7, 7874.

both the appointment of a "strong" ambassador to Cuba and the use of the good offices of the President to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Cuban situation.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after the Hoover administration had left office, Representative Fish discussed the Cuban problem with Dr. Ernest H. Gruening of The Nation before a meeting of the Foreign Policy Association. They agreed the United States should not resort to armed intervention. Instead, they believed diplomatic pressure should be used against Machado and that there should perhaps be a Congressional investigation of the relationships between American banking firms and the Machado government. They argued that only after such an investigation could the United States determine a proper course of action for rehabilitating Cuba.<sup>5</sup>

On 4 May, Congressman Fish brought these ideas onto the floor of the House. He charged the Hoover administration with having evaded its responsibility and obligations under the Platt Amendment to end the terrorism in Cuba. He also charged

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<sup>4</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st Sess., 1933, LXXVII, Part 3, 2892-93; N.Y. Times January 13, 1933, p. 6; N.Y. Times January 14, 1933, p.1.

<sup>5</sup>N.Y. Times, March 31, 1933, p. 39.

Hoover with promoting "dollar diplomacy" and intimated a connection between the Chase National and National City banks of New York City and the Machado regime.<sup>6</sup>

During the same period, another Congressman, Representative Shoemaker (Farmer-Labor, Minnesota) was asking for a special investigation by Congress of the reported revolutionary movement based in the United States which was planning the overthrow of the Machado government. Representative Shoemaker was apparently supporting the Machado regime when he stated in his resolution:

. . . that certain underworld characters and Cuban conspirators were heading an expedition to Cuba for the purpose of carrying on a revolution against the government of President Machado, the duly constituted and constitutional authority of the republic of Cuba, were apprehended and their arms and ammunition destroyed by New York and New Jersey police officials; and. . .

Whereas it is becoming evident . . . that those revolutionary activities are being fostered and financed by agents of a foreign power, not over-friendly to the government of the United States, for the purpose of distracting public attention from contemplated movements of their own. . . .<sup>7</sup>

But while it may have been entirely clear to Congressmen Fish and Shoemaker that for different reasons the United States had an obligation to Cuba under the Permanent Treaty to maintain

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<sup>6</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 194.

<sup>7</sup>N.Y. Times, April 22, 1933, p. 5.

a stable government, this was not the interpretation given to the Platt Amendment by the State Department. On 26 January, Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, in an open letter to Representative Fish which was printed in The New York Times, said the administration would hold to a strict interpretation of the Platt Amendment as stated by Elihu Root (4 April 1901). According to Secretary Stimson, the Platt Amendment placed no obligation whatsoever upon the United States to intervene in any way in Cuban internal affairs. Instead, Article III only, ". . . set forth the willingness of the government of Cuba that the United States may intervene for the attainment of certain objects."<sup>8</sup>

While several prominent Americans were debating the problem of Cuba, the terrorism, censorship, and suppression of civil liberties continued on the island.<sup>9</sup> The inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States, moreover, brought no drastic change in American policy toward Cuba. From the first day of the new administration, it was clear the United States would continue to avoid direct intervention if at all possible. While there was no indication

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<sup>8</sup>N.Y. Times, January 27, 1933, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 274-77.

that the policy of the United States would change in regard to action it would or would not take, there was an indication that the Roosevelt administration would be more direct than the Hoover administration in attempting to woo the friendship of all Latin America. Without specific regard for any nation, the new President hinted at the same policy he had proposed in 1928.<sup>10</sup> In his inaugural address, he declared:

In the field of world policy I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor-- the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others, the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.<sup>11</sup>

Although Roosevelt was not speaking directly of Latin America, the label "Good Neighbor" policy soon applied exclusively to the Western Hemisphere. This direction for the Good Neighbor policy was largely the result of efforts by Roosevelt's Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. Hull had helped to write the plank in the 1932 Democratic platform

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<sup>10</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt, Foreign Affairs, VI, 578-86.

<sup>11</sup>Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Inaugural Address," March 4, 1933, reprinted in Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Vol. II: The Year of Crisis, 1933 (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 207.

which stated, ". . . no interference in the internal affairs of other nations."<sup>12</sup> Before the inauguration of 4 March, he was determined to promote a policy of strict adherence to nonintervention. Hull believed:

. . . that our principles could have little effect in the world unless they produced a bounteous harvest in our own neighborhood. We could not look for closer cooperation throughout the world, . . . unless we first showed that cooperation could work in the areas of the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>13</sup>

Hull believed the President firmly supported his belief that the United States should move to restore genuinely friendly relations with Latin America.<sup>14</sup>

Accompanied by Hull, the President personally extended the Good Neighbor policy to all of the Americas on 11 April 1933. In his Pan-American Day address, the President said mutual understanding and a respect for the point of view of others were needed to build hemispheric solidarity. It could not be done by the acquisition of territory at the expense of others.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Vol. I (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 310.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 309.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>15</sup>Department of State, Press Releases, April 15, 1933, p. 243; Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 311.



Words alone, however, were not enough to convince Latin America of a genuinely changed attitude by the United States. In the face of an Argentine movement against American intervention, the high American tariff which plagued Latin American economics, the Chaco War, the tumbling Machado regime in Cuba, and the scheduled Montevideo Conference (December, 1933), it was clear, at least to Hull, that the United States had to do more than speak in generalities about our "good-neighborliness."<sup>16</sup>

The first public statement by the new administration which dealt specifically with Cuba came on 15 April when Secretary of State Hull told a news conference:

No consideration has been given to any movement in the nature of intervention. Nothing whatever is going on that would call for the slightest departure from the ordinary relationships and contacts between two separate and sovereign nations.<sup>17</sup>

At about the same time, Congressman Fish was again urging the State Department to use its influence to bring about a restoration of law and order in Cuba. Although Representative Fish was still opposed to the use of armed intervention, he favored sending a strong ambassador to compel Machado to

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<sup>16</sup>Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 308-9.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

resign in favor of a provisional government which would be compelled to hold an honest election.<sup>18</sup> About two weeks later, Representative Fish asked, in the House of Representatives, the Roosevelt administration to seek the restoration of civil liberties and a government which would be adequate for the protection of life, liberty, and property. He noted that while there was a great deal of sympathy for the Jews in Germany, it should be remembered that Hitler has not killed a single Jew while in Cuba there has been hundreds murdered by the secret police. He then charged that the affairs of some American banks and utilities companies in Cuba in supporting the Machado government were characteristic of, "American dollar diplomacy at its worse--anything to protect property investments, regardless of human rights. . . ." In his concluding remarks, Congressman Fish expressed satisfaction with the appointment of Sumner Welles as Ambassador to Cuba.<sup>19</sup>

During April, Roosevelt had named his friend, Sumner Welles, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Cuba after first ascertaining from Edward

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<sup>18</sup>N.Y. Times, April 17, 1933, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>N.Y. Times, May 5, 1933, p. 8.

L. Reed, the Charge d' Affaires in Cuba, that Welles's appointment was acceptable to the Cuban government.<sup>20</sup> Welles, who had long been interested in Latin American affairs, replaced Harry F. Guggenheim who had served in Cuba during the Hoover administration. Guggenheim had had the misfortune of serving sincerely and consistently to ease the political tension during a time when he had little support from Washington and at a time when the unpopularity of the United States found expression in a dislike for the American Ambassador.<sup>21</sup>

Welles, who was unknown outside Washington but was a man who had had diplomatic experience from 1915 to 1922 in the Caribbean region,<sup>22</sup> arrived in Havana on 7 May.<sup>23</sup> Before leaving for Cuba, Welles indicated his belief in the principles of the Good Neighbor policy and expressed his desire to work for closer and more friendly relations between the two countries. He also said his mission would work for mutual tolerance and

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<sup>20</sup>123W451/95: Telegram, The Charge in Cuba (Reed) to the Secretary of State, Habana, April 20, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 278.

<sup>21</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 195.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>23</sup>123W451/102: Telegram, The Charge in Cuba (Reed) to the Secretary of State, Habana, May 8, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 286.

respect among the two countries and, whenever possible, for new reciprocal trade agreements to the mutual advantage of Cuba and the United States.<sup>24</sup>

In the general instructions issued to Welles by the Secretary of State, the administration made it perfectly clear it was holding to the Root Interpretation of the Platt Amendment. Hull said that however alarming the situation might seem, the domestic conditions did not constitute a just basis for formal action by the United States. This was qualified, however, when the new Ambassador was also told that the United States could not help experiencing grave concern when a situation existed which might result in open rebellion against the government of Cuba and thus cause destruction of life and property. As a result, the United States felt obligated to offer its friendly advice so that such a situation might be prevented. Welles was to be extremely cautious in offering his help, however, so that it would not appear to be intervention. On the contrary, any efforts the Ambassador might make would be to prevent intervention.<sup>25</sup> The nature of Welles's

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<sup>24</sup>711.37/178, statement of Mr. Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of State /April 24, 1933/, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 278-79.

<sup>25</sup>711.37/178a, The Secretary of State to the Appointed Ambassador in Cuba, (Welles), Washington, May 1, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 283-84.

assignment might be termed "intermeddling." The administration was aware that if nothing were done the situation might deteriorate so far as to make armed intervention unavoidable.<sup>26</sup> Roosevelt knew, moreover, that any form of direct intervention would be contrary to his stated foreign policy<sup>27</sup> and that minor agitation against the "Colossus of the North" in Cuba could give rise to anti-American sentiment throughout Latin America.<sup>28</sup>

More specifically, Welles's instructions consisted of four major points. First, he was to convey to Machado the belief that any advice which might be offered him by the United States was given only because of the position of close friendship between the two nations and because of the concern which the United States had for the treaty of 1901. Secondly, he was to point out to Machado that the United States considered it imperative for the ending of the deteriorating condition in Cuba that the terrorism and wholesale murders of his

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<sup>26</sup>Bryce Wood, The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 50; Julius W. Pratt, Cordell Hull, 1933-44, XII, 144.

<sup>27</sup>Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision, p. 194.

<sup>28</sup>Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 308-09.

opponents cease although the United States recognized the need of the Cuban government to control the insurrectionists. The terrorism and suppression of civil liberties were going far, in the thinking of the State Department, to prejudice the people of the United States against Machado's government. Thirdly, Welles was to offer the friendly mediation of the United States between the government and the opposition forces. Although the exact form of the mediation was to be left to Welles, he was to undertake to obtain a definite and binding agreement which would bring peace until free national elections could be held. Finally, the Ambassador was to express the desire of the United States to negotiate a new reciprocal trade agreement with Cuba.<sup>29</sup> Hull stated:

You may say that this Government is strongly inclined to the view that a speedy improvement in economic and commercial conditions in Cuba would result in an immediate allaying of popular unrest and of political agitation, and that the Government of the United States hopes that the Cuban Government will be disposed to give the consideration of this problem preferential attention.<sup>30</sup>

One week after his arrival in Havana, Welles had his first meeting with President Machado. At that time, he

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<sup>29</sup>711.37/178a, The Secretary of State to the Appointed Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, May 1, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 284-85.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

expressed the shock of the United States at the acts of violence being committed in Cuba. In addition, he told Machado that the United States would like to see the restoration of civil liberties, an end of the violence as soon as possible, and the holding of free elections by the autumn of 1934. Ambassador Welles also stated the desire of the United States to negotiate a reciprocal trade agreement. On all points, Welles reported, Machado was agreeable. Machado said plans were underway for the restoration of civil liberties, many political prisoners had been released, press censorship had been lifted, and that not only would he like to see free elections the following year, he was willing to consider resigning before the election to insure free elections. Machado also stated he would not be a candidate for the Presidency.<sup>31</sup>

In his report of the conversation to Washington, Welles was enthusiastic about the prospect of negotiating a new treaty but he believed the negotiations should be kept secret until the Cuban legislature could make essential amendments to the electoral code and approve changes in the tariff provisions of the existing constitution. On the

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<sup>31</sup>837.00/3512: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, May 13, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 287-89. Also see, Welles, The Time for Decision, pp.195-96.

matter of free elections, he was also optimistic about Machado's statements. Although he believed that in the period before the election it might be desirable for Machado to be replaced by someone in whom all factions had confidence, he did not believe that the State Department should anticipate such a change. Machado, he said, was able to preserve order and had the loyalty and support of the Cuban Army. If he were replaced, the loyalty of the army would be in doubt. Under such conditions, it was likely a chaotic situation would result during the course of which many malcontents might begin to destroy property in an effort to secure American intervention.<sup>32</sup>

Two weeks after his arrival in Cuba, Welles was confident he would be able to gain the cooperation of the opposition leaders to work out a peaceful solution to the political strife.<sup>33</sup> In a conference with Dr. Cosme de la Torriente, the most prominent of the opposition leaders and a former President of the Assembly of the League of Nations,

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>33</sup>837.00/3522: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, May 22, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 292.



he gained not only the support of Dr. Torriente for American mediation but was also assured that the leaders of the revolutionary junta exiled since 1931 in New York (Carlos Mendieta and Mendez Peñate) would support a peaceful solution. Welles was also told that two of the dissident factions in the Conservative party would also support the mediation. The only group which had not approved of a program of conciliation was the group based in Florida and led by General Menocal. At the same time, Welles reported that he believed no financial or economic concessions should be granted to the Cuban government until a definite political settlement had been agreed upon.<sup>34</sup>

A few days later, Dr. de la Torriente assured Welles that the A.B.C. and the Organizacion Celular Radical Revolucionaria or O.C.R.R. had agreed to cease their terrorism to seek a peaceful solution. Machado himself had issued a public statement in which he formally expressed his desire for conciliation and had actually begun to relax police and censorship regulations and release political prisoners. Welles had reason to be apprehensive, however, because of the lack of control many of the opposition leaders had over

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<sup>34</sup>837:00/3526: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, May 25, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 295-96.

their followers. He was fearful a resort to violence by any dissident group would bring reprisals from Machado and negotiations would thereupon break down.<sup>35</sup>

By 2 June, Welles believed the situation had improved so that he could formally offer his services as a mediator. He told President Machado that he believed the solution had to be worked out within the provisions of the existing constitution and without dissolving the Congress. Welles flatly rejected the opposition proposal which called for the immediate resignation of Machado and the substitution of an impartial Secretary of State to serve as Provisional President. Under the constitution then in effect, the dissolution of Congress would have meant that national elections would have had to be held within sixty days. Since the Liberal Party (Machado's) was the only organized political party, this would have meant that the Liberals would win the election and the situation would remain the same to the opposition groups. Welles told Machado that he personally would like to see an immediate reform of the electoral code based upon the recommendations of an electoral

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<sup>35</sup>837.00/3528: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, May 29, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V., 297-98.

expert. These reforms, Welles thought, would assure freedom for the reorganization of parties and absolutely free elections. He also proposed a revision of the Constitution to provide for the election of a Vice-President, limiting the term of the next president to five years with no opportunity for immediate re-election, and a reduction in the number of Senators and Congressmen. All of these reforms, Welles believed, could be accomplished within six months.<sup>36</sup>

Not only did Machado agree to all of Welles's suggestions, he offered to resign his position immediately after the election of a Vice-President. He even told Welles he would have been willing to do the same during the past three years had there been a Vice-President. Although Welles did not indicate to Machado a definite time when he thought this should be done, he did express his desire to see the Vice-President in complete control at the time the national elections were held.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>837.00/3530: Telegram, The Ambassador to Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, June 2, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 299-300; Robert F. Smith, The United States and Cuba, p. 145; Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision, p. 196.

<sup>37</sup>837.00/3530: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, June 2, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 300-01.

Although the Cuban situation was steadily improving, Welles believed his position had been damaged when President Roosevelt announced that he had abandoned his intention of requesting Congress to approve a reciprocal trade program during the current session. This statement left the impression in Cuba that there was no hope of any change in the economic picture until sometime in the distant future. Welles therefore requested the immediate authorization of Washington to proceed as planned in laying the groundwork for a new commercial treaty so that the positive psychological effect that talk of a treaty had already brought would not be lost.<sup>38</sup> The President replied to Welles's request by informing him in a personal letter that, "There is no reason why we cannot start immediate conversations for a trade treaty with Cuba."<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the month of June, the negotiations to establish the mediation proceedings progressed smoothly. Machado was still willing to participate in electoral reforms as proposed by Welles and recommended by a special commission

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<sup>38</sup>611.3731/419: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, June 8, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 304.

