



---

Fifteenth sessionLETTER DATED 6 DECEMBER 1960 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GUATEMALA TO  
THE UNITED NATIONS

On express instructions from my Government, I have the honour to write to you with reference to the letter of 18 November last addressed to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Raul Roa, with the request that it should be circulated to all Members of the United Nations (A/4581). In that letter, Mr. Roa denounces the naval and air patrol carried out by United States forces along the Caribbean coast near the States of Guatemala and Nicaragua, at the request of the Governments of those States.

Mr. Roa says that the purpose of this patrol is "to support the dictatorial regimes of Guatemala and Nicaragua which are facing conflicts that are matters exclusively within their domestic jurisdiction". After a series of false assertions, he concludes that the mobilization of those forces marks the beginning of concerted action against the Government and people of Cuba by the United States, in which it counts on help from the Governments of Guatemala and Nicaragua.

I shall confine myself necessarily to the charges made by Mr. Roa against the Government of Guatemala.

As the Guatemalan delegation felt it necessary to expose to the General Assembly, our Government is fully aware of the activities carried on by the Cuban Government, in connivance with certain Guatemalans of the communist persuasion, with a view to overthrowing the constitutional regime of General Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes, the President of the Republic, and to replacing it by one which would be a replica in all respects of the regime which at present controls the destinies of the unfortunate people of Cuba. It is no secret that

the Revolutionary Government of Cuba, with the help of the Soviet Union and of the People's Republic of China, is trying to export its revolution to the other nations of this continent in order to introduce communism into our countries. That is proved by the constant and systematic agitation stirred up not only in Central America but in other Latin-American countries which have democratic constitutional Governments. Cuba has become the operational headquarters for all this agitation and propaganda.

The exposure by the Government of Guatemala was fully confirmed, a few days later, by the military revolt which broke out on 13 November and was found to have links outside the country. In the face of this situation and in order to protect its coasts from an imminent invasion that had already been announced, the Government of Guatemala, exercising the right of self-defence, requested the assistance of the United States in patrolling its coasts within the legal limits. It had a right to make this request, as a sovereign act and in conformity with the guarantee, in Article 51 of the Charter, of the inherent right of self-defence, a provision closely related to article 3 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, which states that an armed attack against an American State shall be considered an attack against all, and that each one of the Parties undertakes to assist in meeting the attack in exercise of the right referred to in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. This provident measure kept the Guatemalan conflict within its own domestic boundaries.

Although there is a great readiness today to pin labels on Governments, it is absurd and distressing that Mr. Roa, speaking on behalf of the "Revolutionary Government of Cuba", should call the Guatemalan Government a "dictatorship." In our Latin American environment, we are well aware of what a "dictatorship" is, and there is no need for semantics to prove to the people when a dictatorship exists or does not exist. If, in a general way, a dictatorship is a Government functioning outside the constitutional laws of a country, the constitutional Government of General Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes is not a dictatorship, and the "Revolutionary Government of Cuba" is. President Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes was elected by the will of the people, in the freest elections held in my country. The Constitution by which we are governed was promulgated before he came into power, and the other constitutional organs were already functioning and have been

renewed by constitutional means. We have a Parliament freely elected by the people, in which the opposition has a voice in all State business, and there is a completely independent Judiciary, appointed in accordance with the Constitution. In my country there is full freedom of the Press, of industry and labour, as well as all fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of movement, without the need for drastic measures to prevent our nationals from leaving the country. There is no confiscation of any kind, and the judgements of our courts are rendered in accordance with due process of law, and not at the whim of a dictator. It is an exceedingly strange epithet, therefore, that Mr. Roa applies to a legitimate Government, and like a boomerang, it flies back against the person who hurled it; for we know of course what master he serves.

Now that the Government of Guatemala has exposed the plot being hatched against it in Cuba, and now that the Cuban Government, to conceal its intentions, has tried to implicate Guatemala in what it calls a concerted international action against it, my Government's repeated offer still stands, namely, that these activities should be investigated alike in both countries - an offer which the Government of Cuba, for obvious reasons, had never been willing to accept. It remains for those who can judge dispassionately to decide who is in the right.

I have the honour to request you, Mr. President, to arrange for this letter to be circulated to all delegations at this Assembly, in the same manner as Mr. Roa's letter was circulated.

(Signed) Alberto Herrarte  
Permanent Representative of Guatemala  
to the United Nations

-----