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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

27 May 1958

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Likelihood of Anti-US Demonstrations during Dr. Eisenhower's Central American Tour

1. We believe that, almost certainly in Guatemala and Panama, and possibly elsewhere, the Communists and associated anti-American groups will take advantage of Dr. Milton Eisenhower's presence on his intended tour to stage demonstrations designed to discredit both the United States and the local governments friendly toward the United States.
2. The demonstrations in Lima and Caracas on the occasion of Vice President Nixon's visits to those places were well organized and effective. Although undoubtedly Communist instigated, these demonstrations did give expression to a popular sense of grievances against certain phases of US policy, and the general feeling that with our preoccupation with Europe, Asia and Africa, South America has been relatively neglected. The host governments were, of course, embarrassed, and moderate opinion deplored the excesses of the mob. The general public reaction, however,

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has been that the shock brought South American problems to our attention as nothing else could have done and hence may have long range benefits for the South American countries. It is likely that this fact is understood in Central America and that in at least some of the Central American countries disgruntled people would take the occasion of Dr. Eisenhower's trip to join Communist demonstrations to bring their case likewise vividly to our attention. From the Communist point of view, the demonstrations in Lima and Caracas were at least a temporary success though they did surface Communist agitators and alert the conservative elements to the extent of the Communist danger. The Communists will almost certainly plan to repeat the Venezuela-Peru type of tactics against Dr. Eisenhower in Central America, and will find followers outside of their own ranks, ~~although the High Command in Moscow may urge that they be a bit more temperate.~~

3. Existing conditions in Guatemala and Panama are highly favorable for Communist-inspired action. In Guatemala the expectation that President Ydigoras would provide a strong government has been disappointed. Leftist, including Communist, political strength is growing rapidly. The security organization

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has been disrupted by the change of administration. There is no effective control over the return of Communist exiles. Dr. Eisenhower's visit will come during a month in which student disorders are traditional. The students are already in a ferment over unrelated matters. Certain grievances against the United States are already well established in the public mind: the alleged US role in 1954 in the upset of Arbenz, US support for Latin American dictatorships, US "economic imperialism" as symbolized in the minds of the people by the United Fruit Company and other enterprises. Today, the Communists would have no difficulty in finding people eager to demonstrate against the United States in Guatemala.

4. In Panama, powerful ultra-nationalistic politicians are already carrying on a sustained agitation against the government for the softness of its attitude toward the United States, particularly for its failure to assert Panama's claims to sovereign rights in the Canal Zone and to a share in the gross income of the canal. There is already considerable popular irritation against the United States over these issues, over US delay in fully implementing the Remon-Eisenhower Treaty of 1955, and over a general

- 3 -

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deterioration of the economic situation. Moreover, there have recently been serious disturbances among the normally volatile students. Thus ultra-nationalist and Communist agitators could readily exploit existing unrest among the students and the unemployed to stage demonstrations against the United States and the local government on the occasion of Dr. Eisenhower's visit. The fact that Panama would be the last stop on the itinerary would in case of hostile receptions earlier in the trip make demonstrations there the more likely.

5. The governments of the area, except Guatemala, are understood to have given assurances that they can and will control any demonstrations that may occur. The attitude of President Ydigoras of Guatemala has been highly equivocal. While unwilling to admit that he cannot control the situation, he is disturbed about the visit and its timing and has privately suggested that Dr. Eisenhower's visit might well be postponed to a more convenient season.

6. Whether the governments of the area actually can and will make good their assurances is another matter. None of them have a sufficient intelligence capability to be sure of being

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able to anticipate Communist tactics in detail. The security forces of Guatemala and Costa Rica have recently been disrupted by changes in administration. Provided that Dr. Eisenhower consented to avoid close contact with the public, it is likely that he could be protected from the personal indignities to which Vice President Nixon was subjected. However, violent manifestations of anti-US sentiment probably could not be prevented, especially in Guatemala and Panama.

7. "Good will" missions ^{by making direct personal} to areas where the people are looking to the United States for concrete aid or readjustment of policies deemed to be inimical to the interests of the country concerned are likely to become more and more counter productive. Surely this will be true unless the missions are equipped to bring some alleviation of the causes of complaints or at least are ready to give a real hearing to the complaints, real or fancied.

8. The extent of the protests or disorders which may be incident to Dr. Milton Eisenhower's trip is dependent upon two factors which cannot be fully evaluated in advance of the trip but which have been discussed in this memorandum to the extent

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of available information; namely, the determination of the host governments to make the most effective possible use of the security forces available to them (we have already commented upon the inefficiencies of these forces in certain of these countries to be visited); and secondly, whether or not directives will go out from the Communist leadership to make an all-out effort to disrupt the trip as was done in Peru and Venezuela or whether they will prefer at this stage merely to register a protest but to avoid overt incidents. We are rather inclined to believe that at least in Guatemala and probably in Panama, the Communists will be instructed to make a vigorous effort to disrupt the trip.

9. It remains to be noted that if, for the protection of Dr. Eisenhower, it became necessary for local security forces to employ violence against the population, or to call out the armed forces, especially if there were bloodshed, the credit of the United States, in the area and throughout Latin America, would be adversely affected.

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- 6 -

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