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## FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM

AMEMBASSY, HABANA

DESP. NO.

TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF

|                             |                 |   |
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| 25<br>For Dept.<br>Use Only | ACTION          | DEPT.   |
|                             | REC'D           | OTHER   |
|                             | 011-10<br>10-21 | OC/R-2 ara-2<br>USIA-8 Army-35 Navy-39 Air-24<br>CIA-16 OSD-4 |

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 42 for State, Army, Navy and Air  
Departments from SANA.

Part IPolitical

(UNCLASSIFIED) FURTHER ARRESTS IN CONNECTION WITH EXPLOSIVES SEIZURE. A total of 21 people are said now to be under arrest in connection with the alleged seizure of explosives on October 12 (see Weeka No. 41) and despatch No. 396, October 15, 1954). Another 20 persons are reportedly being sought for complicity in the terroristic campaign for which the explosives were supposedly intended. The official version of the plot has been expanded to include a "suicide" group whose purpose was to have been the assassination of Batista with hand grenades, even at the cost of the lives of the assassins.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. Admitting that plotting of the kind described might well be going on, the Embassy views the official version of this case with reserve and a certain degree of skepticism. In any event the publicity given this outstanding political occurrence of the week has not served to quiet fears of trouble before the elections.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) CLOSE OF ELECTIONEERING CAMPAIGN AND APPREHENSIONS OF TROUBLE. The Electoral Code provides that all electioneering shall cease a week prior to the elections, that is, on October 25. Batista and Grau are active in their final week of campaigning, with the former's meetings and speeches continuing to receive greater press publicity than that accorded Grau who is said to be spending very little on his campaign, feeling that he cannot compete with the government propaganda machine. Reports reaching the Embassy indicate that in many quarters there is apprehension that there will be trouble prior to the date of the elections. None of these reports are specific but are indicative of a feeling of uneasiness that is in no way allayed by the reports of seizures of explosives and terroristic plots. (see above).

FCFornes, Ur., mgw

REPORTER

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October 20, 1954

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Encl. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
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(UNCLASSIFIED) ERNESTO DE LA FE TAKEN OFF THE AIR. The thrice-weekly radio program of Ernesto DE LA FE, former cabinet minister, was ordered off the air by the government ostensibly for non-compliance with regulations. This effectively stifled his anti-Communist and anti-election campaign since the press had previously been giving him only minimum coverage. While de la Fe professed to be unable to discover who in the government was responsible for the move against him, he ascribed it to those who did not want revealed to the people of Cuba "the difficult situation in which the regime has been placed by the penetration of political hacks and thieves and by Communist infiltration that reaches even the Council of Ministers".

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. It is possible that the silencing of de la Fe was part of a reported policy of "going easy" on Communists until after the elections (see Weeka No. 38). It is equally possible that with November 1 drawing closer it was considered advisable that de la Fe be restrained from continuing his anti-election campaign and his public exhortation of Batista to break free from his self-seeking advisers, revert to the "principles of the March 10 revolution", and cancel elections that de la Fe sees as bringing only discredit on that revolution.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITY CLOSED. Public schools were closed on October 18 and will not reopen until November 8. The school premises were turned over to the Superior Electoral Tribunal for the installation of polling places for the November 1 elections. The measure did not affect private schools. The University of Havana suspended activities for the same period, presumably as insurance against student activities directed against the government or the elections.

(UNCLASSIFIED) ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS. On October 15, 1954, Victor FERNANDEZ Bazán presented to President Andrés DOMINGO y Morales del Castillo his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Argentina.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) CTC AND GUATEMALA. Rafael OTERO, the representative in Guatemala of the Cuban Confederation of Workers (CTC), has returned to Cuba, largely because of the expense of keeping him in Guatemala. While seeing the picture as not very encouraging from the trade union point of view, he seems to feel that there is a real chance to accomplish something with the unions if outside help and money can be brought in. CASTILLO Armas he views as incapable of elaborating a program that even a single sector of the population (church, business, labor, etc.) can adhere to; and he represents the over-all situation as chaotic. If the Catholics win control of the labor movement, he believes they will be willing to take it into ORIT and ICFTU. It would be hard to exaggerate his pleasure at the cooperation extended him by the Embassy in Guatemala and he has formed an excellent impression of its officers.

