

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO : Department of State

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ACT 100 TSKED *Lincolnton*

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FROM : HABANA 1718 February 16, 1951

REF :

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

DEPARTMENT OF STATE RECEIVED
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POLITICAL

Preparations by the C.O.A.S. for the IV Meeting of American Foreign Ministers have been given wide publicity including details of the draft regulations for the meeting published here February 14. Cuba is cooperating fully in these preparations. While there are indications that Cuba, with other Latin American countries, will stress economic phases of the Conference, it is also giving thought to the question of military participation and cooperation in hemisphere defense and security. Before 3000 guests at a farewell banquet for Ambassador BUTLER, attended by almost the entire Government, as well as leaders in the economic field, President PRIO asked the Ambassador to inform President TRUMAN that "Cuba will comply absolutely with her obligations as a member of the United Nations and will not forget the moral obligations which she has incurred through her long alliance with the United States."

Denying a statement the press reported he had made to the effect that Cuban troops would not be sent to Korea, Minister of Defense Rubén de LEON announced on February 10 that "the Committee of Ministers designated to study the Internal Emergency Law (Weeka No. 6, February 9) will submit to the Council of Ministers the draft message which the President will send to the Congress for its authorization, should it be necessary, to send Cuban troops to Korea." If taken at face value, it would appear from the foregoing that the Government considers it necessary to obtain congressional authorization before dispatching Cuban troops abroad, including those already offered to and accepted by the United Nations.

The Special Session of Congress is now scheduled to meet February 19. It has been reported that the Executive Message calling the session will request new emergency legislation applying stricter controls over subversives than is now authorized.

ETCrain/elw
Feb. 16, 1951

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An increasingly bitter polemic between PRC Representative Rolando MASFERRER and the Ortodoxo leader, Senator CHIBAS, has developed into a situation that threatens to result in disorders next Sunday evening when Chibás takes to the air on his weekly radio broadcast. Masferrer, who among other things was termed a "gangster" by Chibás, has demanded and reportedly received from the Minister of Communications authorization to reply to Chibás on the latter's own radio time. Masferrer took this action on the basis of Decree 2273 (Week 32, Aug. 11, 1950) which provides all citizens with the "right of reply" to slander broadcast over the radio. Chibás' followers have announced that Masferrer will speak on Chibás' hour only "over our dead bodies". Reportedly President Prio asked Masferrer to desist in order to prevent trouble, but Masferrer replied he would do so only if the Executive abrogated Decree 2273. While the foregoing situation could cause trouble, there is some possibility the Government may intervene to prevent disorders.

The political parties continue their quest for power on the basis of political pacts, conferences, "secret meetings", et cetera. Latest indications are that Prio may have succeeded in buying off the Liberals, weaning them away from the opposition on the basis of promises of succulent jobs and patronage. Reportedly, even CASTELLANOS has been in contact with the President, negotiating a possible shifting of forces. Grau, who is still holding out, has reportedly run into money troubles in connection with formation of his Cubanidad Party, still largely a paper organization.

P.R.C. leaders state that the party will soon announce its candidate for the presidency in 1952. While Minister of Agriculture HEVIA apparently continues to enjoy the President's favor, many other party leaders persist, rightly or wrongly, in their aspirations. The fact that the President appears currently to back Hevia does not mean that Hevia could not be discarded later on should such a step seem expedient.

The Communist P.S.P. has voiced fears for the lives of various of its leaders, reportedly threatened with assassination. The P.S.P. appears to be attempting to take advantage of the present quest for allies by other parties to start a new drive for a "Popular Front". While the various groups would welcome votes from almost any source, the chances for a popular front, as such, appear non-existent.

It has been rumored that the Government plans to introduce a bill into the Congress whereby the budgetary surplus (estimated at 40-60 million pesos) will be made available to the Government, without strings, for "Public Works". Chibás' opposition forces accuse the Government of attempting to obtain control of this money for the purpose of "buying" the 1952 presidential election.

Chibás has also demanded a congressional investigation of the recent internal loan--a demand which the Government will reportedly support on grounds the loan was a clean operation. Chibás inquires as to the necessity for the loan in view of the large surplus now building up in the Treasury.

ECONOMIC

Labor unity in Cuba moved a step nearer reality during the week with the announcement by Angel COFINO, Secretary General of the National Federation of Electrical Workers, that the CGT (General Confederation of Workers) would be dissolved and the electrical workers affiliated with the CTC (Cuban Workers Confederation). This action would leave the telephone workers as the only national federation outside the CTC. Vicente RUBIERA, Secretary General of the Telephone Workers Federation, issued a statement to the press indicating he favored unity of Cuban workers, but remained firm in his stand to refuse to affiliate with the CTC unless its leaders are completely divorced from politics.

Rumors to the effect that the Administration was considering the possibility of nationalizing Cia. Omnibus Aliados, S. A., provoked strong protests from bus owners.

Upon its return from Washington this week, the delegation representing the National Manufacturers Association of Cuba announced that it had been cordially received by Washington officials. In accordance with a suggestion received in Washington, the delegation has named a National Production Commission to study the Cuban economy and recommend possible contributions Cuba might make to the united defense effort.

Although requests to increase bus fares in Habana have reportedly been denied by the Ministry of Finance, the Federation of University Students—and the public in general have voiced strong protests against any such move.

The Department of Agriculture reported 149 mills were in operation on February 15. This leaves 12 mills yet to start the current sugar crop which is developing normally.

On the night of February 13 President Carlos Prío, completely disregarding the recommendations of the Cuban Sugar Institute as to the distribution of the 1951 Cuban sugar crop, signed a decree which to all intents and purposes threw 2,700,000 long Spanish tons of sugar on the world market. Of this amount, it is estimated that approximately 1,000,000 Spanish long tons have already been sold. The President's action had the effect of weakening world sugar prices. With the possibility of a minimum 5,600,000 long Spanish ton crop in 1951, it is reported President Prío wants to dispose of Cuba's sugar quickly and end the year 1951 free of a burdensome carry-over.

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ARMY

Negative.

AIR

Air to ground gunnery practice for all pilots has been initiated by Colonel Eulogio CANTILLO, Chief of the Cuban Army Air Corps. Firing is being conducted at Cabaña Fortress on the northeast side of Habana Bay. This is the latest development in Colonel Cantillo's program to modernize and revitalize his command and is the first instance of aerial gunnery practice known to have been held in the Cuban Air Corps for at least five years.

Funds in the amount of \$500,000 have been appropriated for construction of a new airport at Santiago de Cuba. It will be located almost due south of the city and will consist of one paved strip approximately 6000 feet long. The airport is designed to be the new international field, but will be under jurisdiction of the Cuban Army. A landing strip of approximately the same length at Camp Columbia on the outskirts of Habana is now nearing completion.



C. Burke Elbrick,
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

Participants: CBElbrick, RMConnell,
ETCrain, Schaffer (MA),
Ryan (NA), Pitts (AA)

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