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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 44 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

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Political

(UNCLASSIFIED) PRE-ELECTION CRISIS LEADS TO GRAU'S WITHDRAWAL FROM ELECTIONS. On October 29th Ramon GRAU San Martin, Autentico candidate for President, precipitated a crisis that led to his last-minute withdrawal from the elections. Acting on his own without consulting his party leaders, he called a late evening press conference at which he declared that such was the lack of electoral guarantees that he could not advise the people to vote, thereby in effect calling upon his Autenticos to abstain from the elections. He specifically charged that ever since the time expired for obtaining duplicate voting carnets; the armed forces had been searching homes and seizing carnets; that individuals were being coerced in various ways; that Autentico candidates were being detained and forced into hiding or flight; that a decision of the Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE) to permit publicity only for its official releases regarding returns constituted censorship facilitating fraud; and that a proposed ruling of the TSE to restrict congregation of persons around polling places violated citizens' rights. He later obtained the backing of his provincial leaders who submitted a petition to the Superior Electoral Tribunal requesting rulings to correct the situation alleged by Grau.

On October 30 the TSE decreed that in the interest of avoiding possible disturbances congregations of persons would not be permitted within 50 meters of polling places after voting ceased and counting began. This action was taken in view of Grau's call to his adherents to supervise the count by their presence at the polls (see Weeka No. 43). Also on the 30th Grau issued a statement repeating his advice not to participate in the elections which "will be a work of violence designed to produce a fraud without precedent in our republican history". He likewise declared that postponement of the elections was necessary to allow time to correct the evils of which he complained and reiterated.

FCFernes, Jr. :mgw
REPORTER

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that under current conditions he would be compelled to withdraw. Simultaneously Batista stated that there would be elections "with or without Grau". He added that he would like to see Grau change his mind and condemned his attitude as tending to create a state of alarm and aid revolutionary plans.

In a nine-hour session on Sunday, October 31st, the TSE complied practically completely with the demands submitted by the Auténtico provincial leaders. It ruled that all national parties could set up information centers to report election developments as well as the official reports of the count by individual polling places, thus enabling speedier unofficial returns. It directed that all members of the armed forces be confined to posts except those detailed to guard polling places and it ordered that objectionable patrolling of towns cease. Post commanders were forbidden to call in members of voting boards, candidates and voters, thus combatting intimidation. It reiterated that personnel guarding polling places were at the orders of the president of the precinct board. While finding it physically impossible to appoint special inspectors as the Auténticos had asked, it directed the presidents of the provincial and municipal electoral boards to keep an eye on the activity of the armed forces. The TSE also clarified its ruling regarding dissemination of news regarding returns, emphasizing that it did not wish to impose censorship but to avoid disturbing false reports.

During the Sunday session the representative of the Auténticos at the TSE, under telephone instructions from Grau, submitted a petition that the elections be postponed for at least ten days. This the TSE rejected on the ground that such evidence as the Auténticos had presented to support their allegations of abuse, coercion and irregularities did not establish the existence of a state of emergency sufficient to warrant postponing national elections. Grau thereupon ratified his decision to withdraw, saying that "an effort is being made to submit the country to a tyranny that the people reject and that we can in no way further" and that "therefore we will not participate in this farce and we recommend that the people completely abstain".

(UNCLASSIFIED) ELECTION RESULTS. Elections were held as scheduled on November 1 in spite of Grau's withdrawal. Unofficial returns up to today from more than 90 percent of the 8,321 precincts in the country give 1,220,389 votes to Batista and 177,423 votes to Grau, a ratio of seven to one.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS. Voting was slow in getting under way on November 1st because of the failure of Auténticos, acting on the advice of Grau, to appear to assume the positions assigned to them on many of the precinct boards

supervising voting at each polling place. Voting picked up later in the day when local municipal electoral boards remedied the situation in all but eight precinct boards by appointing substitutes for the missing Auténticos. It was reported that in two or three provinces the Auténtico leaders disregarded Grau's call for abstention and urged their followers to vote. Incomplete and unofficial returns indicate that about 50 per cent of the qualified electorate voted and that Batista obtained about 45 per cent of the total electorate.

(UNCLASSIFIED) ELECTION INCIDENTS. On the whole the election was marked by calm and such isolated incidents that it probably ranks as the quietest in Cuban history. On the night of the 30th a bomb went off in Havana and on the night of the 31st another exploded at the office of the Cuban Telephone Company. Neither caused extensive damage and the only casualty was the injured finger of a woman passing by the telephone company. Another bomb went off last night damaging cars on display in an automobile agency. Early on November 1 the occupants of a car and a guard at the headquarters of the maritime police exchanged shots. As best can be ascertained and contrary to reports appearing in the United States, the headquarters of the Cuban Navy was not involved nor was there machine gun fire. During elections one man was shot and killed in an election argument in the Province of Matanzas. A coalition propaganda vehicle was reported to have been burned in Camaguey. There were disorders in one or two polling places, with the documentation of another reportedly being highjacked. Two Americans; Milt Sosin of the Miami Daily News and Henry Wallace of Life-Time, aroused suspicion while roving the city in search of election day stories. They were stopped by the armed policemen of a prowler car, searched, taken to a police station, and released after properly identifying themselves. A demonstration in front of Grau's house was broken up by police on the 31st and Grau had an argument with a police officer on election day when the latter ordered the dispersal of a number of Auténticos in the busy thoroughfare in front of Grau's residence. A number of other incidents, including the finding of some unexploded bombs, were reported but there was nothing that would justify characterizing the election generally as other than orderly and extremely quiet.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. It has come to the attention of the Embassy that in at least one case the press in the United States carried a sensational report of election violence. The implications of this report could not be farther from the truth. The incidents that did occur were strikingly less in number and significance than might have been expected in view of the events immediately preceding the election and the persistent rumors of revolutionary activity to be launched on or about election day.

