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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF : - -

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DESP. NO.

May 10, 1955

DATE

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	REC'D 5/11	OTHER ARMY-35 NAVY-39	

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 19 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

(UNCLASSIFIED) POLITICAL AMNESTY BECOMES LAW. The Congress in extraordinary session (see Weeka No. 18) quickly approved for the second time the political amnesty bill passed during the ordinary session (see Weekas Nos. 16 and 17). The question of whether the political amnesty thus granted would apply to ex-members of the armed forces was solved by simultaneously passing a second law that specifically amnestied political offenses committed under the Military Penal Code. (See despatch No. 1091, May 6, 1955).

President Batista signed both measures on May 6th and they were published in the Official Gazette and became effective on May 7th as Laws Nos. 2 and 3 of 1955.

The general Law No. 2 amnesties crimes committed prior to April 15, 1955; the "military" Law No. 3 refers only to offenses committed between March 10, 1952 and April 15, 1955. The latter does not require ratification in a second session of Congress, as did Law No. 2.

The scope of these two amnesty laws is very broad and they apply to a wide variety of adjudicated and pending cases involving political offenses, including revolutionary attempts against the government (e.g., the Moncada uprising), conspiracy, unlawful possession of arms (e.g., the Country Club case), illegal meetings, and the like. A special provision excludes from their benefits crimes intended to advance the aims of international Communism. Another grants a period of 30 days during which illegally held arms may be surrendered without criminal liability.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. There is no doubt that this political amnesty goes a long way toward a solution of Cuba's political problems. It satisfies strong public opinion in its favor, as well as a demand that has been first and foremost among those laid down by opposition elements as indispensable to a "national solution". Generous amnesty will tend to reduce animosity, bitterness and resentment as between the Batista regime and its opponents, and should help to smooth the path toward an eventual return to political.

FCFornes, Jr.:mbw
REPORTER

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normality. Batista may gain in esteem and prestige through the measure and his position is strengthened, if in no other way, at least with regard to any recrudescence of revolutionary activities. It is expected that amnesty will result in the return to Cuba of some of the exiles abroad and, some speculate, even in the return of Prío himself (if a face-saving way of doing so can be devised).

(UNCLASSIFIED) DRAFT DECREE CREATING BUREAU FOR REPRESSION OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES (BRAC). The papers carried a draft decree setting up the Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities (BRAC) (see Weeka No. 17 and despatch No. 1089 of May 5). The decree is intended to enforce anti-Communist Law-Decree No. 1975 and for that purpose creates BRAC in the Ministry of Interior. BRAC is to advise the Minister on investigating and repressing international Communism "in all its phases and methods" and on its infiltration of government, autonomous agencies, credit institutions, cultural, propaganda, and publicity organizations, and employer and labor organizations.

BRAC is to be under the direction of an administrative secretary, who shall be a high army officer appointed by the Minister of Defense. An attorney shall be appointed to BRAC by the President. An officer with police experience, to be appointed by the Minister of State, shall serve as Chief of Investigations. BRAC shall investigate Communist activities and recommend the suspension or intervention of any organization engaged in Communist activity. It shall keep a registry of all persons with Communist antecedents including all non-official visitors to Communist countries in the last ten years, shall pass on the admissibility into Cuba of persons from Communist countries, and investigate business transactions with Communist countries. It is to make recommendations or requests regarding the removal of officers from the government, autonomous agencies and employer or labor organizations; it is to make recommendations, also, for the repression or prevention of Communist activities, regarding undesirable aliens and regarding business with Communist countries. Civil, military and police authorities are to cooperate with BRAC, and the immigration authorities to obtain its clearance for prospective immigrants from Communist countries.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. BRAC's success will depend principally on the caliber of the men appointed to it, the budget it is given to operate with, and its being kept free from politics.

(UNCLASSIFIED) STUDENT DISTURBANCES. It was reported from Matanzas that student commemoration there on May 8th of the death of Tony GUITERAS in 1935 resulted in a disturbance in which shots were fired. Several students were arrested, including officers of the University (of Havana) Student Federation (FEU) who had gone to Matanzas to participate in the observance of the date. The

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

President of the FEU was among those arrested and apparently was hurt.

