

Air Priority  
PRIORITY

SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION  
(Security Classification)

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737.00(W)/8-2952

AUG 29 1952

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

317  
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

August 29, 1952  
DATE

REF :

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|                                    | REC'D<br>SEP 1 | OTHER                     | ARMY NAVY AIR CIA           |

Action Assigned to *[Handwritten]*  
Action ~~Info~~ *[Handwritten]*

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 35 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA

Date of Action *[Handwritten]*  
Action Office *[Handwritten]*  
Name of Officer *[Handwritten]*

Part I

Political

(CONFIDENTIAL) The Ortodoxo party showed a new attitude of stiffening and spirited resistance against the BATISTA regime during the week. The first in a series of events indicating this was an interview of Emilio OCHOA, Ortodoxo party president, on the weekly television show "Meet the Press" of August 24. Ochoa's remarks on this program constituted an unequivocal call for rebellion against the Batista Government of such frankness that the Minister of the Interior ordered his arrest while still watching the program. Agents of the SIM (Military Intelligence) picked up Ochoa as soon as the program was over. He was jailed and the following day indicted before the Urgency Court on 11 counts of incitement to rebellion.

737.00 (W) / 8-2952

(RESTRICTED) Two days later, August 26, the Ortodoxo party scheduled meetings throughout the island to commemorate the birthday of Eddy CHIBAS. Attempts to hold these meetings despite the Government ban on them resulted in a series of arrests which on August 27 had most of the leaders of the party in jail. In Habana José PARDO Llada and a group of demonstrators were arrested as they attempted to pass through police cordons around the party office on the Prado. These arrested were charged with incitement to violence against the public forces as a result of one of the most spirited protest demonstrations called since Batista assumed power. The same day in Santiago de Cuba Roberto AGRAMONTE, the party's presidential candidate, and three others were arrested as they stepped off the plane from Habana. Interruptions of the planned ceremonies plus reported circulation of "subversive" leaflets at that time touched off a number of incidents ending with the arrest of some 50 Ortodoxos. In Pinar del Rio some 20 Ortodoxos were arrested on clandestine meeting and conspiracy charges.

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Arrests and similar incidents were reported from a number of other cities in the island.

(RESTRICTED) All those arrested, including Ochoa, were arraigned before Urgency Courts on August 27. Ochoa was charged with sedition on the basis of his remarks on the "Meet the Press" program and of SIM information which stated Ochoa was planning a revolution to have been held September 4, but postponed. Ochoa was committed to jail pending trial on September 5. The Urgency Court in Santiago de Cuba acquitted Agramonte and the others arrested there on August 28. Pardo Llada and the group arrested in Habana were released provisionally, pending a trial September 22.

(SECRET) The National Directive Council of the PPC (Ortodexo) issued a public statement giving "decided and unanimous support" to the declarations of Ochoa on the "Meet the Press" program, presumably thereby elevating his statement to the status of party policy. This, together with other indications of a new spirit of active resistance by the Ortodexos, may indicate that the deep split between the faction favoring direct action and that favoring passive resistance has ended. It appears that the Ortodexo leaders have been inviting this form of "repression" from the Government in order to mobilize public opinion behind them as the leaders of the opposition cause, while discrediting the Government's statements of "democracy". Whether the Ortodexos are prepared to go further remains to be seen. A confidential report from the Cuban police alleges a planned uprising the night of September 3. September 4 reportedly is to be celebrated as Soldiers Day this year as it was under the previous Batista regime. The police have allegedly been alerted in case of violence on this occasion.

(SECRET) The sudden surge of Ortodexo activity and Government counter-Ortodexo activity obscured the question of the newspaperman KUCHILAN (Weeka 34 August 22) who was reportedly attacked by agents of the SIM. The threatened strike of newspapermen if the assailants were not caught did not materialize, probably largely because of a speech Batista addressed to the nation on August 22. In it he characterized his Government as one appealing to the democratic sentiment of the Cuban people and therefore supporting freedom of the press. He added, however, that his Government was of necessity one of authority and implied that abuse of the "mission of the press" would not be tolerated. In a meeting held August 24 the strike motion was voted down by a heavy majority of newsmen. There are indications, however, that newspapermen's organizations do not

consider the matter closed. In the meantime, the SIM published what appears to be a rather fanciful story, laying responsibility for the Kuchilán incident on Aureliano SANCHEZ Arango, but it has failed to apprehend anyone directly connected with the affair. In this connection three persons were arrested last week, charged with being in contact with Sanchez Arango. Of these, the civilian was released for lack of evidence and the two members of the military were tried by court martial, and reportedly sentenced to prison for 4 years and to dishonorable discharge. This continues what seems to be a precedent that "conspirators" have not been convicted in civil courts, while those tried by court martial have been convicted.

#### Psychological

Negative.

#### Military

The Cuban Army Liaison Officer stated on August 27, 1952 that SIM is presently conducting an investigation of the activities of José Luis HERNANDEZ, an ex-Cuban army soldier, who is reportedly offering the services to the UN of 2,000 volunteers to fight in Korea (Weeka No. 34 August 22, 1952) and that the Army Attaché will be advised of the results of the investigation.

#### Naval

Negative.

#### Air

One of the indirect results of Ochoa's arrest on August 24 was a suit for libel brought before the Supreme Court by General Luis ROBAINA Piedra, Quartermaster General of the Army. General Robaina charges that the Ortodexo leader made false statements that the 25 F-47 aircraft bought by the present Cuban Government from the United States for the sum of \$1,250,000 had already been bought by the PRIO Government and the then Chief of Staff General Genevevo PEREZ Damera for \$600,000. The implication was that the difference in money appropriated for this purpose was being improperly used.

COMMENT: General Robaina explained that the 25 F-47's were acquired at the factory with parts and accessories for two

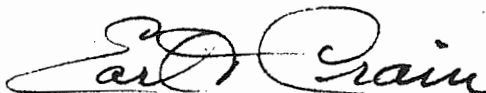
Page 4 of  
Desp. No. 317  
From HABANA

SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION  
(Classification)

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of  
Encl. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Desp. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_

years' duration, that the transaction was between governments for the sum of \$1,250,000 and that a check for that amount was sent to the United States Government. This office has no knowledge of F-47's being bought by the army under General Perez Damera.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Grain  
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Participants:

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Amembassies Ciudad Trujillo, Port-au-Prince

MA (4) for USARCARIB and USARFANT  
AA (1)  
NA (2) for Guantánamo

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