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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM

AMEMBASSY, HABANA

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DESP. NO.

TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

February 7, 1956
DATE

REF

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	IN N. OTHER
	01-10 2/8	ARMY-35 NAVY-39 AIR-24 CIA-16 OSD-2 OOR-2

SUBJECT:

Joint Weeka No. 6 for State, Army, Navy and Air
Departments from SANA.

(UNCLASSIFIED) GOVERNMENT-OPPOSITION DISCUSSIONS STALLED.

The commissions designated by the government parties and opposition groups to discuss the political problem (see Weeka No. 5) have not yet met and a situation has been created which may bring the entire idea of discussion by commissions to naught.

When the "unified" Ortodoxes agreed to name commissioners, they did so with the proviso that the government end the "climate of oppression" they saw principally evidenced in recent student disturbances, the yearend sugar strike, the Marti anniversary troubles, and the shutting down of opposition radio programs. The other opposition groups believed that the question of guarantees to relieve the "climate of oppression" should be the first item on the agenda for discussion after the commissions were named and had met. However, in the face of Ortodoxe insistence and not to jeopardize unity, these groups gave in to the Ortodoxe view and presented seven demands as "minimum prerequisites to beginning the conversations" of the commissions. The opposition's seven demands were full observance of various articles of the Constitution and covered guarantees of the rights of persons detained or arrested, free exercise of the right to congregate and parade peacefully, no domiciliary search without warrant, and no closing of radio hours.

The government commissioners rejected the opposition's "prior demands" stating that the government acted in "strict compliance with the Constitution and the laws" and in accordance with its obligation to "maintain public order and the tranquility and security of the society in which we live". The door was not slammed completely shut, however, for the government commission, while "manifesting firmly its refusal to consider the prior demands", nonetheless "considered that demands of this nature, or any other, should be made in the course of the commission meetings".

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The "Society of Friends of the Republic" (SAR) is trying to find a way around this new obstacle to the initiation of the "civic dialogue".

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. It is undeniable that personal rights and guarantees have been infringed in varying degrees from time to time and from place to place in Cuba during the last four years. It was generally expected that this problem would first and foremost be ventilated in the discussions to be held between the commissions. It appears to be another tactical mistake, the first having been the opposition's initial refusal to name commissioners, not to proceed in accordance with this expectation but to refuse to begin discussions until the problem of guarantees is settled. It is all well and good to say, as the Ortodoxos do now, that in any case the government would refuse to satisfy demands regarding guarantees, either before or during discussions. However, it would be much better tactically to take the problem to discussion where at least an effort would have been made and the government's sincerity in seeking solutions would have been tested.

(UNCLASSIFIED) TERRORISTIC AND SUBVERSIVE PLANS CHARGED.

The Military Intelligence Service (SIM) and the national police have filed separate charges with the Havana Urgency Court, the one accusing Fidel CASTRO Ruz and others of terroristic and subversive plotting and the other denouncing similar activities by members of the University Student Federation (FEU). While the text of the charges has not been made public, it is understood that the SIM accusations were in part at least based on reports published here of Castro's open seeking of material and moral support for his revolutionary plans among Cubans in the United States.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. Speaking only as far as Castro is concerned but not with respect to others who may (perhaps with little evidence) be accused along with him, the SIM charges merely make a court record of open and avowed revolutionary plotting.

(UNCLASSIFIED) MORE BOMBS. During the week a homemade bomb with fuse extinguished was found outside the offices of one of the Havana electoral boards. A second bomb exploded over the weekend, during early morning hours, under a parked automobile. No one was hurt.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. As is so often the case, there appeared to be no rhyme or reason to these bomb attempts and they are probably ascribable to evidently aimless and unorganized terrorism. Thus far no arrests have been announced in connection with them.

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(UNCLASSIFIED) NEW MINISTER OF HEALTH. Dr. Carlos SALAS Humara was sworn in on February 2, 1956, as Minister of Health and Public Welfare to succeed Dr. Alberto RECIO Ferns who recently died (see Weeka No. 5).

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. The 36-year old Salas Humara is close to Batista, having shared the latter's exile from 1944 to 1948 and being married to a sister of the President's wife. He has been administrative Under Secretary of Health since July 1953, with a period as Minister of Health from August 1954 to February 1955 under the interim presidency of Andrés DOMINGO y Morales del Castillo while Batista was on electoral leave.

Psychological

(UNCLASSIFIED) BULGANIN LETTERS TO EISENHOWER. With reference to BULGANIN's letters to President EISENHOWER, Excelsior stated that Russia has had many opportunities to prove that she is sincerely interested in world peace and in better relations with the West. What Russia really wants is to create the illusion of peace and to be given a certain period of time in which to solve her grave internal problems. Información felt that Bulganin's letters were nothing more than a new Soviet attempt toward the conclusion of a unification agreement on Germany in exchange for a neutral Germany. Tiempo thought that the letter was a part of a double Soviet maneuver - pretending to revive the "spirit of Geneva", while at the same time the Prague Conference of satellites was displaying a show of power. Prensa Libre asked: "Why a non-aggression pact when no agreement has been reached in regard to disarmament, Germany, and other points of difference?" Alerta had no doubt that the main purpose of the letter was to embarrass the Eisenhower-Eden conference. Diario de la Marina agreed with this and fully approved Eisenhower's reply, which still left the door open for negotiations.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Ambassador:

Vinton Chapin
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Counselor of Embassy

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

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