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C U B A

29 November 1961

CASTRO TALKS TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Havana Domestic Radio and Television in Spanish 0229 GMT 28 November 1961--F

(Live speech by Prime Minister Fidel Castro at Havana University commemorating the anniversary of the martyred students of 1871)

(Text) Students, days back while we were making a visit, a customary visit when the opportunity permits us, to be University of Havana, we thought while we talked with the students, a group of students, that on this 27 November it would be a good time to discuss a number of problems from this university rostrum, problems which are of interest to us, of interest to our country, our economy, and to you.

Subsequently a number of events took place, or better said, an incident of international character of great importance and above all very revealing of the state of discomposition of imperialist society took place causing the attention of our people and our country to be focused on an analysis of it and causing us to give the required attention to that event. Subsequently, yesterday to be exact, for other reasons, we had a meeting with high school students. On that occasion some of the subjects we had thought to discuss here today were brought up by those students. That I mean by this is that 27th November has come, not with the characteristics we would have liked, that is without problems other than in a purely technical, student, academic fields and with a subject which has not already been partly discussed. That is why I feel that I am not going to be very satisfied under the circumstances, because I had thought that this was the day to discuss all the things that have to do with technology, economy, education (applause) and all those things. However on the other subjects something must be said at any rate. They are the subjects which we would rather not have spoken about here. I am going to refer as briefly as possible in something like a passing reference to the problem related with the assassination of the President of the United States and how events have gradually been unmasking all the maneuver, all the filthy, unscrupulous background behind that episode, the plot against peace, the sinister conspiracy which becomes more evident every day in the plot and in the idea of those responsible for that deed. Every day world public opinion receives more and more evidence which bares, which completely unmasks the maneuver carried out against the world and particularly against our country.

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Aside from a number of strange things which every day become more strange and which every day make the story, the lies, the insinuations which they try to build around Kennedy's death, aside, as we said, from a number of events on which the world is now thinking--and all the world is thinking and the more it thinks on them the harder put it is to find explanations for them. Today, for example, a shooting champion who can be called a firing specialist, an Olympic shooting champion--I think he is named Hubert Hummer, that is how it is pronounced but it is written differently here because they give the pronunciation and then write it differently--declared in Vienna that it is unlikely that a marksman equipped with a repeating carbine with a telescopic sight can hit the target three consecutive times in the space of five seconds when he is firing at a target that is moving at a distance of 180 meters at a speed of 15 kilometers per hour.

An entire series of details are beginning to be distinguished. When we read this cable we recalled some experience on these matters, particularly on matters of rifles with telescopic sights. When we landed in Cuba we had half a hundred rifles with telescopic sights and we had prepared those rifles very well. We had practiced very much with those rifles. We know perfectly all the characteristics of that type of rifle because, also, we had them with different powers. One of the difficulties of the rifle with telescopic sights is that once one fires on a target, the target is lost. It is necessary to find it again quickly, as a result of the shot, only from the effects of the shot, particularly when the rifle has to be levered because at first it was said that it was an automatic rifle. Then it was said that it was not automatic, or semi-automatic, or repeater.

That type of weapon--it is really very difficult to fire three consecutive shots with a weapon of that type--but above all, difficult to hit the target, almost impossible. We were reminded of certain shooting contests held in various countries, Mexico for example. There is a contest for shooting fans that is performed with a lamb which is released at one point and runs through the hills. I believe it runs some 200 meters and while it is moving one is permitted to fire three times at it. The best marksmen, having enough time and being calm while the animal is running the 200 meters, very rarely hit it twice. It is very difficult and it is very extraordinary when they can hit it three times while taking a lot of time and being absolutely calm and quiet. In general this was not done with rifles with telescopic sights but with rifles with what they call Lyman sights, which is the type of sight used by the North American Garand rifles, and with some shooting rifles that have a small circle for a sight in the center of which the target is placed.

