

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page 2 of
Encl. No. 93
Desp. No. Habana
From

than insurrectionary process to get rid of the Government, appears to be a serious attempt to develop a unified attack by the opposition. What success it can expect is problematical. Varona is a spokesman and faithful follower of Carlos PRIO, somewhat discredited with the Cuban people. Andreu represents little more than himself and his wife, and Lorenzo is in little better position. However, both Grau and Ochoa command fairly sizeable followings.
(CONFIDENTIAL)

2. Ambassador Smith Holds Press Conference

Ambassador SMITH held his first press conference on July 25. It was well attended by representatives of both the local press and the international services. The three principal points covered were: (1) The United States adheres strictly to a policy of non-intervention in internal affairs in all countries, including Cuba; (2) The Ambassador expected to meet with representatives of all political opinion, including the opposition, for the purpose of learning their views, but only when approached through normal channels, and not clandestinely; and (3) a careful outline of the background of military aid to the Cuban Government, with emphasis on the aspects of hemispheric protection, defense against the Communist threat, and military missions approved by the Inter-American Defense Board. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The conference received full coverage in the local press, including favorable editorial comment in leading papers. There was some published criticism on the behavior of representatives of the international services, who asked and insisted on questions involving the local political scene which some considered improper. The Ambassador's objective, to establish clearly and publicly that he and the United States maintain cordial relations with the present Cuban Government, but are openly neutral in Cuban internal affairs, appears to have been achieved. (UNCLASSIFIED)

3. Insurrectionary Activities

Both the Government and opposition circles expected disturbances and possible violence on the 26th of July, anniversary of the movement headed by Fidel CASTRO. As the date approached, the Government took more than usual security precautions, including maintaining some armed forces personnel at duty stations. The day was marked in Habana only by four small demonstrations of groups of women, promptly and efficiently broken up by the police. Traffic was unusually light in the evening, but by the following day the city was completely normal. However, in a great number of cities and towns elsewhere in the country there were nuisance bombings, fires started by molotov cocktails and otherwise, short flash strikes, interruptions of electric service, and demonstrations. That night a group of Castro's armed forces attacked the

former

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

Page 3 of
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. 93
From Habana

former headquarters of the Cuban army group operating in the Sierra Maestra area, and burned a few minor buildings. The army squad on guard avoided a fight, and the Castro group soon withdrew to the hills. (UNCLASSIFIED).

Comment: For several days prior to the date, opposition sources had indicated that no large demonstrations or armed attacks were planned, presumably because of the readiness of the Government forces. Little serious damage was done by the various actions, but they clearly demonstrated once again the existence of a widespread state of tension and unrest. The Embassy understands that several of the short strikes were staged in response to pressure from the Castro movement, and did not entirely represent the free decision of the workers involved. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

4. Rural Schools Burned

During the past few weeks a number of rural schools have been burned. The Government blames opposition terrorists, and the opposition implies that the Government itself, or more irresponsible elements connected with it such as Senator Rolando MASFERRER's followers, are responsible. The Minister of Education and former Prime Minister, Dr. Jorge GARCIA MONTES, has made two impassioned public pleas to all concerned to stop such acts, which he correctly labels as contrary to the country's interests. At latest count, admittedly incomplete, 57 schools had been burned - mostly small one or two-room buildings. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Reason for the burnings is not clear. This is vacation period, and the empty and unguarded schools offer an easy target for terrorists and their destruction serves to emphasize the inability of the Government to maintain order. But it is a tactic which appears reasonably certain to boomerang eventually. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

5. Arrests within the Army

Over the past weekend a number of Army personnel stationed at La Cabaña fortress at Habana have been quietly arrested and held. It appears that the group consists principally of privates and sergeants, numbering over 10 but probably not more than 30. The Army is trying to keep the affair completely quiet. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Comment: The group was presumably conspiring against the present regime. However, the affair does not appear to have alarmed the Government. The Military Attaché saw the commanding general of the fortress, General DIAZ Tamayo, whom he knows well, on July 29, and reports that the General appeared completely relaxed and unconcerned, and urged him to visit the fortress soon. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. Protectionism

"Protectionism" in Cuba received further impetus this past week when the Government, urged on by special interests, by-passed its own Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page 4 of
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. 93
Front Habana

and the powerful sugar interests and: (1) issued a decree, the conditions of which will seriously curtail, if not eliminate entirely, the importation of baby chicks; (2) granted a tentative 30,000-ton wheat allotment to the still unfinished flour mill "Melipera Oriental" at Santiago de Cuba, provided the mill is in operation by January 31, 1958. (UNCLASSIFIED)