<sup>39</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt to Sumner Welles in Havana, June 8, 1933, in Elliot Roosevelt (ed.), F.D.R., His Personal Letters, 1928-1945, Vol. I (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), p. 350.

headed by the Dean of Graduate Faculties of Columbia University (New York), Dr. Howard Lee McBain.<sup>40</sup> In addition, Welles had secured the support of all the opposition groups and, by 30 June, had been informed of the names of the delegates to the mediation proceedings representing both the Machado government and the opposition groups. On that day, he telegraphed the Department of State to say he would formally commence mediation proceedings on the following day.<sup>41</sup>

The first week of the negotiations proceeded with little difficulty. Welles believed, despite the recalcitrance of Menocal, the opposition groups were willing intelligently and rationally to work for an agreement and was encouraged because

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<sup>40</sup>U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 306-15.

<sup>41</sup>1837.00/3566: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, June 30, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 316. The representatives of the government were General Herrera, Acting Secretary of State; Dr. Averhoff, Secretary of the Treasury, and Dr. Ruiz Mesa, member of the House of Representatives. The opposition forces were represented by Dr. Cosme de la Torriente for the Union Nacionalista; Dr. Martinez Saenz for the A.B.C.; Dr. Wilfredo Albanes, representative from Oriente for the Conservative opposition party; Dr. Santos Jimenez for the Liberal opposition party; Dr. Dorta Duque for the University; Dr. Aragon for the professors of the normal and high schools; Dr. Silverio for the O.C.R.R.; and Senorita Lamar for all of the women's organizations. Also see, "Machado Government and A.B.C. Rebel Group Accept Welles as Mediator," N.Y. Times, (June 16, 1933), p. 1; "Junta in New York City Meets and Studies Mediation," N.Y. Times, (June 17, 1933), p. 13; "More Rebels Accept Mediation," (June 28, 1933), p. 3.

he was able to convince Machado to eliminate martial law in Habana province and restore constitutional guarantees. In general, the conciliatory position of the government had eased the tension throughout Cuba and the island was again peaceful.<sup>42</sup> At this point, Welles viewed his task in three parts. He first had to get the opposing factions to agree to negotiate with one another. Secondly, such an agreement had to be negotiated. And finally, the agreement had to continue to be effective until elections could be held in November, 1934.

Welles had been appointed as Ambassador with the specific assignment of working out an agreement. At that time, it was thought he would stay in Cuba only long enough to mediate a political settlement and would then be replaced by Jefferson Caffery, a former Consul in Columbia and Assistant Secretary of State after July, 1933. On 8 July, Welles was quite certain his services in Cuba would no longer be needed after September. At that time, he thought, Caffery could be appointed Ambassador in Cuba and he would be free to devote his time to

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<sup>42</sup>837.00/3570: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, July 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 318.

the forthcoming Seventh Pan-American Conference scheduled to meet at Montevideo in December.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout July, although there were minor disturbances, the negotiations proceeded as planned under the guidance of Ambassador Welles. For a time, Welles was upset because, although the opposition groups had complied with his wishes that they refrain from all violence, Machado had not yet gotten the enactment of a general amnesty bill and had not completely restored all constitutional guarantees and abolished martial law as he had promised.<sup>44</sup> Welles was relieved, however, when he was informed on 26 July that the law had been signed by the President and had been put in effect. On the same day, Machado informed Welles that he would be willing to accept the constitutional and electoral revisions which were being discussed at the time.<sup>45</sup> He again told Welles that after a Vice-President had been chosen, he would resign from office

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<sup>43</sup>123W451/111: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, July 8, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 319-20.

<sup>44</sup>U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 320-22; N.Y. Times July 7, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup>837.00/3583: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, July 26, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, p. 329.

(probably in May, 1934) and allow the new Vice-President to hold office until a general election could be held in November of 1934. Machado's resignation, however, would cut short his term of office by one year. In 1928, he had extended his own term through a constitutional reform bill he had pushed through the legislature.<sup>46</sup> In concluding his report to the Department of State, Welles, generally optimistic about the eventual outcome of the mediation, said:

If the President's frame of mind as made evident today in my conversation with him were to continue unchanged there would be no possibility of an unsuccessful outcome of the present negotiations. The chief difficulty is, however, that the President changes his mind with the utmost frequency and it is impossible to foretell what his opinion may be when the transitory reforms are brought up for discussion.<sup>47</sup>

Only four hours after talking with Welles on 26 July, Machado made an unexpected trip to the legislature and spoke to both the House and the Senate. Machado asked for support until 1935 when his term would "legally" expire and then said that the mediation by Welles had been accepted because he was personally a friend of Cubans. He said the offer of mediation had not been "upon the instruction of the United States govern-

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.



ment." His intention, Welles believed, being to imply that there was no attempt at intervention by the United States and that Welles was therefore acting unofficially.<sup>48</sup> Although he believed the statements of Machado had undermined the progress which had been made toward mediation of the crisis, Welles was reassured about the eventual outcome when the representatives of the government and of the opposition groups met on the next day and made progress on most of the important features of the proposed constitutional reforms.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Welles was relieved when Washington officially reported that his mission had the complete support of the State Department.<sup>50</sup>

Machado, however, was beginning to reverse his position more than Welles had at first realized. On 2 August, the Cuban Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Oscar B. Cintas, accused Ambassador Welles of delaying the negotiations for a new commercial treaty to pressure Machado into accepting

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<sup>48</sup>837.00/3585: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, July 27, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 330.

<sup>49</sup>837.00/3587: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, July 27, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 331.

<sup>50</sup>N.Y. Times (July 29, 1933), p. 1.

the results of the mediation. But while Cintas was complaining to the Department of State, Machado was assuring Welles that he would accept the recommendations for reform which had been completed by the commission on that day. As soon as Welles was able to receive support for the reforms from all the opposition leaders, Machado promised he would send the recommendations to Congress and urge their immediate enactment.<sup>51</sup>

Later that day, Welles was assured by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who was also the leader of the Liberal party, of the willingness of Congress to support the reform recommendations, ". . . provided such agreement made it possible for the President to resign his office in a 'decorous' manner such as the institution of a Vice-Presidency would be."<sup>52</sup> The Speaker did not believe, however, there

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<sup>51</sup> 837.00/3638, Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State, Washington, August 2, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 331. Acting Secretary of State Phillips denied that Machado's resignation was a condition for peace. He did say, however, that peace had to return to Cuba before the trade agreement could be finally negotiated, N.Y. Times, August 3, 1933, p. 6. On the following day, Phillips said the United States only wished to avoid intervention and did not care what reforms were adopted as long as peace was restored, N.Y. Times, August 4, 1933, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> 837.00/3594: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, August 2, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 333.

would be widespread support for the shortening of Congressional terms unless there were some compromise made to appease the legislators.<sup>53</sup>

The proceedings which had seemed to be operating so perfectly for Welles for over a month began to deteriorate rapidly two days later when it was rumored there would be a full-scale general strike and Welles learned from reliable sources that the Machado government was secretly promoting the strike. On 4 August, members of the Liberal party (Machado's) were sent by the President to tell Welles, because of the general strike which had begun on 3 August,<sup>54</sup> they recommended the mediation proceedings be abandoned for the time being. When Welles insisted that if the proceedings broke down it would mean a return to terrorism and revolution by the opposition which the government would not be able to withstand, Machado's delegates withdrew their request.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>J. D. Phillips, "Cuba Threatened by General Strike," N.Y. Times, August 4, 1933, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup>837.00/3601: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, August 4, 1933, U.S. Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 334; N.Y. Times, August 2, 1933, p. 16.

In a luncheon conversation with Machado, the President admitted to Welles that he had sent the delegation to visit him against the judgment of the party leaders. Machado believed that the mediation had weakened his position and the authority of the government. He was still willing, however, to agree to any solution which would not have him, "thrown into the street."<sup>56</sup> Because he had again been assured by Machado of the President's reasonableness on the mediation and because the commission had agreed by this time on all important points in their suggestions for a reformed constitution such as a modified parliamentary system which would limit the powers of the executive and were nearly in agreement on the length of the Presidential term and the independence of the judiciary, Welles remained confident of the ultimate success of his efforts.<sup>57</sup>

By 7 August, a situation which, up to that time, had only been "tense" erupted into violent rioting. A general strike began which was supposedly caused by the economic

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<sup>56</sup>837.00/3603: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, August 5, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V. 335.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

dissatisfaction of the lower classes and the general inability of the people to see any immediate change in the present government. It was successful in tying up all transportation facilities with an attendant loss of perishable goods left on the docks.<sup>58</sup> Rioting began when crowds celebrated a false report that President Machado had resigned. The report was circulated when it was learned that for some reason Ambassador Welles had decided, in the wake of the strikes and growing terrorism, to present the Machado government with his own formula<sup>59</sup> to prevent what he termed a "state of utter chaos"<sup>60</sup> On 6 August, he communicated the following to President Machado and impressed upon him the necessity of accepting the suggestions:

1. Appointment by the President of an impartial Secretary of State acceptable to all elements.
2. The request by the President of the Congress for leave of absence and authorization by him of the new Secretary of State to reorganize the Cabinet giving representation to all important political

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<sup>58</sup>J.D. Phillips, "Cuba Threatened by General Strike," N.Y. Times, August 4, 1933, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup>J.D. Phillips, "Havana Police Kill Score in Crowd Outside Capitol; Machado Expected to Quit," N.Y. Times, August 8, 1933, p. 1; Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision, p. 196.

<sup>60</sup>837.00/3606: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 336; J.D. Phillips, "Machado 'Leave' Sought by Welles," N.Y. Times, August 9, 1933, p. 1.

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3. The immediate passage by the Congress of the constitutional reforms which have been elaborated by the Mixed Commission as the result of which the members of the House of Representatives will agree to shorten their terms so that half of the House will be renewed in the national elections of 1934 and those representatives remaining in the House to shorten their terms to a corresponding extent as those who will vacate in that year.

4. Half of the Senate is renewed in 1934 and the remaining Senators to agree to shorten their terms to a total period of 6 years.

5. The creation of the Vice-Presidency, said Vice-President to assume the Presidency upon his inauguration.<sup>61</sup>

Welles also felt obliged to remind Machado that, although it was the desire of the United States to avoid intervention if at all possible, the United States had certain very definite obligations placed upon it in the case Cuba was in a state of complete chaos and anarchy.<sup>62</sup>

President Machado politely informed Ambassador Welles that although he was still willing to resign as soon as a Vice-President was chosen, he believed it would be disastrous for him to take a 'leave of absence' and put the government

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<sup>61</sup>837.00/3606: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 336;

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 337.

in the hands of a Secretary of State. Machado then proceeded to take steps to again suspend constitutional guarantees in an effort to end the rioting.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, it was being freely predicted in Washington that the United States would intervene in Cuba to prevent anarchy and the disorder caused by the general strike and lesser officers of the United States Army and Navy were admitting that plans for intervention had been perfected for six months.<sup>64</sup>

On the evening of 7 August, Welles was still hopeful, however, that Machado could be persuaded to take the "leave of absence" and was sure he could obtain the support of the opposition leaders and the members of Machado's own Liberal party for his plan. If, Welles thought, his solution could be accomplished within forty-eight hours, peace could be restored and the recommendations of the Mixed Commission could be peacefully placed into operation.<sup>65</sup> Two days later, however, Machado would still not accept Welles's suggestions and,

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<sup>63</sup>837.00/3606: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 337; also, N.Y. Times, August 9, 1933, p. 12.

<sup>64</sup>N.Y. Times, August 8, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup>837.00/3606: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 337.

although the general strike had eased, the general condition of turmoil throughout the island had not improved.<sup>66</sup> Welles then became convinced that there was no hope of reaching a solution as long as Machado remained in office since he no longer had the support of anyone except his own small group of friends. In addition, he was convinced that there was no chance of improving Cuba's economic plight while the political situation remained in ruin.<sup>67</sup>

Welles was convinced that if Machado were to remain in office even until February of 1934 it would be impossible for the opposition parties to organize with the result that a free election could not be held in November as planned. He recommended to the Department of State that unless his suggestions were adopted and Machado resigned or took a "leave of absence" within a short period of time, the United States would feel that it could no longer support a government which maintained itself by martial law and terrorism and would withdraw

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<sup>66</sup>U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 338-43.

<sup>67</sup>837.00/3616: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 8, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 341-43; 837.00/3622: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 344.



diplomatic recognition. It was the belief of the Ambassador that it would then be impossible for Machado to maintain himself in office and would be forced to resign. Welles then proceeded to recommend that if the United States withdrew recognition, two American warships should be sent to Havana with orders not to land troops except in the "gravest emergency" and these ships would presumably lend moral support to the restoration of order after the mild disturbances which Welles predicted would occur after the withdrawal of recognition.<sup>68</sup> Although it was direct and armed intervention by the United States that Welles was trying to forstall, it would appear that after 7 August, the activities of the American Ambassador were in themselves, if not armed, at least direct intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

Machado's opposition to Welles's suggestions then became more firm. Welles considered it entirely possible that Machado would be able to force the legislators to adopt a resolution which stated:

That the activities of His Excellency the Ambassador of the United States to Cuba interfering in the interior problems of the Government have caused a deep perturbation of public order and the threat embodied in his insinuation of possible intervention in our country are a

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

violation upon our rights as a free and independent people and an aggression upon the sovereignty of small nationalities.<sup>69</sup>

Evidently, President Roosevelt was not particularly receptive to Welles's solution either. When the President received the Cuban Ambassador to hear the complaints of Sr. Cintas against the actions of Welles, he told Cintas that Welles was acting with the fullest authorization of the administration. When Cintas informed him that Machado was still willing to resign if he could do so gracefully, however, Roosevelt suggested that perhaps Machado would step down to save the Cuban people from starvation. The President offered, in the event Machado would resign, a shipload of food supplied to Cuba for the benefit of the people. Cintas then promised to take the offer up with his government.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>837.00/3624: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 346-47.

<sup>70</sup>837.00/3623: Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, August 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 347-48; Robert F. Smith, The United States and Cuba; Business and Diplomacy, 1917-1960 (New York: Bookman Associates, 1960), p. 147.

The next day, 10 August, Machado was able to force the executive committee of the Liberal party to reject the proposals submitted to the government by Welles. The Conservative and Popular parties, however, continued to support the constitutional reform measures and the suggestions of Welles.<sup>71</sup> That afternoon, Secretary of State Orestes Ferrara told Welles that his government would have to have an indefinite period of time before reaching any final decision and that the solutions proposed by the mediation committee would have to be postponed for at least six or seven months. In addition, he said that his government requested the United States to acquiesce in any measures used by Machado to end the strike and that Cuba would refuse the offer of food made by the United States. He did state, however, that if the United States would be willing to make a very liberal loan to his government without interest for a stated period of time, President Machado might still be willing to negotiate a settlement. Welles replied that although he was not officially authorized, he would assume a loan could be made as soon as the island had a government which was

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<sup>71</sup>1837.00/3630: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 10, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 349.

constitutional and elected by the people. Any loan to the Machado government, however, was out of the question.<sup>72</sup>

By 11 August, Welles was not so adamant in his demands of the Machado regime. During that afternoon, he informed Ferrara that it would be acceptable if Machado would request, of his own initiative, a leave of absence until a Vice-President could be chosen and the immediate resignation of all the members of the cabinet except General Herrera who would become Acting President until a Vice-President could be found. Welles said that he would accept such a proposal from Machado and forward it to his government and to the opposition leaders for their approval. Having already received the approval of General Herrera for such a plan, Welles believed that if the constitutional reforms could be passed by February, General Herrera could then retire from office and turn over the government to the Vice-President who would govern until after the national elections.<sup>73</sup>

Welles believed the solution would be acceptable to Machado because:

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., pp. 349-50.

<sup>73</sup>837.00/3640: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 355-56.