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(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) TROUBLE WITH UNION AT GUANTANAMO NAVAL BASE. After a Cuban employee had been detained and delivered to the Cuban authorities for the theft of \$1500 worth of cigarettes, the Union of Base Employees at Guantánamo published an account in its Bulletin for September and over the radio on October 3 of the employee's being tortured in Chinese Communist style for fifteen days to wing a confession from him.

The Base authorities thereupon began action to dismiss the union spokesman at the Base and wrote the union demanding a retraction on its October 10 broadcast. On that date the broadcast merely said that the case was in confusion and a statement would be made later. The union wrote to the Ambassador on October 2, with copies to Serafino ROMUALDI, the CTC, and ORIT, repeating the charges and alleging that the Base police were consistently brutal. At an October 14 meeting the union secretary general offered a retraction in exchange for the reinstatement of the union's spokesman. He was told that the proposal would be submitted to the Base Commander, who was away supervising rescue work in Haiti. The Base authorities were not disposed to accept the offer and it is believed that the Commander will decide against doing so.

The newspaper Avance has carried three reports on this difficulty at Guantánamo, twice at some length and with illustrations. Pueblo had an editorial on it, which while believing that the Cuban might be falsely accused, scouted the torture reports. Bohemia, the widely-circulated weekly magazine, published a report giving the torture allegations as they were made. None of the more influential newspapers have mentioned the matter.

Comment. The Base union has for some time been indulging in nationalistic propaganda and making farfetched charges against the Base, which if effectual might well serve to poison relations between Cuba and the United States and which have nothing to do with labor relations at the Base. It is the Embassy's hope that the present difficulty can be used to put an end to this kind of agitation, which besides being dangerous to United States interests, can only stand in the way of the attainment of healthy union-Base relations.

(UNCLASSIFIED) EUROPE. Editorials and political columns reflected both optimism and apprehension over the European situation. El Mundo editorially praised the London Pact as not only a triumph for Mendes-France but a great forward step toward European unity, and said France now realizes that reconciliation with Germany is vital in the face of Soviet expansionism. In another editorial El Mundo called Molotov's proposal for a four-power conference on German unification ridiculous in the light of his suggestion that the Allies withdraw their troops, a trap the free world has seen before. Diario Nacional and Diario de la Marina felt the vote of confidence given Mendes-France represented a considerable personal victory for the premier and reflected better chances of

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the London Pact passing the National Assembly. Alerta warned that if France rejects the Pact she will be left without allies or friends while Germany, with or without French approval, will rearm with the aid of the same allies on whom she turned her back. Several papers praised the Churchill statement on the possibility of United States isolationism, saying the United States cannot wetnurse 200 million Europeans forever and naturally can be expected to pull out her troops when Germany is rearmed. Excelsior deplored Méndes-France's new vacillating tactics and observed that the London Pact clearly has irritated Moscow, as seen from the Molotov trip to East Berlin. Información lost its optimism on the future of the London Pact in the National Assembly, predicting it might receive the same reception as did EDC, and foresaw tragedy for the western world as well as political suicide for France if this happens.

Diario Nacional and others mocked the "free" elections held in Communist-controlled Germany, saying the results were known beforehand since only approved candidates were on the ballot. Diario Nacional said the fact that Molotov was heavily guarded on his visit to an area dominated by the Soviet Union showed that his popularity in East Germany is nil and that if those Germans could have manifested their feelings freely there would be no Soviet control.

(UNCLASSIFIED) RIO CONFERENCE. There was increasing attention to the forthcoming Rio economic conference. El Mundo said editorially that nobody should expect the conference to solve all Latin American economic problems overnight, but that the meeting should make for greater economic cooperation and political cohesion. El Mundo hoped that a better balance of trade among the Americas, with less dependence on the United States, would develop. Diario Nacional said it is essential that the American nations develop internal economic stability if they are to save themselves from the machinations of demagogues of the right and left and convert themselves into useful allies. Avance reminded its readers that the United States has spent two and one-half billion dollars in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia since 1950 and has failed to stop communism there, implying that the United States could do better by Latin America.

Army, Navy, Air

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

*F. C. Fornes, Jr.*  
F. C. Fornes, Jr.

First Secretary of Embassy.

Participants: HMRandall, JPHoover, FCFornes, Jr., JdeZengotita, WBCaldwell, CAnderson, RGCushing, Krisel(NA).

Copies to Amembassies Ciudad Trujilli, Port-au-Prince, Guatemala.

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NA(4) For Guantanamo

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