PSYCHOLOGICAL

7. Cuban press commentary last week was devoted to the following international subjects, no one of which received predominant attention: (1) Tunisia becoming a Republic; (2) France and Algeria; (3) RAF assistance to the Sultan of Oman; (4) the Argentine elections and (5) the assassination of Castillo Armas. Considerably more press reaction is expected on the last subject during this week, but all commentators deplored the shooting of the Guatemalan President and most praised his record, particularly his ousting of the pro-Communist regime of Arbenz. While not receiving predominant attention, the act of Tunisia becoming a Republic did result in more Cuban press commentary than the other themes. The ousting of the Bey and the taking over of formal power by President Burguiba without any bloodshed seemed to have impressed the Cuban press. Pueblo said the transition from a monarchy to a republic without shedding a drop of blood was something original and unusual in this part of the world. This paper called the event a "democratic evolution" which speaks well for the progress of North Africa. Both Excelsior and Informacion dealt in some detail with the history of Tunisia, which only three years ago was a protectorate of France, and showed how the Bey had been used by France to perpetuate her control over Tunisia. Informacion advanced the theory that the Algerian issue was the real cause of the fall of the Bey as a result of his opposition to assistance to the Algeria Arabs in their struggle against France. Diario de la Marina discussed the new republic in conjunction with the whole question of North Africa, warmly praised President Burguiba and predicted that all Arabic North Africa would soon be a united free country.

LABOR

8. Becquer Forming Opposition Labor Group

Conrado Becquer Diaz, Representative of Las Villas Province and prominent sugar workers' leader in that province, announced on July 30 that he is forming an opposition labor group to be called USO (Union Sindical Oposicionista). The stated purposes of USO will be to combat the "false policy of politics of the CTC" and to achieve in the labor movement the same type of unity among CTC oppositionists that Manuel Varena and Jose Andreu have reached in the political arena. Becquer is planning to release soon a 12-point manifesto. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Becquer is generally regarded as a demagogue in both political and labor circles. The Embassy understands that he is now trying to get all the well-known CTC opponents such as Angel Cefine, Calixto Fernandez, Marco Hirigoyen, Pascasio Lineras, Cesar Lancis, Vicente Rubiera, Rodrigo Leminchar Jaime Lopez, and Pablo Balbuena to join USO. Previous efforts to form an

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

Page _____ of
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. 53
From Habana

opposition front of labor leaders belonging to different political parties have failed primarily because each labor leader wanted to maintain his own political individuality. In the light of this and because of Becquer's reputation, it is more than probable that his new attempt will prove abortive. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

MILITARY - Negative

For the Ambassador:

Vinton Chapin
Vinton Chapin
Counselor of Embassy

Contributors: Political: JLTopping
Protectionism: CEDavis
Psycheological: RSBryan
Labor: JFCerrell

Distribution by Embassy: AmEmbassies, Port-au-Prince, Ciudad Trujillo
AmConsulate, Santiago de Cuba
MA (7); AA (2); NA (5)

704

3ECEIA

CONFIDENTIAL

MPA

AIR POUCH
PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FW 737.00(W)/7-3157

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

96
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

August 1, 1957
DATE

REF :

EQR/A-1 U/O-1 P-1

24 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.	OTHER
	REC'D	INFO	
8/5	OL-10 RM/R	ARMY-2 REP-2 ARA-4 IO-2 ICA-10 OSIA-10 ARMY-35 NAVY-30 AIR-24	

SUBJECT: Correction on Joint WEEKA No. 31

CIA-16 OCB-2 OSD-2

THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE RETURNED TO THE GENERAL FILES

On page one, paragraph 1 of Joint WEEKA No. 31 the sentence beginning "The objectives of the Front...." should read as follows: "The objectives of the Front are not entirely clear but it appears that they intend to press for resignation of the Government and designation of the ranking justice of the Supreme Court as provisional chief of state to hold elections within 90 days in accordance with certain provisions of the Constitution; and failing this, the Front hopes to unite behind a prominent non-political figure and defeat the Government in the elections scheduled for June, 1958."

For the Ambassador:

Vinton Chapin
Vinton Chapin

Action Assigned to Counselor of Embassy

Action Taken Noted TRP/ER

Date of Action 8/2

Action Office Symbol 1078

Name of Officer N

Direction to DC/R file

FW 737.00(W)/7-3157

HBS

VChapin:lm

REPORTER

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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