INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State



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- 1. May 14, Cofino followers after failure get permission hold rally staged unauthorized "lightening" demonstration in front offices Cuban Electric Company. This broken up by police who made several arrests including Amado Maestri and Guillermo Mestri. They later released. Stated immediate cause of demonstration was dismissal of Manola Castro as chief Workers Welfare Department and his replacement by Luis Cabrera who follower of Samalea.
- 2. May 15, Cofino followers began combination slowdown-sitdown strike in offices Electric Company not only in Habana but throughout Cuba as protest manner in which police handled situation May 24.
- 3. Afternoon May 15 Labor Minister issued resolution declaring strike illegal and participants subject to penalty under criminal code. He pointed out (1) vital nature of electric power and (2) that dispute does not involve wages and working conditions. Later in afternoon 10 persons including daughter of Cofino arrested and charged being involved illicit strike. Lawyer for Electric Company preferred charges.
- 4. Company manager issued circular to department chiefs saying strike unjustified, that it involved no issue between company and employees that it solely an inter-union fight; that company fully intends to abide by and respect collective bargaining agreement; and thus workers should use good judgment and restore normalcy to operations of company.

5. So far no

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-2-#548, May 16, from Havana

- 5. So far no interruption basic power services only offices and shops involved in strike.
- 6. Unofficial reports indicate Cofino and other leaders in hiding fearful of arrest. News reporters claim they unable to contact them. This may be true.
- 7. May 15, Executive Committee of Telephone Federation held special meeting decide strategy in support of Cofino. Later Rubiera quoted as saying "we are together with electrical workers and will defend to the last principle of trade union liberty and free elections. We are against CTC intervention". To show support of Electrical Workers, Rubiera has announced that on May 16 from 10:00 to 10:15 a.m. there will be a short telephone stoppage "which will not interfere with service".
- 8. Reports have been circulating that Cofino and followers would gradually move toward more drastic action to keep intervention issue to fore. It also reported Rubiera would cooperate only up to point where vital electric and telephone services be interrupted.
- 9. With the actual displacement of Cofino followers from jobs which now being filled with Samalea adherents it logical assume situation may become more tense.

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