

AIR POUCH

PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL

(Security Classification)

Action Assigned to *Kupper*

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

Action Taken *237.00 (W) / 12-2756*

FROM AMEMBASSY HABANA

367

DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

DATE *December 27, 1956*

DATE

REF

Action Office Symbol

20 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.	Name of Officer	
	OKI-10 REC'D 12-28-56	RM/R-2 ICA-10 ARA-4	NEA-4 IO-2 MC-1	
		IN N O OTHER	Direction to DC/R	
		USIA-10 OSD-2 ARMY-35	NAVY-30 AIR-24 CIA-16 OCB-2	

SUBJECT:

Joint Weeka No. 52 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from S...

This Document Must Be Returned to  
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737.00 (W) / 12-2756

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY). TRANQUILITY MARRED BY CONTINUING MINOR TERRORISTIC ACTS. The general tranquility of the country during the past week was marred by continuing minor terroristic acts. Small bombs were exploded on various nights in Habana, and one bomb thrower seriously injured. Bombs were exploded in Guantanamo City and Santa Clara. An unidentified man was killed in Camaguey as he attempted to place a bomb alongside the wall of the local prison. High tension lines were repeatedly shorted, resulting in electric power failures for extended periods, in Guantanamo City, Bayamo, and other localities in Oriente Province. Molotov cocktails were thrown in several cities. A train was derailed near Habana on December 24, allegedly by sabotage. There were no injuries, but considerable damage to two locomotives. The airport of Camaguey was blacked out for nearly two hours on the evening of December 22. It has not been possible to confirm the rumor that the ~~air~~ ordered the blackout because of reports of unidentified aircraft over the southern coast of the island. Conditions in Santiago were apparently quiet, with the holiday celebrations somewhat subdued.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) COMMENT: These continuing actions are causing the development of a vague air of tension and unease. There are no indications that they are causing widespread alarm or fear. They appear to be principally the work of members of the "26 of July" Movement, intended to create unrest more than to cause serious or lasting damage. Their continuation is leading to a feeling of resentment, directed for the present, so far as the Embassy can determine, more against the perpetrators than against the Government.

(UNCLASSIFIED) GOVERNMENT ACTIVE AGAINST ALLEGED DISTURBERS. The police and military have been notably active in searching out and arresting persons they allege are responsible for the terroristic actions taking place in the country. They are concentrating increasingly on known members and leaders of the "26 of July" Movement. The arrests appear in many cases to be based principally on suspicion, with those arrested being freed promptly when presented before the Urgency Courts. In several cases, however, the police have promptly re-arrested the defendants on other charges.

JLTopping/lnt

REPORTER

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The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

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(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) COMMENT: All indications are that the conviction of the authorities that the "26 of July" Movement is mainly responsible for the terroristic actions is well founded.

(UNCLASSIFIED) DEATHS UNDER STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES IN ORIENTE PROVINCE. On December 26 the Government announced that 19 men had been found hanged or shot to death in various widely separated localities in Oriente Province. Several of them were said to be either known members of the "26 of July" Movement, members of the Ortodexo Party, or said to have been involved in recent terroristic actions. Government spokesmen have expressed the opinion that many of the dead persons had been found guilty of some crime by their fellow conspirators, and hence liquidated.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT: The Government's contention may be correct. At least one of the bodies had a placard on it reading "Killed as a traitor, 26 of July". It has not been established that all of the dead persons had been involved in conspiratorial activities. But the killings all apparently occurred over the past few days, and it seems logical that at least some of them have factors in common. The possibility should not be overlooked that members of the armed forces and police may have had a direct hand in the deaths. The patience and temper of these agencies has been sorely tried during the past month by what appears to be a numerically small group, the "26 of July" Movement and its sympathizers, lacking in popular support and acting in ways disapproved of by the people as a whole, which has endeavored to create a condition of unrest and fear by uprisings, invasion, and persistent acts of terrorism throughout the island. It is consequently well within the realm of possibility that the army and police, who have seen members of their services killed by the Movement, may have decided to take direct reprisal action against the known leaders and extremists of the Movement as the surest way of terminating the present situation. Certainly, this thesis will be strongly advocated by the opposition. Conversely, President BATISTA'S clear awareness of the danger to his position inherent in any extreme action against the members of the Movement has undoubtedly been a strong factor in the generally correct behavior of the army and police to date. But this restraining influence may well have finally proven unavailing against the irritation created by the continuing acts of terrorism.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) WHEREABOUTS OF FIDEL CASTRO. The whereabouts of Fidel CASTRO Ruz, leader of the "26 of July" Movement, continue to be shrouded in mystery. Government spokesmen continue to maintain that they are not sure, but that he is probably with the group of some 40 survivors of the party which landed from the Mexican vessel GRAMA on December 2 which they maintain is in the hills of Oriente Province, probably near Pico Turquino. There are persistent reports that this version is correct. But there are equally persistent reports that Castro, his brother Raul, and some 30 others were killed in attacks by the Cuban Air Force shortly after landing.

