

# INCOMING AIRGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS TELEGRAPH BRANCH

AIRGRAM

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FROM: American Embassy,  
Havana, Cuba.

Date of Mailing:

Rec'd. Sept 28, 1948 10:53 a.m.

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Secretary of State,  
Washington.

A-1075, September 24, 1948

President-elect Prió announced September 23 the Cabinet to be formed after his inauguration October 10.

Most of the persons concerned are described in the Embassy's despatch No. 786, September 21, 1948, subject: "Political Situation in Cuba", and date of most recent CBD report available is given following each name for Department's guidance.

## Prime Minister

Manuel A. ("Tony") VARELA Loredó, 40, Senator from Camaguey 1944-48, reelected June 1948, slippery, none too good reputation, powerful politico, very close to Prió. (CBD report 4 Feb. 1948)

## Minister of State

Carlos HENRIQUEZ Reyes Gavilan, 48, graduate of United States Naval Academy, fervent revolutionary during Machado days, Minister of Agriculture first Grau regime, President of Cuba three days in 1934, Director of Office of Price Control during war, honest, correct, highly respected, bearer of excellent reputation but, unfortunately, poor administrator. Very friendly and cooperative with Embassy. (CBD report Feb. 1940)

## Minister of Justice

Ramon ("Mon") CORONA Garcia, 50, Governor of Oriente Province 1940-48, elected Senator June 1, 1948, lawyer, newspaperman, reportedly affable, pleasant, bearer of

Fair

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CONFIDENTIAL

A-1078, September 24, 1948  
Embassy at Habana, Cuba.

- 2 -

fair reputation. Important politician in Oriente. (CBD report 24 June 1948)

Minister of the Interior

Rubén de LEON Garcia, 41, former student revolutionary leader, advisor to Grau on student matters during first Grau Administration, member of House of Representatives 1944-48, elected Senator June 1, 1948. Pleasant, forceful, personality, effective orator, not particularly friendly to the United States, "professional revolutionary". (CBD report 13 Nov. 1947)

Minister of the Treasury

Antonio PRIO Socarrás, 43, younger brother of President-elect, Director of Division of Taxes and Imposts of Ministry of the Treasury during Grau regime. Pleasant, affable, friendly to officers of this Embassy, cooperative but known to be venal. Believed to be completely under President-elect's control.

Minister of Public Works

Manuel FEBLES, 42, head of the Department of Architecture and Municipal Urbanization of the City of Habana, close friend of President-elect, but otherwise relatively unknown figure so far. Reportedly honest, hard-working, competent.

Minister of Agriculture

Francoisco GRAU Alsina, 30, agricultural engineer, nephew of President Grau, Under-Secretary of Agriculture during Grau regime, affable, alert, agreeable and considerable technical qualifications for office, but inclined to be suspicious of the United States. Idealistic, still bearer of good reputation. First agricultural engineer to be Minister of Agriculture. (CBD report 25 June 1948)

Minister of Labor

Edgardo BUTTARI Puig, 39, born in Florida, revolutionary during Machado regime, close to President Grau in 1934.

CONFIDENTIAL

Minister

CONFIDENTIAL

A-1078, September 24, 1948  
Embassy at Habana, Cuba.

- 3 -

Minister of Commerce 1942-44, member of House of Representatives June 1944 to June 1948. Low grade but astute politico with poor reputation who has moved from one party to another. Nationalistic, undependable, somewhat anti-United States, no special qualifications for office. (CBD report 14 Sept. 1943)

Minister of Education

Aureliano SANCHEZ Arango, 41, revolutionary during Machado regime, professor of labor law Habana University after overthrow of Machado. Close friend and advisor to President-elect since student days, intelligent, left of center, unstable, alleged author of Cuban social revolution.

Minister of Health and Social Welfare

Alberto OTEIZA Setién, 43, specialist in venereal and skin diseases, head Cuban Leprosy Institute, authentic leader in medical profession, reportedly honest, well educated, competent and pleasant. Relatively unknown until last six months. Has a brother in Customs with poor reputation.

Minister of Defense

Roman NODAL, 43, sugar chemist, member House of Representatives 1938-48, Minister of Agriculture December 1947 to date. A minor politico who has cooperated only slightly with the Embassy. Narrow-minded, inflexible, of limited vision, Nodal is not qualified for a Cabinet position. (CBD report 19 December 1947)

Minister of Communications

José Raimundo ANDREU Martinez, 47, member of House of Representatives 1936, elected Senator 1940, reelected 1944 and 1948, Minister of Health and Social Welfare November 1945 to April 1948. A powerful politico in Las Villas, somewhat conservative, intelligent, politically astute and comparatively honest, often considered presidential timber, of higher caliber than most Cuban politicians. (CBD report 23 October 1947)

Minister

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

A-1078, September 24, 1948  
Embassy at Habana, Cuba.

- 4 -

Minister of Communications

Virgilio PEREZ Lopez, 42, student revolutionary in Machado days, member of House of Representatives since 1940, very close to President-elect. He wanted Agricultural Ministry, knows nothing of communications and may resign shortly.

Secretary of the Presidency

Orlando PUENTE, 35, official of the Ministry of Labor during Grau regime, apparently close to President-elect when he was Minister of Labor. Puente's sister is married to Angel COFINO, leader of anti-Communist Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC). Puente is described as a little rough, typical Cuban revolutionary, self-assured, untidy and not particularly able.

Minister without Portfolio

Primitivo RODRIGUEZ, 42, member of House of Representatives, former "revolutionary", a tough "politico".

Minister without Portfolio

Ramon VASCONCELOS y Maragliano, 57, newspaperman, Senator continuously since 1936, Minister without Portfolio 1942, clever writer but has no particular political ideology, self-educated, powerful force in Cuban politics, although not trusted. Reportedly will handle press and publicity. (CBD report 1 December 1947)

Corona, Nodal and Andreu are members of the Republican Party; all the rest at present claim allegiance to the Autentico Party. Predominance of President-elect Priol's student "revolutionary" friends should be noted. Use of Hevia as respectable, though not outstandingly able, front in Ministry of State is also significant. Appointment of Andreu as Minister of Commerce also expected to be well received. Caliber of rest of Cabinet, with possible exception of Oteiza and Grau, leaves much to be desired.

Revised CBD reports and new ones in cases where no report has been prepared will be forwarded. Further comment on Cabinet in despatch form follows.

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W Lansing Collins, Jr./ats  
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