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Mexican Stand on Cuba Affected by Leftist Pressures

Mexican Foreign Minister Manuel Tello released on 11 July a statement declaring that the pro-Cuban sentiments expressed recently by two Mexican congressional leaders do "not necessarily" reflect the views of the Mexican Government but admitting the existence in Mexico of a "profound affection for Cuba." The Tello statement broke the administration's silence on Mexico's position on the US-Cuban controversy, but further clarification is not likely to be forthcoming at this time.

The government's announcement explained--apparently in an effort to curb rising anti-US sentiment in Mexico--that efforts to obtain an official explanation of the Mexican position on Cuba were in line with normal diplomatic practice. Mexico has long been especially sensitive about any action which it interprets as constituting interference in its domestic or foreign affairs.

On 8 July Foreign Minister Tello confided to the American ambassador that a "very serious" leftist and Communist problem exists in Mexico, and that manifestations of Mexican support for the Castro regime in Cuba should be viewed against that background. He remarked that President Lopez Mateos was forced to take certain measures to foil leftist plans and asked that the US "leave us to handle this matter in our own way." Similar comments were made by Mexican officials following the warm reception recently accorded to visiting Cuban President Dorticos.

Mexico is faced with strong pro-Cuban pressures from a leftist minority. Influential ex-President Lazaro Cardenas, long a staunch defender of the Cuban revolution, also maintained in a speech of 7 July that the US policy of "economic aggression" against Cuba was unjustified. Vicente Lombardo Toledano, a prominent Communist leader, is reliably reported to be making plans for a mass demonstration allegedly in support of President Lopez Mateos but presumably to pressure him into a pro-Castro stand. Radical students and other leftist-influenced groups may provide further demonstrations of pro-Castro support in the near future. [REDACTED]

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