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3 March 1966

OCI No. 1153/66

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CABINET CRISIS LIKELY SOON IN PERU

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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OCI No. 1153/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
3 March 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Cabinet Crisis Likely Soon in Peru

SUMMARY

There is a strong possibility that Peru will experience a full-blown cabinet crisis when the Congress reconvenes in mid-March. Opposition congressmen, who dominate the legislative body, are threatening censure of the education minister, and the cabinet has served notice publicly that it will resign en masse if his censure is voted. Congressional censure of cabinet ministers has occurred frequently during President Belaunde's administration, mainly because it has been adopted by the opposition APRA party as the primary means of political attack on the government.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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2. The basis for the impending crisis is an increasingly bitter rivalry between the executive branch and the Congress, or, in terms of political groupings, between Belaunde's AP and the powerful APRA party. Repeatedly denied executive office because of the traditional enmity of the Peruvian armed forces, APRA is using the legislative branch as its vehicle for exerting influence. Since the Belaunde government took office in July 1963, APRA has striven to elevate the prestige and importance of Congress at the expense of the presidency. Thus, APRA and its coalition partner UNO have been extremely sensitive to every slight by the administration--real or imagined--to the Congress. Their attempt to assert congressional authority or to strike back at the executive has taken the form of ministerial censure--an action requiring a majority vote and which, according to constitutional law, forces the censured minister to resign his office.

3. APRA further justifies the application of congressional censure by charging that AP ministers have used their authority for partisan political purposes. AP ministers have, in fact, worked through their offices to build and strengthen the youthful AP party, and the present AP cabinet ministers are especially active in their party roles. Naturally jealous of its own status as Peru's largest mass-based party, APRA hotly resents any action by a government official which might accrue to the advantage of AP. (APRA would be certain, however, to use the same techniques to strengthen its own party organization if it were in power.)

4. The current situation [Redacted]

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[Redacted] has been building since September 1965. At that time, a new cabinet was appointed following the refusal of former prime minister Schwalb to appear before congress for interpellation. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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APRA is planning to censure the minister of education when Congress reconvenes in mid-March. In that event, the ministers reportedly have agreed to resign en masse [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Their decision to resign has been made public.

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5. Congressional censure of a cabinet minister has occurred five times during the life of the Belaunde administration. Additional ministerial changes have been made to ward off the threat of censure. Belaunde finally moved to reduce harassment of the controversial ministries of education and government in 1964 by appointing military men to these posts. Until replaced later by civilians, the military ministers served without undue attention from opposition congressmen, who recognized that they represented not only the government but also the untouchable prestige of the Peruvian military establishment.

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