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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : HABANA

446

September 14, 1951

DESP. NO.

DATE

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

Air Priority

REF :

SUBJECT: WEEKA NO. ³⁷ 11 FOR STATE, ARMY, NAVY AND AIR DEPARTMENTS FROM SANA

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SECTION I

POLITICAL

Ambassador BEAULAC has now presented copies of his letters of credence to Minister of State GANS. It is possible that the presentation of credentials ceremony at the Palace may be held next week.

The generous nature of the Japanese treaty, the strong united stand of the western countries in the face of the Soviet attempt to disrupt the Conference, the adroit handling of the Conference by Secretary ACHESON, and the effective role played by the Cuban delegation headed by Minister of State Gans, were the factors featured and praised by the Habana press in its comments on the proceedings at San Francisco. Representative of the Cuban reaction was the Havana Herald's statement, "The strength and determination shown there [San Francisco] was founded on the muscle required to back up this vigorous diplomacy, new style". The Communists, of course, denounced the treaty as a war instrument imposed by the United States.

Upon his return from the United States, Gans stated he had discussed with the Japanese the question of a trade agreement between the two countries indicating negotiations might commence in the near future.

It was reported September 8 that a Dominican sailing vessel, the Yolanda Mirella, which put in at Niquero to escape cyclonic disturbances, was being held by the Cuban Navy. This report was denied on the eleventh by the Ministry of State which announced the vessel had been given all facilities and that the Master of the vessel had written a letter of appreciation to the Cuban authorities.

ETCrain:rc

REPORTER(S)

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The Guatemalan Minister, Dr. Raul OSEGUEDA, has stated in a press interview that 1) TRUJILLO carries within him the seeds of his own destruction and cannot last long, 2) the only official information on the Quetzal is that an official of the Dominican Government took to his country the property of others together with citizens of other countries, 3) Ambassador PATTERSON meddled in Guatemalan affairs, 4) PERON has greatly assisted Guatemala, 5) agrarian reform is the first task facing ARBENZ, and 6) the problem of the U.S. companies is for them to comply with the laws. Osegueda said the concessions of several of these companies had expired and that the revision of contracts might be the first step towards nationalization.

The special session of Congress was a complete failure, having terminated without a single substantive meeting in either house. The regular session, scheduled to open September 17, should hold meetings, theoretically, until Christmas time. However, if it convenes at all, no action is expected in the regular session after October 7 which is the start of the party "re-organization" period.

A U.P. item datelined Lake Success September 7 reported Dr. DIHIGO, head of Cuba's U.N. Delegation, as stating that it was up to the Cuban Congress to decide on the Government's proposal to send a battalion of troops to Korea. He added that he thought the Congress, meeting this month, would deliberate on this important question. The impression here, based on informal conversations at the Ministry of State and on the reported attitude of individual legislators and others, is that, if possible, the Government will avoid the troops for Korea issue during the pre-electoral period ending June 1, 1952.

The deaths of two men at the hands of the police following the FEU meeting on September 5 to protest increased bus fares (Week 10 September 7) aroused the indignation of the Cuban press and people to the extent that charges of dictatorship have been hurled at the PRIO Administration from all quarters. Public feeling died down somewhat when it was learned that the policemen involved had been arrested for trial and that their superior officers would be dismissed or transferred. The two officers most directly concerned have also been arrested.

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Although the issue of increases in bus fares has apparently been shelved as a political hot-potato the Communists nevertheless attempted during the week to organize another "march" on the 14th to protest the proposed increases. The permit for the march - this time strictly Communist - has been denied. The Communist Hoy now reports that, instead, a demonstration "to protest the transportation monopoly, the cost of living and to defend the Cuban sugar industry menaced by the U.S. Government" will be held on the 14th at Santiago de Cuba.

Inocente ALVAREZ and Rolando MASFERRER have resigned as PRC (A) leader in the Senate and PRC (A) sub-leader in the House, respectively. Alvarez gave as his reason that he had "failed" - presumably in obtaining desired legislation during the special session. Masferrer gave no reason, but he is becoming increasingly critical of the Administration and his resignation may presage a further break with the Government.

It is being freely predicted that Cabinet changes are in the offing. The changes, if any, are expected to be thoroughly political in nature and accompanied by increased public works in an effort to regain some of the political strength lost in recent weeks. The Government is also making strenuous efforts, with some success, to prevent the supporters of ex-Minister of State Miguel SUAREZ Fernandez from following him into GRAU's Cubanidad group.

Ex-President BATISTA, who is a strong candidate for the presidency, has denied a report originally published by Edward TOMLINSON in the Miami Herald and quoted textually in Cuba to the effect that he might have to assume power in Cuba by illegal means in order to avert chaos. Batista stated he would reach the presidency through constitutional means; that the Army was not the friend of any individual, but only of the Republic and its laws, and that the people of Cuba would never permit the flouting of the popular will.

Today's Alerta published, under the banner headline "PLOT TO KILL BATISTA", charges made by Rafael DIAZ Balart, President of Batista's P.A.U. National Youth, that Minister of Education SANCHEZ Arango was the intellectual author of a plot to assassinate Batista and that Trujillo agents; the Cuban gangsters Eufemio

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FERNANDEZ and Jesús GONZALEZ Cartas; together with Alfonso MARTINEZ, a Guatemalan having close connections with his Government, were involved. Diaz recalled that Sanchez, Fernandez and Martinez were in Guatemala when Colonel ARANA was assassinated. The Embassy has no information on the above charges. It is possible that Alerta, the principal opposition newspaper, may be trying to make it appear the Government would go to any lengths to eliminate anyone threatening its continuance in power.

ARMY - AIR

Negative.

NAVY

Commander R. C. BENITEZ, USN, arrived this week for a 4 day visit to Cuba. He is the prospective Chief of the U.S. Naval Mission slated to arrive in Habana in November. Commander Benitez, a submarine officer who speaks fluent Spanish, made a most favorable impression on the Cubans. Final details on the number and qualifications of the Mission personnel, based upon the needs of the Cuban Navy, will be agreed upon before his departure for Washington on Sunday, September 16.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

Participants:

ETCrain, RGomez, RHCrane,
Schaffer (MA), Ryan (NA), Mason (AA)

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