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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

E.T. LONG - ARA

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

227 9/20/78

DESP. NO.

FOI 820123 RABAS

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

August 7, 1953

REF : F780011-0246

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED

Action Assigned to Vincelatta

2 For Dept. Use Only hm	ACTION	DEPT.	AUG 10 1953		Action Taken	<u>noted</u>
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	AUG8					

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 32 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA

Date of Action 8-1-53

Part I

Action Office Symbol IAO

Name of Officer Vincelatta

Political

Direction to DC/R PL

(CONFIDENTIAL) Aftermath of Attacks on Armed Forces.

The Army's mopping-up operations following the attacks on the armed forces in Oriente Province (see Weeka No. 31) were reported to have resulted in the deaths of additional alleged insurrectionists. Responsible people in Santiago de Cuba, according to reports reaching the Embassy, believed that the Army was showing no quarter to captured attackers. After interviews with the Archbishop and prominent citizens of Santiago de Cuba, the Army officer commanding in Oriente Province issued proclamations offering assurances against reprisals to those surrendering. As a result of these assurances and personal efforts by the Archbishop to find and induce fugitives to surrender, a group was taken into custody which included Fidel CASTRO who reportedly assumed full responsibility of leadership of the attacks and proclaimed them the work of independent Ortodoxo followers of the Chibás program unaided by and unassociated with any other group. Since then there have been no further reports of fighting between fugitives and the Army, although fugitives are undoubtedly still at large and the Army continues its mopping-up activities. (See despatch No. 223 of August 6, 1953.)

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The situation throughout the country is quiet at present, although tense. All political activity contrary to the Government has ceased, at least publicly, because of censorship, many arrests, continued detention of political leaders for some of whom petitions for habeas corpus writs have been denied on grounds of the suspension of constitutional guarantees, and the hiding out of other political figures, notably Communists. A CAS source (Confidential - U. S. officials only - B-2) reports

FCFornes, Jr.:rc
REPORTER

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that a number of military men were involved in the assaults, which the report described as planned by Castro independently of any other political group.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Broadening of Government Powers. President BATISTA on August 6 signed a law-decree dated July 26 modifying the Public Order Law and the Social Defense Code to make even broader the powers granted the Government upon the suspension of constitutional guarantees (see Weeka No. 31). Stiff penalties are provided for publishing or transmitting false rumors or news reports. The amendments are designed to repress offenses against "national dignity, peace, tranquillity or public confidence", and change existing provisions regarding disrespect for authority, defamation, calumny, etc.

(RESTRICTED) Comment. This new law-decree suggests that the Government considers the situation following the uprisings in Oriente Province sufficiently threatening to warrant additional repressive measures.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Communist Reaction to Government Repressive Measures. The Embassy is informed that the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP) is sorely feeling the loss through the closing of the Communist daily Hoy of its means of expression, communication and orientation. Apparently all Communist leaders likely to be arrested have been instructed by the PSP to remain in hiding until the party decides that a propitious moment has arrived for presenting them to the courts for speedy exoneration of complicity in the Oriente uprisings. The PSP is also said to feel that the "persecution" of it following the events in Santiago de Cuba is only natural in view of its active opposition to Batista but that eventually the party will return to normalcy when the Government seeks, as the PSP reportedly thinks it will, a pacific compromise which may involve the holding of elections. Meanwhile, the PSP is reported to have decided to carry on cautiously with regular party activities and to attempt to reach the public by manifestos and other means to replace the closed-down Hoy.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Hearings on Unconstitutionality Appeal. After 16 days of hearings, the argument phase of the appeal to declare the Constitutional Statute unconstitutional came to a close yesterday (see Weeka No. 31). The attorneys for the Government finished their presentations and today the Court will meet to begin its consideration of the case.

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(UNCLASSIFIED) Sale of Sugar to Russia. It was announced today that Minister of Commerce Raúl LORENZO had issued resolution No. 317 of August 6, 1953 which excluded sugar from the list of commodities the exportation of which had been prohibited by resolution No. 259 of December 26, 1951 to the Soviet Union and countries under its control or influence, including the so-called Popular Republic of China. This action was said to have been taken after the Minister of State had given an opinion that there was no international commitment impeding the free exportation of sugar and in view of the desirability of sugar exports regardless of destination. The Minister of Commerce is reported to have approved a request for authorization to export 20,000 tons of sugar to the Soviet Union.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Rumor Aimed at Financial Stability. During the past week a rumor campaign was launched in Habana through telephone calls and anonymous letters which aimed at starting a bank run by alleging that the Government plans to take over personal bank accounts, issuing debt certificates in exchange. The rumors were strongly denied in an official statement signed by leading financial authorities including Finance Minister GUTIERREZ and National Bank President MARTINEZ Saenz. In an interview granted foreign newspapermen on the same day, President Batista reiterated this official denial (see despatch No. 225 of August 7, 1953).

(RESTRICTED) Comment. Although the anonymous letter described itself as originating not from the opposition but from a group of businessmen, bankers, etc., there is little doubt that this rumor campaign is intended to contribute to the currently uneasy political situation.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Swedish Minister Presents Credentials. On August 5 Carl Herbert de BORGSTIerna presented credentials as Swedish Minister to Cuba. He is also assigned to Venezuela, where he is resident, and to Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Army

Negative.

Navy

(UNCLASSIFIED) Navy Personnel Changes. A Government decree, published August 5, announces that Capitán de Fragata (CDR) Juan Felix Manuel Rolando RODRIGUEZ Alonso has been designated to represent the Cuban Navy on the Joint Inter-American Defense Board in Washington. Rodriguez Alonso was

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recalled to active duty on August 1. CDR Julio FEIJOO, the Cuban Naval Attaché in Washington, has recently had the Defense Board assignment on a collateral duty basis. A Government decree, published August 5, has relieved Capitán de Navío (CAPT) Carlos Antonio LEON Sans of his duties as Chief of the Oriente Naval District (Santiago) and designates Capitán de Fragata (CDR) Mario Felipe RUBIO Baro as Chief of the District. CDR Rubio Baro has been serving as one of the Aides to the Navy Chief of Staff, with special duties in regard to customs clearance.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. Captain Leon Sans has been investigated several times recently for irregularities in his command and has been suspected of dissatisfaction with the present Navy regime. He departed Habana for Santiago by commercial aircraft on the morning of the recent Santiago trouble on July 26. On arrival of the plane, there was considerable argument by military officers at the airport as to whether he should be placed under arrest. He was not arrested at the time. He has a reputation for honesty. No information is available as to his next assignment. Several other officers from the Santiago area have been retired in the past week, in addition to Cdr. FERNANDEZ Febles (see Weeka No. 31). No credible story of the Navy's part in the Santiago attempted revolt has been revealed.

Air

(RESTRICTED) Air Patrol Activities. The Cuban Army Air Force continues to conduct regular patrol flights covering the coastline of the Island. Activity at the Campo Columbia Military Airdrome appears to have returned to normal. Air Force officers whom the Air Attaché has had contact with indicate that the opportunity to participate, even in a small way, in the action against the insurgents has brought about an increase in the morale of the pilots and air crew personnel.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain

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Copies to: Amembassies Ciudad Trujillo, Port-au-Prince, Moscow
MA (4) for USARCARIB and USARFANT
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