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| FROM: <i>W.H. IV/Martha Therpe</i> | | | | COMMENTS | |
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| DISPATCH | | CLASSIFICATION S-E-C-R-E-T | DISPATCH SYMBOL AND NO UBW-25 |
| TO WHD Representative, Miami Havana, (Caracas) 16-17 | HEADQUARTERS FILE NO 201-259,120 | | |
| FROM Chief, WHD | DATE | | |
| SUBJECT Meeting of Fidel CASTRO with Gustavo MACHADO in Caracas as reported by Pedro Luis DIAZ Lanz | RE "QJ" - (CHECK "X" ONE) | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MARKED FOR INDEXING | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> NO INDEXING REQUIRED | | |
| ACTION REQUIRED See paragraph 3 | INDEXING CAN BE JUDGED BY QUALIFIED HQ DESK ONLY | | |

REFERENCES:

- In an article by Pedro Luis DIAZ Lanz, former Chief, Cuban Air Force, which appeared in PARADE of the Washington Post on 3 January 1960 entitled "Why I Fight Fidel *CASTRO" (201-97456), the following statement is made:

"My doubts grew when I accompanied him on his official visit to Venezuela. He put on a big act of not wanting to meet Venezuela's top Communist, Gustavo MACHADO. Yet he locked himself in a bathroom with MACHADO for two hours. It was the longest talk he held with anyone in Venezuela."
- Gustavo MACHADO has for some years been well-known as an overt top Communist leader in Venezuela, but the meeting with CASTRO, if it did in fact occur, as presumably it did, could have much more significance in light of the following information previously received from a source proven to be reliable in the past and known to have been in a position to have knowledge of RIS activities during World War II.

"Gustavo MACHADO Morales, born 1898 in Caracas, Venezuela, was recruited in the summer of 1944 by the NKGB in Bogota, Colombia, for political intelligence work in his native Venezuela. MACHADO was initially controlled by RIS through his wife, Maria Lucas MACHADO, who maintained contact with Soviet Consular officials during the middle forties."
- In view of the above, it is requested that KARNLEY interview Pedro Luis DIAZ Lanz in the most minute detail concerning his knowledge of arrangements made for this contact with MACHADO in Venezuela, the reactions of CASTRO to the arrangements, and any indicated reactions in the days following that meeting. The interview should include specifics as to the location, identities of others who were knowledgeable of the contact, the length of the meeting, and other circumstances surrounding it.

Although our efforts at this time and in this connection may not in any way establish that CASTRO is a Soviet agent, it is believed that as much detail as possible should be acquired concerning this meeting, since it may be of considerable value at some future time.

OLIVER G. GALBRID

Distribution:
 3 - Miami
 2 - Havana
 1 - (Caracas) 16-17

26 January 1960

WH/IV/Martha Tharpeters
 (Based on memo from Chief, CI/SID to Chief CI/Ops, dated 12 Jan. 1960.)

2/20

RLT/...



Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz

Once they were comrades. Then this man stood ready to kill the Cuban Premier. Now he tells...

WHY I FIGHT FIDEL CASTRO

by PEDRO LUIS DIAZ LANZ

Former chief, Cuban Air Force

MIAMI, FLA.

ONE YEAR AGO this week, Fidel Castro triumphantly entered Havana and took over the Government of Cuba. One of his first moves was to appoint me chief of the Cuban Air Force. Today, 12 short months later, I am opposing Castro's revolution with all the strength I once used to help bring it about.

For the second time in my life, I am an outlaw unable to return to my native land except at the risk of being shot. Yet I have committed no crime unless it is a crime to fight for freedom—the kind of freedom all Americans enjoy and all true Cubans long to share.

Most men become revolutionaries because of an appetite for adventure, greed for power, or zeal for reform. A few like myself become revolutionaries by accident. Looking back, it hardly seems possible that only eight years ago I was a gay young pilot for Q Airways, commuting between Cuba and Florida, without a rebellious thought in my head.

My years since have been crowded with bloodshed, death, glory, terror, and bitterness. There were escapes that still make my nerves twang like violin strings. Then came our moment of triumph. And finally I faced Fidel Castro, a man to whom I had been devoted, with a cocked pistol ready to kill him.

