

Air Priority
PRIORITY

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JUL 18 1952

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

103

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ~~Action Assigned to~~ July 18, 1952

DATE

REF : ~~Action Taken~~

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	REC'D JUL 19	IN F O	ARMY	Date of Action 7-23-52								

SUBJECT: ~~Weeks~~ No. 29 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments
From SANA

Name of Officer *Linette*

Director *SEC/REC/R*

RECEIVED

JUL 20 1952

POLITICAL

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MESSAGE CENTER

The week was virtually devoid of political developments. This may account for the wide publicity given a plea by Cuba's elder statesman, Cosme de la TORRIENTE, for a return to "normalcy" in Cuban public life through a formula similar to that of the Ortodoxos. To facilitate this he offered to conduct conversations among the various political leaders and the government. His plan, which reiterates a previous proposal of June 1, 1952, would include a return to the Constitution of 1940, and holding of elections under a newly-established "neutral" government. De la Terriente said that the alternative to conciliation could mean civil conflict.

Both Autentico and Ortodoxo party leaders expressed qualified willingness to cooperate on such a program. Roberto AGRAMONTE, however, sounded the opinion of many when he said there was "little likelihood" of its success. Other reactions were mixed, with most commentators paying respect to de la Terriente's high motives but admitting that his plan probably had practically no chance of succeeding. Gente, the labor weekly, derided de la Terriente as having the "mentality of 1900" and speculated on which political group was using him for its private ends. FEU pledged its support to de la Terriente's formula. Because of de la Terriente's stature in Cuban life, government spokesmen tempered their comments, but Propaganda Minister de la FE said de la Terriente was disqualified as a neutral because of his declared opposition to the government.

The net result of Terriente's remarks was grist for the continuing polemic among political leaders as to just what course they should pursue. Hope among opposition

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REPORTER

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party leaders for at least some unity among themselves was dying at week's end, as the force of de la Torriente's appeal diminished in renewed party squabbles. One newspaper pointed out that this situation could only be settled when the new electoral code was issued by the Council of Ministers. (It is still "under study"). Where the matter really stands is probably best illustrated by the statement of Andrés DOMINGO y Morales del Castillo (Secretary of the Presidency) after an interview with BATISTA - "Batista will be president in 1953". The complete disunity of the opposition is probably the best piece of good fortune the Batista regime has had, distracting to some extent the lack of achievement of the Batista government, in public opinion.

Newspaper reports, substantiated by a labor source, indicate that a "deal" is imminent between PAU's labor bloc and the CTC. "Negotiation" would open the way for PAU members to assume some CTC posts, not necessarily including the secretary-generalship. If this happens it is believed the much-talked of labor's political party will get started - and that Batista will follow the PRIO regime's policy of subsidies to the CTC. The end result would be greater domination of the CTC by Batista. Labor source said all this was obnoxious to the CTC but that no other course was possible at the moment. The CTC's National Council meeting, called for July 19 and 20, lends credence to reports of important developments in that organization. Francisco AGUIRRE told Embassy's labor reporting officer that this meeting would be "one of the most important ever held by the CTC".

Emilio NUÑEZ Portuondo, in a UN statement which received prominent coverage in the press, declared there are 200,000 Communists in Cuba and that an aggressive campaign against this menace was needed. He said there are proportionately more Communists in Cuba than in the USSR. This, of course, immediately drew fire from Hoy which attacked Nuñez Portuondo as a "politician without principle", a follower of Prio and a favorite of the "tyrant" MACHADO. It is difficult to evaluate the attitude of the Batista government toward the domestic Communists, despite the nearly continual barrage of official public statements against them, because of the government's failure so far to take more than harassing measures against them, and reports of Commie infiltration at various levels in the government and the government party.

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ARMY

As was expected, Hoy attempted to exploit to the full the funeral of Sgt. Jorge PEREZ Crespo, a U.S. soldier of Cuban birth who was killed in Korea and whose body arrived in Habana this week escorted by his father, ex-Sgt. Manuel PEREZ Garcia. Hoy claimed to have interviewed Sgt. Perez's grandmother, an old lady of 65 years, and quoted her as saying Sgt. Perez was forced to stay in the Army after his enlistment was up and was forced to go to Korea against his will. The father of Sgt. Perez, who gained his U.S. citizenship through service in the Army during World War II, was outraged by this alleged interview and denies that his mother made any such statements. On July 17 he went personally to the Minister of Propaganda to deny the story attributed to her and a strongly worded statement by him was published in several newspapers on July 18, together with a letter from his son indicating that he had volunteered not only for service in the Army but for front line duty in Korea. Mr. Perez Garcia has stated that unless Hoy prints a full retraction he will sue for damages.

COMMENT

Hoy in this instance seems to have overstepped the bounds in printing a story which is being refuted locally. Whether the suit of Mr. Perez Garcia actually will accomplish anything will depend in a large degree on the backing which his case may receive from the present regime. Mr. Perez Garcia claims that FAVOLE y Sterling, who is secretary of the Presidential Aides, is a close personal friend of his and is helping him in his fight against Hoy.

NAVY

Lieuts. (jg) (Alferez de Navio) Renato DIAZ Blanco and Manuel RODRIGUEZ Quevedo will attend a five week course at the U.S. Naval Damage Control Center at Philadelphia, commencing July 21, 1952. These two Cuban officers will be accompanied by machinist Charles N. DYER, USN, a member of the U.S. Naval Mission, Cuba.

COMMENT

Damage control has been badly neglected in the Cuban Navy ships. Since these two officers will serve as

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instructors to the Cuban Navy on their return, some improvement in Cuban Damage Control Training may be anticipated.

AIR

Negative.

For the Ambassador:

Irvin S. Lippe

Irvin S. Lippe
Attaché

Participants:

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