

Air Priority
PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION
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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

344
DESP. NO.

August 28, 1953
DATE

Action Assigned to Simellette

Action Taken noted

2 For Dept. Use Only rrm	ACTION OLI	DEPT. I N F O	ARA I IBS IFT IPS
	REC'D Aug. 29	OTHER ARMY NAVY AIR CIA OSD PSB	

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

Action Office Symbol IAO

Name of Officer Simellette

Assignment to DC/R file

Part I

Political

(RESTRICTED) Prospect of Lifted Censorship and Restored Guarantees. A source within the Ministry of Information has stated that on Armed Forces Day on September 4 President BATISTA will announce the lifting of censorship of information media and a "relaxation" of the suspension of constitutional guarantees, provided no untoward event intervenes. There has been no indication, however, that the Public Order Law will be revoked.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The Embassy has received indications that the Government now feels its position more secure and that it may in due course make proposals aimed at a compromise with the opposition and the latter's participation in elections. For both these reasons an early return to normal conditions would be advisable, although it should not be overlooked that the Public Order Law, if allowed to stand unchanged, could be a powerful weapon for repression. It must be noted, however, that the courts thus far in the few cases in which defendants have been found guilty under the Public Order Law have not shown a disposition to enforce it harshly, more or less minimum fines only having been imposed.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Cuban Request for Arms Under MDAP. A recent request by Cuba for arms under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act was of such a size in view of current Cuban financial difficulties as to lead to the conclusion that it was motivated in part by domestic political considerations and was intended to contribute to the defense of the regime rather than continental security (see despatches Nos. 295 of August 20 and 322 of August 26, 1953). The arms supplied

FCFornes, Jr.:rc
REPORTER

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by the United States to Batista's Government are regarded by a segment of the population as weapons to attack rather than defend democracy and to maintain an oppressive regime in power.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Ex-Officials of Prio Administration Indicted. On August 24 a Habana judge returned a criminal indictment against eight former officials of the administration of ex-President Carlos PRIO, including the latter's brother, Antonio PRIO Socarrás (former Minister of the Treasury). The indictment followed the discovery in circulation of some 15,500,000 pesos in silver certificates that were supposed to have been burned in 1949. The indictment required that each accused post bond to cover pecuniary responsibility in the startling amount of 22,000,000 pesos. The indictment permits the attachment of personal assets if the bond is not posted. Only one of the accused is now in Cuba. (See despatch No. 331 of August 27, 1953.)

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. It is impossible to say whether the accused will ever be prosecuted under this indictment, since other malfeasance cases in the past still lie dormant in the courts. Should active prosecution be undertaken, it is possible that the Cuban Government may seek extradition of Antonio Prio and the other accused now in exile, some of whom are certainly in the United States.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Possible Return of Communist Property. In connection with the possible restoration of constitutional guarantees (see above), a report (evaluated B-2) has been received to the effect that the headquarters of the Cuban Communist party and the offices of its newspaper Hoy will be returned to the party if the suspension of guarantees is terminated. It is said that the SIM is putting the premises in order and restoring them to about their condition prior to seizure.

The Embassy has been informed that as long as guarantees continue in suspense, Communist party activities are confined to what the party considers the irreducible minimum, especially those involving contact with other political groups that are being very cautious under existing circumstances.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Cardinal's Injury Ascribed to Police. Usually reliable sources have informed the Embassy that the head injury of the Cardinal Archbishop of Habana, Monsignor Manuel ARTEAGA (see Weeka No. 33), was caused by a blow by

a member of the armed forces. According to these reports, the Servicio de Inteligencia Militar (SIM) and the National Police entered the Archbishop's Palace to search it on suspicion that opposition members had been permitted to take refuge there. The Cardinal reportedly protested the search and was struck on the head, receiving a wound said to have required 20 stitches. The Cardinal has now been released from the clinic where he was treated.

(RESTRICTED) Comment. If this report is true, the attack on the Cardinal shows an uncommon lack of respect for an eminent prelate in a traditionally Catholic country. In this connection, it may be significant that considerable publicity was given to the confirmation of one of Batista's sons in a private ceremony by the Cardinal himself after his return to his residence.

(UNCLASSIFIED) UN Debate on Composition of Korean Political Conference. Only two Cuban analysts commented on the debate now going on in the UN General Assembly on the composition of the political conference which is to decide the future of Korea. Victor BILBAO, in Excelsior, favored the exclusion of India from the conference since the appearance of pro-Communist India as an arbiter on the side of the West would undermine the authority and prestige of the United Nations. Francisco PARES, in Información, held that though India would probably be excluded, the actual composition of the political conference was meaningless since a parliamentary victory in the UN is not a victory if Russia chooses to ignore it.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Comment. From the start Cuba strongly supported the United States position regarding the exclusion of India from the political conference.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Ousting of Sultan of Morocco. Certain Cuban observers, commenting on the ousting by France of the Sultan of French Morocco, explained France's action in terms of the strategic importance of Morocco in the defense plans of the West. On the other hand, other commentators looked upon the deposition of the Sultan as an attempt by France to crush the nationalist aspirations of the Protectorate.

Army

(RESTRICTED) Relaxation of Army Tension. The tension which existed within the Army after the Santiago uprising on July 26, 1953 has lessened considerably during the past

week, at least superficially. For example, and in direct contrast to the state of readiness maintained on the holiday of August 12, 1953 (see Weeka No. 33), a very elaborate program is planned for the celebration of September 4, the anniversary of the 1933 Batista coup. The program will begin at 0630 and last all day until after midnight in all commands throughout the island. All work will be suspended except "indispensable" guard duty, and all military personnel who were in the Army on September 4, 1933 will be given 48 hour passes.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. It is believed that this relaxation of tension is the result of the belief by the Government that it has, for the immediate future at least, broken the back of any uprising or invasion, by the wholesale arrest and imprisonment of literally hundreds of suspects since July 26, 1953. Those who might have been connected with any revolt plans have undoubtedly been picked up along with many innocent people.

Navy

Negative.

Air

(UNCLASSIFIED) New Air Force Aide to Minister of Defense. Lt. Colonel Miguel A. MATAMOROS y Valle was assigned by Army Special Order No. 223 of August 22, 1953 as Aide de Camp to Dr. Nicolas PEREZ Hernandez, Minister of National Defense (see Weekas Nos. 33 and 34).

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. Matamoros' new assignment indicates that he continues to enjoy Batista's confidence and remains on the "first team". It also appears that the personal difference between Matamoros and Colonel PASCUAL was sufficiently great to make it impossible for him to return to the Air Force under Pascual's command.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

Earl T. Crain

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AA (1)

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