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FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

May 17, 1955
DATE

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 20 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PRISONERS RELEASED UNDER AMNESTY LAWS. Because of legal formalities, it took more than a week for the political amnesty granted by Law No. 2 of 1955 (see Weeka No. 19), to become effective in actual releases of prisoners from jail. On May 15 Fidel CASTRO Ruz and the others sentenced by the Urgency Court in Santiago de Cuba for the Moncada and Bayamo uprising in July 1953 were released from the prison on the Isle of Pines after about 19 months of imprisonment there. On the following day those involved in the Country Club affair were released from the same prison while another group, serving sentences for possession of arms, explosives, etc., came out of the Havana municipal jail. Both these last groups had been tried in the Havana Urgency Court. In all about 50 persons regained their freedom through the amnesty law and the list is not yet complete.

(UNCLASSIFIED) JOSE DUARTE AVAILS HIMSELF OF AMNESTY. José DUARTE Oropesa, under indictment in the United States for his connection with the arms cache seized in Mamaroneck, N.Y., has come out into the open to avail himself of the benefits of political amnesty Law No. 2 of 1955. He voluntarily appeared before the Havana Urgency Court on May 12th to take the legal steps necessary to this end.

Duarte gave the press a resumé of his revolutionary activities since 1952. He said that after he fled from the United States, he went successively to Mexico and Costa Rica, both of which countries in turn became uncomfortable for him. He returned to Cuba in April 1954 and had been underground for 13 months.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. In addition to bringing Duarte out of hiding, the amnesty law has resulted in the return to Cuba of a few exiles against whom there were charges of conspiracy. It seems also to have brought a measure of relief, although possibly only temporary, to another sector at times hard pressed: the Latin American diplomats in Havana popular with Cubans seeking diplomatic asylum. The Brazilian Ambassador informed the Embassy that he recently refused a request for asylum on the ground that

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amnesty of political offenses had made diplomatic asylum unnecessary.

(UNCLASSIFIED) BOMB EXPLOSIONS. On May 11 and again on May 13 bombs exploded at night at commercial establishments in separate sections of town. There was the usual property damage, principally broken window and door glass, but no one was hurt. It is speculated by the police that the bombs were thrown from passing automobiles.

Because of the nature and location of the establishments attacked it would appear that these bombings may be part of an aimless terroristic pattern.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CTC DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON ON SUGAR ISSUE. Newspaper reports from Washington, where Eusebio MUJAL, Secretary-General of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), is heading his organization's second mission in two weeks to make representations on behalf of Cuba's sugar interests, quote Mujal as reaffirming that he has received assurances that no action will be taken this year on pending sugar legislation and that the effects of whatever legislation may be enacted would not go into effect before the expiration of the legislation now in force.

(UNCLASSIFIED) FOUR POWER CONFERENCE. Most Cuban editorial writers and commentators felt that the projected Four Power Conference cannot produce global peace unless Soviet Russia makes the unlikely move of renouncing in full sincerity her plans for world conquest. In general, they took with a grain of salt the Soviet offer to go along with Western disarmament plans, and pointed to the Warsaw conference of Soviet satellites as more of a war council than a peaceable gathering. There was a slight undertone of optimism, however, over Russia's apparent conciliatory attitude.

Diario Nacional predicted that the Soviets will demand the dismantling of Western military bases constructed to contain Soviet aggression, and that the West will insist on international arms inspection. Neither demand, said Diario Nacional, will be honored, and the result will be an impasse. The paper cautioned that while the world may suddenly become optimistic over chances for peace, it should be remembered that Russia's basic aim is the expansion of international communism and the Kremlin will go to any length to carry this out. Excelsior said that a high-level conference will not change the Soviet pattern of aggression and termed the Reds' "peace" offer a rejoinder to NATO, constituting nothing but a re-edited version of an old one that failed. The offer was put forth, the paper said, in an attempt to soften up the West and obtain the best deal possible at the conference table. Alerta and other papers termed the Soviet disarmament

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offer too obviously synchronized with the integration of Western Germany into NATO and the imminent Four Power talks. Alerta said that the "foxes of Moscow" studied their offer carefully and timed it perfectly, trying to recapture propaganda and political initiative after recent failures in both. Información noted that Russia could have accepted disarmament long ago when the idea was first put forth by the United States, but waited until its "offer" would seem to the naive like a peace gesture. Diario de la Marina considered the Soviet change of attitude surprising, but gave it little importance since the Reds change their tactics often to suit their convenience. Pueblo viewed the Warsaw conference as a farcical meeting of puppets, and observed that if Russia really wanted peace it would not resort to this type of low comedy. More soberly, however, Diario Nacional thought it significant that PENG Teh-Huai had come all the way from Peiping to pledge Red China's millions to support the Soviet bloc in any conflict, and recalled that perhaps never before in history has such a mass of strength been pledged.

Army, Navy

Negative.

Air

(UNCLASSIFIED) CELEBRATION OF PILOTS DAY IN CUBA. In commemoration of Domingo ROSILLO's light plane flight from Key West, Florida, to Havana, Cuba in 1913, the third anniversary of Pilots' Day was held on 15 May 1955. Approximately 15 U.S. civilian planes, 35 Cuban civilian planes, 10 Cuban Air Force planes, and four Cuban Navy trainers participated. The light aircraft landed on the Malecón (sea wall avenue), proceeded to the Presidential Palace for ceremonies, and then taxied by the Palace for a presidential review.

President Batista received honorary wings from all the airline companies operating in and through Cuba. Certificates of service, in some cases medals of merit, were given to Cuban airline crews, and to Cuban civilians who have furthered civil aviation in Cuba.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Comment. Pilots' Day, first celebrated in 1953, has done much to stimulate interest in private flying, and has helped to further U.S. - Cuban air relations.

(UNCLASSIFIED) DEATH OF CUBAN ARMY AIR FORCE CHIEF. On 10 May 1955, Colonel Carlos PASCUAL y Pinard, Chief of the Cuban Air Force, died quietly at his home in Havana from Bright's disease. Colonel Pascual was stricken in mid-March and his case was considered hopeless by the hospital medical staff. High government

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officials, including President Batista, attended both the wake and the burial.

Lt. Colonel Carlos "Winsy" TABERNILLA y Palmero, second son of the Army Chief of Staff, General TABERNILLA y Diaz, is Acting Chief of the Cuban Army Air Force, and is a likely choice to be promoted to colonel and given permanent command of the Cuban Army Air Force.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Comment. Colonel Pascual made many friends over his 42-year life span, and will be sincerely missed by both civilian and military personnel.

Lt. Colonel Tabernilla is considered pro-American and a very capable pilot.

For the Ambassador:


Carlos C. Hall
Counselor of Embassy

Participants: CCHall, HMRandall, JPHoover, CFPick, FCFornes, Jr., JdeZengotita, RGCushing, WBCaldwell, CDAnderson, Krisel (NA), Slaton (AA).

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