

Air Priority  
PRIORITY

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**FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH**

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA 1581  
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. April 10, 1953  
DATE

REF : Action Assigned to *[Handwritten]*

5 For Dept. Use Only mlr	ACTION	DEPT.	Action Taken <i>[Handwritten]</i>					
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	REC'D APR 11		ARMY NAVY AIR CIA OSD					4-15-53

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 15 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA

Action Office Symbol *IAA*  
Name of Officer *[Handwritten]*  
Direction to DC/R *[Handwritten]*

Part I

Political

(CONFIDENTIAL) On Easter Sunday the authorities made numerous arrests which they claim nipped in the bud a conspiracy which involved an attack on the same day on Camp Columbia, military headquarters and nerve center. A small quantity of arms and ammunition was seized. Rafael GARCIA Bárcena, University professor who for some time has been known to advocate revolutionary tactics, was taken into custody as the leader of the plot. José PARDO Llada, who seems to have become the number one suspect of the Government in conspiratorial matters, was arrested, released, re-arrested and again released on orders of the Urgency Court which found no evidence of implication. The others arrested, to the number of 40 to 50, were practically all young men of university age, together with a handful of teenagers. Imprisonment of most has been confirmed by the Urgency Court pending a hearing. Garcia Bárcena was held incommunicado until yesterday in the Camp Columbia hospital, reportedly suffering from a slight injury sustained "in a fall on a stairway".

It is widely considered that this conspiracy, if in fact it really existed, was a highly impractical project, poorly conceived and worse executed, involving an attack by misguided youths on the Government's strongest point. The Government charged complicity in the plot by most opposition groups and financing by ex-President PRIO, which was denied by the latter. The information that has reached the Embassy during recent months has been to the effect that Garcia Bárcena had been unsuccessful in enlisting support from any side in his evidently impracticable schemes. The opposition groups accused have denounced the affair as a concoction of the government designed to maintain public uncertainty and further plans to suppress opposition.

FCFornes, Jr.:rc  
REPORTER

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LWC

1953

The University student organization has declared a strike until Garcia Bárcena's case is brought to court.

(UNCLASSIFIED) The Communist peace offensive aroused the greatest of interest in Cuba. It was generally regarded with very cautious reserve. While there was some restrained optimism, most commentators viewed developments with suspicion based on past Communist performance and warned against relaxation of vigilance that could redound only to the benefit of the Soviet orbit. In analyses of the situation considerable attention was given to the possibility that the peace offensive was intended to and might possibly succeed in opening wide breaches between the Western allies. The Communist reception of events was naturally lyrical and was combined with an ominous warning that the "imperialists" would try to defeat the Communist peace efforts in order to avoid the economic depression that peace would bring to the capitalistic world.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Mr. John Moors CABOT, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, visited Habana officially from April 6 to 8. He was warmly received and his statements and activities were given wide publicity. Comment on his visit was generally favorable and regarded its "impression finding" objective as a sign of the Administration's intention not to neglect the maintenance of mutually advantageous relations with Latin America.

(UNCLASSIFIED) The press reported that the Cuban Government had agreed to the designation of Julio VEGA Battle as Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to Cuba. It was also reported that Humberto DEL PINO would arrive in Habana today to take up his duties as new Ambassador of Chile.

### Psychological

(UNCLASSIFIED) During the week the Communist press has been carrying on a virulent campaign in support of the Guatemalan Government which is "determined to defend its independence and maintain a policy of democracy and progress". Every Guatemalan action is defended in the terms of this quotation. In today's Hoy, its director, Anibal ESCALANTE, defends Guatemala's denunciation of the Organization of Central American States which he describes as having become an "instrument of aggression" of the United States. He closes his editorial by saying that the "Government of Guatemala has done well in denouncing the aggressive plans of Yankee imperialism and its satellites. We will do

better if we popularize this denunciation and if, at the same time, we mobilize to oppose the invasion plans against Guatemala and to maintain with our struggle the liberty that the valiant sister nation of Central America is defending".

Army

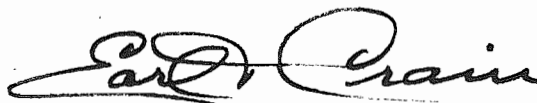
(UNCLASSIFIED) Lt. Col. Oscar MENDOZA has been assigned to the Guatemalan Embassy as Military Attaché to Cuba. He made his official courtesy call on General TABERNILLA, the Chief of Staff, on April 8, 1953.

(RESTRICTED) Lt. Col. José Teofilo VELASCO, the Venezuelan Military Attaché is scheduled to return to Venezuela within the next few days. Although the Cuban Army has not received official notification concerning his successor, they assume he will be replaced.

Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain  
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Participants:

ETCrain, FCFornes, Jr., ETerrell,  
Elmore (MA), Rakow (NA), Beckett (A)

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