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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1914

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

June 5, 1953

DATE

6-8-53

REF :

5	ACTION	DEPT.	
For Dept.	OLI	I N	ARA I IBS IFI IPS
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hm	JUN 6		ARMY NAVY AIR CIA OSD

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 23 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA

Part I

Political

(UNCLASSIFIED) Auténtico-Ortodoxo Agreement at Montreal.

The meeting in Montreal of PRIO Auténticos and OCHOA Ortodoxos monopolized political attention during the week. The published result of the meeting was a document in which, while emphasizing that their "organic individuality" would be maintained, the two groups agreed upon certain principles to be the basis for their unified action in opposition to Batista. These principles included a demand for the restoration of the 1940 Constitution; a declaration that the Batista regime is incapable of holding elections that would reestablish "political institutions"; a demand for a provisional and neutral government to hold elections as soon as possible under the restored Electoral Code of 1943; and a condemnation of "personal attacks, gangsterism and terroristic activities as means of combat". The Montreal pact invited all "truly democratic" parties to adhere to it and provided for the designation of liaison committees at all party levels to implement the accord.

Comment on the Montreal agreement has varied widely. Favorable comment points out that it is a good sign when former enemies in Cuban politics can get together ostensibly for the good of Cuba. President Batista called the Montreal meeting "shameful and dishonest" while another Government spokesman said that it was held by small groups motivated by ambition and revenge. Roberto AGRAMONTE condemned the pact as a "betrayal of Chibas" by Ochoa and his followers. Ramón GRAU San Martín shrugged off the agreement as insignificant.

While the meeting was going on Tiempo came out with a story with considerable detail of an invasion being planned from Yucatan by Prio forces. (See Embassy despatch No. 1901 of June 3, 1953).

FCFornes, Jr.:ep  
REPORTER

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(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. It is yet too early to evaluate the effect of the Montreal agreement as an instrument to create some degree of unified opposition to Batista. Some suspect that it is a cover for a more sinister agreement and wonder whether the condemnation of certain acts of violence extends to all such acts. (See Embassy despatch No. 1910 of June 5, 1953.) The Embassy believes that the Prío-Ochoa forces are not capable of successfully carrying out an amphibious invasion such as that described by Tiempo and that the floating of such stories may be intended to add to public uneasiness and confusion. Such belief does not, however, preclude the possibility of landings of groups of armed men, assassination attempts on Batista, and creation of disorder at various points.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Amnesty Law-Decree. On June 1 an amnesty law-decree came into effect. It covered a variety of crimes which might be described as minor or not involving dangerous criminal habits. One of the first effects of the law-decree was to permit the release of the eight defendants in the Easter Sunday conspiracy trial (see Weeka No. 21) who had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Such term of imprisonment was considered to bring these prisoners under the general amnesty granted in cases within the jurisdiction of the "correctional courts".

### Psychological

(UNCLASSIFIED) "Meet the Press" Program Suspended. The popular weekly television program "Ante La Prensa" (Meet the Press) was suspended this week by television network CMQ after the Government had prohibited Cabinet ministers and other high officials from appearing on the program (see Weeka No. 22). The Government charged that the moderator of the program had shown partiality to opposition groups. CMQ replied that it had been precisely in the interest of preserving impartiality that it had invited representatives of both camps to participate, and that with one side abstaining it could not continue the program.

This was the second time that "Meet the Press" had been suspended since the inception of the Batista regime. Previously, the Government had suspended the program on the pretext that it was violating the Cuban law of "Sunday rest" for journalistic activities. (See Embassy Despatch No. 1460 of March 19, 1953.)

(RESTRICTED) New Management of Newspaper Pueblo. The newspaper Pueblo appeared under new management this week. The new editor was Luis ORTEGA, formerly a popular columnist in Prensa Libre. Ortega has the reputation of being especially venal in this country of venal journalism. He had been a member of the Government Consultative Council, a position from which he resigned upon assuming the editorship of Pueblo. It is rumored that the

new Pueblo has the financial backing of Batista, but this rumor has not been confirmed and the first issues of the paper did not have a particularly pro-government slant. The paper maintains its popular character but in its new form has considerably more reader appeal and its circulation is expected to increase under the new management.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Teachers' Salary Cuts. As another sign of the Government's economic retrenchment, a draft decree has been published, the effect of which would be to reduce many teachers' salaries. The draft aroused much opposition and afforded the Communists an opportunity to rush to the defense of the teachers.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Communist Lines. As was to be expected, the Communists increased their efforts on behalf of the Rosenbergs when a new date for their execution was set. The Communist publications continue to be the only ones handling the case in other than a straight news-reporting fashion.

Hoy attacked as the "delivery of the inexhaustible riches of our country to the Government of the United States" a recent decree granting tax exemption on the Nicaro nickel operations.

ARMY

Negative.

NAVY

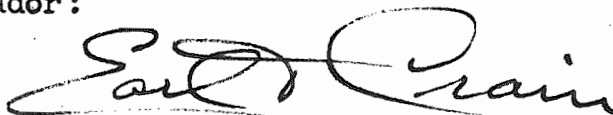
(UNCLASSIFIED) Changes in Officer Personnel. A number of changes in officer personnel assignments were made early in the week. Commodore Pedro M. de la Concepcion Portuondo, the Assistant Chief of Staff of the Navy and Chief of the Department of Direction, was removed from his job and assigned as President of the High Tribunal of the Armed Forces Court. The new assignment is one normally occupied by senior Army and Navy officers on a collateral duty basis. Captain José M. RODRIGUEZ Hernandez was given Concepcion's job, and was immediately promoted to Commodore, his second promotion in less than a month (see Weeka No. 19). Other significant changes were the reassignment away from Headquarters of Commander Gumersindo Fernandez Febles, Lt. Cdr. Manuel F. Alvarez Llaneras, and Lt. Miguel Pons Goizueta. Commander Febles and Commodore Concepcion were both active in the 10 March 1952 coup. Lt. Cdr. Llaneras, foreign liaison officer, and Lt. Pons, Direction of Naval Intelligence, were both close followers of Commodore Concepcion. Cdr. Ramiro A. Rodriguez Palau, who has been Naval Aide to the Chief of Staff of the Army, has been promoted to captain and assigned as Chief of the North Naval District, Havana.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. It is believed that the Chief of Staff of the Navy, Rear Admiral José E. Rodríguez Calderón, made this shake-up of personnel to emphasize to many officers of the Navy that he, and he alone, is running the Navy, and that it is not being controlled by a team of officers who were prominent in bringing Batista back to power. Many of the officers who were ordered from Headquarters appeared to desire that the Cuban Navy be operated like a Navy instead of a police force for the President. The latter function is its principal occupation, and it is expected to continue the same to even a stronger degree with the personnel changes which have been made.

AIR

Negative.

For the Ambassador:



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