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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

The White House
DATE: February 11, 1964
6:45 p.m.

SUBJECT: Spanish-American Relations

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Antonio Garrigues, Ambassador of Spain
William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary

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President Johnson met with the Spanish Ambassador in the Treaty Room of the White House before the start of the Diplomatic Reception.

The Ambassador informed the President that he had been named Ambassador to the Holy See, and would be leaving soon. He said he had conferred at length in Madrid with members of the Spanish government, and with General Franco, who had asked him to convey a personal letter to President Johnson. The Ambassador thereupon gave the President the original letter and an English translation. The Ambassador said he regretted leaving Washington, and that he wished to emphasize how important to Spain were good relations with the United States. He stressed repeatedly that Spain recognized the United States as the great defender of the Free World, and as the major factor in resistance to Communism and in the search for peace. He said that whatever differences there might be between Spain and the United States, such as the question of trade with Cuba, must be seen within the broad framework of Spanish-US friendship which was a vital element in Spain's foreign policy.

The President thanked the Ambassador for his words and said he was sorry to hear the Ambassador was leaving. He knew how much Ambassador Garrigues had contributed to our good relations with Spain.

The President

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The President said the United States Government was pleased that it had been possible to renew the US-Spanish Defense Agreement. The President said that he was already aware of the contents of General Franco's letter and that he appreciated the sentiments which it expressed with regard to the Spanish policy of close and friendly relations with the United States. The President said he reciprocated these sentiments.

The President said that the matter of trade with Cuba was an extremely serious one and that he felt that Spain must consider the effects of this issue on the course of Spanish-US relations, as well as on the fortunes of the Free World as a whole. He emphasized that Castro was an instrument for penetration and subversion of democratic governments and institutions, not only in the Western Hemisphere but, as recently shown in the case of Zanzibar, in other parts of the world. It was the purpose of the United States to bring about the end of the Castro regime so that Cuba could be ruled by a freely elected and democratic government. For these reasons the United States Government looked to its allies to cease trading with Cuba in order not to lend Castro economic support, or to make things easier for him. The President said he felt very strongly on this matter and he hoped that this fact would be taken into account by the Spanish Government.

The Ambassador did not reply directly to the President, and the conversation ended on this note.

Comment: Subsequently, during the reception, Ambassador Garrigues expressed to me his unhappiness and concern about the question of Spanish trade with Cuba and the emphasis which the President had placed on this matter. I told the Ambassador that he should be aware that the United States Government did indeed feel very strongly that our allies should do everything possible to reduce, or, better still, eliminate trade with Cuba in critical commodities. The Ambassador argued that Spain had needed sugar and that Cuba was the best source of supply. He also referred to the British and the French and said it was obvious that the other allies of the United States were not following our policy in this area either. I said that this was going to make difficulties all around, that there should be no misapprehension on the part of the Spanish Government as to the importance of this issue to us, and I mentioned the provision in the Foreign Assistance Act under which aid cannot be given a country which permits its ships or planes to be used for trade with Cuba. I also said I understood that

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the five Spanish ships engaged in trade with Cuba all belonged to one individual. My remarks seemed to make the Ambassador uneasy, and he said that this matter was very complicated. The Ambassador said that the Embassy has been working on a formula which he thought might be reconciled with the provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act, and that it had been sent to Madrid for the Spanish Government's consideration. He said that he hoped Spain's trade with Cuba which was so small and of so little importance would be looked at by the United States Government within the framework of Spanish-American friendship and close alliance. I said I thought that the attitude and actions of the Spanish Government on this issue would be considered by the United States Government as an indication of the value which the Spanish Government places on our relations.

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