

A. JUCH

CONFIDENTIAL

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

PRIORITY

(Security Classification)

MAY

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

AmEmbassy, Habana

815

737.00(W)/5-2957

FROM

DESP. NO.

TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Action Assigned to DEPT. R May 29, 1957

DATE

REF

Action Taken U/O-1 Em/x-1

25 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	IN F O
	06-10	RmR-2 Rep-2 Ecce-4 JO-2 JCA-10
	5-30	USIA-10 Army-35 Navy-30 Air-24
Joint Weeks No. 22 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments		
From SANA		
Action Office Symbol <u>Cia-16 OCB-2 OSD-2</u>		

SUBJECT:

(UNCLASSIFIED) **TERRORISTIC ACTIVITIES.** Terroristic activities continued during the past week and bombs exploded daily in Habana and the interior. Two young students, said by police to have been active terrorists, were killed and their female companion seriously injured in Santa Clara on May 26th when a bomb they were carrying in their auto exploded. A medical student was seriously injured in Colon on May 27th when a time bomb police claim he planned to set went off in his hands. At about 2:00 A.M. on May 28th the main conduits near the Habana plant of the Cuban Electrical Company were blown up by terrorists who had tunnelled under the conduits from a nearby house to place their explosives. The explosion damaged nearby houses and started a serious fire when it ruptured a large gas line. The entire city of Habana and surrounding area was without electricity for nearly two hours. The electrical company was then able to cut in other cables and furnish power to the suburbs and the Vedado area but the center of the city, including the principal business and commercial districts, remained blacked out; the company estimates that the area will be without electricity for a total of some 48 hours. Most newspapers were not printed yesterday (May 28th) and today, most shops in the center of the city remained closed, and that area was without telephone service.

(CONFIDENTIAL) **COMMENT:** Those responsible for this incident are not identified. The Embassy has heard reports for some time that the Federation of University Students (FEU) and other revolutionary groups have been attempting to effect a blackout in order to promote their anti-Government activities; the FEU unsuccessfully tried to convince deposed electrical labor leader Angel COFINO to call a general strike of electrical workers for this purpose. Last night the city was comparatively quiet. A large bomb was exploded across the street from the home of Andres DOMINGO, Secretary of the Presidency, which blacked out a small surrounding area without affecting the electrical supply to the Embassy office building two blocks away. Similar activities continue throughout

POL:HLEgasse:hs

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORTER

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE RETURNED TO THE PERMANENT FILES

737.00(W)/5-2957

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page 2 of
Encl. No. 815
Desp. No. Hahana
From _____

the island. Our consulate at Santiago reports that there were from four to nine unexplained killings the night of May 27-28, apparently due to counter-terroristic actions by the Government. The Consulate adds that both Government and opposition groups in Santiago expect serious trouble, and that the situation is explosive.

(UNCLASSIFIED) REBEL LANDING. At dawn on May 24, 1957 armed rebels, said by Cuban authorities to number 27, landed from the 47 ton U.S. flag vessel Corinthia at Cabonice Bay on the northern coast of Oriente Province. Authorities stated that 2 of the rebels were captured soon after landing and that the rest made their way into the nearby Sierra Cristal mountains. The Cuban Army despatched reinforcements to the area (see ARMY below); late on May 28, the Cuban army announced that 16 of the rebels were killed in an encounter with Cuban troops. The two rebels whose capture has been confirmed told newsmen that the group had been scheduled to take the Oriente city of Baracoa but that the Corinthia had been driven off course by storms. They said they had trained in the Dominican Republic, and that the expedition was financed by former President Carlos PRIO Socarras. The Army quotes them as saying that they had no connection with Fidel CASTRO, "because he is a communist". It was reported that the rebels wore armbands with the letters "OA" -- Organizacion Autentica -- and that the group was led by Calixto SANCHEZ White, former labor leader who fled Cuba in March 1957 (WEEKA 13, March 27, 1957).

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT: There is reason to believe that the expedition numbered between 100 and 200 men. It is reported that two other vessels loaded with rebels sailed from Miami bound for Cuba at about the time the Corinthia did; the Cuban authorities have told the Embassy's Naval Attaché that they know of these other ships but that they have not located them. The Embassy hears that the Cuban fishermen who were forced at gunpoint to guide the rebels ashore told authorities that the rebels landed large supplies of arms and munitions. The Embassy has received information confirming that the rebels are led by Calixto SANCHEZ White, who is a close friend of Eusebio MUJAL, secretary general of the Cuban Federation of Workers. Although the Cuban authorities quote the rebels as saying that CASTRO is a Communist, local inhabitants told newsmen that the rebels cheered CASTRO.

