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PRIORITY

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837.062/5-357

**FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH**

FROM : Amembassy, MEXICO, D.F. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. BUREAU OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

REF : **F80004-1727** MAY 3 1957

May 3, 1957

DATE MAY 4 1957

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SUBJECT: Report of William Doherty, Jr., PTTI Representative on Cuban Labor Situation

William Doherty, Jr., PTTI Representative went to Habana April 22-25 to investigate the CTC-Telephone Workers conflict. Upon his return he submitted a report to ORIT, a copy of which is attached for the Department's information.

In the course of his investigation Doherty, Jr. saw Eusebio MUJAL, CTC Secretary General, the Cuban Secretary of Labor, and Vicente RUBIERA, Secretary General of the Telephone Workers. The report is based on conversations with these persons.

Doherty, Jr. also saw Ignacio GONZALEZ Tellechea, ORIT President, at a secret meeting place. According to Doherty, Jr., Gonzalez Tellechea was profoundly upset over the Mujal-Rubiera conflict and asked to be excused from making any report to ORIT as had been requested three weeks ago. Doherty also reported that Gonzalez Tellechea felt Rubiera was going to lose the fight even if he won re-election in his union.

Doherty, Jr. has offered Rubiera a job as PTTI representative in Central America. Rubiera has indicated he will let Doherty, Jr. know soon whether he intends to stay on in Habana or accept the offer.

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 4/28/80

PER HANSON OFFICE CDC

For the Ambassador:

FADRC FOI CASE NO. 7900774

*Pethan*

*Ben Stephansky*  
Ben S. Stephansky  
Labor Attaché

FILED  
MAY 23 1957

Enclosure:  
copy of "Assessment of Cuban Situation"

cc: Amembassy, HABANA

BSSStephansky/vc  
REPORTER

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**ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

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**F800004-1428**

April 27, 1957

ASSESSMENT OF CUBAN SITUATION

Contrary to reports had by ORIT prior to my departure for Cuba, I discovered that the Telephone Workers' Union had not been formally intervened. However, the Electrical Workers' Union has been formally intervened, the leaders deposed, and new elections will be called by the C.T.C. with the cooperation of the government.

In discussion with both the Minister of Labor and the General Secretary of the C.T.C., I received complete reassurance that Convention 87 of the I.L.O. concerning freedom of association would be upheld, and that under no circumstances would there be any intervention of the Telephone Workers' Union. Parenthetically, however, I should state that in my eyes, the Telephone Workers' Union of Cuba is at the present time in effect intervened, although not formally so, because the Cuban Government has not permitted them to have free elections. In addition, during five days of the week beginning April 15, soldiers were actually stationed in the Telephone Workers' building and the leaders of the union were refused admittance, but, as previously stated, the Government has promised to cease and desist from such future interference, and they have also promised that elections can now be had on the request of the union.

\* \* \*

The somewhat chaotic conditions that exist in Cuba have the following historical context: recently the Cuban Government issued a decree, Number 538, which called for the establishment of a Subversive Activity Control Board in order to prevent Communist infiltration of the public utilities industries (telephone, electricity, etc.) of Cuba. The National Executive Board of the C.T.C. indorsed this decree with little or no dissenting vote (252 to 4). Subsequently, the Government of Cuba issued a Pronouncement, No. 51, which established the manner in which Decree No. 538 would be implemented. 51 called for the establishment of a tripartite board of control and review consisting of a representative from the Cuban Government, a representative from the enterprise involved, and two representatives from the trade union movement, one representing the C.T.C. and the other, the national union within the industry. However, the representative from the national union was to be selected by the C.T.C. This latter point was vigorously protested by the Telephone Workers' Union and the Electrical Workers maintaining, rightfully so, that unless they were permitted to select their own representative, they would not, in fact, be represented on this board.

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Page 2 of 2  
Encl. No. 1  
Desp. No. 1089  
From Mexico, D.F.

Three major factors underlying this current dispute must be taken into consideration: 1) there has been long time internal dissension within the C.T.C., the opposition being directed by the Electrical Workers' Union and the Telephone Workers' Union; 2) recent government decrees have called for vast expansion of both the telephone and power industries of Cuba, and it is estimated the employment in these industries will be doubled and there is a struggle as to whether the national unions or the C.T.C. will be in the position to dole out the new jobs; 3) there is great unrest within the rank and file of Cuban labor because of the undemocratic and unwarranted interference into trade union matters on the part of the Cuban Government, and there can be no question that the current dispute is at least partially a manifestation of general protest.

The C.T.C. Constitution (Articles 15 and 54) provides that the C.T.C. may take disciplinary action against its affiliated organizations when they have demonstrated an unwillingness to abide by prior majority decision. The C.T.C. looks upon the current protest being waged by the Electrical Workers' Union and Telephone Workers' Union as a violation of the afore-mentioned articles of the Constitution and has, therefore, intervened the Electrical Workers' Union and has threatened to intervene the Telephone Workers' Union. However, it was explained that under the current laws of Cuba, such intervention cannot be had without the consent of the government and without their participation in the intervention process. Despite arguments to the contrary, there can be no question that the government is playing a role in the current intervention of the Electrical Workers' Union. Moreover, the government refused to allow the Electrical Workers' Union to disaffiliate from the C.T.C. in order to escape said intervention. Such refusal on the part of the government is, in effect, intervention. At the present time the Electrical Workers' Union is under the control of a (C.T.C.-Government) named interventor, who, curiously enough, represents the pro-C.T.C. opposition within the Electrical Workers' Union. There will be elections shortly within the Electrical Workers' Union, but the duly elected leadership prior to the current intervention will not be permitted to seek office.

Despite the fact that both the C.T.C. and the Minister of Labor desired to discuss the matter of the current intervention of the Electrical Workers, I persistently refused to do so in recognition of the fact that I represent only the Cuban Telephone Workers in this dispute.

In my opinion, the spirit of Convention Number 87 guaranteeing freedom of trade union association has been violated in this instance because of the interference of the government, albeit at the

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Page 2 of  
Encl. No. 1  
Desp. No. 1089  
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request of the C.T.C., in the internal affairs of the Telephone Workers and Electrical Workers' Unions. This Convention categorically states that under no circumstances may a government so interfere, regardless of whether or not there is an accompanying request by the trade union center. Article 3 of Convention 87, which specifies that there will be free and uninhibited elections within the trade unions, has been directly violated because in the instance of the Telephone Workers' Union, they were to have had their elections in December, 1956, and the Minister of Labor has steadfastly refused to grant the necessary permission to hold their elections. Even the fact that such permission must be forthcoming is in itself a violation of Article 5, and the Minister's contention that the suspension of constitutional guarantees which was put in effect by the Cuban Government because of the current revolution, is not valid because that suspension officially expired on April 15, and the permission for the elections has not been granted as of this date. However, as mentioned previously, concrete commitments were made to me that there will be no future interference on the part of the government, and that the elections will be held at the request of the Telephone Workers' Union.

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