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To fire with speed one fires much better with that type of rifle than with a telescopic sight because one does not lose sight of the target. And according to the cables they were talking about a rifle with a 4 1/2 by 18-power (sight--ed.). That is a rifle that brings the target very close. The more powerful the sight the more sensitive it is to any movement and the target gets lost. There is also the circumstance--and all this seems to indicate that the rifle may have appeared there as part of the plot, that they may have placed the rifle, which is not precisely the weapon for shooting 80 meters nor for firing three shots.

A telescopic sight is a weapon used for firing 300, 400, 500, and even 600 meters and even more. And the comrades who came in the Granma--many of them--could hit a plate at 600 meters, with a rifle, sitting down, and not snapping off shots. It is the rifle of a marksman for distance firing. It is really strange that one who is going to make an 80-meter shot from a window would purchase a rifle with a telescopic sight when any other type of weapon without a telescopic sight would have been much more appropriate for a shot at that distance. That is one of the strange circumstances that are already beginning to be seen.

Another detail that called my attention is that the rifle was purchased by mail for 12.28 or something that that; that is, 12 dollars. A good sight like that one, alone, is worth the 12 dollars and more. In what part of the world do they sell high-powered rifles with telescopic sights through catalogues for 12.28? We bought a few of those rifles and we know what they are worth, and we had the need to buy many sights and we know what the sights cost. That was another strange fact.

But a series of things which are really strange began to accumulate. It is supposed that a man has a rifle with a telescopic sight in order to fire with safety from a distance and assure accuracy against a fixed target or against a moving target. When you fire against a moving target the telescopic sight becomes a hindrance. This weapon is used to fire accurately from a distance. In other words the individual who would try to use a telescopic sight would do so in an attempt to get accuracy and safety. In this case, against a moving target, 80 meters away, accuracy was not sought and the curious thing is that safety was also not sought.

Because it is very strange, and this is what reveals that a fanatic was not involved here, in my opinion. And in these matters one must always base oneself on opinion, on suppositions. But in the first place it is undeniable that a fanatic--probably it would be the first time in history that a fanatic--probably it would be the first time in history that a fanatic has used a telescopic sight. It would be the

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first time in history. Fanatics have used revolvers, pistols, hand grenades, but never telescopic sights. And what is more, in general, fanatics do not operate from a fifth floor window. In general, fanatics confess and explain why they acted, immediately. It is a psychological reaction by a fanatic.

Here we have the strange case that the accused, the alleged assassin, fires from his place of employment. Nobody who intends to escape--that is if he is not a fanatic--somebody who is paid, who intends to escape, is willing to perpetrate such a crime from the very place he works. A place where he would be identified within five minutes. A place where within five minutes he would be fiercely pursued everywhere. He would have sought a roof on another building. He would have rented an apartment along the route. He would have situated himself with his telescopic sight rifle at a distance which would have allowed him to escape.

It is very strange that a person at his very place of work, where he would be identified in five minutes, would carry out an act of this type from such a place and at the same time attempt to escape. There is no logic in this. There is no sense in this. Such a series of strange circumstances as these. Then to use that type of rifle from there. To try to escape knowing that he would be immediately identified. All these are the contradictions, the illogical and inexplicable things which both show that either a guilty person is invented, that a guilty person was fabricated, or that the perpetrator of the crime--because these two things fit here--either this person is not guilty and was turned into a guilty person by the police, or this person is the one who fired and then all his actions have no other logical explanation or would have no other explanation that that of a person who kills, thinks he will escape, but at the same time would be perfectly identified as the doer of the crime.

There would only be one meaning to this: a person who is perfectly prepared to carry out the act with a promise he would escape, who was assigned a series of previous activities and steps to compromise or not to compromise, but to have the blame fall, insinuate the responsibility, on those on whom the perpetrators were very interested on having the blame fall.

Because since our last appearance we have obtained new data here. A report in the newspaper EXCELSIOR in Mexico states that this man had visited the Cuban Embassy (corrects himself--ed.) the Cuban Consulate and the Soviet Union Consulate to obtain a transit visa through Cuba to the Soviet Union. We immediately checked with our consular officials.