But I am rushing ahead of my story. Let me go back to early 1952, when Dr. Carlos Prío was President of Cuba. Accidentally I learned that his rival, Fulgencio Batista, planned to take over the government. I passed on this information through my father, a career government employe. And on March 10, 1952, as I had warned, Batista seized the presidency.

When, later, I met Prío, he seemed genuinely penitent about the corruption in his administration and swore he would win back freedom for the Cuban people. He was so fervent that I left the interview a revolutionary dedicated to the same cause of liberty.

In those days it was common for airline pilots to smuggle nylons and Scotch into Cuba—something I never did. Now, however, I started bringing in rifles. After a year, someone whispered to Batista's secret police. They tortured and humiliated my father. Then they seized me for 10 days of cross-examination.

They lacked evidence to hold me, but it was only a matter of time until they would come after me again. In a makeshift disguise, I slipped off to Camaguey, registered at a hotel under a false name, and planned my escape to Haiti with a pilot friend who was going there to dust crops. One murky morning I hid out in the grass at the end of the heavily guarded airstrip, leaped aboard the plane as it was taxiing, and left my homeland behind.

Now a revolutionary, I went from Port au Prince to Miami. For the next two years, I worked as busboy and dishwasher. In those days, Fidel Castro was only a name to me. He had attacked the Army barracks at Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953. For his pains, he was languishing in a prison cell.

Slaughter of the innocents

When Batista granted amnesty to all political offenders in 1955, Castro was freed and I hurried home. I wanted nothing more than to resume my peaceful profession as a pilot.

But try as I might, I could not close my eyes to Batista's terror. For my own eyes witnessed Batista's police shoot down innocent victims. Personal friends were tortured and murdered. I myself was falsely accused of burning sugar cane and threatened with death. Anger boiled up inside me until at last I joined Castro's 26th of July movement and volunteered for undercover work.

My first orders were to sneak out of Cuba and ferry weapons to Castro's hide-out in the Sierra Maestra

Mountains. No one with my background could hope to walk into a Cuban airport and catch a flight out of the country. I had to create a new personality.

First I borrowed a passport from Carlos Bastida, a sympathetic newspaperman from Ecuador. I had never visited Ecuador, but I became an expert on that country. I even learned to talk with an Ecuadorean accent and to forge Bastida's signature. Finally I donned a Panama hat, dark glasses, and a sports coat that seemed appropriate for a South American reporter. Then with Frank Fiorini, an American friend of the movement, I set out from Santiago to Camaguey.

"What Are You Doing Here?"

To give the trip the appearance of an outing, we brought along a couple in the back seat. Batista patrols stopped us 15 times and frisked us for weapons. But they politely left the girl alone; they never suspected that this giggling teenager carried a pistol strapped under her skirt.

At Camaguey, Frank and I made our ways separately to the airport. There I realized my dark glasses were arousing the suspicions of airport plainclothesmen. If I kept them on, I would invite an interrogation. If I took them off, I would risk recognition for I was known at every airport in Cuba. I could imagine some friend booming out to me. "Pedro Luis, what are you doing here?"

The plainclothesmen started to approach. With calculated casualness although my heart was pounding, I removed the glasses, pulled off my hat for good measure, and strolled innocently around. The police lost interest. But right up to the moment the plane doors shut, I expected to be recognized.

From that time on, my work for the revolution was one narrow escape after another. From Miami I went to Costa Rica, where I picked up a C-46 loaded with



Premier Fidel Castro

rifles, mortars, and ammunition—and 12 recruits. (One of them was Hubert Matos, who was to become a famous Castro commander and to be rewarded after the revolution with command of Camaguey province—until he spoke out against Communists. Then he was sentenced to jail as a traitor.) All were needed desperately by Castro, who was expecting a final assault on his hide-out.

I brought the big cargo plane down on a dirt road at Cieneguilla, not far from Castro's headquarters, where guerrillas were waiting to unload. Some actually wept joyful tears at the sight of the ammunition arriving in the nick of time.

The road was so narrow that one prop whacked a fence post. I could neither repair the damage nor take off again before Batista's patrols spotted the plane. Regretfully, I splashed gasoline over the C-46 and set it afire.

Then, with the rebel force, I marched into the mountains. There, on March 30, 1958, I had my first meeting with Fidel Castro. He was overflowing with excitement and hailed us as "the saviours of Cuba." At that time he had fewer than 100 men, with no ammunition except what we had brought. Castro spoke with fervor that night. If only his Tommy gun had been a staff, he would have passed for a bearded prophet crying in the wilderness. His personality had the glow of a torch.