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(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT: It is obvious that if Castro and others were killed just after landing the Government is attempting to keep it a close secret. High level contacts in the investigative agencies and armed forces have expressed the personal conviction to Embassy officers that they were so killed. Other contacts, equally prominent and presumably equally well informed, say they hold the personal opinion that Castro is alive and in the mountains of Oriente Province.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) ILLNESS OF MINISTER GUTIERREZ. Sources close to Minister Gustavo GUTIERREZ report that additional surgery last week left him very weak, and that possibly he may not recover sufficiently to attend the meeting of Inter-American Presidential Representatives scheduled for Washington on January 28.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. Minister GUTIERREZ in representing President BATISTA has handled this assignment strictly as a one-man proposition. There is no indication as to who may replace him if he cannot attend the January meeting.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CUBAN NUCLEAR ENERGY FORUM HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. Participants and observers termed an outstanding success the four-day forum organized by the Cuban Nuclear Energy Commission, which closed on December 20. Basically the forum was designed for educational and propaganda purposes, with scientists and lecturers keeping this in mind rather than attempting the presentation of new information. Arrangements were well made and the programs came off unusually well. The forum was particularly effective in attracting public attention to the "Atoms for Peace" theme.

(PSYCHOLOGICAL).

(UNCLASSIFIED) Havana dailies commented chiefly on Nehru's visit to Washington. Excelsior was of the opinion that the Nehru-Eisenhower visit should have taken place before this time, but because of Eisenhower's illness the reunion was impossible. Since the meeting was originally scheduled world developments have caused Nehru to abandon his previous neutralist stand, Excelsior stated. The newspaper further pointed out that Nehru has not changed his idea of helping Communist China to be recognized in the United Nations, but felt that in spite of the differences between East and West, the Eisenhower-Nehru meeting has been a step in the right direction. The West must keep in mind, Avance pointed out, that Nehru is perhaps the most useful statesman in the world today for bringing about a meeting of the minds of Communist and Western leaders, but that the West should look upon his overtures with caution. Información felt that in spite of the extensive conversations between President Eisenhower and the Indian Prime Minister, no official agreement on significant issues have been announced. This newspaper was of the opinion that two chiefs of state have greatly divergent points of views on several major issues, especially the Chinese Communist and Pakistan questions, and that Nehru was unsuccessful in changing official opinion in the United States.

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Navy

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) YACHT AU MOANA RECOVERED OFF JAMAICA. Based upon information received from the U.S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, the Naval Attaché informed the Cuban Navy on 21 December that the missing yacht AU MOANA (See Weekas 50 and 51) had been picked up off the north-west coast of Jamaica and towed into Montego Bay. The Cuban Navy immediately dispatched one of its ships to Montego Bay to tow the AU MOANA to Santiago de Cuba, intending to return her to her owner, Lloyd T. DORSEY. Jamaican authorities refused to release the yacht without the Cuban Government's assumption of all salvage claims; however, they were unable to present a total bill of claims. The Cuban Navy ship returned to Cuba empty handed and the Cuban Consul at Kingston is negotiating with the Jamaican authorities for the yacht.

Army, Air.  
Negative.

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*Vinton Chapin*  
Vinton Chapin

Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

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AA(2)

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*M. J. ...*