As this is written, local radio stations have announced that Calixto SANCHEZ White has been identified as one of the 16 who landed from the Corinthia who were killed in an engagement at Brazo Grande, near Holguin, on May 28. The Army has announced that there was a fight between forces of Fidel CASTRO and a Rural Guard detachment yesterday morning at Ubero, located some 40 miles west of Santiago, with "losses on both sides". The Assistant Air Attaché has been confidentially informed by a contact within the Cuban Army Air Force that Army losses were 10 killed, 18 wounded, and 25 prisoners. Casualties among the Castro forces are unknown.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page 3 of
Encl. No. 815
Desp. No. Habana
From

(UNCLASSIFIED) GOVERNMENT. The decision of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Autentico) Representatives and Senators not to attend further meetings of the Congressional Committees set up to supervise electoral procedures created a temporary impasse in Congressional activities late last week. Although the Autenticos later indicated they would return to the Committee meetings, they said they would continue to press for adoption of the plan proposed by Autentico leader and former President Ramon GRAU San Martin that the old voters' identity cards (carnets) be revalidated and used again in the 1958 general elections.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT. Congressional efforts to solve the Cuban political crisis by planning for peaceful elections in 1958 can still not be called successful. In addition to the hurdle provided by GRAU's stand on the carnets, the efforts are meeting with the opposition of Cuba's underground Communist Party (Partido Socialista Popular). The Embassy detects an undercurrent of uneasiness in Government circles. Some Government leaders are beginning to form their own gangs and seem to be acting independently rather than as members of a team. There are rumors that a Military Junta is being planned to take over the Government and that newspaper publisher (El Pais, Excelsior, El Grisol) and former Senator, Alfredo HORNEDO, would be its civilian head.

(UNCLASSIFIED) RADIO STATIONS WARNED. On May 25, 1957 the Minister of Communications informed radio station operators that he would apply the maximum punishment provided by law to all radio stations which broadcast news of terroristic activities, illegal strikes, and all such items which might tend to upset normal labor relations and cause unrest among the people.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT: The Government is attempting in various ways to control the local news sources with some success. One result is a considerable increase in the number and variety of rumors. Thus, it is said that PRI0 has landed in Pinar del Rio Province, that reinforcements for CASTRO are on the way from Mexico and that the Cuban naval station at Cienfuegos is on the point of revolting. At least some of these reports may be true.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) CUBAN ARMY REQUISITIONS NICARO PROPERTY. Since last Friday Cuban Army personnel have entered the U.S. nickel plant at Nicaro and taken a motor launch, a truck and four passenger automobiles. These seizures were protested by Nicaro officials but they were able to obtain a receipt for only one of the items taken, a passenger automobile. The Embassy is making representations through the Army Attaché and will if necessary approach the Ministry of State.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page 4 of

Encl. No. 815

Desp. Habana

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) COMMENT: This has happened in the past. The Cuban Government had given assurances that it would not happen again. The Army Attache reports that when he spoke to the Cuban Chief of Staff, General TABERNILLA, about it on May 28, he received the impression that immediate steps would be taken to stop the practice, and possibly to return the commandeered vehicles.

(UNCLASSIFIED) SABOTAGE IN SUGAR MILLS. Four mills in four different provinces of Cuba have suffered partial losses of raw sugar from fire, presumably the work of saboteurs. The four mills are: Resolucion, Tinguaro, San Ramon, and Constanacia-A. The Cuban Millowners Association estimates the net loss at approximately 180,000 bags of 250 pounds each.

(UNCLASSIFIED) POLITICAL INFIGHTING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTA CLARA. Behind-the-scenes political maneuvering came to a head at the University of Santa Clara when the Rector suspended three Deans and the Secretary-General, Dr. Modesto Pineda, long known as the real power at the University. Dr. Pineda and his followers were refused entrance to the University by armed guards. The Deans were charged with regularly flouting University statutes, and Dr. Pineda was accused of failing to carry out the Rector's dictates and of rigging faculty appointments in such a way as to ensure his own election next year as Rector. The faculty and the student body split on the issue, but the majority have come out, in resolutions and in the press, in support of the present rector, Dr. Agustin Anido Artiles. The Pineda faction is fighting their ouster and has even requested the Rector of the University of Habana to intercede. The Point IV program appeared temporarily disrupted by the trouble since Dr. Pineda was USOM's most enthusiastic collaborator on audio-visual technical assistance.

