



National  
Foreign  
Assessment  
Center

F(b)(1)  
F(b)(3)

~~Secret~~  
~~NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-~~  
~~ORCON~~

PA LAR 80-018

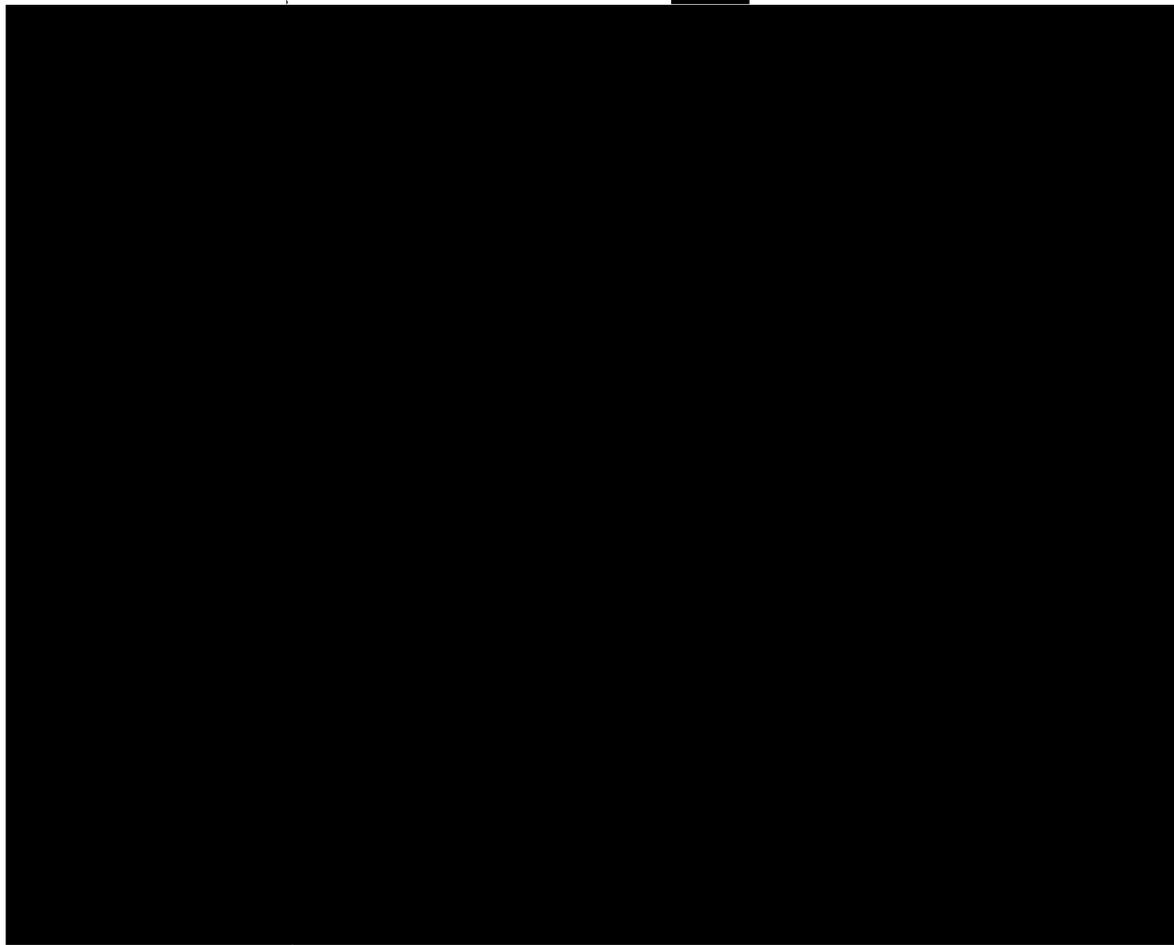
APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: JUL 2000

Latin America  
Review

**SECRET**  
**NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON**

**LATIN AMERICA REVIEW**  
**15 August 1980**  
**CONTENTS**

**Jamaica: Pre-Election Violence** . . . . . **1**



**SECRET**

Jamaica: Pre-Election Violence

Ruling-party radicals, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] apparently have begun to direct their energies toward an open election campaign. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Prime Minister Manley, who apparently is advocating a more restrained use of gunmen, probably will keep trying to check attempts by extremists in his camp to increase the already unprecedented level of violence. Nevertheless, the radicals--with or without Manley's approval--are likely to contemplate another escalation of terrorism if their optimistic assessment of party election prospects flags in the weeks ahead. [REDACTED]