Yesterday a noisy protest was organized in the University in Havana the result of which, as far as the public was concerned, was the closing of surrounding streets to traffic because of the litter of missiles, including bottles, thrown by the students. The FEU plans other protest action, including a mass meeting tomorrow from which there may emerge an attempt at a street demonstration, with attendant possibility of trouble.

(CONFIDENTIAL) STATUS OF COMMUNIST LEADER REGARDING TEACHING JOB. The Embassy discussed with the Minister of Education the status of Juan MARINELLO Vidauretta, president of the Cuban Communist party, who had been ordered restored to his teaching position by a court decision (see Weeka No. 17). At the time of the discussion, the Minister had just received an opinion from his legal department on the Marinello case. Referring to anti-Communist Law-Decrees Nos. 1456 of June 1954 (see Weekas Nos. 22 and 23, 1954) and 1975 of January 1955 (see Weeka No. 3 and despatch No. 886, March 14, 1955), the opinion advised that the decision of the lower court be appealed to the Supreme Court. Then, continued the opinion, if the Supreme Court upheld the lower court, the Minister should inform it that its decision is "impossible of fulfillment", i.e., cannot be complied with because to do so would violate existing legislation which declares Communism incompatible with public service.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The Minister of Education gave the impression of being confident that despite court orders in Marinello's favor, his reinstatement as a teacher could be prevented administratively. The government would practically be forced to prevent such reinstatement of a prominent Communist if it did not wish its anti-Communist measures to be shown up as farcical.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PORTUGUESE MINISTER PRESENTS CREDENTIALS. On May 5, 1955, Mr. Antero Carreiro DE FREITAS presented his credentials as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Portugal.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CTC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING POSTPONED. The National Council of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), which in accordance with the CTC constitution was to meet this week to prepare for the IX Congress, will be postponed because of MUJAL's trip to Washington (see below).

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. The Congress itself should have been held this month, according to the constitution, though it could properly have been postponed by the Council. Mujal has told the Embassy confidentially that he is in favor of postponing

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 4 of
Desp. No. 2025
From HABANA

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page _____ of
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. _____
From _____

the Congress till next year, when the political atmosphere may be less charged. Before that time he will probably ask for leave and enter politics actively. He did not say just what his plans are, and though he mentioned forming a labor party, he also scouted the idea by saying that the country's labor leaders were too comfortably situated to be interested enough in such a party. There have been reports from labor leaders close to Mujal that he will re-enter active politics with freshened ambitions to become President of the Republic.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CTC DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON ON SUGAR. The CTC delegation that went to Washington to discuss the sugar question returned except for Domingo LAMADRID and Rafael OTERO, who, as planned, remained behind to carry on with the delegation's mission. CTC Secretary-General Mujal issued a press release in which he asserted that the AF of L and the CIO had promised to oppose any modification in the present Sugar Act before its expiration at the end of 1956. He said Assistant Secretary of State Holland had expressed himself as favorable to the Cuban case, but had stated that the Administration's policy had not yet been decided upon. Mujal reported also that possibly no action on sugar legislation would be taken at this session of congress.

The press release was not so bold and confident as Mujal's generally are, and it stressed that Cuba had to fight her case. Mujal said, that he and another CTC leader would probably return to Washington early in the present week to discuss the sugar issue in the company of top AF of L and CIO leaders with members of the United States Congress. He ended with an exhortation to all Cubans to continue to work hard at this problem.

The Embassy has been informed that Mujal will leave for Washington on May 10 with José Luis MARTINEZ, Anibal ALVAREZ and José Luis AMIGO, all of the Sugar Workers' Federation, to continue discussions on the sugar question.

