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737.00(W)/10-1951

## FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM

AMEMBASSY, HABANA

Action Assigned to

654

DESP. NO.

October 19, 1951

DATE

TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

Action Taken

Air Priority

OCT 19 1951

18

REF

SUBJECT: WEEKA NO. 42 FOR STATE, ARMY, NAVY AND AIR DEPARTMENTS  
FROM SANA

Action Office Symbol

Name of Officer SECTION I

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NAVY

President TRUMAN's Winston-Salem address on October 15, wherein he invited the USSR to accept atomic arms control, was featured in the Cuban press the next day, but with little editorial comment. The communist Hoy commented that the President's invitation was like asking the USSR "to enter a slave bloc under imperialist domination". The President's statement that Russian agreements were not worth the paper on which they were written, and the Russian reaction thereto, were also featured.

The Cuban press continues to publish without comment optimistic reports of possible agreement on cease-fire talks in Korea. There appears to be a general feeling in Cuba that agreement will be reached only if accepted by the Communists to avoid serious military reverses.

The Cuban press and public have followed closely, and with concern, the events in Iran and in Egypt. In general, this "twisting of the Lion's tail" has been deplored as an attempt by Iran and Egypt to flex their muscles at a time when such action can only weaken the democratic cause, and aid that of Soviet aggression. Egypt's action has been denounced by most editorial writers as an attempt to obtain Sudan as a price for Egyptian entrance into the Middle Eastern defense pact. They do not feel Egypt is really serious in believing it can oust Britain from the Suez Canal. Some writers have suggested that perhaps Egypt may have gone too far in its demands, and will lose by its action, since Egypt is not considered very essential by the Western Powers in their defense plans. The communist Ultima Hora, as might be expected, praised the Egyptian stand.

The principal points brought out here in connection with the Iran dispute were Ecuador's position that the UN should not mediate the dispute and US Delegate AUSTIN's proposal that Iran and Great Britain resume negotiations within the framework of the UN Charter.

ETCrain:WJN  
REPORTER(S)

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Romulo BETANCOURT has issued a statement in connection with the recent disturbances in Venezuela denying Junta charges of Acción Democrática terrorism. He said the unrest merely indicated that the Junta was "repudiated by all nations".

In Cuba, the official two-week party affiliation period is scheduled to end October 21. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal is reportedly considering extension of the period for another week due to the fact that approximately half a million carnets remain undistributed by the Electoral Boards. Nationally, the government PRC(A) is currently in the lead. In Habana the PNC under Mayor of Habana CASTELLANOS heads the list. Both represent parties in power, the PRC(A) in the nation, the PNC in Habana. All parties appear disappointed by the very light registrations which are indicative of public apathy now and a decisive independent vote on June 1, 1952.

The Communist PSP has not yet secured a sufficient number of affiliations to qualify as a legal party. Communist leaders, including Blas ROCA, have issued appeals to prospective PSP affiliates publicly admitting the legal existence of the PSP to be at stake. In his appeal Roca said that "even one vote might be the difference between life or death for the Party".

An assassination attempt was allegedly made against Anibal ESCALANTE, Director of the communist Hoy, on October 17. As evidence, Escalante showed reporters 19 perforations in his car. He said they had been caused by bullets fired by a group of thugs which included Jesús ARTIGAS, a CTC labor leader. The peculiar circumstances surrounding the case, including the fact that Escalante escaped unscathed, has led many to believe the attack was faked in a desperate effort to get sympathisers to affiliate with the PSP. The truth of the matter may never be known. President PRIO has publicly announced his skepticism. Nevertheless, the leaders of all the parties of the House of Representatives have agreed to "condemn the attempted assassination". They declared that a "dangerous state of social defenselessness" exists and called on the Executive Power to take measures to restore order and public peace.

The relatively poor showings of BATISTA's PAU, CASTELLANOS' PNC and the Cubanidad group (GRAU, SUAREZ Fernández, et cetera) have touched off a series of conferences among opposition leaders reportedly on the advisability of pooling the strength of all opposition factions behind one compromise candidate. Carlos SALADRIGAS has been mentioned as

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a possibility. Such a coalition would very probably receive communist support on the grounds it constituted a "popular front" against the government. As is the case wherever the Communists are only a weak minority, the Communists in Cuba have long been urging the creating of such a "front". The Prío PRC(A) would of course try to stop it since such a move would ruin PRC(A) hopes to bring all PRC(A) dissidents back into the party for a united stand against the opposition.

The Congress continues to abdicate its functions through failure to achieve a quorum in either the Senate or House. There is some talk that the Congress will get down to business after the period of affiliations which, as indicated above, may be extended to October 28.

#### ARMY

Ten Puerto Rican legionnaires returning home via Cuba from the Legion Convention at Miami will lay wreaths at both the Maine Monument and Martí Statue in ceremonies scheduled for today.

Comment: Cuba has long expressed unofficial interest in Puerto Rican nationalist aspirations. The double ceremony described above may be intended to express friendship for Cuba while at the same time pointedly indicating Puerto Rican-U.S. solidarity.

#### NAVY

The visit of Amphibious Group 4, Rear Admiral H. E. OREM, USN, commanding, consisting of the Group Command ship "MOUNT OLYMPUS" and two destroyers, was most successful. The Cuban Navy rendered customary courtesies by arranging for tugs, supplying transportation, guides, and two naval liaison officers. Very favorable press coverage was accorded the various social affairs in which the Cuban Navy, Embassy officials and the visiting naval personnel participated.

Rear Admiral Pedro E. PASCUAL Borges, Chief of Cuban Naval General Staff, will be awarded the "Legion of Merit" by the United States Government on October 31st. Ambassador BEAULAC will make the presentation which is scheduled to take place in the Hall of Mirrors at the Presidential Palace. Rear Admiral M. E. MURPHY, USN, will represent the U.S. Navy. President Prío and members of the Cabinet are expected to attend.

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Pascual is receiving the award because of the valuable logistic support rendered to the many U.S. naval ships visiting Cuba annually; for his forthright supervision of search-and-rescue operations in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard at Miami, and for his excellent cooperation with the U.S. Navy.

Comment: There is no doubt that Admiral Pascual has fostered excellent relationships between the two navies thereby advancing the aims of hemispheric solidarity.

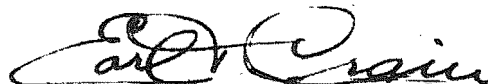
Rear Admiral M.E. Murphy, USN received Carlos HEVIA, President of the National Development Commission and Minister without Portfolio, at the U.S. Naval Operating Base, Guantánamo Bay, on October 19. Also a guest was Rear Admiral Pascual. Hevia and Admiral Murphy were midshipmen together at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, thirty years ago.

Comment: As President of the National Development Committee, Hevia could be very helpful in completing the much-needed highway between Guantánamo City and Caimanera which would be of indirect benefit to the Naval Base.

AIR

Negative.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain

First Secretary of Embassy

Participants:

AO Pierrot, DWG Clark, ETCrain, EM Terrell,  
Schaffer (MA), Ryan (NA), Rarick (AA).

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