

CHAPITRE IX/CHAPTER IX  
AMÉRIQUE LATINE  
LATIN AMERICA

PREMIÈRE PARTIE/PART I  
CUBA

811.

DEA/2444-40

*L'ambassadeur aux États-Unis  
pour le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures  
Ambassador in United States  
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

TELEGRAM 19

Washington, January 4, 1961

CONFIDENTIAL. OPIMMEDIATE.

Reference: Our Tel 16 Jan 4† and Ritchie-Rae Telecon.

Repeat for Information: NATO Paris, London, Permis New York, Paris (Priority).

By Bag Havana from Ottawa.

USA-CUBAN RELATIONS

While we did not repeat not receive text of Havana telegram 2 January 3† until this morning, on the basis of last evening's conversation with Ritchie, enquiry was made of the State Department last night. We were able to reach Merchant, Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, as soon as he had left the meeting of senior officers with the Secretary. Merchant confirmed to us that the decision had just been taken to terminate USA diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba and that the White House would be making the announcement set forth in our telegram 16 January 3† last evening. Merchant added that in the face of the Cuban ultimatum that USA Embassy staff should be reduced to eleven persons (he said including "locals") it had been decided that it was not repeat not possible to carry on. He also told us that the Swiss had been asked by the State Department to assume responsibility for USA interests on the spot, although this was yet to be formally agreed by the Cuban administration.

2. You will note from the official papers released last evening that USA has requested the Cuban Government to withdraw "as soon as possible" the entire Cuban personnel in the Cuban Embassy here and in all Cuban consular offices in USA.

3. The substance of the foregoing was communicated last evening directly to Ross Campbell.

4. We understand that the evacuation of USA official personnel will begin today by Pan American World Airways planes and regular ferry to Key West.

5. White House and State Department press spokesmen who read the President's statement dismissed questions concerning the future of the naval base, Guantánamo, as "hypothetical" and the State Department Press Officer was quoted as saying "This has no repeat no effect at all on the base."