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SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

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737.00(W)/2-2952

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1415

February 29, 1952

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

Air Priority

REF :

Action Assigned to

SUBJECT: WEEKA NO. 9 FOR STATE, ARMY, NAVY AND AIR
FROM SAA

Action Taken

Use Only

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SECTION I

POLITICAL

The Cuban electoral law provides that the certificates of candidacy for senators representing party coalitions must be submitted to Provincial Electoral Boards not later than March 10. This provision is of primary interest to the Government parties which so far have formed the only electoral coalition now in the field. The Government group is hard-pressed to find places for aspirants from the six coalition parties, but must arrive at final decisions within the next few days. Since certificates of candidacy must include a statement that the candidate in question does not hold (or has taken leave from) an appointive position, it will be necessary for Cabinet ministers planning to run for the Senate or other elective office to resign or take leave of absence prior to March 10. It is customary for Cabinet ministers to resign rather than to take leave of absence. Consequently, it is expected that extensive Cabinet changes will take place, probably in the coming week.

The Communist PSP held its National Assembly at Habana February 23-25. The Ortodoxos, Cuba's principal opposition party, announce their National Assembly will be held on March 2 at which time AGRAMONTE and OCHOA will reportedly be proclaimed as the party's candidates for president and vice-president, respectively. Ochoa has threatened in the past to refuse to run for the vice-presidency, preferring to run for Senator. Presumably, he has been prevailed upon to change his mind. His insistence on running for the Senate would have been interpreted as a sign that Ochoa did not expect the Ortodoxos to win the election.

During the past few weeks the Communists have made desperate efforts to obtain an alliance with some other party or parties in the opposition. Failing to

ETCrain:ep

REPORTER(S)

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PREPARATION TIME

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the opposition in a "democratic front," the Communists then attempted to form at least an informal alliance with the Ortodoxo party. At their General Assembly the Communists failed to nominate anyone for the presidency or vice-presidency and proposed instead that the opposition unite its votes in favor of one man, obviously with Agramonte, the Ortodoxo candidate, in mind. This announcement gave rise to rumors that there was in fact a secret pact between the Communists and the Ortodoxos. There undoubtedly exists some understanding between the Communists and certain far left Ortodoxo extremists (such as PARDO LLADA). However, the party itself has officially refuted any understanding, secret or otherwise. In a statement signed by Agramonte, published in today's press, the Ortodoxos refer to current rumors of pacts or understandings, tacit or implied, between the Ortodoxos and the PSP. Agramonte categorically denied "such suppositions," stating that his party was the only one that had never had dealings with the Communists and that it intended to maintain that policy.

Since the chances for the Communists to make any kind of a showing in the forthcoming elections are practically non-existent, it is believed that their principal interest now lies, not in obtaining Congressional seats, but in maintaining sufficient influence to enable them to increase their power, or at least to maintain a foothold, in the Cuban labor movement.

On February 26 the Communist news organ Hoy published an editorial attacking the proposed Military Assistance Bilateral Agreement now under negotiation between Cuba and the United States. It stated that the negotiations were being carried on in great secrecy in order to prevent public opinion from mobilizing against a pact, the purpose of which is "to tie Cuba to the war chariot of U.S. imperialism, burden Cuba's economy with wholly unjustified expenditures, lay the ground work for the military occupation of Cuba, and to utilize Cuba's youth as cannon fodder in Korea or anywhere else the imperialists might carry their war-mongering policies." The editorial states "There is no doubt whatever that the Cuban people oppose a military pact with the imperialists and that the secrecy surrounding present negotiations constitutes an attempt to avoid the same fate suffered by the U.S. negotiators in Mexico." No editorial opinion on these negotiations has appeared in the responsible press.

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The NATO conference in Lisbon received full publicity in Cuba. In reporting the results of the conference the local press stated that the NATO countries have mapped a massive Western Defense build-up, including establishment of the Army of Europe.

The Inter-American Defense Board group, which arrived here on February 20 (Weeka No. 8, Feb. 21), departed February 26 after having completed a very heavy schedule, including a call on President PRIO. During this call the President made a brief address wherein he stated that Cuba was anxious to cooperate in every way in the common defense. The spokesman for the Board, General ROJAS Pinillas, in reply, praised the Pan American spirit of Cuba's people and Army.

ARMY

Negative.

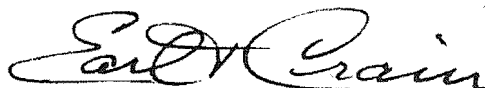
NAVY

Negative.

AIR

Negative

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

Participants:

DGClark, ETCrain, EMTerrell,
Mason (AA), Elmore (MA)

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