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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT NO. [redacted]

CD NO.

COUNTRY El Salvador

DATE DISTR. 23 Mar 1949

SUBJECT Activities of Major Osorio's Partisans

NO. OF PAGES 2

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NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW) [redacted]

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DATE OF INFO. [redacted]

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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[redacted]

1. The leadership of the recently-formed political front in El Salvador which was to have been headed by Col. Jose Arturo Castellanos and whose aim was to work for the support of Major Oscar Osorio's regime, has recently passed to Major Carranza Amaya.* The apparent reason for the change in leadership was Castellanos' failure to win Major Osorio's approval of the activities of the group.

2. The members of the political front had drawn up a list of ten men to interview Osorio on the subject, five of whom he refused to see. Castellanos then interviewed him alone, and acceded to Osorio's opinion that the front would have to suspend activities as long as the government ban (issued by Osorio himself) on political activities continued in effect. Osorio promised to work for a repeal of the ban, but Castellanos nevertheless lost prestige in the eyes of front members.

3. Osorio's reason, as stated to Castellanos, for disapproving the activities of the front (which was designed to work in his own favor) was to maintain the present harmony of the governing junta, which might be instantly upset if Osorio permitted partisan politics to flourish. Osorio insisted that the junta would stick together until after the Constituent Assembly had met and until the presidential elections.

4. The political front to favor Osorio was one of three current organs to promote his support in El Salvador. The other two were the Partido Democrata Progresista (PDP) and the Partido Revolucionario Salvadoreno (PRS), which were eventually to merge in a coalition. It is observed that Major Osorio has been inconsistent in his treatment of the partisan groups supporting him. While he reminded the political front that its activities were still illegal, he personally approved for publication and distribution a draft of principles submitted to him by the PRS.

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5. A member of the Osorio government, moreover, Minister of the Interior, Lt. Col. Jose Maria Lemus, personally authorized the continued publication of El Debate, a pro-Army newspaper which carried attacks on Cabinet member Miguel Rafael Urquia, the Foreign Minister. The paper obviously was of a political nature, and would therefore seemingly have come under the ban on such periodicals. The Sub-Secretary of the Interior, Dr. Mario Hector Salazar, had tried to stop publication of the paper.

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*Cf. [redacted]

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