1. It permits him to save his face by declaring that he has not accepted the solution proposed by me . . . . .
2. It offers security to President Machado for the lives and property of himself and of the members of his family.
3. It offers absolute guarantees to all of the members of the Liberal Party who are afraid of reprisals by the opposition.
4. It insures the loyal support of the Cuban Army which is unanimously devoted to General Herrera although he is now retired from the Army. . . . .
5. The principal leaders of the opposition have unanimously decided to accept this proposal since in their belief it is the only method of obtaining Machado's resignation and of avoiding American intervention which in their opinion Machado is at present determined to force.
6. From the point of view of the United States Government it seems to me a thoroughly satisfactory solution inasmuch as it would be a solution undertaken upon the initiative of the President of Cuba and agreed to by the political parties and the main leaders of the opposition. It is essentially a Cuban solution of the Cuban problem.<sup>74</sup>

The same evening, Ferrera informed Welles that the solution was acceptable to Machado and that he would take his leave of absence within the next week. Although Welles knew that not all opposition leaders were favorable to the plan, he was convinced it would be acceptable and that if the Herrera government could end the general strike soon after it took power, the island could return to normal.<sup>75</sup> In the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> 837.00/3641: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 357.

meanwhile, however, opposition from a quarter Welles least expected moved the unstable situation to a rapid climax. On the afternoon of 11 August, a small-scale revolution was begun by the officers of the First Artillery Battalion of the Cuban Army. Later in the afternoon, the revolt spread to other army units.<sup>76</sup> That evening, all of the ranking officers of the Army were unanimous in their demand that Machado leave the Presidency no later than the end of 12 August.<sup>77</sup>

As a result of the Army coup, Machado abandoned his office and immediately left for his vacation retreat. From there, he flew to Nassau when he began to believe his life was in danger.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, the Army leaders, who had originally approved of General Herrera, changed their minds. Although they liked him personally, they believed his close association with Machado would create too much opposition.

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<sup>76</sup>837.00/3642: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 12, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 358.

<sup>77</sup>837.00/3650: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 12, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 359.

<sup>78</sup>N.Y. Times, August 12, 1933, p. 1.

As a result, General Herrera said that in order to follow constitutional procedure he would agree to accept the ad interim Presidency as soon as Congress had accepted the hurried message of President Machado requesting a leave of absence. This procedure was followed because, constitutionally, the Presidency ad interim could only be entrusted to a cabinet member. Immediately after he accepted the Presidency, Herrera appointed Dr. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, former Secretary of State and former Minister at Washington, as Secretary of State and immediately thereafter entrusted him with the Presidency.<sup>79</sup> By the evening of 13 August, the transformation of the government was complete and aside from some minor disturbances the island was under the control of the Army which Welles believed to be completely loyal to the new government.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> 837.00/3650: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 12, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 358-59; N.Y. Times, August 12, 1933, p. 1; Pratt, Cordell Hull, 1933-44, XII, 146.

<sup>80</sup> 837.00/3646: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 13, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 360-61; N.Y. Times, August 14, 1933, p. 3.

### CHAPTER III

#### "INTERVENTION BY INERTIA": AUGUST, 1933-JANUARY, 1934

As soon as Dr. Céspedes had taken office as President ad interim, President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull sent a congratulatory wire to Welles expressing, ". . . appreciation of what you have done."<sup>1</sup> The following day, 14 August, after Welles had requested that the United States recognize the new government because it came to power by constitutional means, the Department of State approved the request.<sup>2</sup> During the next few days, it appeared as though the new government had a good chance for success. Céspedes had the obvious support of the United States Ambassador and

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<sup>1</sup>837.00/3653a: Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, August 12, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 360.

<sup>2</sup>837.00/3649: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 13, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 361-62; 837.00/3648: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 14, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 363.



most of the opposition groups ostensibly supported the measures which put him into office.<sup>3</sup> In addition, President Roosevelt had ordered two warships to assume positions along the Cuban coast in what the President termed, ". . . a precaution . . . for . . . safeguarding . . . the lives and persons of American citizens in Cuba. . . ." <sup>4</sup> At the same time, Roosevelt assured the Cuban people that there was no intention on the part of the United States to intervene.<sup>5</sup>

During the first four days of the Céspedes government, Welles was encouraged by the prospects of success. Although civil disturbances throughout the island continued and some of the Conservative party members were demanding that all of those who had held office under Machado be removed from public positions, Welles believed that the government would

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<sup>3</sup>837.00/3656: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 14, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 363-65.

<sup>4</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Good Neighbor Policy begins to Work in Cuba," A Presidential Statement, August 13, 1933, Roosevelt, The Public Papers, II, 322-23.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; On the sending of the two warships also see: 837.00/3648: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 14, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 363; Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 314

be able to maintain order and control the strikes.<sup>6</sup> On 19 August, Welles believed it would be better if he were recalled to Washington. He was convinced that the Céspedes government had the support of the people and that all the needed reforms would soon be adopted. He also believed that the time was opportune to announce that final negotiations for a new trade treaty would begin immediately and that the United States was taking measures to relieve the financial straits of the government. At the same time, Welles thought his position in Cuba was becoming untenable. Because of his close association with the new government, he was being constantly asked for advice and, although there was no real criticism of his position, he believed such criticism might be forthcoming from disgruntled office seekers, the Menocalists, and sincere opponents of American influence. As a result, Welles thought he should leave Cuba to give the new government a greater chance for success. He did not believe, however, that his replacement, Jefferson Caffery would be limited in exerting influence. According to Welles, the influence of

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<sup>6</sup>837.00/3665: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 15, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 365-67.

Caffery would be different from his in that ". . . it will be an influence exerted behind the scenes and not apparent to the public."<sup>7</sup>

Before Welles could leave, however, the situation in Cuba became worse. By 22 August, some of the exiled political leaders, notably Colonel Mendieta, Mendez Penate, and former-President Menocal were making a determined effort to turn the government into a purely revolutionary de facto government. They announced their desire to abolish the Congress and judiciary and remove all officials and have them replaced by their own followers. Welles attempted to persuade them that the only way to maintain order was through the existence of a constitutional government, not one which would govern only by decree. Without outright support for his position by officials of the government, however, Welles's suggestions fell on deaf ears.<sup>8</sup>

Two days later, with strikes among the sugar workers in the provinces increasing and violence in the streets of Habana nearly out of control, Welles became convinced that it would

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<sup>7</sup>711.37/183: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 19, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 367-69.

<sup>8</sup>837.00/3694: Telegram: The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 22, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 369-70.

not be possible for the administration to rule as a constitutional government for the remainder of the term of General Machado. Without the unqualified support of the Army, Welles believed it would be necessary for the government to modify its program by ordering general elections to be held within three months. This could be done, Welles thought, by having the Cuban Supreme Court declare unconstitutional the 1928 Constitution under which General Machado was elected. The Céspedes government could then dissolve Congress and declare an election to be held in three months. After the new government had been installed, it would be possible to have a constitutional convention draft a new constitution embodying the recommended reforms of the McBain plan.<sup>9</sup>

The following day, after consulting with his cabinet, President Céspedes announced the program suggested by the American Ambassador to be in effect. Because it had been impossible to call the Supreme Court into session to declare the 1928 Constitution unconstitutional, this was done by decree of the President.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>837.00/3706: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 24, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 371-72

<sup>10</sup>837.00/3706: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 24, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 373-76

Despite the "moral" support of the American warships in Havana Harbor, the strikes and general disorder continued to worsen. The Céspedes government, hard-pressed to find a solution to the island's problems, was unable to either placate the dissident political groups or the dissatisfied masses of Cubans.<sup>11</sup> At one A.M. in the morning on 5 September, Ambassador Welles cabled the Secretary of State that there had been a concerted movement by the soldiers of the Cuban Army to depose all officers and take over the Army. Welles urged Washington to send at least two more ships to Havana and one to Santiago de Cuba immediately although he recommended that troops should not be landed. The Ambassador fully expected a condition of absolute chaos by later in the day and also a renewal of the general strike.<sup>12</sup>

By ten A.M., all of the government officials had been forced to leave their posts by the non-commissioned Army officers and enlisted men. The revolutionary government set up by the rebels under Sergeant Fulgencio Batista then proclaimed that it had taken upon itself a program dedicated to

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<sup>11</sup>U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 376-79.

<sup>12</sup>837.00/3800, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) September 5, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 380; Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 314; N.Y. Times, September 6, 1933, p. 1.

carry out the revolutionary plan for Cuba. This meant that Batista planned to bring economic reconstruction and solid political organization to Cuba and to eliminate and punish the supporters of Machado, to pay the debts of the island, restore judicial procedure, and end the widespread disorder. The decree was signed by Sergeant Batista and a group of other persons whom the American Ambassador labeled as the most extreme radicals of the student organization and by others the Ambassador called, "frankly communistic."<sup>13</sup>

This attitude of Welles's is in sharp contrast to his opinion of Communist and radical activity which he expressed to a group of concerned American businessmen a few days before. Welles did not at that time attribute any of the violence to Communists. Instead, while he recognized the existence of foreign agitators in Cuba, he preferred to believe that the unrest was due entirely to the laboring classes which had suffered severely under the Machado regime and were simply trying to organize in an attempt to redress some of their legitimate grievances. He saw the only solution

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<sup>13</sup>837.00/3753: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 5, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 381-83; For an additional text of the junta's manifesto see: N.Y. Times, September 6, 1933, p. 1.

to the disorder to be concessions made by the industries and not suppression by the government or intervention for the protection of American property by the United States. In his report, the Ambassador frankly stated, "I cannot see any indications of the 'red menace' which certain Americans doing business here are fearful of."<sup>14</sup>

During the afternoon of 5 September, President Céspedes and his cabinet (the de facto government) were forced to resign and the government passed into the hands of a committee of five members appointed by the leaders of the Army revolt. At that time, Welles was attempting to persuade some of the opposition leaders to attempt to bring peace to the island.<sup>15</sup> Welles was personally afraid for his own life and the safety of the embassy. When an angry mob appeared outside the embassy, Welles telephoned Secretary of State Hull and requested the possible landing of troops from the McFarland which was in Havana Harbor. The Secretary of State sympathized with Welles but firmly reminded him that it was American policy to land no troops and that they could only be called in case of a

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<sup>14</sup>837.00/3739: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, August 30, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 376-78.

<sup>15</sup>U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 383-84.

physical threat to him and his staff and then only enough men to protect the embassy.<sup>16</sup>

In a meeting between Welles and the opposition groups, it was decided that the leaders of the army revolt would not be able to maintain order and that an attempt should therefore be made to establish a new government with perhaps Colonel Carlos Mendieta as President. It was also the unanimous decision at this meeting that the only way a new government could maintain itself, until the Army could be reorganized under the Cuban Army officers, was by the maintenance of law and order in Havana and a few other key points by United States Marines. If the present military junta were not deposed, it was thought, they could not maintain themselves and the government would fall into the hands of an, "out and out Communist organization."<sup>17</sup>

The next day, however, the commission then in charge of

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<sup>16</sup>837.00/3764, Memorandum of Telephone Conversations Between the Secretary of State and the Ambassador in Cuba, (Welles) and Between the Assistant Secretary of State (Caffery) and the Ambassador in Cuba, (Welles), September 5, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 385-86.

<sup>17</sup>837.00/3756: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 6, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 387-88.



the government flatly rejected the plan because of the control which would be exercised by the United States. In addition, the opposition leaders with whom Welles had conferred were also hesitant about giving their assent to the landing of American troops. The revolutionary A.B.C. announced its intention of not trying to overthrow the new government. Instead, the A.B.C. would give it moderate support while maintaining an attitude of "watchful waiting." Welles reported, however, a situation somewhat better than on the day before and that the presence of American ships was helping preserve peace. The Ambassador had no policy to recommend to Washington except to attempt to avoid intervention if at all possible as long as life and property were being protected. He was sure, however, the "undisciplined group of individuals . . . representing the most irresponsible elements" who were then in control of the government would not be worthy of recognition by the United States for some time to come.<sup>18</sup>

On the following day, 7 September, Welles was visited

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<sup>18</sup>837.00/3767: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 6, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 390-92.

by Dr. Horacio Ferrer, who had been Secretary of War in the Céspedes government. Ferrer told Welles that he had been assured of the loyalty of a number of soldiers and officers both in Havana and in the provinces. He told Welles that a movement was therefore underway to attempt to overthrow the military government established by Sergeant Batista and that he was sure this would be accomplished within a short time. Although Welles was sympathetic to the move, he told Ferrer that he could not then commit American support or military forces to the movement. When Ferrer had gone, Welles immediately cabled the Secretary of State explaining that the Céspedes government had not resigned but had been overthrown by force. In addition, Céspedes represented the legitimate and constitutional government of Cuba. He then stated that:

If the legitimate and recognized Government of Cuba can make an effective demonstration of its intention to reestablish itself, it would most decidedly appear to me to be in the best interest of the United States Government to afford them immediate support.

Welles very frankly suggested that a considerable armed force be landed in Cuba to support Céspedes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>837.00/3778: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 396-98; Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 315. Welles said, in part, "What I propose would be a strictly

Neither the Secretary of State nor the President were favorably impressed with Welles's suggestion. Hull believed Welles had been over-influenced by local conditions and that he had underemphasized the possible reaction in other nations.<sup>20</sup> The President agreed with his Secretary of State. It would be far better, they thought, if the United States could avoid intervention of any kind. In his reply to Welles, President Roosevelt stated:

We feel very strongly that any promise, implied or otherwise, relating to what the United States will do under any circumstances is impossible; that it would be regarded as a breach of neutrality, as favoring one faction out of many, as attempting to

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limited intervention of the following nature. The Cespedes Government should be permitted to function freely in exactly the same manner as it did until the time of its overthrow, having full control of every branch of the Government. It is obvious, of course, that with a great portion of the army in mutiny, it could not maintain itself in power in any satisfactory manner unless the United States Government were willing, should it so request, to lend its assistance to the maintenance of public order until the Cuban Government had been afforded the time sufficient. . . to form a new army. . . . Such a policy on our part would presumably entail the landing of a considerable force at Havana and lesser forces in certain of the more important ports of the Republic. The disadvantages of this policy as I see them lie solely in the fact that we will incur the violent animosity of the extreme radical and communist groups in Cuba. . . it would further seem to me that since the full facts of the situation here have been fully explained to the representatives of the Latin American countries, the landing of such assistance would most decidedly be construed as well within the limits of the policy of the 'good neighbor' which we have done out utmost to demonstrate in our relations with the Cuban people during the past five months."

<sup>20</sup>Hull, Memoirs, I, 315.

set up a government which would be regarded by the whole world, and especially throughout Latin America as a creation and creature of the American Government.<sup>21</sup>

But despite his philosophical opposition to intervention unless it was absolutely necessary, the President had been prepared for the worst. Even before the recommendation of intervention by Welles, Roosevelt had ordered more warships with soldiers aboard to steam toward Cuba in case intervention was necessary.<sup>22</sup> Twenty-nine other ships were placed on Cuban duty on the following day (7 September) and air squadrons were alerted. In addition, guns and bomb racks were mounted on planes and pilots at Quantico, Virginia were ordered to be ready to fly south on a moment's notice. Regiments of United States Marines were assembled at Quantico and at Port Everglades, Florida.<sup>23</sup>

Although the President had prepared for the worst, he was determined not to jeopardize chances for the success of the Good Neighbor Policy. On 8 September, all military forces

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<sup>21</sup>837.00/3778: Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, September 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 402; Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 315.

<sup>22</sup>Samuel Flagg Bemis, Latin American Policy, p. 281; N.Y. Times, September 6, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup>N.Y. Times, September 7, 1933, p. 1, 3; Smith, The United States and Cuba, p. 149.

on Cuban duty were given strict orders that no troops were to be landed on Cuban soil for the protection of property alone.<sup>24</sup> It was decided that intervention would only be undertaken for the protection of lives and then only with the tacit approval of the most influential Latin American nations--Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico.<sup>25</sup> Such approval was highly unlikely, however. Throughout the period from the fifth to the ninth of September, the diplomatic correspondence from American representatives in Latin America such as Josephus Daniels in Mexico indicated that the Latin American nations were not about to approve of any intervention by the "Colossus of the North."<sup>26</sup>

Cordell Hull, in particular, realized that intervention would place the responsibility for governing the island upon

<sup>24</sup> Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Vol. 1: The First Thousand Days, 1933-1936 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 87.

