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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1059  
DESP. NO.

January 12, 1953  
DATE

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF : Embdespatch No. 1052, January 9, 1953

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SUBJECT: Detention of Auténtico Leader, Tony Varona

The correspondent in Camaguey of El Mundo reported that on January 8, 1953 the Auténtico party leader, Tony VARONA, and his brother were held incommunicado for six hours in the office of the chief of the National Police in Camaguey and then released. The chief of the local military district was said to have explained that the Varonas had not been "detained" but had only been "interviewed" to find out what outstanding figures of the previous government were doing in Camaguey. He also added, according to El Mundo's correspondent, that the authorities had known that the Varonas had been involved in various "illegal" meetings and that, after the usual investigation had clarified matters, they had been released, as the reporters had witnessed.

It appears that Tony Varona took advantage of the opportunity to point out to the reporters that his detention exemplified the lack of guarantees and civil security under the present regime and to declare that the arbitrariness of the proceedings demonstrated that the time is not ripe for the holding of elections that would restore liberty to the country.

It does not appear unlikely that the detention of Tony Varona at this time was connected with the gun battles between the authorities and gangsters in Habana and environs on January 6 and the reported seizures of arms and explosives here and in Matanzas Province. Since these events had been ascribed by Government spokesmen to the plotting of PRIO and associates, it seems probable that the police and military thought it wise, as part of the Government's extensive precautions against revolt and violence, to keep a careful eye on Varona's activities during his visit to Camaguey.

For the Ambassador:

*Earl T. Crain*

Earl T. Crain

Acting Counselor of Embassy

FCFornes, Jr.:rc  
REPORTER

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