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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

98
DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

July 14, 1953

REF Despatches 79 and 72 of July 10, 1953

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JUL 16 1953

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SUBJECT: Rumored Invasion Attempt July 16

Yesterday evening a minor official of the Ministry of Information informed the Embassy unofficially that President BATISTA has received "reliable" information to the effect that an invasion of Cuba, coming from Guatemala, is expected on the evening of Thursday, July 16. According to the official, the invasion forces consist of 3 ships, carrying 500 men each, and 30 planes. Each ship is reported to be carrying sufficient arms to supply 15,000 men ashore. According to this informant, Batista has stated that he has 8,000 troops, aside from the established garrisons, to deploy at the various points of expected disembarkation.

COMMENT

The Embassy's informant stated that he obtained his information indirectly from the SIM. He did not pass on this information officially and it should, therefore, be considered as another rumor, probably with little foundation in fact.

Honduras has already denied charges reiterated by the pro-Government newspaper Alerta that three vessels of Greek registry were in Honduran waters awaiting the signal for an attack against the Batista regime. The latest rumor reports these vessels as in Guatemala. A Navy source states the Cuban Navy heard the rumor from press sources that the alleged ships were in Costa Rica. Whether or not the vessels exist at all is a matter of conjecture. The Embassy has never received any indication that the opposition group could put anywhere approaching 30 planes into the air.

Units of the Cuban Army are now engaged in field artillery service practice in the vicinity of Guanito in Pinar del Rio province and are expected to remain there, possibly another two weeks or so. While these units could be moved fairly rapidly, it is doubted they would be concentrated in Pinar del Rio if the Government, which is undoubtedly aware of

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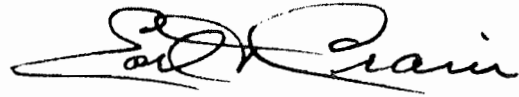
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latest rumor, believed it to be true. The rumor is nevertheless reported for what it may be worth.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Copies to: Anembassies, Tegucigalpa
Guatemala
Costa Rica

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