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PRIORITY

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

137

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF :

2 For Dept. Use Only kp	ACTION OLI	DEPT. I N F O	DCR	ARA	I	IBS	IFI	RE	IPS	ASIS	7-22-52
	REC'D JUL 26	OTHER	ARMY			NAVY			AIR		

SUBJECT: Weeka No. 30 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments
From SANA

SECTION I

POLITICAL

Considerable press and public attention was given another of the BATISTA regime's indications of its plans for transition from de facto to elected government. The "plans" were outlined by Minister of Education Andrés RIVERO Agueró to newspaper men following an interview with Batista. Rivero, whom the newspapers called a government spokesman, said that when the Superior Electoral Tribunal issues the call for elections, Batista will resign to become a candidate, to be replaced by a provisional President named by the Council of Ministers. This man, he continued, "would be a patriotic Cuban above reproach and respected by all". (A later indication by Secretary of the Presidency Andrés DOMINGO pointed to Chief Justice of the Supreme Court PICHARDO as a possible substitute.) Rivero's remarks may have been occasioned by the Batista Government's recognition of the need for placating increasing public apprehension over Batista's plans, for the promised elections of November 1952.

This popular anxiety was probably sharpened by intra- and inter-party struggles of the Autenticos and Ortodoxos for a formula or modus operandi to resolve the de facto situation, recent debate over Cosme de la TORRIENTE's "conciliation" proposal (which has died down), and continued harassment of political leaders through arrests and restrictions on meetings and radio broadcasts. Rivero's statement shows Government concern with creating the impression that free elections are to be held. It has the advantage of not having come from the President himself, should he want to disavow the "plans" if future developments so warrant. A further concession to public opinion was Rivero's statement that the controversial "direct vote" (popular election of the President) would be kept in the

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RMC

new Electoral Code. Rivero criticized the opposition for its "impossible" demand of restoration of the Constitution of 1940 since "Batista will not restore Carlos PRIO". Reaction was cautious, pending replies from opposition leaders.

The Liberal Party, which held its national convention in Habana, issued a statement in which it "opposes" but also recognizes the Batista coup as "an accomplished fact", in its party manifesto, published in the Habana press. Outside of PAU, the Government party which Rivero in the statement referred to above says is now dissolved, this party is the only one to make such a concession. This led to a great deal of speculation regarding a possible rapprochement between the Liberales and Batista, even though the statement was probably in the nature of a "trial balloon". It is noteworthy that most of the leaders of the party are abroad at this time, on "vacation". It will be recalled that Batista and most of his Government belonged to the Liberal Party before the formation of the PAU, and also a certain lack of ideological inflexibility enabled the liberals to join the Governments of GRAU and Prio.

The much-heralded National Council of the CTC failed to produce any immediate changes in the union hierarchy but two labor sources reported that the way has now been paved for admission of PAU members into some CTC positions. MUJAL's offered resignation was rejected by a vote of 27 to 6, each affiliated federation having one vote. COFINO (electric plant workers), RUBIERA (telephone workers) and VALLADARES (retail clerks) were among those who voted against Mujal at first; later the vote was made unanimous. The vote was more an expression of union solidarity than affection for Mujal who reportedly will serve until the next CTC national convention in mid-1953. Most significant was the willingness of the delegates to accept some kind of working relationship with PAU's workers' bloc, although its exact nature has not yet been announced.

The Government declared an embargo on the removal or sale of any property of Hey, charging its management with failure to pay over \$8,000 into the Graphic Arts Retirement Fund for its employees. Hey paid up the next day, decrying the action as "persecution" since it had an agreement with the fund on payment of that portion of its contribution. The fund lifted the embargo, but announced its court action for fraud still stood. Publication of the paper was not interrupted. The President of the fund, Ramiro de la FE, is a Batista man and brother of the Communist-baiting Minister of Information, Ernesto de la FE. Eusebio Mujal

called on the Government to seize Hey because of its failure to pay the amount deducted from the wages of its workers. This action does not seem immediately likely.

ARMY

Several promotions of field grade officers in the Cuban Army were announced on July 23, the most important of which was that of Captain Benjamin CAMINO y Garmendia, Army Foreign Liaison Officer, to the rank of Major. Major Camino, in addition to his duties as Army Foreign Liaison Officer, has been Chief of the Investigation Section of SIM for some time.

In response to an invitation extended by the Dominican Republic, Decree No. 2428, published in the Official Gazette of July 24, 1952, designated a Military Mission to represent the Republic of Cuba at the inauguration ceremonies in the Dominican Republic on August 16, 1952, composed of the following Cuban Army officers:

Brig. General Juan ROJAS y Gonzalez (Chief of Regt. #7)

Colonel Pedro A. RODRIGUEZ y Avila (Chief of the Mixed Tank Regt. "10 of March")

Lt. Colonel Pedro A. BARRERA y Perez (Executive Officer of the Hq. and Hq. Company of the Infantry Division)

NAVY

Negative.

AIR

The Cuban Air Force is flying scheduled patrols daily of the entire coast line of the island of Cuba and the Isle of Pines. Aircraft are stationed at Santiago de Cuba, Camaguey, and at Batista Field and Campo Columbia in Habana.

The Patrol aircraft are armed with thirty and fifty caliber machine guns. One B-25 bomber and seven T-6 advanced trainers are used each day. Many of the younger pilots are flying as much as eighty hours per month, which is considerably more than any of the pilots have flown in the past.

COMMENT

These patrols have been carefully worked out to provide coverage of the entire coast line at least once daily. The

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Habana area is covered twice daily.

For the Ambassador:

Irvin S. Lippe

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Attaché

Participants:

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