Habana, September 7, 1944

AIR MAIL

Subject: Cuba agrees to accept 1000 refugee children

The Honorable
The Secretary of State;
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

In amplification of my telegram No. 798 of September 5, 7 p.m., I have the honor to enclose copy and translation of note No. 2219 from the Ministry of State wherein the Government of Cuba agrees to accept 1000 refugee children in France and Hungary.

I have not been apprised of the manner in which Cuba proposes to handle this matter, but I shall advise the Department immediately of further developments.

Respectfully yours,

For the Chargé d'Affaires a.i.:

Garret G. Aikerson, Jr.
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures:

1. Copy of Foreign Office note No. 2219
2. Translation thereof

File No. 711
HEM/mhf
El Ministerio de Estado saluda muy atentamente a la Embajada de los Estados Unidos de América y, en relación con el memorándum de la Embajada de 17 de agosto sobre la admisión en Cuba de mil niños refugiados que se encuentran ahora en Francia y Hungría, el Ministerio se compliece en manifestar que el Gobierno de Cuba está conforme en ofrecer alojamiento en nuestro suelo a los mencionados menores y que está dispuesto a brindar todas las facilidades que conduzcan a la consecución de tan altos propósitos humanitarios.

El Ministerio de Estado aprovecha la oportunidad para reiterar a la Embajada de los Estados Unidos de América el testimonio de su más alta y distinguida consideración.

La Habana, 5 de septiembre de 1944.
Enclosure No. 2 to dispatch No. 7845 of September 7, 1944, from the Embassy at Habana

Translation

The Ministry of State presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and in connection with the memorandum from the Embassy dated August 17 regarding the admission into Cuba of 1000 refugee children who are at present in France and Hungary, is pleased to advise that the Government of Cuba agrees to offer lodging on our soil to the indicated minors and that it is disposed to offer all facilities to carry out this humanitarian proposal.

The Ministry of State avail[s] of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

Habana, September 5, 1944
HEM/hmf
Havana
Dated: September 5, 1944
Read 8:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington,

US URGENT
798, September 5, 7 p.m.

Note which has been received from Ministry of State (reference Department's A-142, August 14) says that the Cuban Government agrees to offer lodging in Cuba to 1,000 refugee children now in France and Hungary and that it is disposed to offer all facilities in order to carry out this humanitarian proposal.

MUPER
DU
HABANA (CUBA).

For the personal and information of the Ambassador.

The Department and the War Refugee Board appreciate the information contained in your A-688, and are pleased to learn that the Cuban authorities will not, during the duration of the war, raise the question at issue of the validity of passports.

The critical nature of the situation makes it vital however that the documents in reference be upheld should the validity be contested by Germany. Please urge the Cuban Government therefore to take the positive actions outlined in the Department's A-788 of May 3, and to uphold its attitude in the face of possible German challenge.

No way can be foreseen in which these measures would endanger the position of holders of recently acquired documents.

It is understood moreover that, in any exchange negotiations which may be entered into, unquestioned citizens of Cuba will be considered by this Government as being in a category entitled to priority over others. Please advise Cuban officials.

Your attention is again drawn to the assurances given in the

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, L-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972
HAGANA A-44

the Department's circular airgram of March 31 and April 11
and to the stand taken by this Government regarding refugees
claiming American citizenship as outlined in the circular
airgram of May 11. You are requested to urge speedy action,
in view of the imminent danger in which the persons concerned
find themselves. Please inform the Department of any develop-
ments.

Hull

GOV

5/22/44
J. 333
20, 1944

SUBJECT:

NATIONAL DEFENSE BOARD
LST EMERGENCY

Enclosed is your information contained in your letter no. 632 of April 18. The National Defense Board has just been informed by the Joint Security Committee that it is prepared to provide for the protection of 25,000 children only, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Department of Interior's circulars of April 15, 1945, if it be mutually agreed that the guarantee would be more effective through a separate program under the supervision of the Joint Security Committee.