<sup>25</sup> 837.00/3778: Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, September 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 402.

<sup>26</sup> U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 399-419. Bemis, Latin American Policy, p. 281. Bemis says, "After the fashion of Woodrow Wilson, he /Roosevelt/ held diplomatic discussions, none too successfully, with representatives of Latin American governments, seeking to convince them that anarchy in Cuba would be the joint concern of all American republics."

the United States and that such action would make it nearly impossible to win the friendship of Latin American nations.<sup>27</sup> Hull was determined that the United States would not be swayed from its nonintervention course by pressure from any quarter, including American businessmen, with interests in Cuba. In addition, Hull's and Roosevelt's thinking at this time was significantly influenced by the threat of complete failure at the forthcoming Montevideo Conference.<sup>28</sup>

The United States had been treading a thin line between intervention for the protection of American lives and property and nonintervention for the sake of the wider and more important policy of the Good Neighbor. By the end of the second week in September, with the prospect of no cooperation from other Latin American governments for intervention and with the Montevideo Conference due to convene soon, the United States had found itself forced into a position of being more firmly than ever committed to a policy of nonintervention and a denial of "responsibility" under the Platt Amendment. The "life, liberty, and property" clause of Article III of the

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<sup>27</sup>Smith, The United States and Cuba, p. 150.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

Platt Amendment had become, during the Hoover Administration, "life, liberty, and property of Americans," During the crisis of the first days of September, 1933, the "property" clause had been all but abandoned. The phrase, "unless absolutely necessary" in regard to intervention remained, however, and was as yet undefined. In case intervention should become, "absolutely necessary" American warships lay along Cuba's coast and in Havana Harbor on 9 September.

With the threat of military intervention by the United States eased, events in Cuba moved swiftly toward a political compromise. The plan of revolt proposed by Dr. Ferrer became unnecessary when Batista, realizing his position was in danger pushed a settlement which would be satisfactory to all political groups. After learning of the resignations of two of his chief supporters, Porfirio Franca and José Irizarri,<sup>29</sup> Batista offered to return Céspedes to the Presidency. In return, Batista required a guarantee that he would remain as Chief of Staff of the Army. When Céspedes would make no such guarantee,<sup>30</sup> the three remaining members

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<sup>29</sup>837.00/3807: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 8, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 410-11.

<sup>30</sup>837.00/3812: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 414.

of the original revolutionary committee established by Batista designated Dr. Grau San Martín as Provisional President of the Republic.<sup>31</sup>

For reasons which remain somewhat obscure, Ambassador Welles became the determined opponent of the Grau Government. He firmly believed the riots would continue and that the government would probably not be able to maintain order for long. Although the A.B.C. was the only group openly opposed to the new government, Welles was convinced that none of the other political groups supported it.<sup>32</sup> In spite of assurances from the American Ambassador in Mexico, Josephus Daniels, who was in contact with groups having a good deal of information about Cuban affairs, from the Cuban Ambassador to the United States, M. Marquez Sterling, and from Cubans that the new regime was not Communist inspired nor had Communistic ideas,<sup>33</sup> Welles preferred to believe

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<sup>31</sup>837.00/3803: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 10, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 416.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 417.

<sup>33</sup>837.00/4033: The Ambassador in Mexico (Daniels) to the Secretary of State, Mexico September 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 414-15; 837.00/4218, Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Caffery), Washington, September 8, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 407-08.



that the Grau government represented only the ". . . extreme radical elements."<sup>34</sup>

In regard to possible recognition of the new government by the United States, Welles persuaded Washington to withhold recognition of the new regime until order could be maintained. At the same time, Welles recognized that, ". . . no government here can survive for a protracted period without recognition by the United States. . . ." <sup>35</sup> While it is entirely possible that Welles sincerely believed that the new government was radical and did not have the support of the people (this was certainly his own opinion for no election had been held) and was opposed to immediate recognition for that reason, it is more likely that the Céspedes government had been a creature of Welles's own making and he considered its overthrow a personal affront and would therefore have opposed any new political structure.<sup>36</sup>

The advice of the Ambassador led to a policy of "watchful waiting" toward Cuba. More than passive, the policy had

<sup>34</sup>837.00/3803: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 10, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, p. 417.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.; Pratt, Cordell Hull, 1933-44, XII, 148; Sumner Welles, The Time for Decision, p. 198.

two major points (1) nonrecognition of any government believed to be "radical", and (2) the active encouragement of groups or individuals who would form a conservative, pro-United States government.<sup>37</sup> During the first days of the Grau regime, Welles became convinced that recognition would not be offered in the near future. The Union Nacionalista party, led by Colonels Mendieta, Hevia, Mendez Peñate, and Dr. Torriente, along with the Menocal party, and the O.C.R.R. announced their opposition to the Grau government. Since these parties represented the majority of public opinion, Welles felt justified in believing that the government was not one which had the support of the people.<sup>38</sup>

During this period, the Department of State reiterated its stand that it was attempting to work closely with other Latin American countries in an attempt to bring about a stable government in Cuba which represented the will of the people.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Smith, The United States and Cuba, p, 152.

<sup>38</sup>837.00/3828: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba, (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 419-20; 837.00/3830: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 422-24.

<sup>39</sup>837.00/3830: Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, September 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 424; N.Y. Times, September 12, 1933, p. 1.

In a statement released to the press, Secretary of State

Hull said:

The chief concern of the Government of the United States is, as it has been, that Cuba solve her own political problems in accordance with the desire of the Cuban people themselves. It would seem unnecessary to repeat that the Government of the United States has no interest in behalf of or prejudice against any political group or independent organization which is today active in the political life of Cuba.<sup>40</sup>

Welles had reason to hope a favorable settlement could be reached when, during the following week, the leaders of the opposition parties met with Grau San Martín in an effort to work out a compromise. At first, Grau, realizing his position was based entirely upon the support of the Army and the Student Directory which Welles referred to as a group of "immature radicals," seemed willing to compromise. At the time, the opposition demanded only representation in the cabinet.<sup>41</sup> A few days later, however, they had abandoned compromise and began to insist upon the resignation of Grau. On 18 September, they presented an ultimatum to

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<sup>40</sup>837.00/3830: Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, September 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 424.

<sup>41</sup>837.00/3895: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 15, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 438-39.

Grau which insisted upon such measures as the reorganization of political parties, the appointment of a legislative council to legislate conjointly with the provisional government, and immediate measures to end the violence, disorder, and economic chaos which threatened the island.<sup>42</sup> At this point, although Grau seemed willing to resign, he was persuaded to remain in office by the recalcitrant student group and the Army.<sup>43</sup>

After the failure of the first effort at political compromise, Welles appealed directly to Sergeant Batista. After carefully explaining the position of the United States in wishing to avoid intervention and reminding Batista of the especially poor economic conditions on the island, Batista agreed to talk with the Student Directorate.<sup>44</sup> The result of Batista's efforts was a proposal for compromise by the

<sup>42</sup>837.00/3934: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 18, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 446-48; 837.00/3936: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba, (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 18, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 446-49.

<sup>43</sup>837.00/3959: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 19, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 449.

<sup>44</sup>837.00/3982, Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 21, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 451-53.

Student Directorate which stated:

1. The retention of Grau San Martín as President.
2. Appointment of a junta consultiva composed of 20 members, one-half of which to be selected by the opposition groups, and the remaining one-half by the government supporters to function as a legislative council.
3. The junta consultiva to determine all appointments to the Cabinet, . . . .

Mendieta and his Union Nacionalista party along with the O.C.R.R. were inclined to accept the proposal but the other opposition groups were not.<sup>45</sup> The negotiations again began to break down when the Student Directorate reversed its position and refused to accept a compromise. Likewise, the opposition leaders refused to consider any solution which meant the retention of Grau San Martín as President. Efforts by Batista, who was no longer as sure of his control of the Army, and was disturbed by continued reports of revolution in the provinces, to force a compromise during the last days of September were to no avail.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>837.00/3990: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 21, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 454-55.

<sup>46</sup>837.00/4001: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 23, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 456-57; 837.00/4007: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 25, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 457-58; 837.00/4023: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, September 25, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 459.

Early in October, Welles again met with Batista, because he seemed to represent the only authority in the nation (the Army), and persuaded him to again try to work out a compromise with Grau and the opposition. While Welles did not wish to see another coup d' etat, he did desire to see Batista establish a conservative government.<sup>47</sup> Although Washington was considering dropping some of the requirements for recognition and affording recognition to Grau,<sup>48</sup> Welles insisted that the government still did not have any backing from the business and financial interests nor from the political parties and that as a result the United States would only be giving recognition to a government which could not long maintain itself.<sup>49</sup>

At first, Batista was wholly unsuccessful in attempting to bring together the dissident groups. Then, during the

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<sup>47</sup>837.00/4126; Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, October 4, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 468-72; Smith, The United States and Cuba, p. 152.

<sup>48</sup>837.00/4131: Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Welles), Washington, October 5, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 472.

<sup>49</sup>837.00/4136: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, October 5, 1933, U. S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 473-74.

middle of October, he was somewhat successful in reaching an agreement between himself, Colonel Mendieta, who represented all of the opposition parties, and the Grau government backed by the Student Directorate. The solution which was tentatively agreed upon on 19 October provided for the retention of Grau San Martín as President, the formation of a cabinet representing all major parties, and the creation of an administrative commission which would have a deciding voice in all matters affecting electoral and financial decrees and would be composed of government and opposition appointees.<sup>50</sup>

By 24 October, however, these negotiations had broken down because of continued resistance by some of the leaders of the Student Directorate and because of a split in the A.B.C. over a solution to the political situation. Batista then became convinced that the only method which would settle the situation was for Grau to resign to be replaced by Colonel Mendieta and a cabinet composed of the opposition parties. Negotiations toward this end progressed smoothly with all groups ostensibly agreeing to the replacement of Grau with

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<sup>50</sup>837.00/4236: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, October 19, 1933, U. S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 492-93.

Colonel Mendieta<sup>51</sup> until 29 October when, after 36 hours of negotiation, Colonel Mendieta announced his refusal to accept the provisional presidency. His refusal was due principally to his fear that Batista could not control the Army and because as President he would be a puppet of Batista. In addition, Mendieta was probably influenced by members of his own party who did not wish to have him jeopardize his chances of winning a full term as President when national elections were held. Because of this change in political events, Welles reversed his position and began to urge upon the Cubans the acceptance of the previous plan which had permitted Grau to continue as Provisional President.<sup>52</sup>

As the United States continued to withhold diplomatic recognition from Grau San Martín (it had been granted to Céspedes on 14 August and less than a month later he was out of office), criticism aimed at the United States grew. Many Latin American countries, for example, which had agreed

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<sup>51</sup>837.00/4254: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, October 21, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 496; 837.00/4260: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, October 23, 1933, U.S. Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 496-97; 837.00/4265 and 4267: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, October 24, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 498-99.

<sup>52</sup>837.00/4298: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, October 29, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 503-04.



not to act in regard to Cuba until the United States had done so were becoming increasingly anxious to recognize the new government.<sup>53</sup> Many critics of American policy declared that withholding recognition was equal to direct intervention since no Cuban government could long remain in power without United States recognition.<sup>54</sup> President Grau had himself proclaimed that the policy of the United States seemed to be "intervention by inertia."<sup>55</sup> In refusing recognition because the Grau government could not maintain order, Washington was evidently ignoring the fact that in his first two months in office, President Grau San Martin had successfully crushed two major insurrections in the provinces. As Whitney H. Shepardson and William O. Scroggs have written, ". . . the United States Government was more impressed by the uprisings than it was with the fact that they had been put down."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>837.01/55, Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Caffery), Washington, November 25, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 526.

<sup>54</sup>Whitney H. Shepardson and William O. Scroggs, The United States in World Affairs: An Account of American Foreign Relations, 1934-35 (New York: Harper & Bros., for The Council on Foreign Relations, 1935), p. 121.

<sup>55</sup>Bemis, Latin American Policy, p. 280.

<sup>56</sup>Shepardson and Scroggs, The United States in World Affairs, 1934-35, p. 121.

By the end of the first week in November, Welles was still unable to persuade the opposing factions to reach agreement and the efforts of Batista were apparently having little effect. On 6 November, the Ambassador cabled the Department of State that general conditions were growing worse by the day and that he expected any of the following to occur:

- a. An immediate coup d' etat against Grau by Batista which if successful will result in the formation of a center government headed by Gomez or a military dictatorship;
- b. Outbreak of revolution in Oriente and Camaguey Provinces;
- c. General strike tomorrow instigated by the Communist organization;
- d. Displacement of Batista through violence by elements in the Army upon whom Guiteras /leader of the Cuban Communists/ is working;
- e. Reorganization of the government under Grau bringing into the Cabinet new elements probably of Communist tendencies which could only result in repeated revolutionary attempts against it.<sup>57</sup>

The position of the Ambassador on the seriousness of Communist party influence in the Grau government is interesting. While it is true that during the existence of the Grau government the Communists played an active part in attempting to organize workers and were important in the National Cuban Workers' Confederation, Welles placed their significance out

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<sup>57</sup>837.00/4342: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, November 6, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 515.

of all proportion to their strength. In addition, although Grau had indicated from time to time that he hoped to initiate a radical program for Cuba which included measures aimed against North American companies operating in the country,<sup>58</sup> Communists who were associated with Grau such as Dr. Antonio Guiteras, Secretary of Gobernación, resigned from the government,<sup>59</sup> blindly opposed Grau San Martín, and openly called upon the people to oppose him.<sup>60</sup>

When it became apparent during November that the "intermeddling" of Welles was having no effect, the position of persons in the United States Department of State began to change toward him. On 6 November, Under Secretary of State Phillips suggested to Welles that he join the delegation about to depart for the Montevideo Conference. After Welles had replied that this was impossible because he was urgently

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<sup>58</sup>International Commission of Jurists, Cuba and the Rule of Law, p. 32.

<sup>59</sup>837.00/4338: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, November 4, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 512.

<sup>60</sup>International Commission of Jurists, Cuba and the Rule of Law, p. 32.

needed in Cuba during such a critical time,<sup>61</sup> Phillips noted in his diary:

In my opinion Welles is doing no good in Habana; he has become so involved with the various political parties and is being so violently attack ed in the local press and other wise that his presence there has no longer any 'healing' effect.<sup>62</sup>

During the second week in November, the violent revolution which had been predicted by Welles occurred. In his reports to the Department of State, however, Welles was never precise as to the source of the rebellion. He inferred that it was being caused by a new Army revolt and by workers who were dissatisfied not only with the political chaos but also with the continually worsening economic situation.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup>837.00/4342: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, November 6, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 515.

<sup>62</sup>Pratt, Cordell Hull, 1933-44, XII, 149.

<sup>63</sup>837.00/4354: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, November 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 517; 837.00/4355: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, November 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 518; 837.00/4360: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, November 9, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 518; 837.00/4368: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Secretary of State, Habana, November 10, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 519-20. Also see Hull, Memoirs, I, 317; Welles, The Time for Decision, p. 198.

At this time, Welles requested a conference with President Roosevelt to discuss the future course of American policy.<sup>64</sup>

Welles met with Roosevelt on 19 November at Warm Springs, Georgia. At that time, Roosevelt evidently came to the same conclusions which Under Secretary of State William Phillips had come to two weeks earlier about the advisability of Welles remaining in Havana.<sup>65</sup> At about the same time, Grau San Martin had decided that Welles was persona non grata and requested his recall.<sup>66</sup> In any event, Roosevelt telephoned Phillips (Hull was then traveling to Montevideo) to tell him that Welles would return to Havana for a few days and would then return to Washington as Assistant Secretary of State.<sup>67</sup> Welles's replacement in Cuba,

<sup>64</sup>837.00/4391: Telegram: The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, November 13, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 520-21; 837.00/4435, Statement by the Acting Secretary of State /issued as a press release on 15 November/, U. S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 521.

<sup>65</sup>123 W 451/144: Telegram: The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Sea, Washington, November 20, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 523.

