American Embassy
Habana, Cuba, February 4, 1949

RESTRICTED

Subject: Guatemalan Government Decorates President Prio with Grand Cross of the Order of the Quetzal.

I have the honor to report that on January 28, 1949, President Carlos PRIO Socarrás was decorated with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Quetzal, its highest award, by the Government of Guatemala. A special mission, headed by Sr. Adolfo MONSANTO, was sent from Guatemala by President AREVALO to bestow this order.

The ceremony took place on the anniversary of the birthday of the Cuban patriot José Martí in the reception hall of the Presidential Palace. After the Guatemalan Ambassador had presented his credentials, he launched into a twenty-five minute eulogy of President Prio as a militant champion of democracy, of the Cuban people, of José Martí, and of almost all the other Latin American patriots and liberators, not forgetting to say a good word for Guatemala. He then presented the decoration and President Prio indicated his appreciation in a short but fulsome reply to Monsanto's words. As a close to the ceremony, Prio caused a lengthy telegram of thanks to be sent to President Arévalo.

No particular political significance is attached to this event. It is possible that Guatemala wanted to emulate the gesture made by the United States in presenting President Prio with the Legion of Merit in that the former country did not decorate Prio at the time of his pre-inaugural visit to that nation.

Respectfully yours,

Lester D. Mallory
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

WWPhelps, Jr./dts