

Air Priority  
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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
RECEIVED  
SEP 11 1953  
DESP. NO.

September 11, 1953  
Assigned to *Malte*

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 37 for State, Army, Navy and Air  
Departments from SANA

Office Symbol *197*

of Officer *W. J. [unclear]*

Section to DC/R *file*

Part I

Political

(UNCLASSIFIED) Probable Further Postponement of Elections.  
 Justo Luis DEL POZO, Mayor of Habana and chairman of the Govern-  
 ment's Electoral Commission, announced that the Commission  
 would meet to study a recommendation to the Government to post-  
 pone elections from June 1, 1954, the present scheduled date,  
 to the end of 1954. The Mayor indicated that such postpone-  
 ment would be on account of the interruption of the electoral  
 process by the suspension of constitutional guarantees. Del  
 Pozo expressed doubt that guarantees would be restored earlier  
 than originally provided in view of continued incitement to  
 revolt, exemplified by a letter from ex-President PRIO pub-  
 lished by the New York Times on September 5. Since the Mayor  
 said nothing regarding the type of election to be held, the  
 press speculated that the Commission would also consider  
 recommending the holding of general elections for all offices  
 including the presidency, instead of partial elections not  
 including the presidency as now scheduled. (See despatch  
 No. 381, September 10, 1953.)

(RESTRICTED) Comment. The Embassy has felt for some  
 time that further postponement of elections was a distinct  
 possibility, even without the excuse of suspension of guar-  
 antees. There is not only the obvious point that repeated  
 postponements would keep BATISTA in power but also the thought  
 that, if the intransigent opposition should ever be prevailed  
 upon to cooperate in elections, the whole electoral process  
 would probably have to be set ahead to permit registration  
 of parties. Finally, there is the ever-present question of  
 whether the armed forces might not insist on postponement of  
 elections if not satisfied that Batista would be a candidate  
 under propitious circumstances.

FCFornes, Jr.:rc  
REPORTER

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(UNCLASSIFIED) Batista's September 4 Speech. President Batista's speech on September 4, the 20th anniversary of his first assumption of power, was in the nature of a "state of the nation" address, in which Batista, as he has done before, defended the March 10 coup and his regime and enumerated the achievements and plans of his Government in the economic field. In speaking of political matters, however, he said nothing to come up to advance expectations of "spectacular" announcements. Censorship and the suspension of constitutional guarantees were touched upon in generalities that could not be construed as meaning that either one or the other would be done away with before the end of the 90-day period originally specified. The possibility of a "national solution" was only implied in the President's words that "the political parties of the opposition and of the Government must lead the citizenry to the goal of institutional normality". In one section of his speech Batista denounced Communism as an "enemy of constant danger" and warned against the infiltration tactics of the Communists intent on sowing discord.

(RESTRICTED) Comment. There is reason to believe that this speech was extensively rewritten on the eve of its presentation. Why this was done is not known but it is suspected that the original version would have more nearly met advance expectations and might have offered electoral concessions that the final version did not contain. There is some speculation that pressure from the armed forces may have been responsible for the last-minute changes. This speculation is not concerned with changes to include quotation of a Time magazine article (see below) but with the failure of the speech to make expected significant political pronouncements. The reaction of those present at the delivery of the speech seemed apathetic in comparison with the reception of Batista's speeches on previous occasions. It is interesting to note that on September 8, at a military banquet in his honor, Batista was reported to have affirmed his "willingness to consider an electoral solution to the present impasse" but never a "solution imposed by violence or force".

(UNCLASSIFIED) Cardinal Leaves Cuba. In his September 4 speech, President Batista quoted from an article in Time magazine dated September 7 and attacked the "insidious propaganda" regarding Cardinal ARTEAGA's head injury, which he ascribed to a regrettable accident. A few days later the Cardinal announced that he was going to Rome for a rest on doctor's orders and stated that his injury resulted from an "unsuccessful attempt at a common crime". His private

secretary amplified this by describing how the Cardinal was hurt during an attempt at armed robbery in his residence. On September 9 the Cardinal left Cuba en route to Rome via New York. (See despatches Nos. 377, September 9 and 381, September 10, 1953.)

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The effort to cover up the Cardinal's injury as an accident has failed, principally because the Cardinal himself exploded the accident theory. It can only be suspected that he did this to let it be inferred that he actually had been attacked by police (see Weeka No. 35), while at the same time permitting the face-saving "common crime" version to be put forth. The Embassy has received a report that the Cardinal will remain in Rome for several months and that he will be joined by the Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba who had already proceeded to Mexico. Barring political repercussions from any protracted absence from Cuba of these two ranking Catholic prelates, it appears that the question of the Cardinal's injury will be regarded as a closed matter.

(UNCLASSIFIED) New Clandestine Opposition Group. There has come to the Embassy's attention a leaflet announcing the organization of Periodistas Unidos por La Libertad (PUL) (Journalists United for Liberty), an anti-Government group organized on a clandestine basis. This leaflet denounces the Government in strong terms, particularly for its actions that have restricted journalistic activities and especially for censorship and the Public Order Law. The objectives of the group were said to include the reestablishment of a "regime of justice" under which "liberty is not an object of persecution" and freedom of thought "is not a crime that must be prosecuted".

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. Other than that contained in the leaflet, the Embassy has no information regarding the PUL except that it appears to be non-Communist.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Statement of Secretary Dulles re German Elections. Secretary DULLES' statement concerning the German elections in his September 3 press conference was criticized by some Cuban commentators as imprudent on the grounds that it constituted American intervention in West Germany's internal affairs and would hurt ADENAUER's chances for victory in the elections. On the other hand, one editorialist praised the Secretary for his "honorable sincerity". Another felt it could not be proved that the unification of Germany would come about as a result of the victory of an anti-Soviet government in Western Germany.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Comment. Adenauer's sweeping victory effectively silenced all criticism of the Secretary's statement.

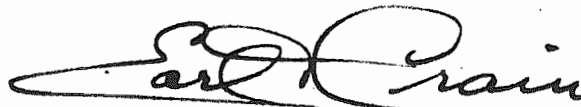
(UNCLASSIFIED) West German Elections. Cuban commentators expressed satisfaction with the results of the September 6 elections which returned Konrad Adenauer and his Christian-Democrat party to power in West Germany, pointing out that Adenauer's victory was as much a victory for the West as it was for Germany. One observer considered that one result of the victory would be the replacement of France by West Germany as the center of power in Western Europe.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Secretary Dulles' Speech at American Legion Convention. The two Cuban analysts who commented on Secretary Dulles' September 2 speech at the American Legion Convention in St. Louis applauded the speech for its clear and firm statement of United States policy in the event of further Communist aggression in Asia.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:



Earl T. Crain  
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Participants:

ETCrain, FCFornes, Jr., ETerrell, JCanter,  
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