(UNCLASSIFIED) INDOCHINA. Most Cuban newspapers expressed pleasure over the fall of Bao Dai and hoped that Viet Nam's new leader, Dinh Diem, will pull the country together sufficiently to resist Communist encroachment. Bao Dai was termed variously as irresponsible, frivolous, and incapable, and papers wondered how the French tolerated him for so long. Diario Nacional backed Dinh Diem without reserve, saying he is doing what he considers necessary to liquidate the impotent and corrupt Bao Dai regime and establish a republican government that offers some hope of better days. The paper suggested that if Dinh Diem builds a strong regime, progressive and just, Communist Ho Chih-Minh will have to give up his idea of invading Saigon. Alerta said that Dinh Diem has prestige and evidently the support of the United States, and granted that revolutionary action was needed to rid

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CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

Viet Nam of administrative corruption and constant Communist infiltration.

(UNCLASSIFIED) GERMAN SOVEREIGNTY. The Cuban press hailed the newly-attained sovereignty of the Federal German Republic as auguring well for peace in Europe, and felt that the Germans will play an important democratic role in defending the Christian bloc of nations against atheistic Communism. Diario de la Marina said that Germany's slow but firm transformation to democracy is viewed with great satisfaction in Latin America and that the handling of the German situation by the West proves that justice and equity among men still exist. Alerta predicted that no totalitarian type of German government disguised as Prussianism will beguile the German people again, since German thinking has changed in the past ten years. Diario Nacional said that the Russians can blame Stalin for turning the German people away from Communism, since he was responsible for repression like the Berlin blockade. Información cautioned that Germany received her independence after World War I only to resurrect aggressive militarism, and said that the destiny of Europe depends on a Germany that is not only strong but also democratic.

Army

(UNCLASSIFIED) ELECTRONIC TECHNICIANS COURSE BEGINS. On April 26, 1955 the first "Telecommunications Course" for technicians to operate and maintain the new RCA telecommunications system began at Batista Airport in San Antonio de los Baños. The instructors are furnished by RCA and the Cuban Government. Forty students from the Army, Navy, Police Force and Ministry of Communications will be given this course which will end about October 24, 1955.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CHANGE IN REGIMENTAL COMMANDER. On May 2, 1955 Lt. Col. Florencio CEBALLOS y Reyes, commander of the 10th EMS Regiment was transferred to the 5th Rural Guard Regiment as Inspector. The former Inspector, Lt. Col. Pedro A. BARRERA y Perez, assumed command of the 10th EMS Regiment.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. It was reported that about ten days ago the Chief of Staff made a surprise visit to San Antonio to inspect the new RCA electronic equipment stored at Batista airport. While there he also inspected the 10th Regiment and was reportedly very displeased with conditions, particularly of the mess halls. Shortly thereafter Lt. Col. CEBALLOS was relieved of command.

Navy

(CONFIDENTIAL) MORE SHIPS CARRYING SUGAR TO RUSSIA. An

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 6 of 2025
Desp. No. 2025
From HABANA

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page _____ of
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. _____
From _____

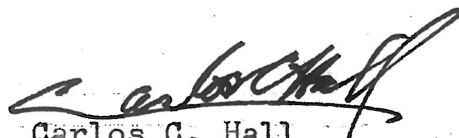
additional 13 ships have been scheduled to transport sugar to the USSR. These ships will carry part of the 100,000 tons of refined sugar purchased subsequently to the original sale of raw sugar. There are five German ships, two British, two Norwegian, two Swedish, one Danish, and one Costa Rican. All of the destinations of these ships are not known at this time. However, it appears that Riga and Leningrad will receive most of the sugar with some of it destined for Black Sea ports.

The Russian freighter, Taganrog, departed Manzanillo on May 8, 1955. She is enroute to Nakhodka, USSR, via the Panama Canal, with approximately 3,500 tons of raw sugar.

Air

Negative.


For the Ambassador:


Carlos C. Hall
Counselor of Embassy

Participants: CCHall, HMRandall, JPHoover, CSPick, Jr., FCFornes, Jr., JdeZengotita, WBCaldwell, FJDonahue, CDAnderson, Elmore (MA), Krisel (NA), Beckett (AA).

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