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FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

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DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

May 24, 1956

DATE

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeks No. 21 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

(CONFIDENTIAL) INDEPENDENCE DAY WEEKEND QUIET. There were a number of rumors, some from sources considered reliable, that various opposition groups planned insurrectional activities to coincide with the celebration of Cuban Independence Day, May 20. However, the weekend was uneventful, with an appearance of complete normalcy prevailing in Habana. President BATISTA, following custom, received the diplomatic and consular corps, officials of the armed forces, and various other groups in the Presidential Palace, with every appearance of calm and confidence. The remarks of the Papal Nuncio, speaking as Dean of the diplomatic corps, and Batista's reply, were routine and contained nothing noteworthy.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) LITTLE REACTION TO PRIO'S EXCLUSION. The reports of the decision of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service to deny Carlos PRIO permission to enter the United States have been carried as straight news by the local press; columnist and editorial comment being prevented by the continuing censorship. Thus far, it appears as though the event has caused little stir, and that the bulk of the people are indifferent concerning Prío's fortunes. One reaction which the Embassy has heard several times is that Prío brought his difficulties on himself by his past and probably continuing actions. The fact that Carlos HEVIA, ex-President and Presidential candidate of the Prío party in the abortive elections of 1952, was admitted into the United States when the decision to exclude Prío was announced has apparently had considerable effect in lessening criticism of the exclusion.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. Considerable activity is becoming apparent among the political figures associated with Prío. Candido DE LA TORRE, one of the persons most frequently accused of complicity in revolutionary activities involving the Prío group, is rumored to have taken asylum in the Mexican Embassy yesterday. The day before, Juan AMADOR Rodriguez, leader of the small opposition group CADI in the Chamber of Deputies, opportunist, and Communist sympathizer or fellow-traveler, obtained a single entry visa for the United States reportedly to consult with political

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associates. In order to obtain the visa, Amador presented a diplomatic passport and a letter from the Foreign Office stating that he was going to the United States on an official mission. Amador was instrumental in arranging Prío's return to Cuba in August, 1954, and probably hopes to achieve further political prominence by attempting to repeat the operation.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) CUBAN-DOMINICAN RELATIONS. There were two public developments in this field during the week. In reply to reporters' questions Chief of Staff Tabernilla said he did not think there was a possibility of war with the Dominican Republic: Cuba would not provoke it; although if attacked she would repel the aggression with all her energy. Rafael SOLER Puig, under arrest as the key figure in the murder last August of Dominican exile "Pipi" HERNANDEZ, appeared before a judge to testify regarding alleged Dominican interest in the victim and to declare that he had been offered \$100,000 to go to the United States and murder Dr. Jesús de GALINDEZ. The offer allegedly was made by the wife of Policarpo SOLER, Cuban gunman understood here to be in the Dominican Republic under the protection of its government.

In confidence the Cuban government gave the Ambassador a copy of a note it was preparing to send the IAPC, asking it in view of the attitude of the Dominican Foreign Office as reported in the newspaper El Caribe on April 22, to "place the terms of its statement of April 20, 1956, in their proper position in the light of the Committee's judgment, of international law, and of the Inter-American system of living together".

The Government also confidentially gave the Ambassador a transcript of the alleged recording of a conversation between Senator MASFERRER and Dominican Ambassador LLAVERIAS, in which the latter attempted to suborn the former. The most telling points of the conversation had already appeared in the press.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) CENSORSHIP EXPECTED TO BE LIFTED SHORTLY. Considerable expectation had developed that Batista would lift censorship of press and radio on May 20, without waiting for the full term of 45 days for which constitutional guarantees were suspended on April 29. However, on the day before he stated that while he hoped to remove censorship shortly, May 20 was not the date. The Embassy now understands that Minister of Interior Santiago REY, the official directly responsible for imposing and enforcing censorship, has told Miguel QUEVEDO of Bohemia magazine that censorship will be lifted today, May 24 - just after publication of this week's edition of the magazine.

(UNCLASSIFIED) GRINDING OF SUGAR CROP VIRTUALLY COMPLETED. As of May 23, only 7 mills were still grinding, and they were expected to stop operations very shortly as their quotas of the

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1956 crop, limited to 4,600,000 Spanish long tons, were completed. Due to drought conditions, mills in the four western provinces fell about 300,000 bags short of their individual quotas. The shortage was allocated largely to mills in the eastern provinces of Camaguey and Oriente, which had surplus cane. This situation is expected to exist at least until 1958.

(UNCLASSIFIED) DEATH MARS SEVENTH WOMEN'S AIR RACE. The Seventh All Women's International Air Race, ending this year in Habana, was tragically marred by the death on May 20 of Pilot Marjorie MILLER of Reynoldsberg, Ohio in an accident when attempting an apparently emergency landing at the Cuban Naval Air Base at Mariel. Mrs. Miller's passenger, Bonnie BUTLER of Zanesville, Ohio, was injured in the accident but is recovering. It appeared that the plane, a Beechcraft Bonanza, was having motor trouble. A United States CAA inspector is now investigating the accident.

Psychological.

Negative.

Navy.

(UNCLASSIFIED) SHIPMENT OF RUSSIAN SUGAR PURCHASE COMPLETED. The last of the 200,000 long tons of sugar purchased by the USSR has now been shipped.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The last shipment departed on May 19, 1956. Twenty-eight vessels of eight nationalities were chartered by the Russians to transport the sugar. Eighteen had destinations in the Black Sea, eight in the Baltic, and two in the Pacific. Completion of this transaction is not classified, but the fact that the Embassy has followed the shipments closely and in detail should remain classified.

Army, Navy.

Negative.

For the Ambassador:

  
Vinton Chapin  
Counselor of Embassy

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