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*L'ambassadeur au Cuba*  
*au sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*  
*Ambassador in Cuba*  
*to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

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CONFIDENTIAL

CUBAN CONFLICT – POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The decisive developments of the last few days have put to the ultimate test not only the strength of the Cuban Government and its armed forces but also the political complexion and orientation of Prime Minister Fidel Castro and his régime. The Government's reaction to some of the recent developments was illuminating.

2. The increasing tempo of the counter-revolutionary campaign, anxiety over the economic future of the country (our telegram No. 124 of April 12),† sabotage, arson, terrorism, executions and Government countermeasures had been contributing to the growing tension. Mass demonstrations demanding death for saboteurs were staged, and on April 13 the Minister of the Armed Forces, Raul Castro, informed a meeting of farm workers that if they would seize suspected counter-revolutionaries, and send at once for a magistrate to condemn them, they would themselves have the privilege of shooting these imperialist agents.

3. Immediately following the bombing, on April 15, of Havana, Santiago and San Antonio de los Baños by Cuban Air Force planes flown by defecting pilots, it was conceivable that the Cuban authorities were not aware of the facts. However, it is extremely doubtful that the facts were not known five hours later when the Acting Foreign Minister, Dr. Carlos Olivares Sanchez, summoned Heads of Diplomatic Missions and declared that "the Government of the United States is directly guilty of this act of aggression against Cuba." And it is completely inconceivable that 24 hours later, on April 16, when Prime Minister Fidel Castro addressed a mammoth funeral demonstration for victims of the bombing, that the truth had not been ascertained. And yet Castro insisted over and over again in his speech that the United States was to blame for the bombing attacks.

4. In the course of his speech Castro admitted for the first time in public that "This is a socialist revolution." His words were greeted with enthusiastic shouts of "Fidel, Khrushchev, we are on your side." His words are still being echoed and re-echoed in the newspapers and propaganda broadcasts: "This socialist revolution ..."

5. It was several hours before the Cuban Government reacted officially to the April 17 invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro armed forces, but the series of communiqués it then issued contained a number of interesting reflections of the Government's attitude. There was no note of panic and the communiqués expressed every confidence in the ability of the Cuban Army, the Militia and the Young Rebels and the people. However, the colour connotations of Prime Minister Castro's warning that the newly-found "dignity of the negro man and woman" would be lost if the counter-revolution succeeded, and an excited commentary on the Government-controlled radio denouncing all Catholics as "potential counter-revolutionaries," offered some indications of the extremes to which the régime might descent if the tide of battle turned against it.