<sup>66</sup>837.00/4450: Telegram: The Secretary to President Roosevelt (Early) to the Acting Secretary of State, Warm Springs, Ga., November 22, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 524; N.Y. Times, November 18, 1933, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup>123 W 451/144: Telegram: The acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Sea, Washington, November 20, 1933, U. S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 523; Pratt, Cordell Hull, 1933-44, XII, 149.

Jefferson Caffery, had been designated for that position since early summer. He would enter Cuba, however, as the Personal Representative of the President rather than as Ambassador.<sup>68</sup> Apparently, Washington finally realized that it was inconsistent with the non-recognition policy to maintain an Ambassador in Cuba.

An additional indication of a possible revision in Cuban policy came a few days after the conference between Roosevelt and Welles. While Hull was enroute to the Montevideo Conference, Roosevelt expressed a willingness to renegotiate the 1903 Treaty of Relations with Cuba of which the Platt Amendment was a part. By so doing, it was hoped that the image of the United States would be improved at the Montevideo Conference.<sup>69</sup> A view, incidentally, which was shared by observers in London who expressed the opinion that the British looked upon the move simply as a device to win sympathy in Latin America and increase American trade during a period

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt, Presidential Statement of Non-Intervention in Cuba--The Good Neighbor Policy Applied. November 23, 1933, Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, II, 500; Hull, Memoirs, I, 317.

of economic depression.<sup>70</sup> The good neighborliness of Roosevelt was tempered, however, when he added that such a revision of the treaty could not take place, ". . . until there exists in Cuba a provisional Government which, through popular support. . . shows evidence of genuine stability."<sup>71</sup>

While the United States was remaining firm in its stand that recognition would not be offered to a nation which could not maintain order and did not represent the will of the people, the whole question of intervention under the Platt Amendment was being warmly debated. The New York Journal of Commerce was reported to be strongly supporting intervention. Reminding the United States of the contractual obligation of the Platt Amendment and of the fact that American investors had relied upon it, it said, "We can not neglect the definite obligations imposed upon this country by the Platt Amendment."<sup>72</sup> Other periodicals were taking a

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<sup>70</sup>N.Y. Times, December 14, 1933, p. 9.

<sup>71</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Presidential Statement of Non-Intervention in Cuba--The Good Neighbor Policy Applied." November 23, 1933, Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, II, 500.

<sup>72</sup>"The Challenge of the Cuban Kaleidoscope," The Literary Digest, (September 23, 1933), p. 7.

similar stand. The Review of Reviews, for example, was concerned about the welfare of Americans and the millions of dollars they had invested.<sup>73</sup>

An editorial in The New York Times stated that while there may have been a few American businessmen and Cubans of wealth who desired to see the American flag flying over Cuba, this was most definitely not the sentiment of a majority of Cubans or Americans. The paper then urged President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull to withstand any pressure for intervention.<sup>74</sup> Raymond Buell and the Foreign Policy Association had taken a similar stand during August and again in November but had gone further by deploring the existence of the Platt Amendment as an unnecessary and useless tool of foreign policy.<sup>75</sup>

Other periodicals were taking a similar position. The Christian Science Monitor urged the United States to avoid intervention because, ". . . interfering in another country's

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<sup>73</sup>Review of Reviews (November, 1933), p. 18.

<sup>74</sup>Editorial, "Who Wants Intervention," N.Y. Times, September 12, 1933, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup>N.Y. Times, August 12, 1933, p. 3; N.Y. Times, November 12, 1933, p. 20.



affairs is always a thankless business."<sup>76</sup> It pointed out that past intervention had not been extremely successful and that if we desired democracy in Cuba we had best permit it to develop by itself.<sup>77</sup> The Wall Street Journal was quoted as saying:

Forceful measures on our part will work no change either in the economic circumstances of the island or in habits of political thought. If the character of the Machado regime imposed upon us no obligation to intervene, we may consistently allow the new provisional government a wide latitude to work out its own destiny.<sup>78</sup>

Further, the New York Herald Tribune severely criticized the movements of a fleet in Cuba saying that:

. . . it is not intelligent action and is certainly disastrous policy. . . . The appearance is that of an Administration going off half-cocked in all directions. It was that sort of snap judgment that took the Maine to Havana in 1898--a much less jingoistic performance.<sup>79</sup>

Latin American newspapers, particularly in Buenos Aires, were also interpreting the deployment of ships and the withholding of diplomatic recognition as direct intervention under

<sup>76</sup>Literary Digest (August 19, 1933), p. 9.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>"The Challenge of the Cuban Kaleidoscope," Literary Digest (September 23, 1933), p. 7.

<sup>79</sup>Literary Digest (September 16, 1933), p. 7.

the Platt Amendment.<sup>80</sup> The Literary Digest reported that some European newspapers were taking a very similar stand against the de facto intervention by the United States.<sup>81</sup>

One of the most severe criticisms of American policy came from Samuel G. Inman. Writing for The Christian Century, Mr. Inman first denounced the American press for trying to bring on intervention with such explosive headlines as "Counter-Revolution!" and "Labor Prepared to Destroy all Sugar Mills!" which he charged were reminiscent of the Hearst press during 1898. He then warned Roosevelt and Hull to beware of the course Congress might take for the protection of American business, of the influence of American businessmen, and of the strong influence of business interests in the administration in the persons of Secretary Woodin, Secretary Roper and Ambassador-at-Large Davis, all of whom had financial interests in Cuba. Finally, the author reminded the administration of the real need for basic reform in Cuba where there had been nothing but inequality and the ever present "moral" authority of Uncle Sam. Indeed, many of the Cuban "revolutionists" had only been looking to the United States where a revolutionary

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<sup>80</sup>ibid.

<sup>81</sup>ibid.

socialized program had become necessary in a time of great difficulty. He said:

The new government has officially announced its intention to respect international treaties and financial obligations, to protect life and compensate for land taken and there has been no suggestion of any anti-religious movement. They are not communists and promise to take vigorous action against either a communist or a conservative movement, either of which they believe would defeat the real purposes of the revolution. But they will not accept placidly attempted dictation from the United States.<sup>82</sup>

Finally, he reminded the administration and the American public of our experiences with Mexico and Russia to show that we could deal with the problem much more realistically if we appreciated the fundamental character of the problem rather than treating it as, ". . . a mere eruption."<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps the most bitter denunciation of American policy and of Ambassador Welles in particular came from Carleton Beals. In The Nation, Beals condemned the "inept meddling" which made "non-intervention merely a hypocritical pose."<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup>Samuel Guy Inman, "Which Way in Cuba?" The Christian Century, L, No. 41, (October 11, 1933), p. 1268.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Carleton Beals, "American Diplomacy in Cuba," The Nation (January 17, 1934), p. 68.

He charged that Welles attempted throughout his stay in Cuba to create a government subservient to Washington and in so doing repeated American blunders of a past generation. The meddling of Welles, he charged, made a government unfriendly to the United States a logical result. The sending of ships to Cuba only strengthened that anti-American feeling.<sup>85</sup>

Furthermore, he claimed that the unsettled and terroristic situation at the end of 1933 was the result of Welles's attempt to:

. . . install reactionary and discredited elements in control of the Cuban government, his use of the embassy as a club room for the reunion of all the enemies of the government, his abetting of the terrorist A.B.C. which talked conciliation during the day but planted bombs at night, have contributed to instability and armed revolt.<sup>86</sup>

By the time Welles had arrived back in Havana after his conference with Roosevelt, the Grau government had successfully suppressed the counter-revolution of November. This fact was causing Acting Secretary of State William Phillips to question whether or not the criterion of withholding recognition because the government could not maintain order

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

was valid.<sup>87</sup> During the first week in December, Welles and the Uruguayan Minister sought another compromise solution. At first, Grau again agreed to resign no later than April, 1934. Later, however, Grau again reversed his position. This led General Menocal, in exile in Florida, to declare that the only solution was violent revolution.<sup>88</sup> By 8 December, the political scene which had been relatively quiet for only a few days was again becoming tense. In particular, the American controlled Cuban Electric Company and Cuban Telephone Company were afraid for the safety of their property. This prompted Welles to notify the Department of State that he would have to postpone his return to the United States for at least a few days until a settlement could be reached or the crisis subsided.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup>837.01/47: Telegram, The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, Washington, November 28, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 527-28.

<sup>88</sup>837.00/4467: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, December 2, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 529-30; 837.00/4475: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, December 5, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 531-33; 837.00/4475: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, December 7, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 533-36.

<sup>89</sup>837.00/4485: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, December 8, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 536.

By 11 December, the negotiations which called for the resignation of Grau, the continuance of the revolutionary program, and the retention of Batista as Chief of Staff of the Army, and in which Welles had acted as a "friendly observer" had completely broken down. With the situation no nearer a solution than it had been in September, Welles agreed to leave Havana on 13 December.<sup>90</sup> On the same day, The New York Times reported a charge made by the Uruguayan Minister to Cuba, Benjamin Fernandez de Medina, that Welles had ruined the recent negotiations by conspiring with the opposition forces. The Department of State replied for the former Ambassador by saying that Welles had confirmed to the Department that he had acted only as an observer.<sup>91</sup>

Meanwhile, Cordell Hull was attempting to convince the delegates to the Montevideo Conference that, ". . . the United States Government is as much opposed as any other government to interference with the freedom, the sovereignty, or other

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<sup>90</sup>123 W 451/162: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba, (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, December 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 539; 837.00/4498: Telegram, The Ambassador in Cuba (Welles) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, December 11, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, V, 539-40.

<sup>91</sup>N.Y. Times, December 13, 1933, p. 10.

internal affairs or processes of the governments of other nations."<sup>92</sup> Hull made inferences to the Cuban situation when he stated:

My Government is doing its utmost, with due regard to commitments made in the past, to end with all possible speed engagements which have been set up by previous circumstances. There are some engagements which can be removed more speedily than others. In some instances disentanglement from obligations of another era can only be brought about through the exercise of some patience.<sup>93</sup>

More specifically, Hull withstood pressure from Chile, Argentina, and Mexico to immediately accord recognition to the Grau government.<sup>94</sup> The United States, he said, wished only for a situation which would benefit all Cubans and would recognize any government when the two major conditions had been met.<sup>95</sup> Hoping for support, Hull, after receiving instructions from Roosevelt, urged other Latin American governments

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<sup>92</sup>Cordell Hull, Memoirs, I, 333-34.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>94</sup>837.00/4449: Telegram, The Ambassador in Brazil (Gibson) to the Acting Secretary of State, Rio de Janeiro, November 24, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, IV, 40-41.

<sup>95</sup>710.G/371, Instructions to the Delegates to the Seventh International Conference of American States, Montevideo, Uruguay, Washington, November 10, 1933, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1933, IV, 151.

to withhold recognition for the time being so as to do nothing which would jeopardize the success of the Pan American Conference.<sup>96</sup>

Nevertheless, the subject of intervention and in particular the problem of Cuba was a vital part of the conference proceedings. The Chairman of the Cuban delegation, Sr. Angel Giraudy, denounced the United States by saying:

It is not possible to remain silent when it is affirmed that the United States does not wish to intervene in Cuba, because this is not true. . . if it is not intervention when in a defenseless nation a representative of the United States incites part of the people against the government. . . ; if it is not intervention to surround a defenseless island by a threatening squadron in the attempt to impose upon it a government it does not desire then there has never been any intervention in America.<sup>97</sup>

The indication of the United States that it was willing to abrogate the Platt Amendment and the statements by Hull to the other delegates that the United States was willing to back

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<sup>96</sup>837.00/4449: Telegram, The Acting Secretary of State to the Chairman of the American Delegation (Hull), Washington, November 25, 1933, U. S., Foreign Relations, 1933, IV, 41-42.

<sup>97</sup>Diario de la VII Conferencia Internacional Americana (Montevideo), No. 11, p. 19, quoted in, Harry Hersh Shapiro, "The United States and the Principle of Absolute Nonintervention in Latin America with Particular Reference to Mexico" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, 1949) p. 148.



its words with deeds saved the United States from a diplomatic disaster. The conference had before it a draft of a convention on the rights and duties of states which had been prepared by the International Commission of American Jurisconsults at Rio de Janeiro in 1927. The most important part of the convention was Article 8 which stated, ". . . no state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another."<sup>98</sup> Although Secretary Hull had some reservations about signing the declaration, explaining his reservations were due to a lack of time to study all of the articles, he voted for the convention including Article 8.<sup>99</sup>

The position of the United States in wooing Latin America was enhanced further by a speech delivered by President Roosevelt to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation on 28 December. The President first reaffirmed the United States's position against intervention. He then said:

The maintenance of constitutional government in other nations is not a sacred obligation devolving upon the United States alone. The maintenance of law and the orderly processes of government in this hemisphere is

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<sup>98</sup>United States Department of State, Report of the Delegates of the United States of America to the Seventh International Conference of American States, Montevideo, Uruguay, December 3-26, 1933. Conference Series No. 19, Publication No. 666. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934), p. 103.

<sup>99</sup>Harry Hersh Shapiro, "The United States and the Principle of Absolute Nonintervention," p. 150.

the concern of each individual nation within its own borders first of all. It is only if and when the failure of orderly processes affects the other nations of the continent that it becomes their concern and the point to stress is that in such an event it becomes the joint concern of a whole continent in which we are all neighbors.<sup>100</sup>

It must be noted that it was only armed intervention in internal affairs that the United States was abjuring. Presumably, the "intermeddling" of Welles and later of Caffery was officially sanctioned. The statement on joint concern is also interesting. Theoretically, joint concern meant joint consultation such as Roosevelt had been pursuing. The policy also implied the possibility of joint intervention. In any intervention in Latin America, the principal military force would have to come from the United States. It would seem that while Roosevelt was intimating that the policy of unilateral intervention under the Roosevelt Corollary and action in Cuba under the Platt Amendment were at an end, the President was seeking sanction for nearly the same policy through international law and the Pan-American Union.<sup>101</sup> As

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<sup>100</sup>Address by President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Washington, D.C. on December 28, 1933, Department of State, Press Releases (December 30, 1933), p. 380, reprinted in James W. Gantenbein, The Evolution of Our Latin American Policy, A Documentary Record (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 166.

<sup>101</sup>Bemis, Latin American Policy, p. 277.

far as the administration was concerned, formal use of the Platt Amendment was out of the question after 28 December largely because it was viewed as unnecessary.

Throughout January, Caffery worked to secure a change in government in much the same manner as had Welles. Grau, however, remained convinced that he was maintaining stability and would be able to hold free elections if he remained in the Presidency.<sup>102</sup> Caffery, in fact, agreed with Grau when he reported to Washington that the government was supported,

. . . only by the army and ignorant masses who have been misled by utopian promises. However, unless Dr. Grau decides voluntarily to give up power it is my opinion that he can be forced to do so only by the armed intervention of the United States.<sup>103</sup>

Caffery believed that the upper class political and business leaders had to be relied upon to bring stable government to the island. In addition, he believed that only a change in government would avert a more radical and communistic

<sup>102</sup>837.00/4596: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 11, 1934, United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1934, Vol. V: The American Republics (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 97.

<sup>103</sup>837.00/4591: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 10, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 95.

revolution. He reported:

. . . the de facto authorities in view of the fact that they have no support from the better elements of the country are relying more and more on radical and communistic elements and we may soon be faced with a very grave situation in connection with the protection of our manifold interests on the island.<sup>104</sup>

By mid-January, political conditions were as unsettled as ever before. Labor disturbances affected most phases of the already crippled economy and the threat of strikes or a general strike led by the Communist Labor leaders increased daily.<sup>105</sup> Because of the severity of the situation and Caffery's urging, Batista became convinced that he had to use his authority with the Army to force a change in the government. Batista again contacted Carlos Mendieta and urged him to accept the Provisional Presidency until a final solution could be negotiated.<sup>106</sup> Mendieta, however, considering the problems caused Grau by the lack of United States recognition,

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 96

<sup>105</sup>837.00/4605: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 13, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 97-98; 837.00/4606: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 14, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 98.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

wanted advance assurance that his government would be recognized by the United States. Caffery urged Roosevelt to grant such assurance on the grounds that otherwise, ". . . Batista will probably turn definitely to the left with definite disaster for all our interests here (or declare himself a military dictator)."<sup>107</sup> When Roosevelt refused to grant advance recognition,<sup>108</sup> Batista threw his support to Carlos Hevia, a man who was relatively unknown but was definitely more conservative than Grau San Martín, thus accomplishing what Welles had been trying to do since September, 1933.<sup>109</sup> As one author states, "Batista had cast his lot with the conservative, pro-American political groups, and his reward was twenty-five years of power."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>837.00/4606: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 14, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 98.

