



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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AIR MAIL

No. 1573

Habana, May 14, 1946

Subject: Dismissal of Police Chief CARREÑO FIALLO

SECRET

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

*Mr Walker - a RA
released to War
& Navy*

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5/27/46

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's Telegram No. 349 of May 14, 10 a.m., reporting the rather summary "transfer" of Colonel Carreño Fiallo from the powerful post of Chief of the Cuban Police to the innocuous position of Cuban Military Attaché at Mexico City. As background to this long-expected development there are quoted below two paragraphs from the Embassy's Year-End Political Review, Despatch No. 899 of January 14, 1946:

"There were no Cabinet changes during the period under review, but there were changes of equal significance in the Army high command. President Grau's policy has been to eliminate the politically troublesome rank of General entirely except for the Chief of Staff (Genovevo PEREZ DAMERA) and up to December 24 there was only one other active officer of this rank remaining in the Cuban Army and none in the National Police. On that date, however, he elevated two Colonels to Brigadier General - Gregorio QUEREJETA y Valdes and Ruperto CABRERA y Rodriguez. Querejeta, an able 60 year old Negro now commanding Cabaña Fortress, was designated as Inspector General and Cabrera, commandant at Camp Colombia, as Quartermaster General. The appeal to the Negro vote in the elevation of Querejeta (giving them "another MACEO") was obvious, but speculation immediately began to the effect that there was even deeper significance behind this move.

Cabrera has been notably devoted to Chief of Staff Genovevo and is believed to have furnished him with evidence of disloyalty on the part of other Batista appointees which led to their rapid retirements or transfers to safer areas. At the same time there has been continual friction and rivalry, as previously reported, between Genovevo and Police Chief Colonel CARREÑO FIALLO, a favorite of the First Lady and holder of a semi-autonomous position of great influence.

*RECEIVED DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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Reliable rumor now has it that the loyal General Cabrera will take over the Police and that Carreño Fiallo will be compensated by elevation to Brigadier General as Quartermaster, in which position he would be directly under the control of Genovevo. At the same time Querejeta and the other elderly remaining Brigadier GOMEZ GOMEZ, would be honorably retired and the chain-of-command to Grau and Genovevo safely established. It remains to be seen whether the redoubtable First Lady will permit her protégé to be thus innocuously kicked upstairs, but the development would be a logical extension of a year-old Grau policy to assure the subservience of the Army and Police to the civil executive - a good objective if the civil executive is itself honest and responsible to Congress and the people".

As will be noted from the above excerpt, it was anticipated in January of this year that the power of Carreño Fiallo would be definitely subordinated to that of his rival, Chief of Staff Genovevo Perez Damera, but it then appeared that the influence of the First Lady, Doña Paulina ALSINA, would be sufficient to assure a nominally higher position for her protégé, such as the rank of Quartermaster General. It is interesting to note that in this case she was apparently unable to stem the combined pressure of Genovevo and of public opinion; probably one reason was that her own new son-in-law, Police Major Pablo SUAREZ, was implicated in one of the many crimes that Carreño failed to solve - the cabaret killing of the student DUPOTY (See Embassy Despatch No. 1336, March 27).

Except as an indication that the arbitrary and arrogant power of the First Lady is not unlimited, the removal of Carreño Fiallo does not necessarily reflect any great credit on the Administration. The position of the Chief of Police was always a hopeless one, from the point of view of law enforcement. In the first place, he was a soldier and a politician rather than a trained professional police official; in the second place, he was prevented by higher authorities from taking any effective action against political crimes of violence, most of which have obviously been engineered by fanatic Auténtico gangsters. On the criminal side he was forced to leave murderers unapprehended or allow them to escape; on the civil side he was estopped by the loose construction of the laws and by resultant Court decisions from taking any effective action against black-market operators and grafters.

This situation clearly played not only into the hands of Genovevo, but also into those of the Opposition on the eve of the June 1 elections. The Administration's obfuscator extraordinary, Senator Eddy CHIBAS, and other spokesmen, can now proclaim a new era of police reform and law enforcement as a result of Carreño Fiallo's replacement.

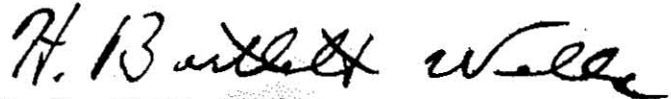
Smoke will thus be cast over one of the main Opposition grounds for attack - the "law and order" theme, which has been pointedly stressed from afar by ex-President BATISTA and underlined in fiery prose by journalist - Senator VASCONCELOS in frequent broadcasts and newspaper articles.

The pro-tempore successor to Carreño Fiallo, Colonel Alvaro MORENO, is a veteran Police Inspector with no particular political influence and no outstanding enemies. It would seem to be sound Administration political strategy to keep him in office until the June elections, after which he will probably be replaced by a military politician directly loyal to Genovevo and the President. It is noteworthy that (after the window-dressing ceremony at the Palace, at which Dr. Grau and the Cuban Ambassador to Mexico solemnly announced Carreño's new appointment) an immediate consultation was held with Genovevo and his protégé Cabrera prominently in attendance, along with Moreno. It would thus appear that General Cabrera is still the most likely ultimate successor, for reasons indicated in the excerpts quoted above.

Regardless of who attains the title, however, there is little hope for any improvement in Cuban law enforcement unless President Grau feels strong enough after the election to purge his own party of the lawless gangster and student elements who have always been an integral part of the Auténtico battle - whether against MACHADO, Batista or the Communists. It would seem unlikely that he would be inclined to challenge these elements and the rising power of the Communists simultaneously, but should he do so, by means of the establishment of a strong, independent and trained Police Force, he would command widespread public support on both issues. Further developments in this connection will be reported by airgram or telegram.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:



H. Bartlett Wells
Second Secretary of Embassy

File No. 800

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Original and Hectograph
to Department

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DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS
TELEGRAPH BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION COPY

ACTION: ARA

INCOMING TELEGRAM

INFO:

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Paraphrase before communicating to anyone.

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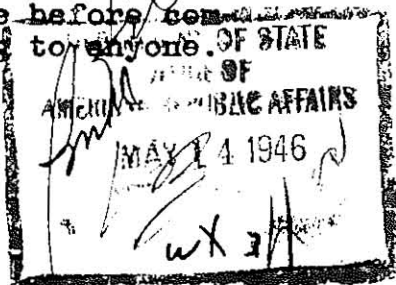
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Habana

Dated May 14, 1946

Rec'd 12:27 p.m., 14th



349, May 14, 10 p.m.

Press announces that on May 13, Col Carreno Fiallo was relieved as Chief of National Police and designated Military Attache at Mexico City departing end this week. Col Alvaro Moreno Rodriguez, Inspector General of Police, designated acting chief.

Removal of Carreno Fiallo was doubtless necessitated by long succession of unsolved and unpunished crimes with political implication which have marked his one and onehalf years in office. Public clamor against these disorders has been reaching crescendo on eve of elections. While Carreno Fiallo probably knows authors of these crimes he has been unable to act because of loyalty to Grau and knowledge that prosecution would embarrass President. Removal therefore appears sound administration political move. Full report by airmail.

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