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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

737.00(W)/6-1957

JUN 19 1957

FROM : AmEmbassy, Habana

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

June 19, 1957
DATE

REF : Action Taken ----- *Jan 5 RI SEA-R*

25 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	OTHER
6-20	6-20	6-20

1 N MR-2 Rep-2 CIA-4 Do-2 JCA-10 UO-1
Date of Action - Army-35 Navy-30 Air-24 Cia-16
D. SIA-10

SUBJECT: Joint Weeks No. 25 ~~Efficient~~ *of Officer* Navy and Air Departments from SANA

R 310C B-2 OSD-2

(UNCLASSIFIED) MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ORIZABA PROVINCE. On June 14, it was announced that Colonel ~~Bebe~~ BARRERA Perez, commander of the Army troops opposing the rebels led by Fidel CASTRO, had moved his headquarters from El Uvero, on the south side of the Sierra Maestra mountains, to Estrada Palma, north of the mountains. BARRERA is reported to be attempting to force CASTRO out of the mountains by cutting off his sources of supplies. He is said to have ordered the physical removal of certain country grocery stores so that CASTRO will not have available sources of foodstuff. The Army has purchased 5 American bloodhounds and is said to be using them to seek out the rebels. Most of the evacuated residents of the Sierra Maestra area -- now reported to have been some 7,000 --- have reportedly returned to their homes. There were reports of several cases of disease in the emergency evacuee centers -- malaria and gastro-enteritis.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT. Cuban Army officials have told the Embassy's Army Attache that they expect to successfully complete the operations against CASTRO within the next two or three weeks. The Cuban Navy has also set up a restricted area on the south coast, west of Santiago de Cuba, to stop the possible flow of supplies to CASTRO. It is doubtful that the military will be successful in either forcing CASTRO out of the hills, or in locating and destroying his forces.

(UNCLASSIFIED) TERRORISTIC ACTIVITY. A few bombs exploded in Habana during the past week and on June 14, a group of 11 youths were arrested and charged with planning and executing acts of terrorism in Habana and nearby Pinar del Rio. On June 12 four bombs exploded in Artemisa, Pinar del Rio -- the fourth bomb exploded in the jeep from which they reportedly were being thrown seriously wounding one of its occupants but the other three escaped. There have been reports of intense terroristic activity in the Santiago de Cuba area, with mysterious shootings and killings, and it was reported that during the past weekend soldiers and police patrolled Santiago de Cuba carrying rifles and light machine guns.

(CONFIDENTIAL) (COMMENT) Embassy officers who recently visited Oriente heard reports of open terrorism by the Government. They found widespread opposition to the Government and were repeatedly assured by oppositnists that a strong anti-BATISTA move would take place before the end of this month.

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Desp. No. HABANA
From

(UNCLASSIFIED) CONGRESS AND ELECTIONS. On June 11, 1957 Ramon GRAU San Martin, leader of the registered faction of the Cuban Revolutionary Party-- Autenticos -- and former President of Cuba, announced that his Party would participate in the 1958 general elections, notwithstanding its withdrawal from the Congressional Committee planning the elections (WEEKKA 24 of June 12). In publicizing his decision GRAU stated that he has added the names of the 5 BOC (Bloque Oposicionista Coincidente) leaders -- Jose PARDO Llada of the National Revolutionary Party, Emilio "Millo" OCHOA of the registered Ortodoxo Party (Cuban People's Party), Carlos MARQUEZ Sterling of the unregistered Ortodoxo Party, Porfirio FENDAS of Constitutional Defense, and Amalio FIALLO of the Radical Liberation Group (WEEKKA 24 of June 12) -- to that of BATISTA on the list of his political enemies.

On June 12, the Senate officially designated June 1, 1958 as the date of the next general elections. On the same date Interior Minister and Senator Santiago REY slapped the face of Senator Raul LORENZO, leader of the Cuban Social Party, during a Senate debate. The Senate immediately went into secret session, and an hour later announced that the incident was considered settled.