<sup>108</sup>837.00/4609: Telegram, The Acting Secretary of State to the Personal Representative of the President (Caffery), Washington, January 14, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 100.

<sup>109</sup>937.00/4619: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 15, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 101.

<sup>110</sup>Ruby Hart Phillips, Cuba: Island of Paradox (New York: 1959), p. 81, quoted in Smith, The United States and Cuba, p. 155.

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOGNITION, ABROGATION, AND RECIPROCITY, 1934

After some delay, Hevia was installed as Provisional President on 16 January, 1934.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, and throughout the next few days, there were growing rumors of strikes being fomented by the Communists and radical left under the leadership of Antonio Guiteras. After negotiations between Caffery and Batista, Batista sent word to Caffery that the Cuban Army and Navy were taking direct steps to end the possibility of strikes or a general strike.<sup>2</sup> Although Batista believed the situation was under control, there was enough public dissatisfaction with the choice of Hevia that Batista again began to negotiate with Mendieta to persuade him to accept the Presidency. Mendieta, Batista thought,

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<sup>1</sup>837.00/4622: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 16, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 102.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; 837.00/4625: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 17, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 102-03.

could command more widespread popular confidence.<sup>3</sup> On 18 January, Hevia resigned his office and Mendieta was installed as Provisional President.<sup>4</sup> Caffery immediately telegraphed the Department of State that although there was a small communistic element opposed to Mendieta that would undoubtedly be attempting to topple the government, he believed Mendieta was capable of dealing firmly with the situation and would be capable of maintaining law and order.<sup>5</sup>

The question of popular support raises an interesting but difficult question. Both the representatives of the United States and most of those in a position of local power believed Mendieta to be the champion of the people. The New York Times reported and subsequent events indicated, however, that a great deal of opposition to the government

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<sup>3</sup>837.00/4626: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President, (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 17, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 103; 837.00/4633: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 18, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 104.

<sup>4</sup>837.00/4634: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 18, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 105.

<sup>5</sup>837.00/4643: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Acting Secretary of State, Habana, January 18, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 105.

remained. Large numbers of workers were on strike and a general strike was threatened for 19 January. Presumably, while most of the government workers were protesting because they had not been paid for several months, the remainder of the opposition was to the military control exercised by Batista and to the United States for interference in the person of Jefferson Caffery.<sup>6</sup>

Although it appears that most political groups, with the exception of what Caffery called the "extreme left and . . . the adherents of Machado,"<sup>7</sup> supported Mendieta, it is impossible to tell precisely the extent of Mendieta's backing at this time for no election had been held. This would not be clearly known until at least 22 April, the date set (by former Provisional President Grau) for the election of a constituent assembly. In reality, Mendieta believed even April would be too early to hold an election. He supposed it would take longer to take a census, organize political parties, and make proper preparations for a free election.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>J.D. Phillips, "Mendieta Accepts Cuban Presidency; Takes Oath Today," N.Y. Times, January 18, 1934, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>837.00/4664: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President, (Caffery) to the Secretary of State, Habana, January 22, 1934, U.S. Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 106.

<sup>8</sup>N.Y. Times, January 20, 1934, p. 7.



The new government did not postpone seeking close relations with the United States, however. Almost immediately, Mendieta expressed hope that as soon as Cuba established a stable government, a new trade agreement would be completed and the Permanent Treaty of 1903 revised.<sup>9</sup> Nor did the United States delay in seeking cordial relations with Mendieta. Two days after the provisional government was established and while the country was still threatened with strikes and violence, it became clear the United States intended to recognize Mendieta. On 20 January, Washington looked toward recognition within a week or ten days. President Roosevelt expressed hope that Mendieta would meet his two requirements of backing by the Cuban people and ability to maintain law and order. The President further stated he had had no word from Cuba on that day but expected good news.<sup>10</sup>

The next day, Secretary of State Cordell Hull returned to Washington from the Pan American Conference at Montevideo. Upon arrival, he received a message from Acting Secretary of State Phillips informing him that President Roosevelt had invited the Latin American representatives in Washington to

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>N.Y. Times, January 20, 1934, p. 1.

meet with him in a few days. The purpose of the proposed meeting was to inform the Latin American countries of Mendieta's success in meeting the requirements for recognition. The United States was certain, on 21 January, that Mendieta had popular support and was able to maintain order--with the help of the Army.<sup>11</sup>

Caffery, on 22 January, affirmed Roosevelt's position on Cuba.<sup>12</sup> The following day, with the concurrence of the President,<sup>13</sup> Cordell Hull instructed Caffery to immediately extend "formal and cordial" recognition to the Government of Cuba.<sup>14</sup> At once, France, Italy, Great Britain, and the self-governing Dominions recognized Mendieta. The Latin

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<sup>11</sup>Hull, Memoirs, I, 342. The New York Times reported that this was the first time the U.S. had consulted the nations of Latin America en masse about the recognition of the government of a sister state although there had been previous consultations between the State Department and Latin American ministers over the situation in Cuba, N.Y. Times, January 23, 1934, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>837.00/4664: Telegram, The Personal Representative of the President (Caffery) to the Secretary of State, Habana, January 22, 1934, U.S. Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 107.

<sup>13</sup>Hull, Memoirs, I, 343.

<sup>14</sup>837.01/70: The Secretary of State to the Personal Representative of the President (Caffery), Washington, January 23, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 107.

American republics soon followed with full recognition.<sup>15</sup>

The next day, Secretary of State Hull announced the withdrawal of United States Navy vessels from Cuban waters.<sup>16</sup>

In promoting a change in the government of Cuba through the mediation of Welles and Caffery with Batista and others of political influence, the United States apparently was not thinking in terms of whether or not this action constituted intervention in Cuban internal affairs or whether or not the meddling was boosting Batista to a position of near absolute power. On the contrary, the only consideration seems to have been bringing about a rapid settlement to eliminate the danger of direct intervention for the protection of American lives and property. Consideration was also given to bringing about a more favorable attitude toward the United States on the part of Latin American nations.<sup>17</sup>

Vehement criticism of the administration's policy in regard to the recognition of Cuba was forthcoming from The Nation. The magazine espoused, on 31 January, the idea that

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<sup>15</sup>Bemis, Latin American Policy, p. 281.

<sup>16</sup>N.Y. Times, January 24, 1934, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>A good discussion of the motivation of the United States in granting recognition may be found in, Bryce Wood, The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 111.

no nation should have to win the approval of the United States Ambassador before recognition is granted and further:

To contrast the insurmountable tests and standards we presented to President Grau and the ready recognition we accord to Colonel Mendieta is to disclose the inconsistency, the absurdity, and the personal bias which have characterized our Cuban policy. The only way in which those past errors can be rectified and the New Deal really brought to Cuba is to proceed henceforth with a frank, vigorous, and generous policy. . . .<sup>18</sup>

A part of the generous policy advocated by The Nation was abrogation of the Platt Amendment without reservation.<sup>19</sup>

By the time this article was written, however, the United States was already proceeding toward that goal. On 18 January, Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr. had risen in the House to express his affection for the new President of Cuba who had been selected by the Cuban people, to request recognition, and to ask that the United States proceed to abolish the Platt Amendment. He reasoned that the United States had failed to keep its obligation to the Cuban people and that the Amendment had therefore lost its meaning. Because the United States had neglected its moral obligation

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<sup>18</sup>The Nation (January 31, 1934), Vol. CXXXVIII, p. 117.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

and because of the Presidential policy opposed to the use of armed force or military aggression, particularly in regard to Latin America, the Platt Amendment should be repealed. He then proposed to introduce a resolution to that effect.<sup>20</sup>

On 29 January, Representative Fish, charging that the Platt Amendment was "only a scrap of paper," introduced a concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 28) requesting the President to take whatever steps were necessary for the revision or repeal of the Platt Amendment or that part of it dealing with intervention (Article III). The resolution was sent to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile Senator King introduced a resolution in the Senate on 22 January (S. Res. 150) calling upon the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to examine the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the Platt Amendment to determine, ". . . whether conditions now existing justify the repeal of such Amendment and the complete relinquishment to the people

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<sup>20</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 1, 892-93.

<sup>21</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 2, 1539; N.Y. Times, January 30, 1934, p. 5.

of. . . Cuba of the government and control of such island. .  
.. "22

The next day, The New York Times reported that the administration would seek the advice of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on repealing the Platt Amendment.<sup>23</sup>

One particular problem was whether or not negotiations with Spain had to precede negotiations with Cuba on the treaty because of the obligations undertaken by the United States with Spain in the Treaty of Paris. It was the opinion of the State Department, however, that this would probably not be necessary since the obligations were expressly, "limited to the time of its Cuba's occupancy."<sup>24</sup>

Although specific information is lacking, the Congressional committees apparently did not fully investigate the matter of the Platt Amendment. Within indexes of government documents, there is no indication that either the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or the House Foreign Affairs Committee ever published a report on their proceedings on

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<sup>22</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 1, 1052.

<sup>23</sup>"Roosevelt Decides to Recognize Cuba," N.Y. Times, January 23, 1934, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>N.Y. Times, January 24, 1934, p. 1.

the Platt Amendment during the period from January to May. Russell Fitzgibbon explains this by saying that Congress dropped the matter when it was understood the Department of State was undertaking an investigation toward the same goal.<sup>25</sup>

On 1 February, in accepting the credentials of Dr. Manuel Marquez Sterling as Cuban Ambassador to the United States, President Roosevelt invited the Cubans to open negotiations with the United States for revising the treaty relations between the two nations. In his remarks, the President asked for, ". . . modification of the permanent treaty between the United States and Cuba and for revision of the commercial convention between the two countries."<sup>26</sup> The Nation wholeheartedly approved of the President's statement.<sup>27</sup> Immediately after the President's announcement, the Department of State (Secretary Hull and Assistant Secretary Sumner Welles) began preparing the new treaty.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 200.

<sup>26</sup>N.Y. Times, February 1, 1934, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup>The Nation, (February 14, 1934).

<sup>28</sup>Hull, Memoirs, I, 343. Sumner Welles was appointed to the position of Assistant Secretary of State on January 10, 1934.

The prospect of a new treaty being quickly concluded was indicated by Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles. In Washington, in an address to the Young Democratic Clubs of America on 29 March, the Assistant Secretary criticized the promotion of big business by the Hoover administration, and the Hawley-Smoot Tariff. He also criticized the Grau regime and attempted to justify the failure of the United States to recognize it. Welles then proceeded to promise immediate revision of the tariff preferential on Cuban sugar and the elimination of the Platt Amendment as aids to rapid Cuban recovery.<sup>29</sup>

While Washington proceeded to negotiate a new treaty with Cuba and to help Cuba's sagging economy by a new commercial agreement, Americans were becoming vocal in their praise of the new Cuban government. Although Mendieta had been in power only ten days, Russell B. Porter was able to write, in The New York Times, a strong article supporting Mendieta. Porter found Mendieta to be a godsend because he was friendly to the United States, would take a strong stand against communism, would probably not expropriate land--at least not without just compensation, and because

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<sup>29</sup>N.Y. Times, March 30, 1934, p. 16.



he expressed a desire for partnership with American capital.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, President Mendieta announced elections for the Constituent Assembly would be held no later than 31 December, 1934, full civil rights were guaranteed, and a constitution would be drafted within forty days.<sup>31</sup> By 1 February, however, it was apparent that Mendieta's control was not as firm as the United States had "hoped" it was. Tobacco and railway workers were on strike and there were numerous threatened strikes among the sugar workers.<sup>32</sup>

In the face of widespread labor difficulties, the Mendieta government was quick to take a firm stand. On 3 February, Mendieta declared virtual war against the "small" radical element which was fomenting the difficulty.<sup>33</sup> It seems as though most of the trouble was caused by a return of companies to private ownership after they had been state-controlled during Grau's tenure.<sup>34</sup> By mid-February, however,

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<sup>30</sup>Russell B. Porter, "Cuba, With a New President, Renews Her Hope for Peace," N.Y. Times, January 28, 1934, VIII, 2.

<sup>31</sup>N.Y. Times, January 30, 1934, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup>N.Y. Times, February 1, 1934, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup>N.Y. Times, February 4, 1934, p. 21

<sup>34</sup>Articles appeared almost daily in, N.Y. Times, February 1 to 15, 1934.

the labor situation had quieted considerably and most workers had returned to their jobs.<sup>35</sup>

During the first week in March, the labor situation again became serious. This was especially true in the provinces of Oriente, Camaguey, and Santa Clara and specifically among the sugar workers.<sup>36</sup> When the proportions of the discontent grew, the government made preparations to tighten military control throughout the island. Peace and order were rapidly fading.<sup>37</sup> On 6 March, Mendieta announced that constitutional guarantees would be suspended and heavy penalties imposed upon strikers.<sup>38</sup> As strikes continued, Mendieta reiterated his claim that the agitation was thoroughly Communist inspired.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See N.Y. Times, February 1-15, 1934.

<sup>36</sup> N.Y. Times, March 2, 1934, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> N.Y. Times, March 6, 1934, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> N.Y. Times, March 7, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> Americans in Cuba were also blaming the disturbances on Communists. On March 11, 1934, the following article appeared in the N.Y. Times, p. 27:

"John T. Danaher, general manager of Dollar Line interests in Cuba, arrived from Havana yesterday on the liner President Pierce. He said he did not believe the country could solve its labor troubles until the communistic element among the workers was eliminated.

By mid-March, most workers had again returned to work and the labor situation seemed somewhat under control. Cuba's internal problems were far from over, however, for during April stories appeared which claimed dissension within the Cuban government.<sup>40</sup> By the middle of the month, Cuba had declared a moratorium on foreign debts for an indefinite period.<sup>41</sup>

The tense situation began to ease by the end of April and into the first days of May. Strikes, bombings, and terrorism in the streets of Havana continued as protests of one kind or another against the government. But for the most part, the disturbances were occurring with less frequency and with less popular support.<sup>42</sup> John Barrett, former Director General of the Pan American Union, theorized that the minor terrorism of April and May was a part of a plot by anti-United

Mr. Danaher said the one man capable of handling the labor situation in Cuba would be Colonel Fulgencio Batista, now in command of Cuba's armed forces. Colonel Batista is a strong, intelligent, fearless man and would bring peace to Cuba if he had wide powers to police the island, he declared."

<sup>40</sup>N.Y. Times, April 6, 1934, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup>N.Y. Times, April 11, 1934, p. 17. Most bankers in the United States were not concerned since the Cubans had promised to continue interest payments. See: "Bankers Not Uneasy on Cuba Moratorium," N.Y. Times, April 12, 1934.

<sup>42</sup>Almost daily reports appeared in N.Y. Times, April 15 to May 15, 1934.

States groups to bring about intervention by the United States and with it, increased resentment toward America throughout the Southern Hemisphere.<sup>43</sup>

Even if Barrett's analysis of the domestic difficulty in Cuba is correct, the terrorists were too late to force intervention by Washington under the terms of the Platt Amendment. On 29 May, the administration went about as far as it could to end criticism of American "imperialism." That day, Secretary of State Cordell Hull transmitted the text of a new Cuban treaty to the President and recommended its transmittal to the Senate for ratification.<sup>44</sup> The treaty had been signed that morning by Hull and Sumner Welles for the United States and Ambassador M. Marquez Sterling for the Republic of Cuba.<sup>45</sup> Until then, negotiations had proceeded secretly with government officials speaking only of "negotiating with Cuba."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>N.Y. Times, May 29, 1934, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup>N.Y. Times, May 30, 1934, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 9, 9839-40.

<sup>46</sup>N.Y. Times, May 30, 1934, p. 11.

