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FROM

AMEMBASSY, HABANA

DESP. NO.

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TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

August 23, 1955

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	041-10	RMIR-2 ARA-3
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		ARMY-35 NAVY-3 AIR-2400 CIA-16 OSD-2 OCB-2

SUBJECT:

Joint Weeka No. 34 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PRIO ACTIVITIES. During his first full week in Cuba after his return from exile in the United States, ex-President Carlos PRIO Secarrás maintained himself in the headlines with various political activities. He first visited Cosme DE LA TORRIENTE, head of the "Society of Friends of the Republic". He associated himself with the formula of the "Friends" embodying opposition demands for the "national solution" (see Weeka No. 30) and approved it as a basis of discussion.

Thereafter he called upon Ram6n GRAU San Mart6n at the latter's home. The visit was cordial on both sides and gave rise to the question whether Pri6 was recognizing Grau's primacy in the Aut6ntico party. Both evaded the question, Pri6 by saying that the time was not ripe to debate internal party questions and Grau by proclaiming (typically) that the presidency of the party resided in its masses. The problem of unification of the two Aut6ntico groups was skirted by declaring that there was unity at the base and only divergencies of opinion and tactics. The meeting can be regarded only as a prelude to attacking the real Aut6ntico problems of leadership and cooperation between the thus far antagonistic groups of Pri6 and Grau.

Pri6 also appeared on the "Meet the Press" television program last week. In general he confirmed his pacific intentions in returning to Cuba. He was asked why he hadn't told his followers to turn in clandestine arms and replied that the surveillance maintained over him by the Government was such that he couldn't reach his followers. One of the interrogators inquired why he didn't urge surrender of arms over the very program in which he was appearing. Pri6 had little choice but to say what he did: "I exhort my friends from here to deliver the arms." Reaction to this was varied. For example, the Diario de la Marina said that "it is an extraordinary contribution

FCFernes Jr/mgw
REPORTER

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that Dr. Carlos Prío Socarrás is making to political peace". On the other hand President BATISTA told the press that, from what he knew of Prío's appearance on the program, he doubted his sincerity since "it was not a spontaneous exhortation but one forced by the suggestion of a distinguished member of the panel".

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) ANOTHER ARMS CACHE SEIZED.

On August 16, the police seized another cache of clandestine arms, the fourth such seizure since August 4. The weapons were found concealed in a cistern at a former bus terminal in the nearby town of Guanabacoa. Three arrests were made in connection with this find. The cache included seven .45 caliber Colt pistols, 15 M-1 carbines, one .30 caliber Johnson machine gun, two .30 caliber Mendoza machine guns, and assorted ammunition.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PRIO REVOLUTIONARIES SEEK ASYLUM AND LEAVE COUNTRY. Eugenio FERNANDEZ Ortega and Jesús GONZALEZ Cartas ("El Extraño"), Prío followers and revolutionary leaders, were granted asylum in the Chilean Embassy on August 16 and left Cuba for Chile on the following day under safe conduct granted by the Government. Also on the 16th, three other revolutionaries, Luis FERNANDEZ de la Cámara ("Ojos Gachos"), Orlando GARCIA Vázquez and Mario BETANCOURT Pichardo, were granted asylum in the Costa Rican Embassy. They left for Costa Rica on August 18. Eugenio Fernández and "El Extraño" told the press on leaving that they had sought asylum and were going into exile so as not to hamper Prío in his efforts to find a pacific solution to the Cuban problem. They added they would return, if necessary.

(CONFIDENTIAL) Comment. The amazing inside story of Eugenio Fernández and "El Extraño," as told by the Minister of State to the Chargé, is that they were granted asylum by the Chilean Ambassador at the request of the Cuban Govt. because "we had to get them out of the country to avoid killing them." The Minister indicated that Aureliano SANCHEZ Arango had left the country surreptitiously. All three, according to the Minister, had been given the choice of slipping out quietly or leaving via the asylum route and he admitted the authorities had the individuals cornered, if not under detention. The unprecedented speed with which the men left the country suggests that the Ministry of State was prepared therefore in advance.

