

AIRGRAM

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FROM: American Embassy,
Habana, Cuba

Date of Mailing: Nov. 22, 1948

Rec'd.

Nov. 24, 1948 5:43 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

A-1322, November 22, 1948

Batista Returns to Cuba

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF AMERICAN REPUBLIC AFFAIRS NOV 26 1948 <i>WUX 2:45</i>

After a voluntary exile of more than four years, former President Batista returned to Cuba by air Saturday afternoon, November 20, to receive an enthusiastic welcome from thousands of his supporters who literally hailed him with affection upon his arrival at Rancho Boyeros airport. Despite elaborate precautions taken by the Government to maintain order, the crowd, which broke through military lines to surround the plane, prevented the prompt approach of the airport ladder with the result that Batista jumped into the arms of his supporters. Crowds also invaded Batista's farm at Arroyo Arenas where he apparently plans to make his home.

Despite threats by Juvenile Section of Authentic Party that protest demonstrations would be organized calling for Batista's exile because of his alleged responsibility for the death of revolutionary hero Gaiteras, no untoward incidents have been reported. Chief of Police Carames announced police would break up any unauthorized demonstrations.

Batista's return has caused sensation in press which features reports of reception and ex-President's statements to reporters, of which the following is a summary:

Batista said he had no personal political aspirations but expected to serve as member of Liberal Senatorial Committee. He expressed interest in educational and sanitary problems and agrarian reform. Regarding reports that he intends to form new party he said he would work for strengthening Liberal and Democratic parties but that if this proved impossible

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A-1322, November 22, 1948
Embassy at Habana.

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Formation of new party might then be considered. Although at first declining to comment on Dr. Grau's Government, he later stated that he held same opinion on this subject as Cuban people. He voiced his appreciation of hospitality of United States and of facilities granted him by Prio Government. He stated he expected to visit Senate this week. (He was elected Senator from Las Villas on Liberal-Democratic Coalition ticket, June 1, 1948.)

Press comment has so far been highly favorable. Diario de la Marina November 20 said Batista's return meant the "end of the exile of Cuban politicians - a great moral triumph for Dr. Prio." Prensa Libre commented that this event marked the "end of a period of hate and resentment."

Embassy takes with grains of salt Batista's denial of political aspirations and believes he either wants the presidency for himself or wishes to fill it in 1952 with a person enjoying his support.

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