INCOMING AIRGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

KIRGAM

FROM: American Embassy, Habana, Cuba.

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Secretary of State, Washington.


In special edition of Gaceta Oficial GOVT on night 21 Sept issued decree removing 20 police officers and
darkening "complacency and indifference" in connection with
continued gangster murders. GOVT also issued orders to
police and the GRAS organization to arrest all members
illegal associations (UIR, FSR and other gangs) accused
of participation in recent killings. Numerous arrests in
last 24 hours with others expected.

Action followed unsuccessful attack 15 Sept against
Representative Rolando FASPEMBER (FSR head) as he left
Capitólio and murder 20 Sept of student leader Gustavo
Adolfo EJIA.

Comment:

A thorough purge of gangsters from the ranks of the
police would have considerable effect in controlling
gangster activity and improving police morale. However,
basic unhealthy condition cannot be eradicated as long
as certain known gunmen continue to receive the protec-
tion of powerful interests in the GOVT.

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PERMANENT RECORD COPY.—This copy must be returned to DC/R central files with notation of action taken.
Secretary of State,  
Washington,  


GoveT today announced removal of Col. José Manuel Caramas as acting Police Chief (and his leave of absence for six months as Inspector General of Police) and his replacement by Br. Gen. Quirino UAIA Lopez. In this connection reference is made to Embtel No. 323 of 23 Sept and Embgram A-1072 of 19 Aug reporting lowered prestige of Police Chief Col. José Manuel Caramas as result of continued gang murders and violence.

During past two days debate in House of Representatives devoted in large measure to heated criticism of police and Police Chief Caramas for failure to stop gang killings. Letter already subject to extensive press ridicule and congressional ire for having engaged in fistfights last week with radio announcer José FrrDO-LLada (who had insinuated in a broadcast that Caramas was now constructing a large building - presumably with grafted funds). Criticism reached point where opposition parties in House presented motion to request presence of defense Min to explain why Caramas had not been removed. In letter of resignation to FRPS FRIO Caramas cited above congressional action as reason for his resignation. (House reportedly agreed in secret session to demand Caramas' removal. FRPS RIO on learning this reportedly decided to beat House to the punch.)

FRPS (recently promoted from Colonel on occasion of removal of Genovevo FRRBZ as Army Chief of Staff - Emb. despatch 660, Aug 26, 1949) is considered an able honest officer and enjoys President's confidence. In press interview he said his tour as Police Chief would be characterized by deeds and not words.
Twenty police officers whose removal was announced yesterday (Embgram A-1203 Sept 22) were suspected of belonging to secret gangs involved in numerous killings. It is believed numerous other removals will be announced in GOVT effort to purge police of gangster elements and to reduce gang killings.