

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1347 February 15, 1952
DATE

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

Action Assigned to *W. J. ...*
Action Taken *noted*

Air Priority
PRIORITY

REF :

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For Dept.
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SUBJECT: WEEKA NO. 7 FOR STATE, ARMY, NAVY AND AIR DEPARTMENTS
FROM SANA

2-15-52

Action Office Symbol *1 AD*
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POLITICAL

The formal reconciliation by GRAU and his Cubanidad group with President PRIO and the PRC(A) was effected on February 8 with much fanfare and publicity. Thus, after many months of rumors and maneuverings, the principal Auténtico forces are once again united. The Administration, of course, claims this unity of PRC(A) elements assures victory for the Government coalition in June. The opposition, however, describes the reconciliation as a "uniting of the two individuals most responsible for corruption and graft in Government in Cuban history", and predicts it will aid materially in the Government's downfall. Although the Cubanidad party does not bring a large number of registered voters to the Government coalition, Grau's personal popularity and the integration of experienced political leaders will undoubtedly help strengthen the Government political machinery. On the other hand Grau's connections with graft and the famous "Causa 82" will provide a fertile field for attacks by opponents of the Administration.

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The most important absentee from the reconciliation meeting was Miguel SUAREZ Fernández, probably one of the leaders whose re-entry was most desired by the Government. Suárez, his political fortunes obviously at a low ebb, left for Venezuela on February 14, ostensibly for a short pleasure trip. Prior to his departure Suárez is quoted as having stated he is not withdrawing from politics but that there is no Senatorial seat open to him at the present time. There is some possibility the departure of Suárez may be for reasons other than those appearing on the surface. He is generally known to be the power behind the UIR, one of the grupos de acción accused of having been implicated in the murder of Cossío del Pino. It is therefore not impossible his departure at this time is for "health reasons".

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It has been announced that Hevia will be proclaimed officially as the PRC(A) Presidential candidate at the meeting of the PRC(A) National Assembly to be held on February 17.

HAHoyt:WJN
REPORTER(S)

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PREPARATION TIME

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

During the week ex-President BATISTA assured newspaper reporters he intends to stay in the running as a Presidential candidate. He stated, "I will be in the fight the first of June and I will win. If they do not want me to enter they will have to eliminate me physically. I prefer physical death to moral death."

The murder on February 12 of Alejo COSSIO del Pino, ex-Minister of Interior and owner of the radio station Radio Cadena Habana, by unknown assailants resulted in a top level shake up in the Habana police and the mass arrest of numerous known members of Cuban gangs. Public opinion, already aroused by the numerous killings during the past year and the recent escape of Policarpo SOLER from prison, was inflamed anew by this latest murder. Sailors and soldiers were brought in to reinforce the police and an extensive hunt for the killers was instituted. The Administration, fully aware of the adverse political effect caused by this continued lawlessness, has indicated it intends to take energetic steps in this matter. Meanwhile, the opposition is exploiting fully this recent murder as further evidence of Government protection of criminals and laxity in law enforcement. Failure to bring the criminals to justice might have important repercussions in the political scene.

The Communist-sponsored National Conference for the Defense of Children, scheduled to be held in Habana February 15, 16 and 17, received a serious blow when Dr. Agustin CASTELLANOS, Cuba's leading pediatrician, announced publicly that the Cuban Pediatric Society was withdrawing its support of the Conference. The names of Dr. Castellanos and other important non-Communist physicians had been used by the Communists to gain prestige for the affair. Castellanos' press release stated that the support of his organization was being withdrawn because "data have been obtained which show that the majority of the members of the organizing committee of said conference are allied with European organizations controlled by Soviet Russia and that these Congresses are being held taking advantage of the good faith and good will of persons whom they use as a shield to hide their anti-democratic activities". Hoy denied that the Cuban Pediatric Society's support had been withdrawn and announced that the Conference would be held as scheduled.

Minister of State, Dr. Aureliano SANCHEZ Arango departed for London on February 11 as head of the Cuban Mission to the funeral of King George VI. The Minister is expected to return to Habana about February 19.

According to press reports, a secret service man testifying in the current trial in Miami of Russian citizen

SIMONOVICH told the jury that the latter had suborned a Cuban military patrol in order to smuggle aliens into the United States.

Conelrad discussions between the United States and Cuba which began on February 5, 1952 are continuing.

ARMY

Lt. Colonel Juan A. E. del C. de J. CONSUEGRA y Valdes was appointed Chief of National Police during the early hours of the morning of 13 Feb. to replace Colonel Cecilio PEREZ y Alfonso following the assassination of Ex-Minister of Interior Alejo COSSIO del Pino on the evening of 12 Feb. Pérez, who continued to command Regiment No. 5 during his tenure as Chief of Police, returned to Regiment No. 5 where Consuegra was formerly Inspector and Acting Regimental Commander. Immediately upon his appointment, Consuegra ordered reinforcement of the Police Force by sailors, and soldiers from Regiment No. 6.

The Cuban Army has officially advised the Army Attaché that (1) no support by maintenance, supply and service is required for U.S. equipment presently on hand, and (2) no major items of U.S. equipment and supplies for the Armed Forces of Cuba are required during Fiscal Year 53 in connection with the reimbursable aid program under the provisions of Section 408 (E) of Public Law 329, as amended.

On 13 Feb. the press announced that the General Staff of the Inter-American Defense Board had been invited by President Prío to visit Cuba and that they are to arrive on 20 Feb. This information was confirmed by official Cuban Army sources and it is understood that quite an elaborate program has been arranged for them during their five-day visit.

NAVY

Following an all night session at the Presidential Palace on February 12th incident to the shooting of the former Minister of Interior, RADM Pascual assigned 100 Cuban Navy enlisted men to temporary duty with the National Police. These sailors were immediately assigned to sentry duty at sensitive locations in the vicinity of Habana.

Comment: It is expected that when the furor subsides over this latest gang killing the sailors will be recalled to the Navy.

Page 4 of
Desp. No. 1347
From Habana

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page _____ of
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. _____
From _____

The U.S. Naval Mission to Cuba has been instructed by the Cuban Naval Chief of Staff, RADM Pascual, to make a study, with suitable recommendations, for future operations and training of the Cuban Naval Air Arm. In connection with this project 5 Cuban air officers, accompanied by the Chief of Naval Mission and the Naval Attaché, visited Naval Air Station, Key West, on February 14th. The group studied airfield layout, fire prevention methods and air safety precautions. The Cubans displayed keen interest, questioning their American colleagues very closely on U.S. Naval aviation standards. It is expected that the results of this visit will be reflected in a five year plan to be drawn up for Cuban Naval Aviation, particularly the Air Station at Mariel.

AIR

Negative.

For the Ambassador:

Henry A. Hoyt

Henry A. Hoyt
Second Secretary of Embassy

Participants:

AO Pierrot, DWG Clark, ETCrain,
HA Hoyt, EM Terrell, Ryan (NA),
Elmore (MA), Rarick (AA).

Copies to Amembassies:

Ciudad Trujillo, Port-au-Prince.

MA (4) for USARCARIB and USARFANT
AA (1)
NA (2) for Guantánamo

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