

Air Priority
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SECURITY INFORMATION
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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

601 4 1953
737-00(10)/10-453

FROM **AMEMBASSY, HABANA**

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DESP. NO.

October 9, 1953

DATE

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TO : **THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.**

REF :

Action Assigned to *Vincent*

Action Taken *10-14-53*

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

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Part I

Political

(RESTRICTED)

Reports of Revolutionary Activity in Armed Forces.

There were no further developments in connection with the report, said to have been based on official information, that seven naval officers were being courtmartialed (see Weeka No. 40). An official statement regarding such a trial had been expected but nothing was forthcoming. However, Navy General Order No. 117 of September 26, 1953, which came to the Embassy's attention during the week, brought charges of incitement to rebellion against a Navy ensign, seven Navy enlisted men, and an Army pilot-lieutenant. It is understood that these men were tried and sentenced to two years imprisonment, but no publicity whatever was given to the case. The reported arrest of Navy personnel from the vessels Yara and Maximo Gomez (see Weeka No. 40) was connected with this case.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. It has been possible to obtain extremely little in the way of confirmation or clarification of the reports that have been current during the past two weeks of plotting in the armed forces. The Government is evidently maintaining a tight curtain of secrecy regarding personnel possibly on trial for subversive activities.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Outcome of Mass Treason Trial. On October 6 the Urgency Court of Santiago de Cuba gave its verdict in the mass trial begun on September 21 of 100-odd persons accused of complicity in the July 26 uprisings in Oriente Province (see Weeka No. 40). Four of the defendants were sentenced to 13 years imprisonment, 20 to 10 years, three to three years, and two (both women) to seven months. The rest of the defendants were acquitted. Those condemned to 13 and 10 years imprisonment were also required to pay court costs and indemnities to the heirs of the members of the armed forces killed in the attacks. Fidel CASTRO, the self-confessed leader of the uprising in Santiago, was not one of the convicted. It is understood that on the technicality that he did not attend all the sessions of

FCFornes, Jr.:ep
REPORTER

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the trial because of alleged illness, he must be retried. Press coverage of the trial was meager in view of its sensational nature.

(RESTRICTED) Comment. The reduced number of convictions in comparison with the total of those accused in the Santiago trial is a clear indication of the extent to which the authorities in Santiago and probably elsewhere used their arbitrary emergency powers to make arrests on charges on which conviction in court could not be obtained. The outcome of the trial also indicates the weakness of government charges of Prío Auténtico, Ochoa Ortodoxo and Communist implication in planning and backing the uprisings, since none of the political leaders who were defendants in the trial were included among the convicted.

(RESTRICTED) Suppression of Issue of Time Magazine. The Embassy was informed that the October 5 issue of Time magazine, the Latin American edition of which is printed in Habana, was ordered by the Government not to be printed (see D-501, October 5, 1953). The issue was finally printed in the United States but no copies were sent to Cuba. The suppression of this issue is understood to have been due to a story on the Santiago de Cuba treason trial and the July 26 uprisings in Oriente Province.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Attack on "Vision." Pueblo of October 8 published under banner headlines an attack by a so-called Committee in Defense of Sugar on the Spanish-language magazine Visión for publishing an article on the spreading use of synthetic sweetening substances and their threat to the sugar industry. The "Committee" was rather in-temperate in its denunciation of Visión's "paid campaign against sugar" and called for its exclusion from Cuba.

(UNCLASSIFIED) New American Ambassador Arrives in Cuba. On October 5, 1953 the Honorable Arthur GARDNER, Ambassador-designate of the United States to Cuba, arrived in Habana. He was very cordially received and his arrival attracted widespread publicity (see Despatch No. TOUSI 14, October 7, 1953). It is expected that Ambassador Gardner will present his credentials to President Batista during the course of next week.

(UNCLASSIFIED) New Guatemalan Ambassador Presents Credentials. On October 8, 1953, Adolfo GARCIA Montenegro presented to President Batista his credentials as Guatemalan Ambassador to Cuba. The Government gave the ceremony more publicity than has been customary. In his remarks to the President during the ceremony the new Ambassador said that it is a principle "of the Guatemalan revolution not to permit intervention in any form in the solution" of the country's problems and that his government observes without restriction "the fundamental principles of respect for the sovereignty of all friendly people and governments."

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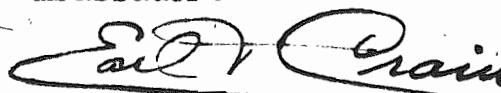
(UNCLASSIFIED) U.S. Non-Aggression Pact With USSR. Francisco PARES, in Información, took a dim view of President Eisenhower's announcement that the United States might sign a non-aggression pact with Soviet Russia. He said the last 20 years have shown that non-aggression pacts are worthless and that such a pact with Russia now would indicate the West is willing to renounce all interest in the Soviet satellites. Victor BILBAO in Excelsior defended the step as a worthwhile effort to persuade the Kremlin to enter into an understanding to guarantee a lasting peace. He called the aim a good one but doubted that such a pact would achieve very much and questioned how it could be enforced. Alerta's L. R. VELARDE defended the idea of offering Russia a non-aggression pact, saying that if it were accepted it doubtless would be a step toward world peace and if it were rejected it would show the world the fallacy of Soviet peace propaganda.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Soviet Rejection of Conference on Germany. Rejection by the Soviets of a West-proposed conference on Germany, in the opinion of Victor Bilbao in Excelsior, proves that the Russians want to keep Germany weak and divided and shows the world that the Soviets have inhumane doctrines reminiscent of the Dark Ages. In a similar vein, José María CAPO, in Diario de la Marina, said Russia's failure to meet with the West on the German question proclaims to the world that her protestations of peaceful intentions are nothing but hollow propaganda. Capo said the Russian attitude and the "Western victory" in the U.S.-Spanish pact add up to another cold-war setback for the USSR.

ARMY, NAVY, AIR

Negative.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Participants:

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