

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO : Department of State

737.00(W)/6-2251

FROM : HABANA 2524 June 22, 1951

REF :

SUBJECT : WEEKA NO. 25 FOR STATE, ARMY, NAVY AND AIR DEPARTMENTS
FROM SNA

Action Assigned to *Hinchette*

Action Taken *noted*

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SECTION I

POLITICAL

News of Ambassador BEAULAC's confirmation by the Senate appeared in the evening press June 19. Practically all morning papers on the 20th carried the story, with photographs, on page one. The Embassy is being besieged with queries as to how soon the Ambassador will arrive.

Minister of State SUAREZ Fernandez and Chargé d'Affaires C. Burke ELBRICK signed a Point Four General Agreement for Technical Cooperation between the United States of America and Cuba on the morning of June 20 in a highly publicized ceremony at the Ministry of State. The Minister, in a statement issued this morning, stressed the importance of the agreement, stating that it constituted a step towards the "consolidation of the country's productive resources". He said the agreement was in line with Cuba's constructive foreign policy and reflected Cuba's close relations with the United States. He stated that the general agreement placed Cuba in position to negotiate specific agreements with particular reference to kenaf and bagasse.

The Cuban Senate approved the 1951-52 budget June 19 in an "extraordinary session" the legality of which has been questioned by some observers on grounds that the House was not also in session as required by the Constitution. However these unofficial views are not expected to result in any invalidation of the legislation. In the meantime, there is considerable talk of a Special Session in July to consider the establishment of a system of labor courts. While other matters might also be discussed, there has been no indication that the issue of Cuban troops for Korea will be taken up. In this connection the Havana Herald on June 17 published an editorial stating that official statements re Cuba's willingness to contribute troops to the U.N. were "intended for international consumption since people (here) are bitterly opposed and uninterested in fighting". It added "bombs will have to fall before Cubans will bother".

ETCrain:rc

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The foregoing view is perhaps more pessimistic than the situation warrants since there is no doubt that the great mass of Cubans are firmly on the side of the democracies. Nevertheless, in view of official procrastination, the Embassy has gone ahead with plans to cooperate as a silent partner with World War II Veterans and the Acera del Louvre Committee in opening a booth for registration of volunteers to serve with U.N. forces. First announcements appeared this morning. In a banner headline Prensa Libre said "Cuban Volunteers - to fight against the Communists". A sub-heading reported that the register would open in Habana June 25, anniversary of the initial aggression against the Republic of Korea. The announcement came simultaneously with General Ridgway's call for more troops from other U.N. nations. It is hoped that at least 500 of military age will register.

The Communists were overjoyed June 19 when the Judge who recently ruled that Hoy had been seized illegally (Week 24, June 15), personally turned the property over to them. It was expected that the Government would take action (such as a new "intervention" or appeal to a higher court) at yesterday's Cabinet meeting, but no such action took place. The Cuban Labor Confederation, taking the position that Hoy was paid for by, and belongs to, the workers, has threatened energetic action if the Government fails to take steps in the matter. In the meantime, the Cuban National Anti-Communist Committee has re-formed and the World War II Veterans have announced they are ready for whatever violence may be necessary in order to "rescue" Hoy.

The Communists continue to push for a "national democratic front for peace, democracy and well-being".

The President's choice for the PRC (A) presidential candidacy was somewhat clarified at a meeting June 16 when the four PRC (A) Senators from Pinar del Rio, including the President's brother, Senator "Paco" PRIO, came out for Carlos HEVIA (Week 23, June 8). Other politicos are straggling onto the Hevia bandwagon, but little enthusiasm is shown. Suarez Fernandez, a much more colorful figure, has redoubled his efforts to counteract the President's apparent favoritism. Although a compromise candidate may eventually be chosen, Suarez Fernandez currently appears as the most vigorous of the PRC (A)'s many aspirants. Chibas, head of the opposition Ortodoxo Party and apparently the strongest of all the candidates, is going ahead with his campaign for "honesty in government" - an issue which appeals to many voters including industrial interests.

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Continuing his policy of catering to the workers, the President on June 15 announced to a railway workers' demonstration that he would definitely request nationalization of the United Railways. He added that seizure without adequate compensation was not contemplated.

José FIGUERES, ex-President of Costa Rica, arrived at Habana with Mrs. Figueres June 15, departing the next day for New Orleans. The purpose of the journey is not known.

ARMY

The Army Attaché, accompanied by a Cuban Army Liaison Officer, is currently making an inspection of the various Cuban Army posts in the area between Habana and Santiago de Cuba.

NAVY

The bodies of Embassy Guard, Sgt. Robert James SHELDON, USMC and Agustin FERNANDEZ, a Cuban janitor, were found early Monday morning, June 18, in the Embassy Visa Section. Both men were shot to death. Indications are that Sheldon shot the janitor in the back of the head and then committed suicide. The Embassy is conducting a thorough investigation. Lt. Charles J. BRATENAH (MC), USN from the Naval Hospital, Key West, participated in the autopsy and the Cuban Navy has been very helpful in providing necessary assistance.

AIR

Negative.


C. Burke Elbrick
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Participants:

CBElbrick, DWGClark, ETCrain,
ETerrell, Ryan (NA), Rarick (AA)

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MA (4) for USARCARIB and USARFANT

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