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5/10/75
OAS

TEXT OF THE REPLY FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, DR. INDALECIO LUBVANO AGUIRRE TO PRESIDENT FORD

Mr. President, on behalf of the Foreign Ministers of the Americas I wish to express our appreciation for the cordial and friendly welcome we have received here in Washington.

We are especially grateful for the reception held in our honor here in the traditional residence of the Presidents of the United States. The White House has been the residence of the great men that have governed a nation that had to assume international responsibilities early in the history of its independent existence. It was here that they went through the emotional experiences that all leaders of great nations undergo; it was here that they enjoyed the sweet fruits of their victories and the victories of the nation; here they suffered the torments and doubts of difficult moments reflected upon the bitter fruits of human ingratitude and inconstancy, evanescence of power and glory.

The Foreign Ministers that meet here in the White House today, Mr. President, do not do so as a matter of routine of the kind that abound in diplomacy and conventional protocol. These are the authorized representatives of countries that geography has always placed near the United States, while politics --and in many occasions a lack of politics--has separated them from the great United States. Latin America has frequently had radical and profound differences of opinion with the United States, but at times of great crisis--especially in the twentieth century--you and we have moved ahead slowly in the pursuit of common goals and in shaping a hemispheric community inspired by altruistic

and similar ideals and by a desire to cooperate in solving common problems, cooperation which the United States has offered and given at times with a sincerity and good will of which there are few examples in the annals of history.

But we should not run the risk of mistakenly trusting too much in the past. Many of the words and symbols that strengthened our unity and served as the strong links binding together a great hemispheric community, have weakened through the course of time and because of the spectacular changes occurring on the disrupted panorama of world politics. Many of these words and symbols have become empty cliches, and just as the United States is now passing through a stage of difficult adjustment to critical and complex situations. This prompts this great nation to formulate basic questions as to its very fate, so is also the Organization of American States feeling the effects of a profound crisis, the solution to which is relevant to us all, and from which the United States cannot be absent and which cannot be ignored by the basic premises of its foreign policy.

As you have said and understand, Mr. President, and as I so state on behalf of the Foreign Ministers of America, we are aware of the transcendent function that the United States Constitution confers upon the President of the United States in the sphere of foreign policy.

At the meetings we have held here in Washington these past few days the exceptional understanding and respect that have surrounded the Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, have been evident. I take pleasure in emphasizing

the exceptional human and intellectual qualities which have earned him a well-deserved reputation in the world. We have hopes, and I want to state it, that under your wise and expert guidance, Mr. President, the separate institutional powers, the Administration and the Congress, will join us in removing the obstacles now blocking the road we must travel to strengthen a community of free and friendly countries in the hemisphere, countries whose institutions and symbols have been renewed. It would be unfair of me to not mention here the efforts undertaken by the U.S. and Panama to reach a constructive settlement to the so-called Panama Canal question. This is an example of what must be done and what could be expected of the decision to confront problems with a new spirit, so that we will be able to face together, as the good neighbors we have been and the good friends we wish to be, the great challenges that the future holds in store for us.

Such are the vows I am formulating on behalf of the Foreign Ministers of America, and these are the vows of friendly and loyal countries, whose representatives take great pleasure now in wishing, through my person, much prosperity for the great people of the United States and in expressing the hope that the Tutelar God of American democracy will guide you, Mr. President, at the helm of your government.

May 12, 1975

OAS/CUBA BACKGROUND

FYI:

OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The OAS continued its closed sessions on Saturday. Friday the U.S. Trade Act and Uruguayan concern with regard to high prices of commodities were discussed. The mood of the meetings thus far has been friendly and constructive though often critical of the U.S. Saturday, the reform of the Inter-American System was discussed and a joint statement agreed on between us and Panama relating to negotiations was read which reiterated the objective of reaching an agreement eliminating the causes of conflict between the two countries. It pointed out that while substantial progress has been made in the negotiations, fundamental subjects remain to be negotiated. Today will also be a closed session. END FYI.

The following exchange took place between Sec. Kissinger and reporters Saturday afternoon (roughly verbatim):

- Q. Why is Cuba not an issue with this conference?
- A. I think we have a general understanding of where we are going; that is why it is not taking prominence.
- Q. What is that understanding?
- A. I think we better leave a little room for secret diplomacy.
- Q. Is there a scenario outlined for handling this problem?
- A. I have the impression there is, and I think it will become apparent during the session.

Q. Does this indicate early action toward renewing.....

A. I don't want to go into it until this group here has taken
action on it.

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The above exchange apparently refers to OAS procedures and plans for lifting sanctions against Cuba. For details of OAS meetings, procedures and probable decisions refer to the State Department.

U. S. POLICY TOWARDS OAS CUBA SANCTIONS

Q. In his interview with L'Express the President said that whatever the decision of the OAS on sanctions against Cuba our attitude is that "we will continue the boycott by the U. S. until there is some change in policy by Cuba toward the United States." Premier Fidel Castro has indicated a willingness to seek improvement of relations with the U. S.; therefore what changes would the President like to see in Cuba's policy and attitude?

A. U. S. policy has been and continues to be that any change in U. S. - Cuban relations depends upon the willingness of the Cuban government to demonstrate by concrete ^{actions} ~~policy changes of its own~~ that it seeks an improvement in relations with the United States. To date, we see no indications ~~of such concrete change.~~