JOE

WARD
2/21/44

OEA


DECLASSIFIED
Date Declassified: 11-11-72
By: D. C. Force Date: SEP 3 1972

3000008
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, London
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: May 27, 1944
NUMBER: 3982

Message below refers to May 6 telegram No. 3644.

from the Department.

Foreign Office has just informed the Embassy that

His Majesty's Minister at Rome has been instructed
to assure the Government of Cuba that the recognition
of Cuban passports issued to Jewish persons in countries
under enemy control is welcomed by His Majesty's
Government and letter appreciates the Cuban Government's
reply to the telegram regarding this matter.

RICHARD

confine Blumeng (for the Gooy) Abrahamson, Alan, Bernstein, Cohn, Dukakis,
Friedman, Gross, Harris, Laubfalk, Lesser, Lithofy, Lonn, Mann, Mar, McNamara, Pabst, Paul, Sargent, Smith, Stempel, Stewart, Weismann,
H. D. White, Files

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1/20/72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, London
DATE: May 6, 1944
NUMBER: 2644

TO AMERICAN EMBASSY, LONDON

Refer to your 13022 of December 19, 1943, 1708 of March 2, and 2033 of April 14, 1944.

The Department and the War Refugee Board have been advised by Minister Barron at Bern that the Vatican had attempted to work out relief measures for Polish and other European Jews in German-controlled territory who hold Latin American documents but who face deportation and death owing to the lack of confirmation of these documents by the countries in whose name they were issued. Cuba is reported to have replied to the Vatican that passports issued in the name of Cuba to Jews in German-controlled territory would be recognized by Cuba if no objection is made by Great Britain and the United States.

Ambassador Breden in Havana has been instructed to convey to the Cuban authorities the Department's appreciation of Cuban attitude and the assurance that the United States has no objection to Cuban recognition of such documents. Please approach the appropriate officials in the British and United States Consular offices with the request that it give a similar assurance to Cuba.

For your confidential information, this Government is asking all Latin American countries concerned for their consent to the United States initiating through proper channels negotiations with Germany for an exchange of nationals on a hemispheric basis for which refugees holding Latin American passports would be eligible. Assurances have been given to the countries concerned that in event of exchange they would not be expected to grant physical admission to persons involved but that such persons would be repatriated elsewhere. Among the Latin American countries approached, Honduras and Venezuela have already acceded to all our requests in this matter.

RJL

Miss Edmonson (for the Sec'y) Abramson, Aron, Bernstein, Cohn, Cohen, Fishman, Givens, Hadler, Haggard, Lesser, Lurford, Man; Mann, Marks, McCormack, Felke, Frenier, Reins, Gerspy, Smith, Stantian, Weinstein, W. / White, File.
Reference is made to your 6/19 of March 21. Department has been apprised that Papal Nuncio at Bern informed Minister Harrison that Vatican had attempted to work out relief measures for Jews in German-held territory who face imminent danger of deportation to Poland and death. It is understood that some of these Jews have been found, or may be found, to hold passports or consular documents issued in the name of Latin American republics. Where such documents have been given recognition by country in whose name they were issued, they have in the past afforded some protection to the persons holding them.

In view of this Government's policy with respect to victims of enemy oppression, the Department has been particularly gratified to learn from the Bern report that when approached by the Vatican, Cuba replied that passports issued in her name to Jews in German-held territory would be recognized by Cuba if Great Britain and the United States had no objection.

Please verify above information. If correct, please convey to Cuban authorities the Department's appreciation of Cuban attitude and the assurance that the United States has no objection to Cuban recognition of such documents.

Department understands that, in approaching Cuba, Vatican raised the question of eventual legalization as result of possible exchange in addition to the question of recognition of documents.

