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CIA Hints of Bobby Baker Aid to Bosch

Report Declares 2 of His Business Friends Involved

BY DAVID KRASLOW
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency reported last March that former Senate majority secretary Bobby Baker may have been working with financial backers of Juan Bosch, ousted president of the Dominican Republic.

This was learned Thursday from secret testimony taken by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in July during its investigation of U.S. intervention in the Dominican rebellion.

The testimony of CIA Director William F. Raborn, Undersecretary of State Thomas Mann and other high administration officials is still classified as secret.

Range of Subjects

The testimony covered a wide range of U.S. military and diplomatic intelligence and economic involvement in the Dominican Republic before and after the April 24 coup against the regime of Donald Reid Cabral.

Mann also made these points:

The military junta formed early in the rebellion asked the United States to land troops because of Communist influence in the rebel movement. But the United States counter-proposed, when it became apparent Americans

would have to be evacuated, that the junta leader base his request on a statement that he could no longer protect American lives. The U.S. felt this would strengthen its legal basis for action, and the junta leader complied.

Heavy Toll Feared

The Johnson administration gave detailed consideration to plans to use U.S. troops to clean out the rebel area in Santo Domingo, but did not follow through because it would have resulted in a heavy casualty toll among women and children.

Baker's name was brought into the hearings by Sen. Bourke Hickenlooper (R-Iowa).

Hickenlooper asked Mann if he had any knowledge that Baker was working in collaboration with Diego Bordas and Jose Benitez, both friends of Baker who reportedly were helping to bankroll Bosch.

"This information, I think," Mann said, "is included in a CIA report dated the 18th of March, 1965. . . I have no knowledge except what is contained in this report."

There was no suggestion in Mann's testimony that his information had been verified.

Bosch, deposed in a bloodless coup in 1963, was in exile in Puerto Rico at the time of the CIA report. The coup against Reid Cabral was launched in Bosch's name. Bosch has since returned to the Dominican Republic and is expected to seek the presidency again when elections are scheduled.

Fears of U.S.

It is clear from the testimony that the Johnson administration opposed the rebel fighting under the Bosch banner and the return of Bosch to power because of fear that a rebel victory could result in another Cuba.

Mann testified that Bosch himself was not a Communist. But he said the United States had learned Bosch had secretly made a political alliance of convenience with three Dominican Communist parties—one oriented to Havana, another to Moscow and a third to Peking.

" . . . I think we ought to give Bosch credit for thinking that he could use these Communist parties and control them," Mann said.

"The gut issue is whether of an alliance they controlled Bosch or Bosch controlled them."

Political Aims Cited

After describing Bosch as a "poet-professor type" and a "do-gooder," Mann said, "in common with many Latin American politicians, he would make an alliance with the devil himself if he thought it would get him into office."

Hickenlooper asked Mann about a report that Bosch, before the coup, had been "getting excellent financial support from different quarters in order to consolidate the PRD (the leftist but non-Communist Dominican Revolutionary Party) in his leadership."

Among the contributions Hickenlooper said, were \$10,000 on March 12 and \$50,000 later from Bordas, a Dominican promoter-businessman.

"Jose Benitez, a Puerto Rican millionaire," Hickenlooper said, "is one of the other contributors, and Bobby Gene Baker, former secretary of the U.S. Senate majority leader, a good friend of Bordas and Benitez, who share business interests. Do you know anything about that allegation and those contributions?"

Topic of Report

"We know there is a CIA report to this effect," Mann said, "and we also know that . . . a limited number of wealthy Dominicans were supporting financially the Bosch political activities."

A Jose Benitez of Puerto Rico testified during the Senate Rules Committee's lengthy investigation into the propriety of Baker's many-faceted financial dealings.

Baker resigned under fire as secretary to Senate Democrats in October, 1963, just before the Rules Committee inquiry began. Benitez, a political operator in Puerto Rico, resigned his Interior Department post during the investigation. He had been commissioner of the U.S. trust territory in the Pacific.

The inquiry disclosed that Benitez and Baker were partners in a deal to import meat from Haiti to Puerto Rico and the United States.

The rules committee also delved into alleged attempts

by Baker and others to obtain gambling casino concessions in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

The committee's report condemned Baker's sideline operations as grossly improper. A federal grand jury in Washington has been investigating the Baker case since last fall.

Mann testified that the Johnson administration had sounded out Joaquin Balaguer, another former Dominican president, about taking charge of a provisional government that would rule until elections could be held.

He said Balaguer refused, stating that he would return to office only if elected.

"I don't myself see Bosch uniting the Dominican Republic except by blood and fire," Mann said. He said Balaguer would "certainly stand pretty high" among possible candidates.

Referring to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, Mann said "we don't want another missile base" in the Caribbean.

"If the Dominican Republic goes," he said, "Haiti will be like a tinder box, and you will have a whole island . . . and we will be sending over U-2s looking for missiles and a lot of things."

Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola.

Mann conceded that the United States solicited from a military junta hastily formed early in the rebellion a request that marines be sent to Santo Domingo to protect Americans there. But it was made only after the junta leader had asked U.S. intervention because of communism in the rebel movement.

The request was made late in the afternoon of April 28. That evening President Johnson announced marines had been ordered in to protect Americans.

Reason for Request

The request was solicited from the junta, Mann said, partly because it would give the United States sounder legal footing for the military intervention.

Mann said the Johnson administration was not at that point convinced that the anti-rebel forces could not control the uprising.

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