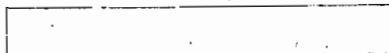
(UNCLASSIFIED) GRAU'S REACTION TO ELECTION RESULTS. After the polls closed, Grau told the press that not more than 10 per cent of the electorate had voted. He repeated his charges regarding the lack of guarantees and upbraided the TSE for refusing to allow time for correcting such a situation. Questioned regarding a possible future insurrectionary course, Grau made no categorical reply but said that "it is very early to talk about that" and quoted Martí to the effect that "at any given moment, one must do what the moment demands". At his instructions the Auténtico representative before the TSE yesterday submitted to the tribunal a statement to the effect that the election returns "are completely fraudulent and incorrect since they are evidently altered with the idea of giving a public impression of electoral participation that in no way agrees with the reality".

(UNCLASSIFIED) REPORTED POLITICAL PACT BETWEEN PRIO AND GRAU. The local press carried a report from Miami that the Diario de las Américas of that city had a story on October 30 to the effect that a "political alliance" had been formed between Prio and Grau against the Batista government. This report was cited against Grau in the pre-election crisis and he took advantage of his election night statements to the press to include a denial of any contact with Cuban exiles.

(UNCLASSIFIED) FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH ARMS CACHE AND ALLEGED TERRORISTIC PLOT. During the middle of last week two bombs exploded in Santiago de Cuba and several unexploded bombs were claimed to have been found there and elsewhere in the Province of Oriente. These bombs were associated with the alleged terroristic plot to interfere with elections.

More arrests were made in connection with the arms seizure in the Country Club section (see Weeka No. 43) and there now are about 50 persons, including those under arrest for the earlier alleged finding of explosives (see Weeka No. 41), awaiting trial under charges of complicity in terroristic or revolutionary activity. On October 29 the Urgency Court, as expected, postponed the trial of all until after elections, i.e., until November 4. There probably are others being detained who have not yet been presented in court.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. It is the Embassy's considered belief that the Country Club arms seizure was not a police plant but a genuine discovery of material intended for subversive use.

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(UNCLASSIFIED) EMILIO OCHOA RETURNS TO CUBA. The press reported that Emilio OCHOA, Ortodexo leader in exile, had returned to Cuba from the United States. He was said to have landed at a private airfield on a country estate in Camaguey Province in a small plane which had brought him from Jamaica. Ochoa eluded capture and is still at large. The pilot of the plane, one Abel HERA Cortón, was captured and the police have published his alleged confession which contains a wealth of detail regarding the negotiations and final agreement for him to pilot Ochoa to Cuba. It is generally assumed, of course, that Ochoa returned to Cuba to engage in revolutionary activities.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. Hera Cortón is known to the Embassy to have been a narcotics smuggler and in fact he is under a narcotics indictment at the moment. He is also known to have had connections in revolutionary circles. The Embassy believes his story of flying Ochoa into Cuba is probably true, even though it may have been obtained with "persuasion".

(UNCLASSIFIED) BATISTA TAKES STAND AGAINST INDEMNIFIED DISMISSAL. Asked on the "Meet the Press" (Ante la Prensa) television program regarding a declaration by Eusebio MUJAL, Secretary-General of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), that he would never sign a decree introducing indemnified dismissal, Batista replied that Mujal was correct. He denied that indemnified dismissal had been taken under consideration by the government, saying that it was a proposal put forward by technicians.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. Indemnified dismissal was of course seriously considered by the government, which went so far as to publish draft legislation on it. Batista's statement is, however, a reaffirmation of his May Day message to the CTC, making it difficult to see how he can once more espouse indemnified dismissal in any direct way.

(UNCLASSIFIED) RIO CONFERENCE. There was continued interest in the forthcoming Rio economic conference. Diario de la Marina praised as promising the report of the OAS Economic Commission for Latin America, and underscored the suggestion that the United States invest one billion dollars annually in Latin America for ten years. The paper said that the world and particularly Latin America is anxious to see how the United States takes to this recommendation at Rio. Herminio PORTELL Vilá in Diario Nacional complained that the speech by Assistant Secretary Holland was disappointing in that it failed to go beyond previously outlined programs on economic aid to Latin America, and expressed the fear that the Rio conference will fail unless the United States loosens its purse strings.

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(UNCLASSIFIED) EUROPE. Most newspapers termed the Paris agreement on Western European unity a great forward step to block Soviet aggressive designs and a promising contribution to peace. Soviet attempts to call a four-power conference were generally ridiculed as reflecting Russian concern over the peaceful turn of events in Europe. For example, Diario Nacional observed that a four-power conference would serve only to gain time for the Soviets, disturb the new European tranquility, and provide propaganda for home consumption. Información questioned the vulnerability of the Western Europe agreement, saying true equilibrium cannot be attained until the members abandon individual ambitions and are federated into a better social and emotional unit.

Several papers felt the decision on the Saar was no lasting solution but at best a compromise, that the Saar problem will come up again to plague relations between Germany and France. The "Europeanization" of the Saar will be an interesting problem of administration, commentators observed, and if successful may set a precedent for other trouble spots.

Army, Navy, Air
Negative

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