It is not clear what position Cuba will take on this policy. To ascertain Cuban attitude, if Cuba is not agreeable to the recognition of such persons holding Cuban documents, the Department requests With your report to send copies of all correspondence concerning exchange does not involve immigration but on the contrary, contains assurance that Cuba will not be expected to admit persons concealed even on a temporary basis. At any rate, we hope that Cuba, in the interests of humanity, will continue until after the war any questioning of said documents, and in the meantime, request Germany through the political representatives to accord holders of documents issued in Cuba's name the same treatment that German holders will be accorded by her.
In the light of the above statement, please urge upon the Cuban government the necessity of acting speedily without delay on these proposals. Any delay in issuing the necessary orders would mean that failure to act would almost certainly result in a default by the Union. The immediate acceptance of these proposals is of the utmost importance.

Please advise Department of the result of our efforts.

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]
Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Department's Confidential circular airmgram, April 22, 1972

The Joint Relief Committee in Havana, local branch of the Joint Distribution Committee in the United States, is the private agency here most qualified and reliable to carry out such work. Its local representative states that he is ready to cooperate but that he would have to obtain authorization from his head office. At the Embassy's request, he has taken no action on the matter.

I feel that if the choice of a private agency were left to the Cuban authorities, local irregularities would probably occur, particularly in the distribution of funds. In this connection the Department will recall the disgraceful record of the Cuban authorities with reference to the refugee situation (see despatch No. 619 of March 1) and also the inclusion of Dr. Gustavo GAVIKER and Manuel PEBY in the recently created Cuban War Refugees Board is not encouraging. A recent example of the Cuban Government's attitude was its unsuccessful attempt to send in 120,000 by freezing the deposits required of immigrants entering Cuba.

I therefore suggest that, before I inform the Cuban Government of the contents of the airmgram under reference, the Department ascertain whether the Joint Distribution Committee would be willing to undertake such a program in Cuba. My approach to the Cuban Government might then be (1) to request it to assure the Cuban Government that it will be willing to accept a fixed number of refugee children and (2) to state that I am informed that the Joint Distribution Committee would be prepared to care for the children, through the Joint Relief Committee in Havana, and to make arrangements to provide the latter with the necessary funds.

BRADEN

711
EMR/JM-dec

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-15-72
By R.H. Perle Date SEp 3 1972

Miss Charnley (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Askin, Bernstein, Cohn, Dubois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, Standish, Stewart, McCormack, Paul, Pfeiffer, Pollak, Rains, Smith, Sargoy, Weinsteii, R. D. White, Files
CROSS REFERENCE ON COOPERATION OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS:
LATIN AMERICAN (CUBA)

For:

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FOR MATERIAL RELATIVE TO ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO CHILDREN (JEWISH) BETWEEN AGES OF 2 AND 14

SEE PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

(EVACUATION OF ABANDONED CHILDREN FROM FRANCE)
Details of approaches which the Vatican made to various Governments of South America in an attempt to work out relief measures for Jews interned in Germany or German-occupied territory who held documentation issued by those Governments were supplied to me on April 13 by the Papal Nuncio Bern.

Apparently the question of eventual immigration to respective countries in course of possible exchange was raised in addition to the question of recognition of documentation. The following is the substance of the replies.

1. Because of laws forbidding admission, a negative reply was made by Panama with respect to Polish Jews.

2. Both Nicaragua and Costa Rica are disposed to recognize passports which their respective Consuls issued up to eight families which could remain in these Republics only during the war if the families are neither industrialists nor farmers.

3. They would be received in Bolivia.

4. A negative reply was made by Salvador and Guatemala.

5. Instructions to verify and recognize passports have been issued by Chile.

6. Each case would be considered individually by Uruguay.

7. No action could be taken by Haiti.

8. Passports could not be recognized by Peru.

9. Passports could be recognized by Cuba if no objection is made by Great Britain and the United States.

10. Passports of Polish Jews at Vittel have been recognized by Paraguay.

Bolivia and Paraguay are represented in Germany by Spain and the rest of the countries listed above are represented by Switzerland. We assume that they will inform their respective protective powers concerning any action which they take in the future following representations of the American Government.

