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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

737.00(W)/10-253
5 1953

FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

493
DESP. NO.

October 2, 1953

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 40 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA

Part I

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Political RECEIVED

(SECRET) Rumored Revolutionary Activity in Armed Forces (see Weeka No. 39) Further investigation revealed that the report that 38 naval officers and two Army pilots had been arrested was apparently erroneous. The Embassy's Naval Attaché was informed, however, that two junior officers and about 30 men from the vessels Yara and Maximo Gomez were under arrest as anti-Batista subversive suspects. The revolt attempt by young Army officers, reportedly to be staged while Batista was in Oriente Province, is said to have been postponed but not abandoned (see D-473, Sept. 30, 1953). According to report, postponement was due to insufficient support from military elements in Oriente. A report is now circulating, allegedly based on an official statement given to newsmen for their information and not for publication, that seven naval officers are currently being tried by courtmartial for "plotting rebellion." The highest ranking officer involved is said to be a lieutenant commander. Confirmation of this report is thus far unobtainable and no official statement has yet been made public.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The persistence of these reports may indicate revolutionary sentiment in the armed forces, especially the lower officer ranks, but they must be regarded with caution, particularly with respect to the Navy where accusations of plotting might be a cover for efforts to remove officers because of internal dissension not involving revolutionary activities.

(RESTRICTED) Arms Seizure in Miami. The seizure in Miami on September 29 of 90 rifles reportedly intended for illegal export to Cuba by supporters of ex-president PRIO received first-page treatment in the Habana press. A Ministry of Information official informed the Embassy that he had learned by phone from Miami that the vehicle that delivered the weapons to the place where seized had been identified as belonging to Prfo. Tiempe carried a story, dated "Special Service" from Washington but of unascertainable

FCFornes, Jr.:ep
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authenticity, that according to a government spokesman who requested anonymity the State Department is "getting ready to ask Prio to leave the country." The Minister of Information is reported to have expressed the hope that the case would be pursued energetically by the American authorities and to have said that the seizure should serve to put the American people on guard against the "paid campaign" against Cuba.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Batista Visit to Oriente Province. According to reports, Batista was well received on his four-day visit to the Holguin area of Oriente Province (see Weeka No. 39 and D-482, Sept. 30, 1953) where he inaugurated various public works. His wife played a prominent part in several of the ceremonies. It has been announced that the President will soon visit Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo in Oriente Province October 9-11) and that he will visit other provinces in the future.

(RESTRICTED) Comment. It is believed that Batista's visit to Holguin was quite successful, particularly because of local enthusiasm over badly-needed public works completed by his regime in a community that had been neglected by previous administrations. It is possible that this visit and other projected trips are part of a political campaign aimed at obtaining popularity for Batista. In addition, they afford him an opportunity to show himself to the armed forces stationed throughout the country and to strengthen his undoubted popularity with the troops.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Mass Treason Trial Continues. The mass treason trial at Santiago de Cuba (see Weeka No. 39) continues. All the accused have been heard and witnesses are now being called. Out of approximately 100 persons on trial, some 25 have admitted participation in the uprisings of July 26. The political leaders involved in the trial were granted provisional liberty on condition they continue to attend the court sessions.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Arrest of Communist Leaders Ordered. In connection with a case before it of illicit propaganda under the Public Order Law, the Habana Urgency Court ordered the arrest of several Communist leaders for non-appearance in court when the case was called. The Communists ordered arrested were said to number 49 in all, including Juan MARINELLO, Blas ROCA, Anibal and César ESCALANTE, Salvador GARCIA Agüero, Nicolás GUILLEN, Nila ORTEGA and Edith GARCIA Buchaca.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Restoration of Constitutional Guarantees. The Minister of Information specified October 28 as the date on which the suspension of constitutional guarantees was due to expire.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Government-sponsored Youth Demonstration.
For some time it has been reported that Rafael DIAZ BALART, Under Secretary of the Interior and head of the youth section of Batista's party, was organizing a large youth demonstration. The Embassy has been informed that the Minister of Defense and Rolando MASFERRER, director of Tiempo, have been given top responsibility for this demonstration which will include a semi-military parade on November 1. The object of the parade is said to be to "present the Batista Government as a liberal democracy," to which end the Spanish, Dominican and Venezuelan regimes will be denounced vocally and by banners.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Cuban Ambassador to Guatemala Returns to Cuba.
Coincidentally with the arrival in Habana of a new Guatemalan Ambassador, the Cuban Ambassador to Guatemala, Alberto ESPINOSA, returned to Cuba although he had been at his post only a short time since his last visit to this country. His return was given out as due to health reasons and the Ministry of State declared that Cuban-Guatemalan relations continued cordial. Alerta, however, insisted that relations were strained and that Espinosa's absence from his post would be lengthy.

(UNCLASSIFIED) U.S.-Spain Military-Economic Pact. The military-economic pact signed by the United States and Spain on September 26 received the unanimous applause of Cuban commentators, although their number continues reduced on account of censorship. The pact was hailed as an important American victory which closed the breach in the European defense network against communist aggression. Commentators generally agreed that Spain had gained a "dynamic" position in Western Europe and that a new and vigorous factor had been introduced on the side of the West which would have decisive repercussions in the world political situation.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Chargé d'Affaires a.i.:



Earl T. Crain
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Participants:

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JCanter, Parks (AA)

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