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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

247
DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

October 24, 1956
DATE

REF

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ARMY-35 NAVY-30 AIR-24 OSD-2

NEA-4 CIA-10

OSD-2

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 43 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

(CONFIDENTIAL) INSURRECTIONARY ACTIVITIES. The flood of rumors and reports of pending revolutionary activities continued during the past week. There is an air of tension and expectancy in insurrectionary and opposition circles. But the Government continues to display, both outwardly and in confidential conversations, an appearance of calm and great confidence. There were various goings and comings between Cuba and Mexico, the acknowledged foreign center of insurrectionary plotting due largely to the presence there of Fidel CASTRO Ruz, leader of the "26 of July" Movement. Fructuoso RODRIGUEZ and Juan NUIRY, Vice Presidents of the Federation of University Students (FEU) and leaders of the "Revolutionary Directorate" of that organization, returned via Miami, and Oscar GANS Martinez, Minister of Justice, ~~was~~ Ambassador to the United States, and Prime Minister under ex-President Carlos PRIO and now a member of Pardo LLADA's Nationalist Revolutionary Party, went to Mexico October 19. It seems generally agreed that "something" will be undertaken fairly soon. Maximum publicity would be obtained if an attempt took place during the meeting, which started here today, of the Inter-American Press Association, and this may be a factor in the minds of plotters.

(UNCLASSIFIED) INVASION OF CAYO SAL. On October 18 a group of ten young Cubans "invaded" Cayo Sal, a small island in the Bahamas lying some 28 miles to the north of Cuba, in a "symbolic gesture" to assert Cuban sovereignty over the island. The group had chartered the fishing vessel "Miss Take" at Varadero, and taken control from the captain when at sea. Their landing was unopposed. The island has only a handful of permanent residents, including a few Bahamians and Cubans working for Mr. Clarence B. MOODY, an American who obtained a concession from the British to develop a tourist resort there, and a representative of British customs. The men started to lower the British flag, but desisted when the customs representative threatened to shoot if they did, and contented themselves with flying the Cuban flag on a short pole. The youths were members and sympathizers of Jose PARDON Llada's Nationalist Revolutionary Party (PNR), and sent him a pretentious message, dated prior to their excursion, stating that they had undertaken the task of "recovering the sovereignty of a part of Mother Cuba", and that their

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action was a "proclamation of Cuban right to Caye Sal".

Parde Llada, accompanied by various newsmen and politicians, flew to Caye Sal the following day, as did several newsmen from Miami. Before their arrival, however, a small contingent of armed British troops had arrived by plane, rounded up the Cuban youths, who reportedly had only a .32 revolver between them, gassed and provisioned their vessel, lowered and restored the Cuban flag, and had seen them off to Varadero.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. The affair was straight comic opera, and as a result has irritated a goodly number of Cuban editorialists and columnists, who feel that Cuban dignity has fared rather poorly. Several politicians, newsmen, and historians, led by the paper Excelsior, Habana Councilman Augustin Navarro and Parde Llada, have been publicly maintaining for the past two months that Caye Sal is Cuban, and that the Government should undertake to have Britain recognise the fact. Their principal motivation appears to have been desire for personal publicity, and they have been fairly successful. The Ministry of State has limited itself to statements that the matter was receiving due attention. With the news of the "invasion", the Ministry issued a statement that the youths had no connection of any sort with the Government and had acted on their own. The British Charge consulted the Ministry, and put out a mild statement expressing pleasure at the official disavowal of the expedition and saying that the incident had been reported to London and the Bahamas. No further official statements have been issued, and none are likely.

(UNCLASSIFIED) NATIONALIST REVOLUTIONARY PARTY APPLIES FOR RECOGNITION. On October 22, José Parde Llada, leader of the Partido Revolucionario Nacional (PNR - Nationalist Revolutionary Party) submitted documents to the Supreme Electoral Court allegedly containing the registration of some 150,000 voters as members of his party. This constitutes more than twice the minimum necessary for a party to be officially recognised and approved to participate in elections. Recognition should be forthcoming automatically after the Electoral Court verifies the documents.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. Parde Llada and his followers are opposed to the Batista Administration. Parde and three of his followers (of dubious political antecedents) are now deputies, and Parde has indicated that his party intends to participate in the partial elections scheduled for November, 1957.

(UNCLASSIFIED) DE LA TORRIENTE ILL. Dr. Cosmé de la TORRIENTE, Cuba's elder statesman and leader of the Society of Friends of the Republic (SAR), entered a local hospital on October 22, allegedly suffering from overwork. Members of the family have informed the Embassy, however, that he is suffering from edema, which may or may

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not be serious depending upon his response to treatment. Dr. de la Terriente is understood to be 84, and the family, while not alarmed, appears quite concerned.

(UNCLASSIFIED) CUBAN-INDIAN RELATIONS. Formal diplomatic relations between Cuba and India were established on October 23, when Gaganvihari L. L. MEHTA presented his credentials as the first Indian Minister to this country. Mehta is also Ambassador to the United States. The Military Attaché and a secretary of the Embassy there, and their wives, accompanied him on this trip. Mrs. Mehta told officers of the Embassy that her husband will resign shortly, probably in January, to return to private life in India. Members of the party state that a permanent Indian commercial representative may be assigned here.

Psychological.

(UNCLASSIFIED) POLAND. The sudden return to power in Poland of anti-Stalinist GOMULKA and his pledge of independence from Moscow control was headline news in the Cuban press, and drew editorials which termed this new event a victory for the West in the sense that it signified a weakening of Soviet control over the satellites.

There is no doubt, said El Mundo, that the crisis now developing in Warsaw is of transcendental importance to the democratic world. The cause of liberty has split the solidarity of the Communist block, but the Russian colossus will do all it can to impede its disintegration. The people of Poland, continued this paper, are condemned to suffer many more trials in the near future. Avance maintained that there is no reason to be surprised at this Polish outbreak - that the Poles have always been highly nationalistic, though almost continually subjugated by one power or another, and that this is a logical outcome of Soviet tyranny. Excelsior felt that KHRUSHCHEV had to give into Gomulka's ouster of the pre-Soviet leaders in Poland or face an open rebellion, and that the whole thing was made possible in the beginning by the example set by Yugoslavia. Información concurred with this view, calling this the hour of triumph for TITO. This paper believed the "Titoist movement" would spread to Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. But one must not forget, said Información, that this policy was started at the initiative of the Kremlin by its new policy towards Tito and the de-Stalinization campaign, and therefore the Polish situation must have been anticipated, if not planned by the Kremlin. Diario de la Marina went further to state its belief that the new Polish "independence" was planned and staged from Moscow as part of its new policy to lull the free world into thinking that international Communism has died out. In any event, admitted Diario de la Marina, the Polish situation is good news, for it is a confirmation of the correctness of the Western policy of strength and vigilance towards the Soviet Union.

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Army, Navy, Air.

Negative.


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