It is stated by the Nuncio that in the present reportedly aggravated situation of certain victims the Holy See had requested its Madrid representative to ask the Government of Spain to inform the Spanish Ambassador at Berlin of the gravity of need of Polish Jews who have Papal documentation and to ask to consider the request.
Information had been received by the Nuncio that the cause of the trouble arose when the proposal was made to exchange these Jews for Germans located in South America. Jews who had Paraguayan passports were included in the list by Germany. A protest was made by Paraguay which stated that the passports had been illegally issued and Paraguay refused to recognize the passports. The Germans withdrew as a result of this and protection was suspended by Spain. I have been further informed by Nuncio that this has been confirmed by International Red Cross which has promised its intervention if an exchange is objective conditioned on Holy See's action. It is not known to me whether details of this proposal for exchange and its results are given in Kullmann's report quoted in your telegram of April 7, 1944, no. 1181. I discussed with Kullmann the idea of exchange and I urged him to foster it but I had not previously known that the idea had been taken up formally.

HARRISON
Havana, Cuba, March 1, 1944

No. 6149

Subject: The Refugee situation in Cuba

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular telegram of January 26, 7 p.m., concerning the President's executive order issued January 22 for the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other persecuted minorities, and instructing the embassy to report on what is being done in this regard by the Cuban Government, describing the refugee situation as it exists today in this country.

As the Department is aware, Immigration into Cuba has virtually ceased since Decree 1072 of April 18, 1942 (now the basic legislation for the admission of aliens) which forbids the granting of Cuban visas to nationals or natives of Axis or Axis-occupied countries. Immigration from Europe is now limited chiefly to Spaniards coming on the Spanish line ships, the only direct regular service between Europe and Cuba. The enactment of such legislation was taken as a security measure to cooperate with us and its administration has been fairly satisfactory.

Prior to Decree 1072 there were in practice few restrictions regarding the entry of aliens, while a scandalous situation prevailed whereby aliens from Europe entering Cuba were usually taken down by the Cuban Consuls abroad and later by the authorities here. (The refugees now in Cuba are, of course, still subject to various corrupt practices of local officials.) In this connection, the Department will recall the irregularities with the arrival in Havana of the last large number of refugees on the S/S GUINEE and the S/S SAN T(Ine) in April 1942.

At present there are estimated between three and four thousand European refugees now in Cuba, most of them...
they entered prior to Decree 1078. Practically all came here as a stepping stone to the United States. The majority of the refugees have financial support (some being wealthy), possessing funds which they have brought with them or which they receive from sources in the United States. Approximately three hundred, both Jews and non-Jews, receive relief from the Joint Relief Committee in Havana, the principal organization here which gives such assistance. Except for approximately five hundred now working in the recently created diamond-cutting industry, most of the refugees are unemployed. In view of the strict labor laws it has not been possible to secure their employment at salaried wages and the Cuban authorities have done little towards solving this problem. A few of the refugees have set up independent businesses and some have invested substantial sums here (in the diamond industry especially).

The attitude of the Cuban authorities toward the refugee problem may be described as largely indifferent, if not slightly hostile, with little more than lip service being accorded to its humanitarian aspects. A recent example of the Cuban Government's attitude is the proposed presidential decree (see alarcon No. A-564, February 9, 3:45 p.m.) freezing the deposits (300 pesos per person) required from immigrants entering Cuba. Should this measure be enacted, it would represent a $900,000 end to, inexcusable on any conceivable count. Another example has been the "flexible interpretation" of the immigration regulations by the Cuban authorities who are disposed to treat each case on a separate basis, very frequently guided by the financial means of the alien and the amount of influence he is able to bring to bear.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Ellis C. Briggs
Counselor of Embassy

711
EH: 07/ja
To Department in original and telegram.