Since April, radicals in Manley's entourage, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] have intensified the conflict between rival gunmen of the People's National Party and of Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labor Party--which the polls strongly favor to win the election. As a result, casualties resulting from political warfare in the first half of this year exceeded the comparable period in 1976--when Manley declared a state of emergency at midyear. In recent months, Jamaica has compared with the most violence-ridden metropolitan centers of North America in murders per capita. The voters' attention at least temporarily has been deflected from economic issues to violence. [REDACTED]

The PNP's effort to deflect voter attention has been accelerated in the past several weeks by an anti-CIA campaign, by terrorism against public institutions, and by vicious attacks against a half dozen of the island's 150 police stations and outposts. Manley argues, probably persuasively to some Jamaicans distant from the ghettos, that the campaign of violence is an effort by the JLP to sabotage the government's economic recovery program. [REDACTED]

15 August 1980

~~SECRET~~

### The Traditional Conflict

Political violence has been a part of Jamaican politics since the 1940s, when the two major parties fought in the shops, on the estates, and in the streets to establish their powerful union affiliates. In 1946 the late founder of the JLP, then chief minister of the government, was tried for manslaughter for leading his supporters in a fatal confrontation with PNP loyalists over a labor dispute. By the mid-1950s, the intense rivalry had divided Jamaica into two political camps that have since excluded all other groups from control of both Parliament and organized labor. ■

Since the 1960s, political warfare has increased and taken more sinister forms. Politicians in Kingston have organized armed gangs at the constituency level, in some cases to hold their turf forcibly at election time and in others to counter assaults of rival gunmen. In turn, public housing projects and politically defined neighborhoods have created their own "defense" squads. Kingston's ghettos have been swelled by a rootless population of unemployable young males who are easily recruited to the ranks of political thugs. ■

The announcement of elections in 1976 and again last February amounted to a declaration of political war resulting in hundreds of killings of both JLP and PNP activists. Opposition gangs have expanded their "territorial rights" to capitalize on growing anti-government sentiment among the people. Ruling-party gunmen, on the other hand, instinctively have moved to deliver the vote for their political patrons, whose defeat they believe would result in the loss of their local power--and probably their lives at the hands of "occupying" rival gunmen. ■

### PNP Offensive

Most evidence since early 1976 indicates the PNP, which has had the most ground to lose in this period, is determined to cut back the JLP's firepower in the slums. In 1976, ruling-party thugs drove out opposition supporters from a housing project and gutted by fire another full block of JLP dwellings. In 1978, Minister of National Security Thompson helped arrange the murders

15 August 1980

2  
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

of five alleged JLP thugs by the army, and last year he approved the assassination by the police of the JLP's foremost gang leader, who was attempting to implement a cease-fire among Kingston's rival gunmen. [REDACTED]

The JLP has maintained an uneasy discipline over its activists because it fears that major ghetto confrontations would result in martial law, further strengthening Manley's hand. It appears, nonetheless, that PNP loyalists have suffered many of the record-high casualties this year. The PNP recently called off at least one terrorist raid because it believed the JLP had greater firepower in the area. [REDACTED]

#### Weapons

The weaponry used by opposing gunmen has become more sophisticated over the past two decades. In contrast with the clubs, machetes, and occasional small arms of the early brawls, since 1976 large caches of arms and ammunition have been uncovered by police. This year, US-made M-16 rifles have been used in several terrorist attacks. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The M-16 rifles would be readily available via Central America or Cuba. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Gun supplies appear to be abundant independent of the Cuban connection, however, because of the island's illegal but thriving marijuana trade with North America. [REDACTED]

#### Prospects

[REDACTED] Further deliberate escalation of the violence probably would hurt their campaign, would encounter resistance from Manley, and would lead to a showdown with the ill-equipped but still formidable security forces. [REDACTED]

15 August 1980

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Manley, fearing for his own safety and apparently convinced that greater violence would be counterproductive, last month reportedly ordered a halt to the distribution of arms to PNP thugs after he narrowly skirted an attack by opposition militants. In recent weeks, he has granted the security forces--which are now under the most professional leadership in years--extraordinary powers to impose curfews, cordon off areas to conduct searches, and carry out special intelligence operations. In addition, he has called up the army reserves and has established a joint military and police communications center. [REDACTED]

The apparent modification of the radicals' strategy, however, will neither eliminate traditional warfare--which top party leaders can start more easily than stop--nor protect US personnel in Jamaica from further attacks. The anti-US propaganda campaign in the streets and on the state-owned media will continue as a diversionary tactic and will sustain hostility toward Washington among action-prone extremists. [REDACTED]

Moreover, if the radicals again conclude they cannot win the election outright, they can be expected at least to consider repeating the more vicious stage of this year's campaign. [REDACTED]

15 August 1980

4  
~~SECRET~~