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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
REF : -

518

DESP. NO.

January 24, 1956

DATE

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	IN F O THER
	061-10 1/25	R MIR-2 ARA-10 ARMY-35 NAVY-32 AIR-24 CIA-16 OSD-2 OOB-2

SUBJECT: Joint Weeks No. 4 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA. USA-8

(UNCLASSIFIED) FURTHER BATISTA-DE LA TORRIENTE NEGOTIATIONS LIKELY. Following the refusal of the opposition to designate commissions to discuss political problems with government representatives (see Weeka No. 3), Cosme DE LA TORRIENTE, head of the "Society of Friends of the Republic" (SAR) and spokesman for the opposition groups, again wrote to President Batista under date of January 16. He referred to the situation that had developed after the second conversation between the two on January 10 and, expressing confidence in Batista's "disposition to resolve the political problem", said: "Therefore I allow myself to insist that you and I should talk once more to see if it is still possible to reach an agreement on all the points we discussed". The President replied in writing on January 21st. De la Torriente refused to make public the contents of the letter pending consideration thereof by the SAR and the opposition groups.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. This further exchange, even though Batista's letter has not yet been divulged, has rekindled hope that the door has not been slammed on the so-called "civic dialogue" and that a road leading to a solution of the political impasse may be found.

(UNCLASSIFIED) NEWSPAPER TIEMPO BOMBED. During the early morning hours of January 18th an apparently powerful bomb exploded in front of the premises of the daily newspaper, Tiempo. Extensive damage was done to the facade and inside front of the building but no one was injured. Tiempo credited the outrage to "known gangster elements in the pay of Trujillo whose terroristic plans... Tiempo had been the first to uncover". In the same breath the paper said that the attempt may have been made by Communists or by followers of Fidel CASTRO.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. It can only be observed that Rolando MASFERRER, the owner and director of Tiempo, has earned any number of enemies at all levels, including the underworld, against whom suspicion of having a hand in this bombing might easily be directed.

FCFornes Jr; JdeZengotita; RGCushing;
LtColJETreadway:mbw

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REPORTER

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(UNCLASSIFIED) CONGRESSMEN GO ON HUNGER STRIKE. The attempt to split the National Federation of Sugar Workers (FNTA) made by Congressmen Conrado RODRIGUEZ and Conrado BECQUER and other sugar leaders removed from their union jobs for failing to carry out the FNTA order ending the end-of-year sugar strike (see Weeka No. 2), has not prospered, although the dissident leaders undoubtedly enjoy considerable local support in Las Villas Province sugar unions. Moreover, they have been joined as outcasts from the labor movement by Jorge CRUZ Pérez, till then Secretary-General of the Camaguey CTC provincial federation, who is also a congressman and who with the Conrados and two others forms the CADI group in the House of Representatives. Cruz was removed from his post for supporting the Conrados.

On January 19, Bécquer, Rodríguez, and Cruz started a hunger strike in the Hall of the Minority in the Representatives' wing of the capitol. Its object is the revocation of the intervention by the CTC and the Ministry of Labor of sugar unions whose officers continued to refuse to accept the orders of the CTC and the FNTA. On the 20th Cruz, who had been ill before the fast, was removed with fever to a clinic, and on the 23rd Bécquer and Rodríguez were taken to the hospital in a reportedly very weak condition.

President of the House of Representatives Gastón GODOY and government representatives were much annoyed at the use of the capitol premises for the fast. It was allegedly not merely against rules, but after holding a labor assembly there (see Weeka No. 2), Bécquer and Rodríguez had specifically promised to abide by those rules.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. Hunger strikes are not uncommon in Cuba in situations of this nature. There is no evaluation available yet of the effect of this gesture of the legislators on feeling among FNTA members. Should their lives be endangered, the situation might become ticklish to deal with. Some nonlabor commentators called the strike unedifying and rather ridiculous.

(UNCLASSIFIED) ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS. On January 19, 1956, Rear Admiral Raúl A. LYNCH presented his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Argentina to Cuba.

(UNCLASSIFIED) SOVIET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OFFER. Bulganin's offer of technical assistance to Latin America resulted in a considerable amount of reaction in the Cuban press during the past week, all highly favorable from the United States point of

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view. What Moscow really wants, said El Mundo, is to infiltrate its propaganda in Latin America. If the offer is not accepted, the paper said, Red agents in each country will say that the governments are mere puppets of American imperialism. In another editorial El Mundo noted that the offer coincided with United States congressional consideration of the Sugar Act, and called the lack of economic unity in Latin America the Achilles' heel which the Soviets were exploiting. It is not enough, said El Mundo, to denounce Soviet tactics of infiltration; economic realities must be faced. Diario de la Marina observed that what Latin America wants is economic and social progress without loss of liberty. What Latin America has learned well in the last 20 years, it said, is that the supposed Soviet freedoms and the supposed distribution of wealth are nothing but rash lies. Alerta brought up the inconsistency of Soviet propaganda; if American technical aid in the past has been "dollar imperialism," then, too, the Soviet offer is imperialistic. Tiempe commented that the unanimous rejection of Bulganin's hypocritical offer shows that the free nations of Latin America would rather be at the bottom of the scale regarding American economic and technical aid to the world than to tolerate the presence of a single Soviet agent. Tiempe said Soviet Russia's only purpose in the gesture is to implant spies and saboteurs in Latin America to work with Red fifth columnists in an attempt to overthrow the democratic regimes of this hemisphere.

Army

(UNCLASSIFIED) CHANGES IN ASSIGNMENT OF CUBAN ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONELS. On 19 January 1956 it was announced by the General Staff Corps that the following transfers had been made: Lt. Col. Jose AGUIAR Garcia, formerly assigned to Inf. Regt. No. 1 of the Infantry Division, was transferred as Territorial Inspector of the 1st Rural Guard Regt. "MACEO" in Santiago de Cuba. He replaced Lt. Col. Jose M. REGO y Rubide who has been transferred as Director of the Application Courses for Officers. Lt. Col. Rego y Rubide replaced Lt. Col. Felix PEREZ y Montoya who has been transferred as Territorial Inspector of Rural Guard Regt. No. 6 "RIUS RIVERA" in Pinar del Rio. He replaced Lt. Col. Armando SUAREZ y Suquet who has been moved to Inf. Regt. No. 1 of the Inf. Div. in Camp Columbia in Havana.

Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Ambassador:

MA(6)NA(4)AA(2)

cc:Amembassies, Ciudad Trujillo
Port-au-Prince.

Vinton Chapin
Counselor of Embassy

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