The two principal articles of the treaty were Section I abrogating the Treaty of Relations of 22 May 1903 and Section III permitting the United States to retain the Guantanamo naval base.<sup>47</sup> In his message accompanying the treaty to the Senate (Executive Q), the President said:

In this new treaty with Cuba, the contractual right to intervene in Cuba which had been granted to the United States in the earlier treaty of 1903 is abolished, and those further rights, likewise granted to the U.S., in the same instrument, involving participation in the determination of such domestic policies of the Republic of Cuba as those relating to finance and to sanitation, are omitted.

By the consummation of this treaty, this government will make it clear that it not only opposes the policy of armed intervention but that it renounces those rights of intervention and interference in Cuba which have been bestowed upon it by treaty.<sup>48</sup>

After presentation of the message to the Senate, the treaty was referred, on the same day, to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.<sup>49</sup> The following morning, the Committee

<sup>47</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 9, 9840. See Appendix II for a complete text of the new treaty.

<sup>48</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 9, 9839; Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Request for Approval of a New Treaty with Cuba, May 29, 1934, in F. D. R., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Vol. III: The Advance of Recovery and Reform (New York: Random House, 1938), pp. 270-71.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

took up the business of the treaty. There is no readily available report of that Committee meeting.<sup>50</sup> It is possible, however, to speculate upon the session. The New York Times, on 30 May, reported the views of the leading members of the Foreign Relations Committee. Chairman Key Pittman of Nevada called the treaty the, "most remarkable pronouncement" in relations between the United States and Latin America since the Monroe Doctrine. He further declared he was strongly in favor of the treaty and was sure it would be ratified. Senator Borah, the ranking Republican on the Committee, also favored the treaty.<sup>51</sup> In fact, Senator Borah had made a speech during January in which he had strongly recommended the abrogation of the treaty because the United States needed an earnest foreign policy which would exhibit, ". . . honest friendship with all nations which would respect the rights and sovereignties of other nations without distinction of great and small."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Letter from Buford Rowland, Chief, Legislative Branch, Office of Civil Archives of the United States to author, Washington, September 29, 1965.

<sup>51</sup> N.Y. Times, May 30, 1934, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> N.Y. Times, January 9, 1934, p. 1; Review of Reviews (February, 1934), p. 46.

Although Senator Johnson was undecided on the evening of 29 May, Senator Vandenberg said he was wholeheartedly in favor of the treaty. He called the Platt Amendment "a nature fake, a paradox. As long as it remains in the Cuban Constitution, we cannot escape the economic responsibility paralleling a political responsibility."<sup>53</sup> Senator Vandenberg's opinion, as an expression of isolationist thought, represents as well the sentiments of Senator Borah. Because of domestic difficulties, they viewed as imperative the elimination of foreign responsibilities.

The treaty was reported favorably and unanimously out of committee on the same day it was first taken up. That afternoon (30 May), Senator Pittman presented the treaty to the Senate.<sup>54</sup> The fact that the Committee considered the treaty for such a short period of time indicates the probability of little or no disagreement among the members.

Although the treaty had been reported for immediate action on 30 May, Senator Pittman withdrew his request for consideration when Senator Huey Long demanded time to discuss Latin American affairs. Long did not object to the treaty

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<sup>53</sup> N.Y. Times, May 30, 1934, p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 9, 9925.

but wished to take the opportunity to accuse Rockefeller interests of financing Bolivia in the Chaco conflict and of attempting to force Cuba to recognize Chase National Bank loans.<sup>55</sup>

On 31 May, Senator Long had no further remarks to make on Latin American affairs. Senator Pittman then brought the treaty to a vote. Senator Marvel M. Logan of Kentucky, who was in the Chair, put the question and declared the treaty ratified before the Senators on the Republican side of the chamber realized what had happened.<sup>56</sup> Senator Simeon D. Fess of Ohio took the floor to say that had he realized the treaty was being acted upon he would have spoken against it. Oregon Senator Charles L. McNary then moved reconsideration so that Mr. Fess could address the Senate. Mr. Fess wondered about the advisability of the treaty given the "volatility of the Cuban mind." Aside from this remark, Senator Fess made no further objection and the treaty remained ratified.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>N.Y. Times, May 31, 1934, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 9, 10116; N.Y. Times, June 1, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 9, 10116.



The speed with which the treaty was ratified was indicated by Dr. Marquez Sterling, Cuban Ambassador, who was witnessing the proceedings from the gallery. When the treaty had been ratified, Dr. Sterling got up, tapped a reporter on the shoulder, and asked him what had happened. When told that the treaty had been ratified, Dr. Sterling gaped incredulously.<sup>58</sup>

It was by the above process that in two days the United States Senate ratified the new treaty of relations with Cuba and the Platt Amendment was abrogated without a recorded vote. Cuba ratified the treaty on 4 June and on 9 June, ratifications were exchanged at Washington. In less than two weeks a goal for which most Cubans had been striving for a generation was reached.<sup>59</sup>

Latin American reaction to the new treaty was immediate and enthusiastic. By 7 June, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Panama, and Venezuela had voiced their approval. The Panamanian newspaper, Estrella de Penama, said that the United States had finally supported words with action and had thereby given Latin America a basis for confidence in the

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<sup>58</sup>"An Amendment's End," Time (June 11, 1934), p. 14.

<sup>59</sup>Hull, Memoirs, I, 343.

United States.<sup>60</sup> In Chile, the government newspaper, La Nación, and another, El Mercurio, voiced the sentiment that the new treaty pointed to a period of more cordial relations between the United States and Latin America.<sup>61</sup> On 4 June, the Argentine government expressed pleasure at the action when the Ambassador of that country called on Secretary of State Hull.<sup>62</sup> Three days later, the Mexican Ambassador, Dr. Fernando Gonzales Roa, expressed similar sentiments to Mr. Hull.<sup>63</sup>

American reaction was more diverse. Newsweek reported that although there was general rejoicing both in America and in Cuba, there were many who believed the continued bombings showed Cuba was not ready to go it alone. These critics were also mindful of the fact that the United States had private investments on the island totalling \$1,500,000,000.<sup>64</sup> On the other side was The Nation, which could only praise the treaty but added that it did not go far enough since the

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<sup>60</sup> N.Y. Times, May 31, 1934, p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> N.Y. Times, June 3, 1934, p. 28.

<sup>62</sup> N.Y. Times, June 5, 1934, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> N.Y. Times, June 8, 1934, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> "Cuba: Nation Freed of Bonds Imposed by Platt Amendment," Newsweek (June 9, 1934), p. 11.

United States should have abandoned the Guantanamo base as well.<sup>65</sup>

A more interesting attitude was shown by columnist Arthur Krock. Writing in The New York Times, Krock generally praised the treaty. He said, however, that the United States, without the Platt Amendment, had the right to intervene in Cuba as it had done in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico, for the protection of American citizens and property, without a declaration of war. Without the Platt Amendment, the United States could assert its interests in a more tactful and less brutal way. Columnist Krock concluded his article by reporting that on Capitol Hill the attitude was that the abrogation of the Platt Amendment was a good way to soften our line toward Latin America without surrendering an ounce of protection for the United States.<sup>66</sup>

A new political relationship was not enough, however, to bring Cuba up to what Secretary of State Hull called, ". . . the surface of normality."<sup>67</sup> Economic assistance was needed

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<sup>65</sup>The Nation (June 20, 1934), p. 689.

<sup>66</sup>Arthur Krock, N.Y. Times, May 30, 1934, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup>Hull, Memoirs, I, p. 344.

as much as a new President and a new treaty. During the latter part of February and into March, Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles had been negotiating with the Secretary of the Cuban Treasury, Joaquin Martinez Saenz, to provide the impoverished island with economic assistance.<sup>68</sup> On 10 March, the negotiations culminated in the establishment of the Cuban Import-Export Bank to finance exports to Cuba. The organization was similar in structure and purpose to the Soviet Union Import-Export Bank which had been established earlier and was controlled by the same board of directors.<sup>69</sup> The arrangement, however, was not an actual loan but instead was a revolving credit fund under which the I-E Bank would advance funds to Cuba for the purchase of silver in the United States which would then be used for minting and paying the past due expenses of the Cuban government such as meeting the government payroll.<sup>70</sup> Apparently, however, the short-term credit was to be almost immediately paid for by Cuba and the opinion was being expressed in Cuba that the \$10,000,000 in silver to go to the island would be far too

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<sup>68</sup>N.Y. Times, March 8, 1934, p. 6.

<sup>69</sup>N.Y. Times, March 10, 1934, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup>N.Y. Times, February 28, 1934, p. 29.

small to be of any material assistance in meeting the economic crisis.<sup>71</sup>

More important than providing short-term credit, however, was the revitalization of the Cuban economy which depended in a large part upon the profitable exportation of sugar. A writer for the London Economist explained the importance of sugar by saying it would be impossible to bring political stability to Cuba until order could be brought out of the chaotic world sugar situation.<sup>72</sup> The economic relationship between the United States and Cuba went back to the bilateral reciprocity treaty of 1903. Under this treaty, Cuban sugar entered the United States at a 20% preferential tariff reduction, and, in return, United States products received a 20% to 40% reduction in the Cuban tariff.<sup>73</sup> The 1903 tariff gave Cuba a profitable market for sugar in the United States,

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<sup>71</sup>J.D. Phillips, "\$10,000,000 Silver Ordered by Cuba," N.Y. Times, March 24, 1934, p. 6.

<sup>72</sup>Literary Digest, (September 16, 1933), p. 7.

<sup>73</sup>Power Yung-Chao Chu, "A History of the Hull Trade Program, 1934-1939," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Columbia University, 1957), p. 157; MacGaffey and Barnett, Twentieth Century Cuba, p. 215; Phillip G. Wright, The Cuban Situation and Our Treaty Relations (Washington: 1931), p. 26-30, cited in Smith, The United States and Cuba, p. 24.

to the dismay of domestic sugar growers, and because the tariff specified that the preferences should not be generalized and extended to other countries through most-favored-nation clauses, gave the United States a virtual monopoly on the Cuban market.<sup>74</sup>

After 1927, however, both the United States and Cuba became more protective in their tariff policies. Cuba, finding it had inadequate markets for its increased sugar production, began to raise tariffs in an effort to diversify the economy. Under the tariffs of 1927, 1930, 1931, and 1932, Cuba was able especially in the production of foodstuffs to develop domestic industries.<sup>75</sup> Although the preferential agreement remained in effect, the United States, in 1930, enacted the Hawley-Smoot Tariff which fixed the duty on Cuban sugar at the high rate of 2 cents per pound.<sup>76</sup>

The high tariff policy of the United States worked a particular hardship on Cuba. The island was dependent for

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>MacGaffey and Barnett, Twentieth Century Cuba, p. 215; Smith, United States and Cuba, p. 48-52.

<sup>76</sup>Power Yung-Chao Chu, "A History of the Hull Trade Program," p. 160; Smith, United States and Cuba, p. 53-71.

85 per cent of her national income upon the sale of sugar in the world market.<sup>77</sup> Finding the European market drying up because of the economic nationalism rampant there,<sup>78</sup> she was forced to depend even more heavily upon her ability to sell sugar to the United States for a reasonable profit.<sup>79</sup> After 1930, however, Cuba encountered increasing difficulty selling to the United States. The insular possessions of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Philippines rapidly increased their share of the United States' sugar market from an average of 23% in the years 1922-1926 to 48% in 1932. In the same period, Cuba's share dwindled proportionately--from 56% to 28%. To some observers, the reason for the economic distress which overtook Cuba after 1931 can be found in these figures coupled with increased production. It was the economic distress, they would argue, which culminated in political unrest and eventually revolution.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Welles, The Time for Decision, p. 193.

<sup>78</sup>Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 25.

<sup>79</sup>Welles, The Time for Decision, p. 193.

<sup>80</sup>Editorial, "Plans for Sugar," N.Y. Times, February 6, 1934, p. 23.

By 1934, the United States was anxious to change the economic relationship which was so unsatisfactory to Cuba. The stimulant, however, was not only a humanitarian desire to help the Cuban people and a political desire to strengthen the Mendieta government. The tariff policy of the United States throughout the 1920's and particularly after 1930 brought disaster to United States trade as well as to Latin America. The incentive to draw up a new commercial agreement with Cuba did not come from American relations with Cuba alone. It was a part of a more comprehensive administration plan to better trade relations throughout Latin America. The value of American imports from Latin America was a little more than \$1,000,000,000 in 1929 while exports to Latin America were only slightly less. In the year ending in June, 1933, however, the value of imports from Latin America had fallen to \$212,000,000 and exports to \$291,000,000. In this short period of time, total trade with Latin America had fallen to one-fourth of what it had been.<sup>81</sup> It was because of this

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<sup>81</sup>Hull, Memoirs, I, 308; Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 250-51, cited in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors? p. 25.



astonishing loss of trade during the depression years that Cordell Hull began correcting this situation which was unprofitable to both Latin America and the United States. Hull had instructed Sumner Welles to attempt the negotiation of a new agreement with Cuba during April and May, 1933. When political events became chaotic, however, the attempt was temporarily abandoned. In December, 1933, Hull secured the adoption, at the Montevideo Conference, of a resolution stating that the American nations would promptly undertake, ". . . to reduce high trade barriers through the negotiation of comprehensive bilateral reciprocity treaties based upon mutual concessions."<sup>82</sup>

Early in February, President Mendieta asked Roosevelt to resume negotiations for a new treaty when he wrote:

Our labor problems are most serious and increasing because of delay in starting the crop. As sugar is our main industry we need a very substantial raw sugar quota which I have anticipated to my people would probably not be less than 2,000,000 long tons and a reduction in the duty. These concessions obtained quickly would give the mill owners incentive to pay higher wages and start work.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors? p. 25.

<sup>83</sup>811.6135/105: Telegram, The President of Cuba (Mendieta) to President Roosevelt, Habana, February 5, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 182.

In his reply, President Roosevelt stated his intention of beginning work on a new agreement immediately. The outcome, he hoped, would not raise prices for American consumers but would, instead, benefit American producers as well as the economy of Cuba.<sup>84</sup> A few days later, Roosevelt announced the resumption of negotiations with Cuba to draft a commercial treaty and that ". . . favorable consideration will be given to an increase in the existing preferential on Cuban sugars to the extent compatible with the joint interests of the two countries."<sup>85</sup> In a special message to Congress, Roosevelt urged the addition of sugar beets and sugar cane to basic commodities under the Agricultural Adjustment Act and allocation of the American market for sugar, through quotas, to the various domestic, Cuban, and insular sources. Because of the quota system proposed, it was believed that the preferential which set the Cuban sugar tariff at 2 cents per pound could be increased without damaging domestic producers. The extent to which the administration was willing to go to benefit Cuba was hinted at, moreover, by

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<sup>84</sup>811.6135/105; Telegram, President Roosevelt to the President of Cuba (Mendieta), Washington, February 8, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 182.

<sup>85</sup>N.Y. Times, February 9, 1934, p. 1.

Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace when he discussed the possible elimination of domestic sugar production under the program announced by the President.<sup>86</sup>

The first concrete step toward helping the Cuban sugar economy was taken on 9 May 1934 when President Roosevelt, upon recommendation of the Tariff Commission, reduced the sugar tariff by 25 per cent under the "flexible provision" of the Hawley-Smoot Act which allowed the President to alter tariff schedules.<sup>87</sup> Less than a month later, the United States passed the Trade Agreements Act. Negotiations then began in the United States between Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles and the Cuban Ambassador, Manuel Sterling, and in Cuba between American Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery and Cuban Secretary of State, Cosme de la Torriente.<sup>88</sup>

The agreement with Cuba, signed on 24 August 1934 and effective 3 September, continued to provide for the "special" relationship between the United States and Cuba. Under

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>U.S. Tariff Commission, Changes in Import Duties since the Passage of the Tariff Act of 1930, p. 17 cited in Power Yung-Chao Chu, "A History of the Hull Trade Program," p. 160; Hull, Memoirs, I, p. 344.

<sup>88</sup>Power Yung-Chao Chu, "A History of the Hull Trade Program," p. 156-57.

