

AIR POUCH
PRIORITY

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

737.00 (W) / 7-2457

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

74
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

July 24, 1957
DATE

REF :

20 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	OTHER
	7/29	OSIA-10 OSD-2 Army-35

SUBJECT: JOINT WEEKA NO. 30

Teague
Wick
Action Assigned to Air-24 CIA-16 OCA
Action Taken 7/30
Date of Action
Office Symbol
Name of Officer

POLITICAL

1. Preparations for Elections

The Cuban Senate is now scheduled to take up the draft bill for the electoral code to govern the elections proposed for June, 1958, in the session scheduled for Friday, July 26. Action by the Chamber of Deputies will follow. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The Government gives every outward manifestation of confidence and determination concerning the proposed elections, and continues to take the stand that they will be held regardless of the attitude of the opposition. There are no clear indications as yet whether any significant portions of the opposition will participate in the elections, and in general opposition spokesmen continue to insist on unspecified guarantees to ensure free elections, a political amnesty at a definite early date, and curtailment of the term of office of the present administration, as conditions precedent to their participation. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

2. Ambassador Smith Presents Credentials

Ambassador Earl E. T. SMITH presented his credentials to President BATISTA the morning of July 23, 1957, with the ceremony usually attendant on such occasions in Cuba. The occasion was cordial, and marked by mutual references to the close friendship between the two peoples and countries. The Ambassador had arrived in Cuba on July 15, and the period between that date and his reception by the President is about the usual time in Cuba. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The remarks by the Ambassador and Batista, both formal and during the following private conversation, were pleasant and unobjectionable, and avoided any reference to the present political conditions in Cuba. Batista made one allusion to the activities of Carlos PRIO and other oppositionists in the United States, when he stated in his formal speech of welcome, "(When I was in the United States) notwithstanding the fact that I was then a political exile, I was able to obtain, through my conduct, the respect of my neighbors there, for Cuba and for myself, doubtless because I never attempted to break the pattern of life or the laws of the country, the generous hospitality of which I was enjoying". The Cuban Government has approached both the Embassy and the Department several times recently pointing out that in its opinion PRIO is openly engaging in

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activities aimed at overthrowing that Government, in violation of the commitment he made to the U. S. Immigration Service in mid-1956 at the time he was permitted to enter and remain in the U. S., but it is somewhat surprising that Batista would choose this time and place to mention it again. The more independent organs of the local press were quick to highlight the reference in their reports of the ceremony. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

3. Terroristic Activities Continue

Minor terroristic activities, principally explosions of small nuisance bombs and "molotov cocktails", continued throughout the country last week. They have become so routine that the press now gives them little prominence, but judging from the reports which have appeared, these activities were on a somewhat reduced scale. Several tobacco warehouses in Pinar del Rio Province have recently burned and terrorists are suspected though proof is lacking. Habana was almost completely calm, with few incidents reported. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The tension so noticeable several weeks ago has greatly diminished, though still existing. From Santiago de Cuba it is reported that attendance at movie theaters has been sharply off for some time, and that some theaters have proposed either closing during the evening or moving the starting hour up, in attempts to avoid further financial loss. It is said that the Government has ordered them to stay open, and has indicated that if necessary a subsidy to offset the losses may be forthcoming. It is obviously to the Government's advantage to minimize or conceal such tension and unrest as does exist. There are a number of rumors and vague reports, from both governmental and opposition circles, that the revolutionary groups plan some sort of spectacular action between now and the end of the month, but nothing definite. (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. Castro Group Sets Forth Political Plan

On July 20 and 21 the local press published a condensation of a political plan allegedly signed in the Sierra Maestra on July 12 by Fidel CASTRO, Raul CHIBAS and Felipe PAZOS. The plan calls for the formation of "Civic Revolutionary Front"; immediate designation of a person to head the future provisional government; and resignation of Batista and assumption of control by the head of the provisional government. The plan adds that the Civic Revolutionary Front neither asks nor will it accept the intervention of any outside country or international body and requests the United States to cease shipments of arms to the present Government; that it will not accept provisional control by a military junta; that it intends to remove the army from politics; that it promises complete general elections within one year from assumption of power; that it proposes the immediate freedom of all political prisoners and restoration of all constitutional guarantees; and that membership is open to all organizations, including political parties and civic institutions. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The document has caused considerable concern and speculation among various groups associated with the Castro movement. Initial reaction among those groups is somewhat unfavorable, on the grounds that the proposals are impractical,

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particularly when they attempt to rule out participation of the military in any interim government. Some spokesmen for those groups also maintain that the proposal weakens the revolutionary posture which has heretofore been one of the principal attractions of the Castro movement and groups allied with it, and substitutes for it an attitude of political maneuvering. On the other hand, the plan is clearly an attempt to enlist further and broader support for the Castro movement. Whether it also constitutes tacit acknowledgement that the revolutionary forces as now constituted cannot accomplish their aims is not clear. The Embassy has noted a slackening of drive, and a lessening of confidence in revolutionary circles during recent weeks, which may be only temporary or may indicate the beginnings of diffusion and bickering among the various groups. Certainly, even among Castro's own "26 of July" Movement there is an increasing tendency to question his leadership, and to insist that he will not head any government which may be formed if Batista falls. (CONFIDENTIAL)

PSYCHOLOGICAL

5. While there were still a considerable number of editorials and press commentaries on international affairs in the Cuban press during the week, no single theme predominated. This contrasts with the heavy emphasis given Khrushchev's purge of the Soviet Presidium members the previous two weeks. (UNCLASSIFIED)

LABOR

6. Rubiera Re-elected Secretary General of Telephone Workers

Vicente RUBIERA Feito was re-elected secretary general of the important Labor Federation of Telephone Workers at the Federation's national congress called into extraordinary session on July 20. A full slate of Rubiera's supporters was also elected to fill positions on the Federation's Executive Committee. Other significant actions taken at the Congress included motions requesting the CTC (1) to reinstate suspended labor leaders of the Electric Workers Federation and (2) to assist in getting the reemployment of workers dismissed during the illegal sit-down strike in the electric industry. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The Extraordinary National Congress of the Telephone Workers, which was held pursuant to an agreement reached by leaders of the CTC and the Federation, through the mediation efforts of the Ministry of Labor, was presided over by Dr. PIO Elizalde of that Ministry. Tribute to his fairness was made in a resolution adopted at the Congress which praised both Elizalde and Labor Minister SUAREZ RIVAS for "the impartial manner in which they directed the telephone elections, thus permitting the exercise of union democracy in its broadest concept." (UNCLASSIFIED)

MILITARY

ARMY, AIR -- Negative

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NAVY

7. Cuban Naval Officers Take Short Submarine Cruise

The USS AMBERJACK (SS-522) took seven Cuban naval officers for an indoctrination cruise off Havana on Saturday, 20 July 1957. The cruise lasted 3 hours and consisted of making three dives, snorkeling, deep submergence (300'), and a high speed submerged run. The Cuban officers were shifted from station to station throughout the submarine for the different events to afford maximum opportunity to observe each evolution. (UNCLASSIFIED)



Earl E. T. Smith

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