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file

21 August 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: A/DEF/A

SUBJECT : Luis CONTE Aguero

1. Subject, who was forced to flee Cuba in April 1960 after his criticism of Communist infiltration of the Castro government, has been utilized by the Agency since this defection as an unsalaried propaganda agent, being paid only expenses for the activities conducted at our request. He has produced radio programs, taken tours of Latin America, and written two books for our Cuban operations. On one of his tours he was able to speak to the Presidents of Honduras, Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, and Uruguay, and was elected president of the Congress for Freedom and Democracy held last June in Montevideo. He is now the president of the permanent group sponsoring these congresses (which are funded by the Agency) known as the "Alianza para Libertad" (Alliance for Liberty). Conte's last trip took him to Montevideo for the ECOSOC meeting, where he held press conferences, spoke on radio and television several times, met with various delegates, and claims to have spoken at some length with U. S. Ambassador to the OAS, Delasseps Morrison and Mr. Goodwin.

2. We consider Conte Aguero to be the most effective Cuban propagandist-in-exile and having a magnetic appeal throughout Latin America. He has been variously described as "the strongest voice of Cuba" (Fidel Castro), "the strongest voice of democracy in Cuba" (Veritas, Buenos Aires), and the "Cuban commentator with the prestige of Edward R. Murrow and the rating of Jack Paar" (Time magazine, April 1960).

3. Conte Aguero will be in Washington on 21 August to report on his recent trip to Punta del Este and to discuss our future plans for him. He has indicated that he will attempt to see Ambassador Morrison and Mr. Goodwin while in the area. He also has asked if he could speak to a senior official who

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is in a position to explain what political action policy has been decided for the Cuban exiles or with someone who can discuss with him Conté's ideas for political action in the Cuban problem.

4. This information on Conté Agüero is forwarded for your background information in the event Messrs. Morrison or Goodwin check out subject with the Agency. In addition, the Western Hemisphere Division is prepared to arrange a meeting with Conté Agüero if such a contact is desired by the A/DHP/A.

/S/ Ralord W. Herbert

RALFORD W. HERBERT

Acting Chief

Western Hemisphere Division

DHP/WH/4/Plans

bb (21 Aug 61)

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