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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	Panama	REPORT NO.	
SUBJECT	Activities of Guardia Nacional (GN) Official Following REMON Assassination	DATE DISTR.	9 May 1956
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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE:

1. On the night of 2 January 1955, after the assassination of former President Jose Antonio REMON Cantera, when Major Timoteo MELENDEZ, Third Commandant of the Panama Guardia Nacional (GN), arrived at the scene of the shooting, he found Danilo SOUZA, who was only slightly wounded.¹ MELENDEZ put SOUZA in the rear seat of GN patrol car number 24 and drove off with his chauffeur, Cpl. Guillermo BERNAL, and SOUZA.² During the drive to Santo Tomas Hospital MELENDEZ ordered his chauffeur to drive to a section of Panama known as El Relleno, an undeveloped plot of ground, and, when the car was parked, he drew his official weapon, a .45 caliber pistol, and shot SOUZA twice. MELENDEZ then reached into the rear seat and, after making certain that SOUZA was dead, ordered the chauffeur to proceed to Santo Tomas Hospital, and at the same time he warned him to forget everything he had seen.
2. The presence of bullet holes in the patrol car used by MELENDEZ on 2 January 1955 and the necessity for repairing the car caused considerable embarrassment and tension at GN Headquarters for several nights after the assassination of REMON. It is possible that the fist fight between Col. Bolivar VALLARINO, Commandant of the GN, and MELENDEZ was caused by the accumulated tension.³

Comments.

1. The death of Danilo SOUZA, a Panamanian lifeguard at Albrook Air Force Base in the Canal Zone, has been a controversial subject in all of the investigations conducted regarding the REMON assassination and during the trial of former President Jose Ramon GUIZADO.
2. GN patrol car number 24 has been the subject of many rumors, and MELENDEZ, who was assigned to that car on the night of 2 January 1955 and who arrived at Santo Tomas Hospital with Cpl. Guillermo BERNAL as chauffeur and with the corpse of Danilo SOUZA, has also been the subject of many rumors.
3. Comment. reported that on 7 January 1955 MELENDEZ and VALLARINO engaged in a fist fight, but the two men reconciled their differences.

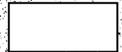
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