LABOR

(UNCLASSIFIED) STRIKE IN ELECTRIC PLANTS CALLED OFF BY COFINO. Angel Cofino, ousted leader of the Electric Plants Federation, issued a public statement on May 27, ordering all workers who had not already done so to return to their jobs. This was tantamount to an open admission of the failure of the strike which began on May 21. The shutdown gradually lost its effectiveness soon after the appointment on May 21, by the Government of Lieutenant Colonel Jose FIGAROLA Infante as military supervisor to restore normal operations. By late afternoon of May 24, various estimates indicated that 95% of the workers were back. On May 22, Figarola had issued a statement giving all workers a 24 hour warning to be at work or lose their jobs. This later was extended to the morning of May 27, the day on which Cofino called off the strike.

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT: The Embassy was informed on May 21, that the strike had been so effective that the Company virtually lost control of operations and informed the government of that fact.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

(Classification)

Page 5 of
Encl. No. 815
Desp. No. 815
From Habana

Soldiers were placed at the operating plants and substations where they still are even though most of the personnel has returned to work. As a precaution two full shifts on the job are being maintained in order that there be no interruption of services. The Company is bearing the double shift expense. It is now being rumored that Cofino is going to Geneva to attend the ILO Conference. He is a member of the Governing Board. With the dynamiting of the producing plant in Habana in the early morning of May 28th the overall situation is fraught with uncertainty.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PSYCHOLOGICAL: The fall of French Prime Minister Guy Mollet was the prime subject of Cuba's editorials. While governments are continually changing in France, this one had lasted 16 months and most papers seemed to feel France was in a serious crisis. The Cuban press generally attributed Mollet's fall to the costly and seemingly insoluble Algerian war. Información called the fall of Mollet a strong blow to socialism in France, and French socialism the natural obstacle to the expansion of Communism in France. Therefore, said this paper, the situation is dangerous not only to France but all of Europe. Información saw as the most logical alternative the radical-left element led by Mendes-France which offers a radical and immediate ending of the Algerian war. Avance brought out that the government of Mollet lasted longer than any other French government since World War II, and many had not expected him to lose a vote of confidence this time because of the projected trip of President Coty to the U.S. This paper also attributed Mollet's downfall to Algeria, noting that the conservatives as well as the Radical-Socialists of Mendes France voted against the government. Excelsior and Diario de la Marina both said the vote of confidence requested by Mollet was not on his policy towards Algeria, but on a new plan for raising money with which to implement that policy. But Excelsior listed other reasons for Mollet's fall: the Suez failure, the bloody Algerian war and the slipping influence of France on the international scene. El Mundo stated the heart of the problem was Algeria where France was spending 3 1/2 million dollars daily, but Alerta felt it went even deeper -- the whole system of parliamentary government in France.

ARMY

(UNCLASSIFIED) On Friday, 24 May, the Cuban Army dispatched by air two MAP-equipped rifle companies from Campo Columbia to Oriente Province. Each company musters about 160 men. One company went to Headquarters of the 8th Rural Guard Regiment in Holguin and the other to Headquarters of the 1st Rural Guard Regiment in Santiago de Cuba. Brig. Gen. Eulogio CANTILLO Perras told USARMA that the companies were not engaged in the round-up of the 27-man rebel landing force in the Sierra del Cristal but that they were assigned as reinforcements for the two regiments and would be used if needed.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

Page 6 of
Encl. No.
Desp. No. 815
From Habana

(CONFIDENTIAL) COMMENT: General CANTILLO would not definitely say so but it is firmly believed that the two rifle companies sent to Oriente will be regrouped shortly with more troops from Campo Columbia in a reinitiation of the Sierra Maestra Campaign against Fidel CASTRO and his followers.

NAVY

(UNCLASSIFIED) CUBAN NAVY OFFICERS CRUISE IN U.S. SHIPS. Four Cuban Navy officers completed an invitational cruise from Habana to Key West, 20-22 May. The cruise was made in USS NORFOLK (DL-1) for the purpose of general familiarization aboard an operating vessel of the U.S. Navy at sea. The next such cruise will involve six Cuban officers who will spend a few days aboard U.S. destroyers en route from Habana to Guantanamo Bay, 2-4 June.

AIR - Negative


Arthur Gardner

Contributors:

Political: H.A.Lagasse
J.L.Topping

Sugar: C.E.Davis

Santa Clara: R.G. Cushing

Labor: J.F.Corrrell

Psychological: R.S.Bryan

Army: Lt.Col. J.E.Treadway

Navy: Cdr. L.Krisel

Copies: AmEmbassies Ciudad Trujillo and Port-au-Prince and American Consulate Santiago de Cuba; Army (7); Air(2); Navy(5).

RECEIVED
OFFICE

CONFIDENTIAL