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The newspaper version is very objective and explains how this man had walked away displeased, slamming the door, because he was not given a visa. We asked for information and it was established that it was true that on 27 November (as heard) he appeared at our consulate in Mexico. (corrects himself) in September. Then, he had requested a visa. He was told that such a visa could not be granted by a consul without authority from the Foreign Ministry. In turn, the Foreign Ministry did not issue such transit visas unless the nation of final destination did not in turn issue a visa.

What is more we receive many requests for visas in our consulates from many people and ingeneral our functionaries are very cautious, very conservative in this respect because we have to suppose that the enemy is constantly trying to send agents here and this is why we take many steps and we do not grant visa to anyone requesting one. We must know their antecedents perfectly. Accordingly, the functionary refused him the visa.

Now, Saturday night, the other day, scarcely 24 hours after Kennedy's death, agents of the Mexican federal police arrested the employee--she has Mexican citizenship--from our consulate and also the employee's husband. Why did they arrest him? What was the purpose of arresting him? (corrects himself--ed.) They arrested her? They arrested her to question her and treated her in a brutal manner. They maltreated her. They imputed that she had supposed relations with the suspect of Kennedy's assassination. They tried to get some information by means of coercion. We did not know about this. I was unaware of this when I spoke. I understand it was Saturday night.

This shows how everything was shaping up. The police agents alleged that they questioned her with an eye toward the visit which this Mr. Oswald made to the Cuban consulate. How did they know? Who told them? Where were they told this? Because we did not know about it. Because it was a routine matter. No one in the Foreign Ministry, none of the functionaries had even identified that individual who appeared as an alleged suspect as one of the hundreds of persons who appeared to request a visa.

Hence, the American police knew about it. Hence the Dallas police reported it. Why did they know it? Why did they report it? Why had not this appeared in the newspapers yet? And it did appear in a Mexican newspaper two or three days later? Here we can see clearly see the warp and the woof. What purpose did this man have in going to the Cuban Consulate in Mexico? What pretext did he use? Request a transit visa? If he wanted to travel to the Soviet Union he could have gone by way of England which is closer and he had more facilities, by way of France, by way of many nations in Europe. Why did he show up in Mexico to make a longer trip and requested a transit visa to the Soviet Union, by way of Cuba?

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In the hypothesis that this man would have been the real slayer, it would be clear that the intellectual perpetrators of the murder were preparing the gambit (quartade) carefully. They sent this man to request a visa from Cuba. Just imagine! just imagine! Mr. Kennedy had been shot by an individual who was known. It was known where he worked. He had been in the Soviet Union and the President of the United States turned out to have been murdered by this person just after he had returned from the Soviet Union by way of Cuba. It was the ideal gambit. All the ideal conditions to put in the head of North American public opinion (pounds the lectern--ed.) the suspicion that it had been a communist and an agent--how would they say it--of Cuba and of the Soviet Union.

It is very strange that anybody who had been in the Soviet Union, who when he was there the first time passed through Cuba. If he had been given a passport with no trouble if he had money to go to Mexico, why did he have to come to Cuba except for the only and exclusive purpose of leaving a trail, of spinning a web? Why did he get angry when he was told that it was impossible? Why did he slam the door? Why did he leave? No friend of Cuba, no communist does this when he visits our consulates. Nobody behaves in that crude manner and of course we have no other background for the accused. We have no other antecedents than those that are published by the press.

We will never categorically declare that somebody is guilty of something if we do not have irrefutable proof of it. However, basing ourselves on hypothesis, if he was the true executioner of the deed, his trip to Mexico, his alleged interview with the press where he presented himself as a defender of Cuba shortly before the events, his supposed brawl with alleged counterrevolutionaries, in all that the perfectly planned gambit could be seen. Then everything is perfectly explainable. Somebody who was offered the chance to escape, fired, left a trial, was identified, and disappeared they would then say he came to Cuba, that he had been in Cuba before the assassination because as can be seen that if he was the guilty one, he did try to escape.

Afterwards he was arrested and he smiled before the television cameras. He did not confess. He denied everything. He did not permit the use of a lie detector, and gentlemen the surprising, the incredible, what increases the suspicion that the entire world has, is that barely 36 or 42 hours later in the basement of a jail surrounded by police agents, he was murdered. He did not speak one word more.

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