Section 350(b) of the Trade Agreements Act, provision was made to continue the preferential agreements of 1903 which were not to be extended to other countries. After Cuba had consented to a reduction in her tariff schedules on several important articles imported from the United States, the United States granted preferences of 20, 40, and 50 per cent below the general rates on 35 Cuban items amounting to over 90 per cent of Cuba's exports to the United States. On sugar, the preferential rate was fixed at 20 per cent. This reduced the tariff on Cuban sugar from 1.5 cents a pound to 0.9 of a cent, or approximately one-half of the rate against the rest of the world, which was 1.875 cents. This reduction was the most important feature of the act.<sup>89</sup>

This concession to Cuba was offset, however, by the Jones-Costigan Act of 9 May 1934 which brought sugar within the scope of the Agricultural Adjustment Act and provided for an import quota on Cuban sugar and for a processing tax on all sugar consumed in the United States. The quota of 1,902,000 short tons, fixed by the Secretary of Agriculture,<sup>90</sup> was somewhat less than the 2,000,000 long tons sought by the Cubans.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 159-60.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>91</sup>N.Y. Times, February 9, 1934, p. 13.

When the A.A.A. was invalidated by the Supreme Court in 1936, the Jones-Costigan Act remained in force and the agreement with Cuba was therefore not affected.<sup>92</sup>

The effects of the commercial treaty were immediate and somewhat surprising. In the first four months after the treaty became effective, exports from the United States to Cuba increased 129 per cent over the same period in 1933. The increase of imports into the United States from Cuba in these same months was even larger as imports on a whole showed a gain of 155 per cent and those items accorded major tariff concessions increased by 165 per cent.<sup>93</sup> The tariff was not entirely to Cuba's benefit, however. After the agreement was signed, American investment interests flooded even more dollars into the island. Most of this investment, moreover, was controlled by a few banking houses such as the National City Bank of New York. As Power Yung-Chao Chu states:

The American penetration brought some stability and prosperity to Cuba, but it largely destroyed the economic freedom of the Island. To be sure, the new trade pact did much to halt the fall in Cuban-

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<sup>92</sup>Power Yung-Chao Chu, "A History of the Hull Trade Program," p. 161.

<sup>93</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Press Release, (February 9, 1935) cited in: Power Yung-Chao Chu, "A History of the Hull Trade Program," p. 164; Hull, Memoirs, I, 344.

American trade and put needed dollars in the pockets of ragged Cuban peasants. Nevertheless, it was the American interests there who received the lion's share of the benefits resulting from such an increase of exports to the United States.<sup>94</sup>

The abrogation of the Platt Amendment was not enough, moreover, even with the impending tariff agreement, to cure all of the ills of the Pearl of the Antilles. During June, labor disturbances continued as did terrorism in the streets of Havana. As a result, Mendieta saw fit to increase restrictions upon constitutional guarantees.<sup>95</sup> Although this sort of trouble was to continue well into 1935, the Roosevelt administration took one further step on 29 June to help Mendieta. While the trade agreement was being completed, Roosevelt placed a ban on the exportation of arms and munitions to Cuba except for those licensed by the State Department on the basis of requests by the Cuban Ambassador to the United States.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>95</sup>N.Y. Times, June 6, 1934; J.D. Phillips, "Cuban Chiefs Seek to Preserve Unity," N.Y. Times, June 4, 1934, p. 9.

<sup>96</sup>837.113/540, The Secretary of State to President Roosevelt, Washington, June 29, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 185-86; 837.113/540, The Secretary of State to the Cuban Ambassador (Marquez Sterling), Washington, July 7, 1934, U.S., Foreign Relations, 1934, V, 187; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Proclamation No. 2089, June 29, 1934, in Franklin Delano Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses, III, 319.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The efforts of the United States to stabilize the Cuban economy and government did not reap immediate rewards. Near the end of 1934 civil disorder on the island was again increasing. This culminated in a nearly-successful attempt at a general strike during March, 1935. Moreover, Mendieta resorted to the techniques of Machado by suspending constitutional guarantees and the writ of habeas corpus. Penalties for those convicted of setting the cane fields afire or committing other acts of destruction were fixed at life imprisonment or death.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas general elections had originally been set for 31 December 1934, they were postponed until March, 1935. Later, they were postponed until November. During this period, President Mendieta announced that under no conditions would he leave his office until a successor had been duly

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<sup>1</sup>Fitzgibbon, Cuba and the United States, p. 201.

elected by the people. The reluctance of Mendieta to negotiate with opposition parties and to restore the full legal status of the political parties before April, 1935 caused some to wonder whether or not free elections could be held at all.<sup>2</sup>

Although the United States had been disturbed by a very similar situation during 1933 and 1934, the events of 1935 did not create apprehension in the United States. The United States had gone about as far as possible without intervening during the 1933 crisis. In addition, the Mendieta government, which tended to be pro-United States and not unfriendly to American investment interests, was entirely satisfactory to the United States. America was also reassured by the presence of the strong arm of Fulgencio Batista and the Cuban Army which were apparently supporting Carlos Mendieta.

Any attempt to analyze American foreign policy toward Cuba in the period of the first two years of the New Deal must take into account not only the specific reasons but also some broad concepts of American foreign policy. William Appleman Williams, in his Tragedy of American Diplomacy, commented upon three considerations directing United States

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



foreign policy. The United States, he said, has been motivated by a strong humanitarian desire to help other peoples. Complimenting this is the desire of the United States to apply the principle of self-determination for all people at an international level. The United States has tried to help other nations establish their own government upon the principles which that nation believes are best for its own welfare. But underlying these policies is the persistent idea that no nation is really capable of good government or economic progress except by proceeding in the same way as the United States.<sup>3</sup> Williams quotes former Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson as saying of our foreign aid program, "We are willing to help people who believe the way we do, to continue to live the way they want to live."<sup>4</sup>

In the background of American policy during the 1933-34 period there is a good deal of the humanitarian impulse of American policy. The United States seems to have been genuinely concerned for the economic welfare of the Cuban people who

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<sup>3</sup>William Appleman Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, (2nd ed. rev. New York: Delta Books Dell Publishing Co., 1962), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

were perhaps undergoing the most difficult period in their history. The United States also seems to have been legitimately interested in the establishment of a stable government which could bring an end to the civil disorder without resorting to the oppressive measures of the Machado regime.

There also seems to have been a good deal of the third aspect of American foreign policy involved in the diplomacy of 1933-34. Although Ambassador Welles had long been personally opposed to intervention in Latin America, both the actions of Welles and later of Jefferson Caffery proceeded upon the assumption that the United States knew what was best for the people of Cuba. The belief of Welles that the United States had a contractual obligation under the Platt Amendment caused him to behave in such a way that his actions, while trying to avoid armed intervention, made it appear to many persons both in Cuba and the United States as though the United States was intervening directly. It also seems as though Welles's continual refusal to recognize the Grau San Martín government, (it was apparently largely upon the advice of Welles that recognition was not extended to Grau) of which he did not approve, delayed a settlement in Cuba and perhaps prolonged the political and economic distress.

Either consciously or unconsciously, Welles was promoting the establishment of a government which was conservative and favorable to the United States and to American investments in Cuba. This was perhaps to the detriment of the Cuban people and therefore contrary to the humanitarian and self-determination considerations of American policy. The actions of the Ambassador, however, cannot be too severely condemned. He genuinely attempted to forestall armed intervention when past administrations would surely have landed troops. Intervention had been a common American procedure and Welles, although his "intermeddling" cannot be approved in terms of promoting the self-determination of nations, did a creditable job of avoiding it to the best of his ability while still trying to protect legitimate American private and public interests. Historians may condemn the wooing of Batista as the wrong choice. At the time, however, it appeared to Welles and Caffery, when weighing United States and Cuban interests, to have been the only course of action.

While the intermeddling of 1933 was probably undertaken for the vague and mixed purpose of humanitarian interest and self interest, the outward actions of 1934 were undertaken for more specific reasons. There are several explanations, all of them probably containing some truth, for the abrogation of

the Platt Amendment, the creation of the Import-Export Bank for Cuba, and the signing of the reciprocal trade agreement with the Cubans. While Sumner Welles, Harry F. Guggenheim, and Cosme de la Torreinte believed the Platt Amendment had been abrogated in order to assure the United States that certain politicians would not be able to provoke intervention for their own ends and to eliminate any contribution of the Platt Amendment to the political turmoil of 1933,<sup>5</sup> other explanations have been advanced.

It is possible that the Import-Export Bank and the abrogation of the Platt Amendment were simply devices to lend prestige to a government which was friendly to the United States and which the United States wanted to have remain in power. In addition, the United States wanted a government which was stable enough to conduct negotiations for a new trade agreement. While the trade agreement is usually considered in terms of its benefit to the Cuban people, economy, and stability of the government, the United States was also anxious to conclude the agreement in order to benefit her own trade program during the depths of the depression.

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<sup>5</sup>Smith, The United States and Cuba, p. 157.

The abrogation of the Platt Amendment, in particular, may also have been an expression of the 1930's variety of isolationist thought. Senators Borah, Vandenberg, and Pittman were all basically isolationist and wholeheartedly supported the new treaty. Senator Pittman, in particular, was pleased at the prospects of silver loans to Cuba which were profitable to his constituents in Nevada. While these men were interested in international trade and commerce and idealistically sought peaceful relations among the family of nations, they abhorred anything which put the United States into an "entangling alliance." Believing the Platt Amendment to have placed an obligation upon the United States, it was consistent with isolationist philosophy to desire an abrogation of this international responsibility.

Finally, the actions of the United States toward Cuba can be considered as a part of the overall policy of the Good Neighbor. The avoidance of direct armed action, the Cuban loan, the abrogation of the Platt Amendment, and the signing of a trade treaty were all a part of the new image the United States was attempting to create throughout Latin America.<sup>6</sup> These inexpensive gestures in Cuba were the cornerstone of

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<sup>6</sup>Bryce Wood, The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy, passim.

the Good Neighbor policy. If successful in Cuba, the United States would have concrete examples of its changing attitudes and reap benefits throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Some Latin Americans tended to view the new policy with skepticism. The United States, it was said, was trying to develop more cordial relations with Latin America only to relieve the depression in the United States and assure itself of the support of Latin America in case of possible conflicts in the Far East and in Europe.<sup>7</sup> By 1936 and 1937, however, it appears as though the Good Neighbor policy which had had its first real test in Cuba during 1933 and 1934 was being widely and enthusiastically accepted. La Croncia of Lima said the United States was no longer, "the big brother, the tutor, and the caretaker of the patrimony of all America, . . . ."8 The concept of the "good neighbor" would be put to many another test throughout the 1930's but the initial effects of friendliness, military nonintervention, and cooperation with the American states as exhibited by the United States during the disorder in Cuba won for the Roosevelt administration a major foreign policy victory in Latin America.

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<sup>7</sup>Nuestro Diario (Guatemala), July 9, 1934, cited in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup>La Croncia (Lima), March 8, 1938, quoted in Dozer, Are We Good Neighbors?, p. 35.

Appendix I

THE PLATT AMENDMENT<sup>1</sup>

Treaty with Cuba Embodying the Platt Amendment

May 22, 1903

ART. I. The Government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes, or otherwise, lodgement in or control over any portion of said island.

ART. II. The Government of Cuba shall not assume or contract any public debt to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking-fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the Island of Cuba, after defraying the current expenses of the Government, shall be inadequate.

ART. III. The Government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.

ART. IV. All Acts of the United States in Cuba during the military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated, and

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congressional Record, 56th Cong. 2nd Sess., 1901, XXXIV, Part 3, 2954; Malloy, ed., Treaties, Conventions, etc. Vol. 1, p. 362ff, reprinted in, Henry Steele Commager, Documents of American History, Vol. II (7th ed. rev.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), 29.

all lawful rights acquired thereunder shall be maintained and protected.

ART. V. The Government of Cuba will execute, and as far as necessary extend, the plans already devised or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemics and infectious diseases may be prevented thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as well as to the commerce of the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.

ART. VI. The Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the boundaries of Cuba, specified in the Constitution, the title thereto being left to future adjustment by treaty.

ART. VII. To enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points to be agreed upon with the President of the United States. . . .



Appendix II

THE ABROGATION OF THE PLATT AMENDMENT<sup>1</sup>

May 29, 1934

The United States of America and the Republic of Cuba, being animated by the desire to fortify the relations of friendship between the two countries and to modify, with this purpose, the relations established between them by the Treaty of Relations signed at Habana, May 22, 1903, have appointed, with this intention, as their Plenipotentiaries:

The President of the United States of America; Mr. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State of the United States of America, and Mr. Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of State of the United States of America; and

The Provisional President of the Republic of Cuba, Senor Dr. Manuel Marquez Sterling, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba to the United States of America;

Who, after having communicated to each other their full powers which were found to be in good and due form, have agreed upon the following articles:

ART. I. The Treaty of Relations which was concluded between the two contracting parties on May 22, 1903, shall cease to be in force, and is abrogated, from the date on which the present Treaty goes into effect.

ART. II. All the acts effected in Cuba by the United States of America during its military occupation of the island, up to May 20, 1902, the date on which the Republic of Cuba was established, have been ratified and held as valid; and all the rights legally acquired by virtue of those acts shall be maintained and protected.

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<sup>1</sup>U. S., Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934, LXXVIII, Part 9, 9840.

ART. III. Until the two contracting parties agree to the modification or abrogation of the stipulations of the agreement in regard to the lease to the United States of America of lands in Cuba for coaling and naval stations signed by the President of the Republic of Cuba on February 16, 1903, and by the President of the United States of America on the 23rd day of the same month and year, the stipulations of that agreement with regard to the naval station of Guantanamo shall continue in effect. The supplementary agreement in regard to naval or coaling stations signed between the two Governments on July 2, 1903, also shall continue in effect in the same form and on the same conditions with respect to the naval station at Guantanamo. So long as the United States of America shall not abandon the said naval station of Guantanamo or the two Governments shall not agree to a modification of its present limits, the station shall continue to have the territorial area that it now has, with the limits that it has on the date of the signature of the present Treaty.

ART. IV. If at any time in the future a situation should arise that appears to point to an outbreak of contagious disease in the territory of either of the contracting parties, either of the two Governments shall, for its own protection, and without its act being considered unfriendly, exercise freely and at its discretion the right to suspend communications between those of its ports that it may designate and all or part of the territory of the other party, and for the period that it may consider to be advisable.

ART. V. The present Treaty shall be ratified by the contracting parties in accordance with their respective constitutional methods; and shall go into effect on the date of the exchange of their ratifications, which shall take place in the city of Washington as soon as possible.

IN FAITH WHEREOF, the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty and have affixed their seals hereto.

DONE in duplicate, in the English and Spanish languages, at Washington on the twenty-ninth day of May, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-four.

CORDELL HULL

SUMNER WELLES

M. MARQUEZ STERLING

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- U.S. Congressional Record. 73rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1934. Vol. LXXVIII. Parts 1-9.

Although the Congressional Record was also used for the period from 1898-1903, this use was limited to the reading of a few important documents. Volume LXXVIII for 1934 has a great deal of material for the immediate period of the abrogation of the Platt Amendment, from January until May 29, however, there was very little said in Congress in relation to Cuba.

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This volume is the major source of information on the diplomatic relationship of the United States and Cuba in 1933. Contains over 300 pages of documents on Cuba.

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Although some other sources indicate that Beard made some critical statements about Roosevelt's foreign policy in regard to Cuba, Kennedy does not mention it.

Laatsch, Melvin Arthur. "The Implementation of the Monroe Doctrine." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Princeton University, 1942.

Although this is a good general discussion of the Monroe Doctrine in the twentieth century, the sources are largely secondary. There is some information on the Seventh Pan-American Conference but nothing on Cuban affairs in the 1933-34 period.

Shapiro, Harry Hersh. "The United States and the Principle of Absolute Nonintervention in Latin America with Particular Reference to Mexico." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, 1949.

A good treatment of the problem of intervention in Latin America particularly from the standpoint of international law. There is also a good deal of information on the Montevideo Conference of 1933. Although the dissertation does not deal directly with Cuba, the author's discussion of attitudes in other Latin American countries is valuable for collateral material.