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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

325
DESP. NO.

September 29, 1954

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REF : Weeka No. 38

25 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.	IN F O	OTHER	OCCASION	DATE	OCCASION	OCCASION	OCCASION
	04-10	cc/R-2							
	REC'D								
	9-30	US 1A-8							

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 39 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

Part I

Political

(UNCLASSIFIED) UPROAR OVER REPRESENTATION ON ELECTORAL BOARDS. The political spotlight during the past few days has been focussed practically exclusively on the question of the distribution of the "presidencies" of the precinct electoral boards between the government coalition and GRAU's Auténticos (see Weeka No. 38). The Council of Ministers refused to approve the draft decree which the Superior Electoral Tribunal had submitted with a view to legalizing "parity of presidencies". This action was supported by arguments that such parity would place the individual parties in the coalition at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the Auténticos and that historically it was unjustified since previous electoral codes contained the same provisions in this respect as the current code. Another factor in the Council decision was the belief that if this concession were granted, Grau would soon put forth additional demands. In accordance with the Council's verdict, the Superior Electoral Tribunal revoked its previous ruling granting "parity of presidencies".

Grau's reaction was to renew his threat to withdraw from the electoral process. His argument was that unless his party held the "presidencies" of half the precinct boards, guarantees against faking returns would be non-existent and under such circumstances he would not "lead the people" to the elections. He called a meeting of the Auténtico executive board for September 27th to decide upon the course of action to be followed.

At this juncture Angel CAMBO Ruiz, a television executive, injected himself into the picture as mediator. He proposed to Grau that the opposing points of view be discussed between the two groups, a proposal which the Auténtico executive board accepted on the 27th with a vote of confidence in Grau under which he named a commission of negotiators. Gambó then made

FCFornes, Jr.;mgw

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an identical proposal to Batista, who in a political speech on September 26th had indicated a disposition to discuss differences with Grau and who in reply to Cambó designated his own group of representatives to meet with the Auténticos. The negotiators began their talks on the 28th but reserve is being maintained thus far regarding progress.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. Grau's protestations regarding the lack of guarantees without "parity of presidencies" are suspect since he raised no such complaints months ago when demanding and receiving concessions to guard against possible discrimination against his party. This leads to the belief that his present tactics are designed to take advantage of a situation which unexpectedly offered the possibility of gaining advantage for the Auténticos at the expense of the coalition and to put Grau in the limelight as the people's champion against crooked elections. His threat to withdraw from the elections must also be evaluated in the light of the fact that not all his followers would join him in withdrawal, particularly those to whom the attractions of the senatorships reserved for the minority would prove irresistible. Thus it appears that Grau will not be precipitous in putting into effect a threat that may be mostly a tactical maneuver, while on the other hand Batista is not anxious to force Grau's hand and run the risk of a situation in which opposition to his election as president could be described as technical only.

(SECRET) CONTINUED RUMORS OF REVOLT. The Embassy continues to receive rumors of plotting against the regime. These have not varied much from previous rumors, and Ernesto de la FE and high-ranking army officers are still mentioned (see Weeka No. 38). A new slant is that de la Fe, according to one informant, will be sent to Europe to get him out of the way. This could be done by a diplomatic assignment, a device used before for such a purpose.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. The Embassy is still without information that would assist in evaluating the truth of these rumors.

(UNCLASSIFIED) HAITIAN AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS. On September 24 Pierre L. RIGAUD presented to President Andrés DOMINGO y Morales del Castillo his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Haiti.

(UNCLASSIFIED) THE ORIENT. Attlee's statement that the West should jettison Chiang Kai-shek drew severe criticism. The Diario Nacional termed Attlee imprudent and irresponsible and expressed alarm that Attlee might some day head the British government. Alerta called the statement poorly timed -- "the worst blunder by Whitehall since World War II" -- and prejudicial to United States-British relations. Attlee's remarks against

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Chiang could have been uttered by Mao or Chou, said Alerta, and show the clear line of difference between the United States and Britain regarding the Orient. Información commentator Francisco PARES, writing in Bohemia, predicted that the U. S. Seventh Fleet plus Chiang's air power would prevent a Communist invasion of Formosa and termed the Quemoy attacks meaningless taunts. In his own paper Parés said Chiang would welcome a Communist attack on Formosa because it would project him to world prominence once again and thrust his regime into a greater military alliance with the United States; Parés foresaw no immediate Red invasion. Several papers praised the U. N. refusal to seat Red China. Excelsior and Alerta said a nation actively at war against the U. N. should not expect a seat. The Diario Nacional explained that Mao's revolution was no popular movement but part of an international Communist plan for world conquest, and the U. N. was founded to prevent such aggressions.

(UNCLASSIFIED) EUROPE. Several papers backed the idea of a rearmed Germany. Excelsior said France should find a way to agree to a rearmed Germany in a form that would make the German contribution effective, since any real defense setup against communism requires both a strong France and an armed Germany as well as cooperation between the two. El Mundo thought France should wake up to the fact that the real menace to Western civilization comes not from Germany but from Soviet Russia. El Mundo said French fears she will be left out of a new western alliance are groundless because her participation is vital. Alerta said that if France rejects the idea of rearming Germany, the West must adopt the weaker plan using Germany and bypassing the French. Excelsior termed the Mendes-France alternative to EDC as unpalatable to Washington as French rejection of EDC, and said this is understandable because the French alternative lacks sufficient teeth to be effective. Excelsior said that if the European situation does not clear up and France and England continue their international flirtations with Moscow and Peiping, the United States will have no recourse but to turn its back and pull her occupation troops out of the Old World. Francisco Parés in Información predicted that the United States will back Germany to the point where two separate blocs will emerge at the forthcoming London Conference -- the United States and Germany vs. France and Britain.

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The Diario Nacional said that the question of Trieste cannot wait much longer if the security of the Mediterranean is to be preserved. The paper said that if Mr. Robert Murphy makes no headway on a solution where Ambassador Luce failed, the Trieste problem will become more acute than that of Germany-France. Alerta considered Mr. Murphy's visit to Tito first as indicating that Yugoslavia and not Italy was the nettlesome problem.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative

FC Fornes Jr
for Carlos C. Hall
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Participants: CCHall, HMRandall, JPHoover, FCFornes, Jr.,
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RGCushing, Elmore (MA), Slaton (AA),
Krisel (NA).

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AA (2)

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