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PRIORITY

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

907
DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

December 5, 1952
DATE

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 49 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA

Part I

Political

(UNCLASSIFIED) During a week of political quiet, the main preoccupation of the "politicos" was the 1952 Electoral Code that came into force with its promulgation on November 14, 1952. The Autentico, Ortodoxo, Democratic and Cuban National parties have rejected the Code on the ground that it is designed to perpetuate BATISTA in power. The argument of these opposition parties is directed almost exclusively against the provisions of the Code that a vote must be cast on a straight party ticket basis and that a ballot marked for senators, representatives, or governors but not for the presidential candidate will be counted as cast for all the party's candidates. Thus, they contend, there is eliminated the "direct vote" that could be cast without respect for party lines and the provision of the 1940 Constitution that a vote could be counted only for whom cast and could not be "accumulated" in favor of any other candidate. The parties are standing fast thus far on the accusation that this is merely a return to "machine politics" favorable only to the government in power. The opposition, with the exception of the Communist party which also rejects the Code, has not yet objected to the requirement that, in order to organize, a party must have the support of six percent of the electorate.

The Code established a period which will end on January 29, 1953, for the registration of parties that it is intended to organize. The parties that have rejected the Code have so far given no sign of intending to register. Ramón GRAU San Martín is reported to be very active in preparation for registration of his faction as the PRC (A). The Liberals seem inclined to register but have not been very active, while the PAU, Batista's party, also appears slow to start.

FCFornes, Jr.:rc
REPORTER

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CONFIDENTIAL FILE

(UNCLASSIFIED) Once again a segment of the Autentico party publicly accused Rolando MASFERRER, Ernesto de la FE, Eusebio MUJAL, Ramón VASCONCELOS, et al., of planning a massacre of opposition leaders and a reign of terror. And once more the accusation evoked the same denials as in the past.

In connection with this mention of Masferrer, it is interesting to note that he has just been awarded the Order of Carlos Finlay. According to his own paper, Tiempo, the award was conferred upon the proposal of Batista as president of the Order.

(UNCLASSIFIED) President Batista ordered that ex-President PRIO's property, including two luxurious country estates, be released from protective custody to Prio's representative. A Government spokesman explained that the protection of the property had for too long been a responsibility of the armed forces and that the troops were needed elsewhere.

(UNCLASSIFIED) The elections in Venezuela and subsequent events there have led some commentators in Cuba to draw a parallel between the situation in the two countries. They warn that Batista as dictator could also ignore the will of the people and perpetuate himself in power if defeated in the 1953 elections.

Psychological

(CONFIDENTIAL) The Communists are making final preparations to send a delegation to the forthcoming Congress of the Peoples for Peace in Vienna. Financing of travel has apparently been a problem and financial aid has almost certainly come from abroad. Every indication is that propagandizing the "universal" nature of the Congress has failed and that the Cuban delegation will be composed of delegates from Communist workers groups, of members of the Communist party, and of fellow travelers and those who in the past have shown acceptance of Communist peace propaganda. The responsible press gave publicity to the imminent departure of the Cuban delegation but such editorial comment as has so far appeared has been unfavorable.

Army

(CONFIDENTIAL) To date no one has been promoted to fill the General Officer vacancy caused by the retirement of Brig. Gen. Jorge GARCIA y Tuñon on November 27, 1952.

(See Weeka No. 48) Rumors concerning those being considered for promotion include Col. Manuel LARRUBIA y Paneque, Director of the Military Academy; Col. Damaso SOGO y Hernandez, C.O. 5th Rural Guard Regt.; Col. Pilar GARCIA y Garcia, C.O. 3rd Rural Guard Regt.; and Col. Leopoldo PEREZ y Coujil, C.O. 4th Rural Guard Regt.; with the odds in favor of Colonel Larrubia.

In addition, today's press confirmed the rumor that Lt. Col. Pedro GARCIA y Tuñon, Director of the Officer Candidate School, Managua, and brother of the General, is also being retired.

COMMENT

From the standpoint of Cuban Army politics, family connections can seemingly be damaging as well as helpful.

Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

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Copies to:

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MA (4) for USARCARIB and USARFANT

AA (1)

NA (3) for Guantánamo

