

837.1051/12-1348  
No. 954

American Embassy  
Habana, Cuba, December 13, 1948

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Subject: Readjustment in Personnel of the  
Cuban National Police

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OFFICE OF  
AMERICAN REPUBLIC AFFAIRS

DEC 22 1948

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's telegram No. 795 of December 10, 1948 and to report that the Cuban National Police, which numbers approximately 7,000 men and which is the most important police organization in Cuba, has undergone a thorough shake-up in officer personnel. It is reported that numerous police officers have been retired from active duty or summarily dismissed from service and that many new appointments and promotions have been approved. This move within the National Police did not come as a complete surprise since it has been expected for some time that far-reaching changes in personnel would be carried out as a matter of course following the inauguration of President Prío on October 10, 1948 and the appointment a day later of José M. CARAMES as Chief of the National Police.

Under authority of Decree No. 4100 of December 6, 1948 National Police Chief José M. Carames was promoted from the rank of Lieutenant Colonel to that of Colonel. In addition to his title as Chief of Police, he was also named Inspector General of the National Police force. He is described as being a "good police officer on a precinct level", but there is considerable doubt in some quarters regarding his ability to fill adequately his new positions. The extent to which this opinion is shared gives rise to the possibility that he may be replaced as Chief of Police in the not too distant future. Aside from the promotion of Colonel Carames, some significance may be attached to the two following developments: Fabio RUIZ Rojas, former Chief of Police who was involved in the intra-police killings of September 15, 1947 in

Marianao

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Despatch No. 954  
December 13, 1948  
Embassy at Habana

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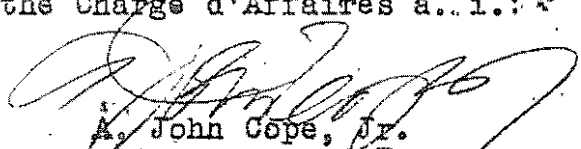
Marianao and who has since been residing in Miami, is reported to have been dismissed from the police force, while Luis M. VARONA, brother of the Prime Minister in the Prio Cabinet, has been promoted to the rank of full Major and assigned to take charge of the Bureau of Investigation. Other appointments, promotions and retirements affecting personnel of the officer corps were authorized by presidential decrees published in the Gaceta Oficial dated December 6, 1948.

Although the Cuban National Police is responsible under the law to the President of the Republic through the Minister of Defense, it is not a part of the Cuban Army. Its function is to preserve law and order throughout the Island and at this time Chief of Police Carames is understood to take his orders direct from President Prio.

The direction and operation of the National Police in Cuba have always been greatly influenced by the personalities of its leaders. For this reason, the recent changes in officer personnel of this police organization are viewed merely as an example of the opportunity customarily afforded new police chiefs of exercising a free hand in their departments and are not considered indicative of improved efficiency or the adoption of higher ethical standards.

Respectfully yours,

For the Charge d'Affaires a.i.:\*

  
A. John Cope, Jr.  
Second Secretary of Embassy

File No. 810.5  
AJCope, Jr./dts

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