A Miraculous Escape

I stayed in the mountains six weeks, fighting with the ground troops. Once I was caught in the open by a Batista F-47 fighter. Bullets kicked up the dust all around me, but miraculously I wasn't even scratched. When Fidel learned I was risking myself on the ground, he sent urgent orders that I should stay out of the fighting. He had less trouble recruiting soldiers, he complained, than finding trained pilots who could

fly weapons into the rugged mountains of the islands. Then our forces in the north captured a small, beat-up plane. Its single engine was underpowered and badly in need of overhaul. The only navigational equipment was a compass, which turned out to be 45 degrees off. But this pitiful plane made up the entire rebel Air Force for some months until, for \$5,000 down, I bought a little Cessna 180 in Miami.

This plane served as our arms airlift. Once, with only 300 pounds load limit to spare, I crammed aboard 1,000 pounds of rifles and ammunition. We were a sitting duck for patrols, but the only plane we saw overlooked us. Another time, after taking off out of a mountain canyon, I had a near-miss with a Batista frigate with anti-aircraft guns. Still another time I was forced to make a storm emergency landing in the Everglades.

One of my missions was to fly weapons to Calabaza where Fidel's brother Raul was in charge of the second front. From the first, he impressed me as wild and unreliable. When he grumbled that Fidel was getting most of the arms, I retorted sharply: "I am not bringing weapons to you as an individual. I am bringing weapons to Cubans who are fighting dictatorship." Later a friend, who has my complete confidence, told me a submarine brought in a big haul of weapons for Raul. By the uniforms and language of the crew, my friend judged the vessel was Russian.

There were many flights in overloaded planes, many landings in the mountains at night without lights. But perhaps my narrowest escape came after I delivered the arms for Ernesto (Che) Guevara, whom I later found out was pro-Communist, to lead the famous attack on Santa Clara. I was forced to land in

an area that Batista's patrols had under constant watch. A hundred waiting guerrillas grabbed the ammunition while I hurriedly poured gas into the wing tanks from five gallon cans. Suddenly a Batista B-26 spotted us and dived down with guns blazing.

"Liberty or Death"

My helpers scattered into the jungle, leaving me alone in a hail of bullets. I stood on the wing screaming "Cowards!" until Faustino Perez, now in charge of confiscating Batista property, emerged with two others to help me camouflage the plane. Later I discovered a bullet had pierced the nose tank. One spark and the plane would have gone up like a bomb. Since we had to assume Batista troops would soon be on their way, I struck a match and once more watched a precious aircraft go up in flames.

On August 24, 1958, Fidel appointed me head of the rebel Air Force. My friends had the date inscribed on a watch that I still wear. Then, on New Year's Day 1959, just one year ago, came our triumph. Batista handed over the government and fled the country. I was in Costa Rica, picking up another load of weapons, when the exciting news came through. When Castro appointed me chief of the Cuban Air Force, he did so in a letter that ended with "Libertad O Muerte"—Liberty or Death.

My faith in Castro was first jolted after his triumphant entry into Havana. Throughout the long march, adoring Catholic women had pinned holy medals on him. I overheard Che Guevara tease him about the "decorations" he was wearing. "Listen," Fidel said, "we have to go slow. Most of our people are Catholic. We cannot condemn the Church right away. That is a power we cannot destroy so easily." It was the first anti-church statement I had heard from him.

My doubts grew when I accompanied him on his official visit to Venezuela. He put on a big act of not

wanting to meet Venezuela's top Communist, Gustavo Machado. Yet he locked himself in a bathroom with Machado for two hours. It was the longest talk he held with anyone in Venezuela.

I complained to Fidel that his brother Raul had named Communists, who hadn't fired a shot in the revolution, as army commanders. Fidel replied earnestly: "I am going to have to dismiss Raul. I am not going to let the Communists take over."

But Fidel did not dismiss Raul. Instead he put him in charge of the armed forces and gave Che Guevara control of agrarian reform. My faith in Fidel was shaken. Having fought for free speech, I decided to put it to the test. But I was wise enough in the ways of revolutions to arrange with my brother Sergio Diaz Brull to have a boat ready for a quick getaway. Then I issued a statement that I was ready to fight any dictatorship—Batista, Trujillo, or "the worst dictatorship in the world, communism."

