

Air Priority

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737.00(W)/9-1853

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA SEP 14 1953 412

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

September 18, 1953

DATE

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	REC'D SEP 20	OTHER ARMY NAVY AIR CIA	ction Taken
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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 38 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA  
of Action 9/24/53

Part I

Office Symbol 119  
Officer W. J. Pines  
Full

Political

(UNCLASSIFIED) Visit of Congressman Jackson. Congressman D. L. JACKSON, accompanied by R. F. WOODWARD, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, J. J. MANZANARES, Assistant to the Congressman, and Col. E. W. DURANT, Jr., USMC, arrived in Habana on September 15 on the first stop of a study trip through Latin America. The Congressman called on President BATISTA and on the Minister of State and was the guest of honor at luncheon of the American Chamber of Commerce. He familiarized himself with various activities of interest in connection with his study trip (such as the kenaf program) and will leave Habana today for Santiago de Cuba.

(RESTRICTED) Comment. The Congressman's visit was well received and he expressed himself as entirely satisfied with the results of his stay in Habana.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Postponement of Elections. The press gave conflicting reports of answers made by President Batista on September 14 to reporters' questions regarding elections. He is generally interpreted to have confirmed that elections will in fact be postponed (see Weeka No. 37), with the Electoral Commission to meet shortly to work out details of the postponement. Some claim that he also indicated that general instead of partial elections will be considered.

(RESTRICTED) Signs of Continued Vigilance by Authorities. In view of the difficulty of maintaining a constant alert and an increased feeling of security on the part of the Government, security measures have undoubtedly been relaxed gradually since the Oriente uprisings. However, that vigilance is still maintained is demonstrated by the fact that patrol car police have been seen searching cars at night on a main city thoroughfare.

FCFornes, Jr.:ep  
REPORTER

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(UNCLASSIFIED) Archbishop of Santiago Returns to Cuba.  
Enrique PERES Serantes, Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba, arrived in Habana by air from Mexico on September 13.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The Embassy is informed that prior to his departure from Cuba, the Cardinal Archbishop of Habana had communicated with Monsignor Pères and that it had been decided that the latter should not join the Cardinal for his stay in Rome (see Weeka No. 37). The return of Archbishop Pères was given no publicity whatever and it is reported that he flatly refused to permit a press release concerning his arrival. On the basis of the reports received by the Embassy, it is surmised that the Cardinal concluded that the absence from the country of both prelates at the same time would be unwise if his purpose is to let the furor over his injury die down.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Letter of Communist Leader Receives Publicity.  
In his column in Alerta of September 16, Ramón VASCONCELOS published a letter of September 11 to him from Juan MARINELLO, president of the Communist party. Vasconcelos did this on the grounds that Cuba was in a state of transition to a mood of political compromise, that demands for reform were not an exclusive Communist prerogative, and that Marinello advocated an electoral solution. Marinello's letter denied Communist implication in the attack on the armed forces in Santiago de Cuba and declared that the Communists were against violence. Otherwise, it was nothing more than a restatement of old Communist propaganda for a "National Democratic Front" government, for Communist panaceas including trade with the Soviet orbit and the peace line, and for elections permitting the participation of all parties, naturally including the Communist.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. It is difficult to reconcile Batista's warning of September 4 against the infiltration tactics and demagogical demands of Communism with this loaning with specious justification of the column of a holder of government office and an apologist for Batista for obvious Communist propaganda. The letter must have been published with the permission of the censor (unless he was incredibly lax) and can be regarded with suspicion as an indication of collaboration between the Communists and at least some of Batista's supporters. At best, publication of the letter might be regarded as paid propaganda accepted by a publisher entirely devoid of scruples.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Communist View of Present Situation. The Embassy is informed that the reduced number of directors of the Communist party who still meet think that the party is going through its most difficult period. According to this information, there is lassitude in the party ranks; efforts towards a "united opposition front" lag because of difficulties in maintaining

contact with leaders of other groups; and propaganda by the only means still available (leaflets, manifestos, etc.) runs into difficulty with apprehensive printers and is risky and inefficient. These Communist leaders are said to feel that others of their number who are sought by the authorities must remain in hiding. They are reported to plan to attack the denunciation of Communism in Batista's September 4 speech by pointing out that the Communist party is the same now as when Batista associated with it and approved its program and that hence his speech can be accounted for only on the basis that Batista has changed.

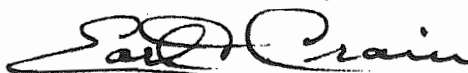
(UNCLASSIFIED) Cubans Reported Arrested in Mexico. Eufemio FERNANDEZ Ortega, former head of the secret police under the Prío administration, and four other Cubans were reported in press despatches from Mexico City to have been taken into custody by Mexican authorities as a "security measure" shortly before the arrival of a Cuban mission to participate in independence celebrations. The press has since published a Mexican denial that the men were held following their arrest.

(UNCLASSIFIED) New Governor of Oriente Province. On September 12, Julián GARCIA Benítez took office as Governor of the Province of Oriente, succeeding Waldo PEREZ Almaguer. Observers regarded the change as a move to eliminate friction within the Oriente branch of Batista's party, the Partido Acción Progresista (PAP). Ex-Governor Pérez, who held the office for about a year, is said to have attempted to undermine the authority of PAP provincial leader Anselmo ALLIEGRO.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:



Earl T. Crain  
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Participants:

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