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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

737.00(w)/4-2457

FROM : Embassy, Habana

709

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

April 24, 1957

REF :

Action Taken

25- For Dept. Use Only	ACTION di-10 REC'D 4-25	DEPT. IN F O RMR-2 Rep-2 USIA-10 Army-35 Navy-30 Air-24
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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 17 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments
from SANA

(UNCLASSIFIED) KILLINGS IN HABANA. Three students, Fructuoso Manuel RODRIGUEZ Perez, Jose MACHADO Rodriguez, and Jose WESTBROOK Rosales, and Dr. Juan Pedro CARBO Servia, on revolutionary associations among student leaders, were shot and killed by police in a raid on an apartment in Habana on April 20, 1957. Fructuoso RODRIGUEZ was President of the Federation of University Students (FEU) since the death of Jose Antonio ECHEVERRIA during the March 13, disturbances (WEEKA No. 12, March 20, 1957). Juan CARBO is alleged by police to have been one of the two men who killed Lt. Col. Antonio BLANCO Rico, former Chief of the Military Intelligence Service (SIM) on October 28, 1956 (WEEKA No. 44, October 31, 1956); he took part in the March 13, attack against the Palace, was wounded, and later escaped from the hospital where he was taken for treatment.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) COMMENT. Various student organizations have strongly protested the killings and some secondary schools have decreed periods of mourning in memory of the deceased students. The police stated that they raided the apartment on a tip, that those killed were shot as they resisted arrest, and that two others in the apartment escaped. The Embassy has no information which would cause it to doubt the police version of the incident. The student killings will however cause much resentment and turn more students against the Government. Jose WESTBROOK, who has been described as an American, was the son of a U.S. citizen father and a Cuban mother; the father was registered at the Embassy until about 1936 but the citizenship section has no record of Jose WESTBROOK. All four dead were acknowledged members of the "Revolutionary Directorate", an organization of some of those members of the Federation of University Students who advocate and practice violence and insurrection in attempting to overthrow the Batista administration.

(UNCLASSIFIED) ARMY TROOPS WITHDRAWN FROM SIERRA MAESTRA. Newspapers of April 18, 1957 reported that most of the special army troops that have been opposing Fidel CASTRO in the Sierra Maestra

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area are being withdrawn. Their commander, Colonel Pedro BARRERA, is said to have returned to Habana and reports indicate that only about 100 men will remain in the area to reinforce rural guard detachments in various towns of Oriente Province.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT. This move indicates that the Government is convinced that CASTRO is no longer an effective threat to national security. The Embassy has received reports of opposition claims that this is the way CASTRO planned it from the start. They say that he intended to keep low until Constitutional Guarantees were restored and army forces were withdrawn and that he will soon carry on an armed action against one of the towns in the Sierra Maestra area.

(UNCLASSIFIED) JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE. The Joint Congressional Committee considering peaceful solutions of Cuba's political problems met as scheduled on April 22, 1957 to begin its study of the opinions expressed by the leaders of the various political groups (WEEKA No. 16 of April 17, 1957). The committee is meeting in closed session and it is not expected that a public announcement of its findings will be made during the coming week.

(UNCLASSIFIED) SUGAR. As of April 17, final production reports had been received from 42 of the 161 operating sugar mills. Production of these 42 mills totaled 7,270,756 bags, which is 12.09% below their assigned quotas. The total assigned quota of the 161 mills is 46,144,000 bags or 5,150,000 Spanish long tons.

(UNCLASSIFIED) COMMENT. The fact that the final production of the 42 mills was 12.09% short is not construed as an indicator of the outcome of the total sugar crop. The mills first to report final production are usually those that fail to make, or just reach, their assigned quotas. Other mills probably will exceed quotas. Usually qualified Cuban sources still estimate the current sugar crop to range between 5,100,000 and 5,300,000 Spanish long tons.

LABOR

(UNCLASSIFIED) LABOR PROBLEM OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS CONTINUES. Angel Cofino Garcia, suspended secretary general of the Federation of Electrical Workers, was arrested on April 17, but was released after brief questioning. Immediately thereafter Cofino ordered his followers to desist, at least until after Easter weekend, from their protest of the Government's intervention of their Federation, which had taken the form of slowdowns in electric offices but not in producing plants on April 15, 16, and 17, 1957.

Cofino then issued a public release stating that he expected to have an interview on April 22, with the Prime Minister to discuss the current labor crisis in the Electric Federation and to present

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a formula designed to solve the problem. On April 22, when Cefino went to his office, the Prime Minister was reportedly not in. Later the Prime Minister told reporters that he knew nothing, except what he had read in the press, about the alleged scheduled interview.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) COMMENT. Cefino's formula for solution has three mainpoints: (1) Accept the continuance of Government intervention but with only Minister of Labor officials on the provisional governing board; (2) Permit all members of the Federation, including those who have been suspended, to be candidates in the coming elections; (3) Hold these elections within 30 days. This formula, while it could provide the basis for discussion and negotiation, would not be acceptable to Mujal and the CTC who so far are insisting on the original terms of the intervention.

The local labor situation has taken on an international aspect with the arrival in Cuba on April 23, of William DOHERTY, Jr., Latin American Representative of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International. Doherty is here at the request of RUBIERA, Secretary General of the Telephone Federation, who has been supporting Cefino and who fears that his own Federation will shortly be intervened. Doherty, who is also making an unofficial investigation for ORIT, will stay in Habana for two days, and intends to interview various labor officials as well as the Minister of Labor about the present labor difficulties, but primarily in regard to the Telephone Federation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

(UNCLASSIFIED). The decisive action of King Hussein in strengthening his own hand in Jordan once again made that little country the main subject of attention in the Cuban press. Hussein has won the battle, at least for now, said Información, which gave much credit to the U.S. for warning that it would assist Jordan if attacked, and called this victory a successful test of the Eisenhower Doctrine. Other papers, too, acknowledged that the young King of Jordan had strengthened his position and that this amounted to a temporary victory for the West, but these papers did not give credit to the Eisenhower Doctrine. Avance and Excelsior both noted that Jordan is the first real test of this doctrine in the Middle East but that the final outcome is still much in doubt. Avance believed that King Hussein saw in the Eisenhower Plan an opportunity to switch from British to U.S. protection, and thus escape from the ambitions of his Arabic neighbors who were closing in for the kill. Excelsior felt that the daring action of Hussein has given the U.S. more time to deal with the Soviet-Egyptian campaign to take over Jordan. Both Alerta and Prensa Libre felt that Jordan was far from being out of danger, however. Alerta feared that a large part of the people of

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Jordan sympathized with Nasser and his anti-Western policy, and Prensa Libre pointed out that the Arab Legion -- upon which the destiny of Jordan depends -- existed on a \$35 million a year British subsidy, a sum no longer forthcoming from any country.

ARMY, NAVY, AIR - Negative

Arthur Gardner
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CC: AmEmbassies, Ciudad Trujillo and Port-au-Prince; AmConsulate, Santiago de Cuba; MA8(7); NA(5); AA(2).

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