The Cocked Pistol

This was the showdown. Juan Almeida, commander of a tank regiment, came with a message that Fidel wanted to see me at his home. I strapped on my pistol, slipped in a clip of 14 bullets, and removed the safety catch. When I faced Castro he erupted like a volcano. "Why should you make a statement against communism?" he demanded. "You will only confuse the people. You are not supposed to do anything without my consent. I am the one who tells you what to do and when."

Angrily I asked whether he had not become a dictator himself. Why should I not have freedom to ex-

press my opinions. I was against communism and stood by my convictions, I declared. "Remember," I said, "you did not win the revolution alone. You had my help and the help of other friends."

I warned fiercely that I would not accept arrest or go to jail for saving what I believed. To silence me he would have to kill me. "You will have to carry my body on your shoulders and explain what has happened," I said. "You will have to explain to the Cuban people why I have been killed after speaking against communism."

My hand was on my pistol, and I was ready to use it. Castro looked at me—and at my pistol—hard for a moment. He was far from sure whether the Cuban people would support him in any action against his Air Force chief for being anti-Communist. He backed

Continued on page 7



With his wife Tania, Major Diaz Lanz smiles for photo. Now in Miami, his "leaflet bombing" of Havana was international incident.



I FIGHT CASTRO *continued*

In happier days, Diaz Lanz (r.) and Castro discuss air search for Raul Castro.

'I shall come back to my homeland'

down. "You go home and wait," he growled. "I'll see what I am going to do with you later."

If I was to escape, I had to put them off balance, if only for a few hours. With an indifferent shrug I told Almeida I would write a letter of resignation. All I wanted from life, I said, was to go back to my old airline job. I said, "Tell Fidel I won't cause him any trouble and I don't want him to cause me any." Then I added as an afterthought: "Don't put any guards on my home or follow me around, interfering with my private life."

My ruse worked. For the next few hours I was unguarded. I got in touch with Sergio, prepared my resignation, and signed it. Then, with my wife Tania, I hurried to the dock. Fidel's men were watching the airports, but apparently it never occurred to them that I might go to Miami by boat.

Yet in my heart I knew I would come back. I could not rest until the democracy I had fought to bring to Cuba had been realized.

In the U.S. I decided not to speak out immediately but to wait until events showed others that Castro was simply exchanging one form of dictatorship for another. But I was subpoenaed to testify before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee about my knowledge of communism in Cuba. As a guest in your country, I was obliged to tell what I knew of this matter.

For the next few weeks I avoided publicity as more and more people got a glimpse behind the heard at the real Castro. Then I tried to reach my people. Because Castro had denounced me as a traitor, I wrote a reply and sent it to every Cuban newspaper. Not a single one dared print it.

This was the reason I decided to be my own mailman. I had 200,000 copies of my letter printed and arranged to

deliver them by air. Frank Fiorini, the American who had been with me through much of the revolution, owned a B-26 that had been converted to a civilian plane. The gun openings had been permanently sealed and the bomb bay fashioned into a makeshift luggage compartment.

On the afternoon of October 21, Frank and I roared off for Havana. The winds were at peace in the sky. Except for some vibration in the left engine, nothing happened to stir up the international storm our flight was to stir up. We swooped low over the country, stuffing our leaflets through the baggage opening.

I learned afterward that Castro himself was caught in the leaflet blizzard. One copy fluttered right into his face. When he read the message, his whiskers trembled with rage.

My Message for Castro

After we were safely on our way back to Florida, Castro's soldiers shot one of their own B-26s full of holes. A light plane also was fired upon and its Chilean pilot wounded. Throughout Havana the falling shrapnel caused tragic casualties for which Castro chose to blame me rather than his own men.

I cannot tell how I know about events inside Cuba today. There are patriots who risk their lives to keep me informed. I have a final word for you who read this newspaper, whose democratic ideals and institutions are my inspiration. Whatever I must do in the future, I will take care not to violate any of your laws or your hospitality. Thank God, freedom of expression is no crime here.

If Fidel Castro should read this, I have a word, too, for him: I demonstrated to you many times that I was willing to die to restore democracy to Cuba. Be assured, I have not changed. ■