The recent seizures of clandestine arms and this exodus of revolutionaries may mean that the back of insurrectionary activity has been broken or that it has been abandoned for the time being. These events may inaugurate a period of freedom from alarms, although its possible duration cannot be estimated. (See despatch No. 136, August 18, 1955)/

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(UNCLASSIFIED) BATISTA STILL FIRM ON GENERAL ELECTIONS IN 1958. The continued emphasis of the opposition on general elections in 1956, strengthened by the apparent inclination of Prío toward this view since his return, still meets the unchanged determination of Batista to serve out his term as president until replaced by a successor elected in 1958. He reaffirmed this on the 20th when in a press interview he answered a question on the subject by saying that the opposition demand did not surprise him. "It is", he said, "as if they believe that I am capable of turning over the Presidency of the Republic because they want me to or that I lack the sense of responsibility so as to forget my obligations and duties toward the Republic. As is already known, I know how to turn over power in obedience to the will of the people... To say otherwise (than that the people elected him President) is to insult the people."

(UNCLASSIFIED) ANOTHER STUDENT DISTURBANCE. On August 16, the fourth anniversary of the death of Eddy CHIBAS, founder of the Ortodoxo party, another disturbance occurred at the University of Havana. This time it was precipitated by the students' attempt to parade through the streets from the University to the cemetery where Chibas is buried. This had been forbidden by the authorities although the graveside ceremonies in which the students wished to participate had not been prohibited. The police cordoned off the University in the customary manner and prevented the students from carrying out their purpose, with the usual accompaniment of missiles, sorties from the University, and police shots in the air.

(UNCLASSIFIED) TELEGRAPH STRIKE. Telegraphic communication was crippled by a five-day strike of the telegraph operators of the Ministry of Communications that ended on Sunday. Cause of the work stoppage was given by the workers as a reduction in seniority pay from \$7.50 to \$4.50 per month for each five years service. This cut had been effected in the budget for the current fiscal year and, while the Minister of Communications had promised to do something about restoring the bonus to its former level, allegedly his hands were tied until Congress could approve the necessary fiscal adjustments in its session to start in September. The strike ended when Batista himself promised remedial action in September and the strikers were assured that there would be no reprisals against them.

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. There is no evidence that Communist agitation played any part in this strike. The Government claimed that it was motivated by opposition politics to embarrass the regime. Although it cannot be ascertained definitely, it is possible that this may be true to a certain extent. It seems more likely that the strike at this time was intended to emphasize the

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operators' protest against the lack of action since July when the fiscal year began. In any case the telegraphists won an apparently firm promise from the top to restore their seniority pay.

(UNCLASSIFIED) MOROCCO AND GOA. Disturbances in French Morocco and Goa touched off extensive comment in the Cuban press. While recognizing the value of France's civilizing mission in North Africa, newspapers generally agreed that constitutional reforms are sorely needed in Morocco. For Diario de la Marina, the present North African crisis pointed up that eight million Moroccans have politically come of age and are able to handle their own resources, wealth and, to a certain extent, their own cultural life. El Mundo called upon France to grant wide-spread constitutional reforms so that her great cultural mission in Morocco will not be forgotten or maligned. To Prensa Libre it was obvious that France is acting against the will of the majority in Morocco, while Informacion held that French armed might can slow up, but not prevent, the trend toward Moroccan independence.

On the Goa question, the press foresaw eventual liquidation of the small Portuguese enclave on Indian soil. Alerta, while showing some sympathy with Portugal's attempt to conserve a measure of past Asiatic glory, believed that India has the more tenable position. This newspaper felt that because of India's new role in the world, Nehru cannot afford to accept a compromise solution, even at the hands of the U.S. Informacion predicted that Portuguese, like colonialism, are on the way out in Asia. Prensa Libre deplored the bloodshed in Goa, adding that neither the Portuguese nor the Indian people stand to gain anything from the present encounter.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative.

Carlos C. Hall
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Participants: CCHall, CABeenstra, CFPick, Jr., FCFernes Jr.,
WCaldwell, FJDonahue, CAnderson, Treadway(Army)
Krisel(Navy) and Slaten(Air).

cc; Amembassies Ciudad Trujillo and Port-au-Prince.
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