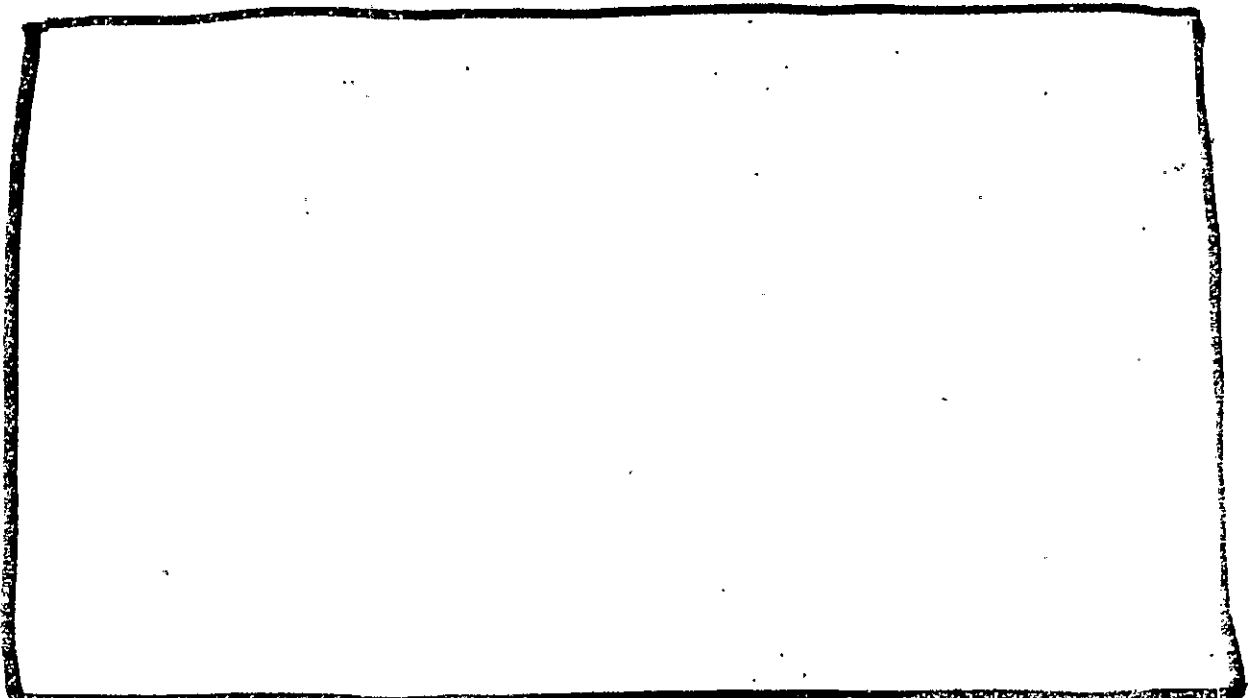


MEETING OF PRESIDENTS JOHNSON AND LOPEZ MATEOS  
IN CALIFORNIA  
February 20-22, 1964

Talking Points

U.S. - MEXICAN COOPERATION ON CUBA  
(To be raised by President)

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February 15, 1964

MEETING OF PRESIDENTS JOHNSON AND LOPEZ MATEOS  
IN CALIFORNIA  
February 20-22, 1964

Background Paper

U.S. - MEXICAN COOPERATION ON CUBA

Political Relations with Cuba

Mexico has taken unpublicized measures to restrict travel to and from Cuba and has cooperated with us against Castro in other ways which do not draw public attention. For domestic political reasons, however, the Mexican Government tries to avoid having to take a public stand in the OAS or elsewhere on the issue of action against Cuba. Mexican leaders have no sympathy for the Castro regime, and they realize that their vital relations with the United States can be jeopardized by seeming to be neutral on the Cuban issue. Nevertheless, there is a vocal minority in Mexico, led by former President Lázaro Cárdenas, which still supports Castro. The hand of this pro-Castro element is strengthened by Mexico's traditionally strong opposition to intervention in the internal affairs of another state. With a national election in the offing, Mexican leaders are extremely reluctant to have the Cuban issue emerge as a divisive political force. Proposals for firm OAS measures against the Cubans on the Venezuelan arms cache issue therefore will present a problem to the Mexican Government.

Mexican Transportation Links to Cuba

No Mexican vessels have called at Cuba during the past three years.

Mexican air service to Cuba is limited to infrequent unscheduled charter flights, and twice monthly unscheduled flights (with no passengers) by the Mexican carrier, SAESA, to move accumulated air mail to Cuba, primarily originated by Cuban exiles in the United States.

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On the Cuban side, Cuban vessels--and Soviet trawlers based on Cuba--make regular calls at Mexican ports. The Cuban airline, Cubana, flies on the average between once and twice weekly, and occasionally all flights have been suspended for brief periods for maintenance or commitments to other runs. We have approached the Mexicans both bilaterally and through the OAS in order to control travel to and from Cuba because it allows Latin American subversives to obtain special training. Mexican cooperation has been good. They have restricted the issuance of Mexican transit visas and have generally honored the requests by other Latin American Governments not to permit movement of their nationals whose passports were not validated for travel to Cuba. Cuban aircraft of Soviet manufacture have been prevented from landing in Mexico.

#### Economic Facts

Mexico is a minor trading partner of Cuba. During the first six months of 1963, Mexico exported \$180,000 to Cuba in drugs and food products. Mexico did, however, export some yellow sulfur, a critical item for Cuban nickel production. Imports from Cuba are insignificant.

Despite continuing good cooperation, Mexico is, according to a Department of Commerce analysis, one of the three most important transshipment points for United States origin goods.

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