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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM : AMEMBASSY, Habana

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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

DESP. NO.

November 24, 1954

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5 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
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	011-10	00/R-2 ARA-2 USIA-8 IO-2
	11/26	ARMY-35 NAVY-39 AIR-24 CIA-16 OSD-4 OCS-1

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 47 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

Political

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) NOTES ON A QUIET POLITICAL WEEK. The past seven days have been very quiet from the political point of view. Batista is vacationing at the Isle of Pines. Grau has had little to say except to reiterate that Auténticos elected to Congress who take office will not represent Autenticismo. His indefatigable representative before the Superior Electoral Tribunal continues to impugn the elections, the latest being a report that an appeal will be made to the Tribunal of Constitutional and Social Guarantees.

Debate on the proposal to increase the number of members of the House of Representatives (see Weeka No. 46) goes on, some papers even printing a purported draft decree which would raise the number of seats from 130 (as provided in the Electoral Code) to 166 (as the 1940 Constitution would provide), with the extra 36 going to Auténticos and the remainder going to the parties of the pro-Batista coalition.

The counting of the votes continues at a slow pace with final returns reported posted only for Mantanzas and Pinar del Rio, the two smallest provinces.

Vehement fraud charges have died down somewhat, although one such charge led to a challenge to a duel.

Ortodoxo "unity" has again become a subject of discussion, although there is little or nothing to indicate that the disruptive forces that dismembered the Ortodoxo party have lost their potency.

Talk of "new" political parties, which has increased lately, many be discounted at present. Batista has let it be known that he considers such an idea premature as far as his followers are concerned. A "new" party would be likely to mean old faces in a new setting, an arrangement not reassuring to an electorate to a considerable degree disillusioned with "old" parties and their activities. A really "new" party with strong appeal to the people would be slow to emerge, especially in view of the need for developing new leaders.

REPORTER

FCFornes, Jr., mgw

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(UNCLASSIFIED) ARMS SEIZURE TRIAL CONCLUDED. The Urgency Court of Havana concluded the trial of the 39 persons who had been charged in connection with the arms seized in the Country Club area on October 26 (see Weeka No. 46 et ante). At the request of the public prosecutor, 38 of the defendants were acquitted for lack of evidence to support the charges against them. Included among the 38 was Abel HERA Cortón, the civilian airplane pilot accused of bringing "Millo" OCHOA to Cuba (see Weeka No. 44), who now may be subject to prosecution for violating flying regulations. Ex-Representative Franciscó CAIROL Garrido, in whose house the arms were found, was sentenced to four years imprisonment under the 1948 Anti-Gangsterism Law for possession of arms. This jail term presumably will run consecutively to the 4-year term Cairol is already serving after conviction last June of an "attempt against the powers of the State" (see Weeka No. 26). In sentencing Cairol to this second jail term, the Urgency Court denied a defense appeal for acquittal on the ground of res adjudicata.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. The judgment of the Court emphasizes the weakness of the authorities' case against all the defendants but Cairol. It also lends authenticity to a previous report (see Weeka No. 41) that innocent people might be picked up prior to the November first elections on charges of revolutionary activity to serve as a warning to others.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CONSOLIDATED RAILROAD LAYOFFS SUSPENDED. After representatives of the Consolidated Railroads and the Railway Brotherhood and the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) met with Batista, the Minister of Labor issued a resolution dated November 19 suspending for 15 days from November 23 the 1100 dismissal notices issued by the railroad (see Weeka No. 46). During that period a commission is to attempt to bring the company and labor together. If it cannot succeed, its findings are to go to the Minister for resolution of the case.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. It is probable that a compromise solution, perhaps involving many fewer layoffs but some wage decreases, will finally be reached. Labor seems to be pleased with the Labor Minister's resolution and the railway service has returned to normal.

(UNCLASSIFIED) MINISTER OF LABOR CONTINUES STRONG STATEMENTS. The Minister of Labor, Ambassador to the United Nations Emilio NÚÑEZ Portuondo, has continued to make strong statements (see Weeka No. 45) that led to exchanges in the press with CTC leaders. On November 16 he made a statement regarding the Havana Post strike, in which he declared it illegal, referred with satisfaction to arrests of strikers, and spoke of Communist maneuvers to damage a responsible business and create difficulties with the American colony.

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CTC Secretary-General Mujal in a public statement referred to the low salaries the Havana Post workers were receiving, alleged that the Minister anticipated the views of the employers, and charged that Nuñez Portuondo's experiences facing Vishinsky had given him a different perspective from that of the Cuban labor movement.

Answering perhaps not so much Mujal as other labor leaders and columnists who have raised a cry against him, Nuñez Portuondo released a statement on November 22 in which he described the propaganda campaign against him as typically Nazi-Communist. The trouble is, he declared, there are few people in Cuba who are willing to tell the truth to the people of Cuba.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. In these and previous statements Nuñez Portuondo has spoken with unwonted bluntness not particularly calculated to please labor leaders. In the process he has also uttered a few home truths which it is salutary to have brought out by a person in his position.

(UNCLASSIFIED) RIO CONFERENCE. The Cuban press expected no panacea for Latin America's problems to come out of Rio economic conference. El Mundo, in a series of editorials, cautioned moderately that the United States could not be expected to provide a cure-all at Rio and that Latin American nations should create a more attractive climate for investment, with guarantees against expropriation, inflation, and excessive nationalism, and stable regimes. It predicted the conference would aid the economic development of Latin America and help to halt Soviet infiltration of this hemisphere. Carteles magazine took a bleaker view, saying that the United States should be more considerate of the bloc of 20 nations whose unanimous vote has kept Red China out of the United Nations. It said that private capital alone is insufficient since such money always seeks a high return and does not necessarily benefit the host country.

(UNCLASSIFIED) VISHINSKY. First commentaries on the death of Vishinsky pictured him as a master executioner whose reputation in the United Nations was built on invective, sarcasm, and his misuse of the veto. Excelsior, for example, said Vishinsky was one of the most hated men in the world, and his death deprives the Soviets of a barbed tongue in their campaign against the free world. The paper predicted the Soviets might soften their attack on the West now that Vishinsky is out of the way. Diario Nacional blamed Vishinsky's death directly on the crushing Soviet defeat on the German rearmament issue, climaxed by the Mendes-France decision to keep France out of a Big Four meeting on Germany. The day before Vishinsky's death Alerta wondered why the normally

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acid orator had become more moderate in the United Nations and cautioned against a Soviet trap, saying the Russians give ground only when they can gain more elsewhere.

Army, Navy, Air
Negative

For the Ambassador:


Carlos C. Hall
Consular of Embassy

Participants: CCHall, JPHoover, FCFornes, DSGreen, JdeXengotita, WmCaldwell, CAnderson, RGCushing, Elmore (MA), Krisel (NA) and Beckett(AA).

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