

Cantillo Porras, headed a plot among army officers to swing the army support to Castro. Castro has released the texts of an exchange of letters between General Cantillo and himself, leading up to a meeting in Santiago de Cuba with Cantillo three days before Batista's flight. At this meeting, it was apparently decided that on January 1 Cantillo would announce the army's support for Castro and arrange for the seizure of Batista and all his senior government officials. Castro claims that following his return to Havana, Cantillo notified Castro that the plan would have to be postponed until January 6 and then proceeded to organize his own military junta to seize power in Havana. According to this version, Cantillo warned Batista that the army would seize power on January 1, thus allowing Batista and most of his senior officials to escape from Cuba before the attempted coup. As soon as Batista and his followers had left Havana, Cantillo attempted to set up the Chief Magistrate of the Supreme Court, Dr. Carlos M. Piedra, as the provisional President according to the terms of the 1940 Constitution. This treasonous plot collapsed, according to Castro, because the remainder of Cantillo's junta fled with Batista so that Piedra refused to carry on in the scheme and resigned.

3. Meanwhile, Castro approached the leader of the military garrison in Santiago de Cuba, Colonel José Rego Rubido, with the original scheme as agreed to by Cantillo. Rubido at first refused to lay down arms. Castro then ordered a rebel march on Santiago. However, when news of Piedra's refusal to assume power in Havana was handed to Col. Rubido, he met Castro at the outskirts of Santiago and turned over the complete Santiago garrison peacefully to the Castro forces. As a reward for this gesture, Castro has named Col. Rubido as Chief of the new Cuban Army and has arrested Cantillo, charging him with high treason. It is also worthy of note at this point, that the new Chief of the Cuban Navy, Gaspar Bruch, was the Commanding Officer of a small frigate stationed in Santiago harbour who arranged for the surrender of the naval forces to Castro on January 1. Defection apparently has paid off for both of these former Batista officers.

4. In Havana, news of Batista's flight began to filter out in the early morning hours of January 1. The Havana radio stations confirmed that Batista, most of his Cabinet and 50 or 60 top Government officials had fled the country sometime between 2 and 4 a.m. on January 1. Two notable exceptions were the former head of the Cuban Confederation of Labour, Eusebio Mujal, who is reported to have received asylum in the Argentine Embassy, and the President of the National Bank, Martínez Saenz, who has been arrested. Several other lesser government officials have also succeeded in gaining asylum in one or another of the Latin American Embassies, although the rebel groups have succeeded in seizing many real or suspected Batista supporters or sympathizers. Castro has warned that many heads will fall in revolutionary justice. Recent newspaper reports indicate that more than 1100 police, army and air force personnel plus many civilians are under detention. The rebels have promised military justice for the chief offenders but have indicated that minor officers who acted honourably under orders might be recalled to duty. Apparently at least ten armed forces officers have already been put to death after summary court martials. This does not seem to be too good an omen for fair trials for the others.

5. The public announcement of Batista's departure was the signal in Havana for wild rejoicing, which took the form of racing automobiles, blaring horns, cheering crowds displaying the red and black Castro colours and the occasional shot. By noon on January 1 the shots were becoming more than occasional. Mobs of unruly youthful Habaneros entered police and army stations which had been surrendered peacefully, seized all available weapons and began to roam the streets. It was unfortunate that Batista chose the eve of a holiday for his flight, since all workers were, therefore, available to take part in whatever rioting might occur. As soon as it became obvious that the provisional government of Carlos Piedra would not be functioning, the disorganization became complete. In spite of occasional pleas for restraint