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737. 13/6-2554

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

June 25, 1954
DATE

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SUBJECT: José SUAREZ Rivas New Undersecretary of Labor Navy-3

Dr. José SUAREZ Rivas took office as Undersecretary of Labor on June 14. He is considered the technical undersecretary as compared with Arsenio GONZALEZ González, the administrative undersecretary. It is believed in labor circles that Dr. Suarez Rivas has been named to this post in preparation for his taking over as Minister upon the expected resignation from that post of Carlos SALADRIGAS. The Embassy is inclined to believe this report since Saladrigas has indicated to it that he intends to run for the Senate in the forthcoming elections. In order to do so he will have to resign as Minister.

Suarez Rivas's appointment has been well received. He is highly qualified for his new post, having had a long connection with the Ministry. He was one of the men who helped organize it when it was established in 1933, served in several senior posts in it during the succeeding years, and finally became Minister of Labor during President Batista's first term of office.

Though not so prominent politically as his brother Eduardo, José Suarez Rivas has had an active and successful political career. After leaving the Ministry of Labor he was twice elected to the House of Representatives, where he was one of the leaders of the Liberal Party. On March 22, 1953, José Suarez Rivas was reported by Carteles to be a member of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano (Autentico) and out of sympathy with the present government. His appointment to the Ministry indicates that, whatever his present political orientation may be, he enjoys the confidence of Batista.

The sympathy of José Suarez Rivas for the United States would seem to be indicated by an incident that happened in the House of Representatives during December 1950. A Communist member had attacked Cuban support of United States policy in Korea. Suarez Rivas declared that Cuba should not merely support the United States but send troops to fight in Korea as well. He added (Havana Herald, December 14, 1950): "That personally he was all for the

JdeZengotita:ep
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U.S." Joaquin ORDOQUI, another Communist member, thereupon called him an "imperialist lackey", and Suarez Rivas sailed into him with his fists. He is noted in Embassy records as having cooperated, when Minister of Labor, with United States defense projects in Cuba.

For the Ambassador:

Juan de Zengotita
Juan de Zengotita
Second Secretary

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