

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 BUREAU OF CONFIDENTIAL
 INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS (Classification)
 AUG 24 1951

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 737.13/8-2251
 August 22, 1951
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 PRIORITY

FROM : HABANA
 TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON
 REF : Habana's 289, August 17
 SUBJECT: POSSIBLE RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF STATE MIGUEL SUAREZ FERNANDEZ

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Ever since the appointment of Miguel SUAREZ Fernandez as Minister of State there has been speculation as to just how long he would last in office. This speculation was based on the fact that Miguel Suarez Fernandez, who is a strong contender for the PRC(A) Presidential nomination for 1952, was not President PRIO's choice for the presidency and, furthermore, that Suarez controlled the Las Villas PRC(A) Provincial Assembly, which gave him the power, under the Electoral Code, to veto any national coalition of parties for electoral purposes. Since the PRC(A) will undoubtedly go to the polls allied with two or more parties, such veto power would in effect give Suarez undue power in relation to the nomination 1/. It was generally understood at the time Suarez was appointed Minister of State that the President was attempting to hamstring Suarez' political activity and power.

Upon the death of the Ortodoxo Party leader, Senator CHIBAS, Suarez was prominently in evidence, both at the hospital and later at the funeral. As a result of these activities it is common gossip that Suarez may have had in mind a switch to the Ortodoxo Party in the event he fails to obtain the PRC(A) nomination and receives an invitation to be the Ortodoxo standard-bearer. Regardless of whether or not Sanchez should go over to the Ortodoxos or enter into any kind of political understanding with that group, it is understood that President Prio was highly indignant at Suarez' activities in connection with Chibas' death.

Rumors are now prevalent that Suarez will resign in the immediate future. In view of the foregoing, it is

1/ Despite Suarez' opposition, the amendment of the Electoral Code to remove this veto power of the party provincial assemblies was included by the administration in the agenda for the Special Session of Congress now convened. It is quite possible that the insertion of this item in the agenda may decide Suarez to resign from the Cabinet entirely apart from the President's views in the matter.

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possible that this may indeed be the case.

Should Suarez resign there are several courses open to him. He may attempt to force Prio to back him for the PRC(A) presidential nomination with the support of GRAU and his "Cubanidad" and "Republicano" followers. Failing this, Suarez may try to make some kind of a deal with the Ortodoxos who recently nominated obscure and colorless (though intelligent) Dr. Roberto AGRAMONTE as the Ortodoxo candidate for the presidency. While perhaps improbable, it is not impossible that Agramonte might withdraw at a later date for the good of the Party.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RESTRICTED
 BUREAU OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
 AUG 23 1951

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 737.13/8-2351 *EWS*

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : HABANA
 TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. *III*
 REF : Habana's 308, August 22, 1951
 SUBJECT: RESIGNATION OF SENATOR MIGUEL SUAREZ FERNANDEZ AS MINISTER OF STATE

313
 DESP. NO. August 23, 1951
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 PRIORITY *Mr. Bennett*
Mr. Phillips

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On the afternoon of August 22 the Minister of State, Senator Miguel SUAREZ Fernandez, delivered his "irrevocable" resignation as Minister to Prime Minister LANCIS for delivery to the President. That evening the Palace announced that the resignation had been accepted and that Under Secretary of State Raul RUIZ would assume charge of the Ministry pending the appointment of a new Minister of State.

When he left the Palace Suarez Fernandez told the press that the cordiality and friendship shown by him to Senator CHIBAS after the latter had shot himself and later at Chibas funeral had been viewed with disfavor by certain elements of the Government. Suarez Fernandez then criticized the policies of the Administration, stating that the action of the Government in bringing all its resources to bear to destroy the Party's democratic system (including the proposed amendment of the Electoral Code) and to assure the imposition (of a presidential candidate) would mark the eclipse of liberty of determination of the Auténtico Party.

It is known that President PRIO was annoyed at the prominence of Suarez Fernandez among the Ortodoxos during the last days and funeral of Senator Chibas. However it is not believed that this in itself was the factor which brought about the resignation. The real reason is believed to lie in the determination of the Prio group to amend the Electoral Code in such a way that Suarez Fernandez would be unable to block the choice of that group for the PRC(A) presidential candidacy. Under the terms of the Code, a Provincial Party Assembly has veto power over nominations for President, Vice President and Senators by that party's National Assembly in cases where such candidacies are based on a coalition of the party in question and other parties. Since Suarez Fernandez controls the PRC(A) Provincial Assembly of Las Villas Province, and since candidates put up by the PRC(A) National Assembly will be the candidates of a PRC(A)-Liberal-Demócrata coalition, Suarez Fernandez has the power under the present regulations to block nominations not to his liking.

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Although Suarez Fernandez had opposed the action vigorously, the President nevertheless included in the agenda for the Special Session of Congress a proposal to amend the Electoral Code in order to remove such provincial veto power. The executive message proposed the amendment of the Electoral Code "taking into account that those amendments introduced into Congress after the elections had been legally convoked will be constitutionally void". None of the other items on the agenda for the Special Session requires action by any fixed date, and it is obvious that most of them could not possibly be enacted during the short session which the Prime Minister announced would begin on August 20 and terminate on September 13, 1951. It would therefore appear that the Special Session was for the exclusive purpose of amending the Electoral Code, the remainder of the agenda being mere window dressing or for the purpose of appeasing organized groups such as the Railway Workers and the Veterans of the War of Independence.

The development which is believed to have finally decided Suarez Fernandez to break with the Government was the decision taken by the PRC(A) Senate Committee on the night of August 21 to support the proposed amendment.

There is intense speculation as to just what the future will hold, not only for Suarez Fernandez but for the other political parties, all of which are still trying to adjust themselves to the new political situation created by the death of Senator Chibás. In view of the very friendly exchanges between Suarez Fernandez and the Ortodoxos on the occasion of Chibás' death, there would appear to be some possibility that Suarez Fernandez, who is a strong leader, and the Ortodoxo Party, which is a relatively strong party but which now lacks a strong leader, may eventually get together. On the other hand, Suarez Fernandez has recently engaged in a number of conferences with ex-President GRAU, Senator Santiago REY, President of the Partido Republicano, Vice President ALONSO PUJOL, and others. These conferences had also been viewed with deep suspicion by the Prio group, and several leaders have stated that Suarez Fernandez acted more like a member of the opposition than a disciplined party member. Whether or not Suarez Fernandez goes over to Grau's "Cubanidad" 1/

1/ Conversations between the Grau group and Castellanos were recently broken off, and it has now been announced that the "Graucistas" and the "Republicanos" will in the forthcoming party reorganizations unite as the "Partido de la Cubanidad".

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group, or they come to him, remains to be seen. Santiago Rey speaking for the "Cubanidad" group has already announced Suarez Fernandez would be welcomed into the group with the greatest pleasure.

There remains another possibility which is somewhat unlikely, and that is that Suarez Fernandez' strength may yet force the PRC(A) to nominate him for the presidency. Several groups within the party, including the PRC(A) Youth, have already announced they will support Suarez Fernandez. However, as stated above, this last possibility seems unlikely.

There is considerable speculation as to who will be the next Minister of State. Whoever it is, it is expected that the presidential choice will be officially announced in the immediate future.

Prior to his resignation Suarez Fernandez had been appointed to head Cuba's delegation to the San Francisco conference. He is not now expected to go to San Francisco, nor is it known whether the new Minister of State will head the delegation. This will, of course, be reported as soon as it is known.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

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