On June 18, the 5 BOC leaders announced that they were withdrawing from the Congressional Committee which they said had failed to live up to its stated objectives.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT. The action of the BOC leaders in joining together to the exclusion of GRAU undoubtedly piqued the Autentico leader. His decision to participate in the 1958 elections did not surprise many who claim that GRAU can joke about anything but his burning desire to be reelected President of Cuba. Embassy officers who recently visited Oriente Province found widespread conviction among the people that BATISTA will not hold free elections as promised in 1958. It is reported that Santiago REY slapped Senator LORENZO because of the latter's disparaging references to REY's well-known proclivity for heavy and unrestrained gambling.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CIVIC INSTITUTIONS CALL FOR PEACE. The United Committee of Cuban Institutions (Comite Conjunto de Instituciones Cubanas), composed of associations of doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, accountants, and fraternal and religious organizations, issued another statement -- its third -- calling for an end to bloodshed and violence, a political amnesty, and a return to peaceful electoral procedures. The Committee states that the Cubans have lost faith in the ability of the Congress to find a peaceful solution of Cuba's political problems. It calls on the Government and the opposition alike to end what it calls civil war in Cuba but it clearly states its belief that the Government should make the first move.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT. Interior Minister Santiago REY has ruthlessly brushed aside past declarations of this nature and has accused the civic groups of being anti-Government. The same thing will probably be done in the case of this rather strong statement. The Committee claims to represent some 300 civic organizations, however, and the declaration is a clear indication of the anxiety most serious-thinking Cubans feel with regard to the current situation.

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(UNCLASSIFIED) CUBAN NEWSMEN PROTEST CURBS. The Colegio Nacional de Periodistas, a type of newspapermen's fraternal and welfare organization, published a statement of protest to the government over what it termed restrictions in their efforts to cover military actions in the Sierra Maestra and elsewhere, citing trips of American newspaper and television men to visit Fidel Castro as evidence that foreign journalists are not so curbed. They acknowledged that Cuban newspapermen were taken to a battle area last month, but complained it was merely a guided tour and that they saw nothing.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) COMMENT. This appears in part, at least, an attempt to save face. American reporters and television men were on their own, and did not deal with government authorities for arrangements. Cubans, however, cannot cover their own story because of fear of punishment under a law prohibiting news inciting to revolution. Thus, even had they been able to interview Castro, for example, they would have no outlet for their articles or films. Cuban newspapers will publish stories on revolutionary activities only if they are either government handouts or can be attributed to foreign news agencies or newspapers.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CTC NATIONAL COUNCIL SETS ELECTION DATES FOR 3 FEDERATIONS. The 25th National Council of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) convened in Habana on June 11, and unanimously adopted resolutions scheduling elections on: (1) June 22, for the Federation of Electric Plants; (2) July 6, for the Federation of Bank Workers; and (3) July 14, for the Federation of Telephone Workers.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) COMMENT. Alleging that the resolutions adopted by the 25th National Council undermine the autonomy of their federations, both the bank workers and telephone workers have publicly protested against them and have indicated that they will ignore the elections. On the other hand, CTC Secretary General Eusebio Mujal maintains that the scheduled elections are in accord with Resolution No. 56 of the Fifth Commission of the 9th National Congress of the CTC, held in May 1956, which all 33 Federations affiliated with the CTC, including the Electric Plants, Bank Workers, and Telephone Workers, voted for. If, in fact, the coming elections are boycotted by large numbers of bank employees and telephone workers tension between the CTC and these two federations can be expected to continue, thus keeping the labor field in a state of uncertainty.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PSYCHOLOGICAL. The Cuban press once again focused attention on France -- the new government and the problem it faces with Algeria. Most papers were of the opinion that the main problem facing the young new Premier Bourges-Maneury was financial -- largely as a result of the prolonged and bitter fighting against the Algerian rebels. Pueblo pointed out that this conflict was costing the French Government four million dollars daily, that the Treasury was exhausted and recently had to borrow 80 billion francs from the Bank of France. Alerta carried a series of three commentaries on France and North Africa, with detailed background on the situation and objectively pointing out the position

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of the two sides in the Algerian conflict, and the great stake France has in this North African colony. But while the French consider Algeria an integral part of France, said this paper, the Algerian nationalists consider it an Arabic country with the right to independence. Both Informacion and Avance deplored the cruel terrorism and merciless killings rampant in Algeria. This type of terrorism is always condemnable, said Avance, but it is particularly unforgivable when it comes from the hands of those in power. The French colons in Algeria, stated Avance, with their bloody reprisals are France's worst enemies in Algeria for they are making any chance of conciliation in Algeria more and more remote. Informacion seemed pessimistic about the new French Government, noting that Bourges-Maunoury announced from the start that he would follow the policy of his predecessor in Algeria.

ARMY, NAVY, AIR - Negative

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