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14 October 1969

DCI BRIEFING FOR
15 OCT NSC MEETING

THE INTERNAL SECURITY THREAT

IN LATIN AMERICA

- I. Mr. President, in any discussion of the threat to internal security in Latin America, it is well to start with the question: "Which threat?"
- A. Our immediate pre-occupation in recent years has been with the efforts of Fidel Castro to export his Cuban revolution to the rest of Central and South America.
- B. Before Castro came to power in Cuba, however, there were active Communist parties in Latin America which looked to Moscow for leadership, and which still do.
- C. In addition to the Communist forces responsive to Soviet or Cuban leadership, there is an extensive array of internal factors—varying from country to country—~~which~~ challenge our interests in the hemisphere. *well-known*
are the ~~internal~~ *ones*
1. These internal factors ~~include~~ nationalism, economic dilemmas, inequities in the social fabric, population growth and its by-product of discontented urban masses, populism, and the inflammable issue of resentment of the United States.

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- We have reported*
2. ~~Your intelligence community~~ is increasingly of the opinion that over the long run, the internal factors constitute a greater threat to Latin American internal security and political stability than does the subversive potential of Soviet and Cuban assets.

II. Fidel Castro--in the two years since the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia--has de-emphasized the export of violent revolution.

A. He has not renounced the policy, and he still provides moderate support in the form of funds, training and propaganda to insurgents in Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia.

1. The Cubans have become much more selective in their aid to insurgents, however, and will now provide substantial assistance only to those revolutionaries who show strong potential for achieving success.
2. It is interesting to note that Castro--in the three dozen speeches he has made since Guevara's death--has discussed revolution in Latin America only three times: twice in early eulogies for Guevara, and once in announcing publication of his diary. Revolution in Latin America used to be a stock subject in Castro's speeches.

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B.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in consequence of Guevara's debacle in Bolivia, Castro's orders for subversion in Latin America were to be more selective and more discreet.

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[REDACTED]

- C. The present de-emphasis is in part a result of Castro's disillusionment with Latin American would-be guerrillas, and in part undoubtedly a response to Soviet pressures.
1. It also reflects Castro's normal pre-occupation~~/~~ now that there is no longer a Guevara at his elbow to urge outside adventures~~/~~ with domestic problems.
 2. Castro at present is committed to the ambitious and very probably impossible goal of bringing in

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a ten-million-ton sugar crop in 1970. At least until the end of the harvest, he is not likely to take a significant part in any new guerrilla initiatives, or try any substantial increase in support for existing groups--unless he sees some golden opportunity.

III. The Soviets at present are nurturing normal and expanding relations with Latin American governments. In concert with orthodox pro-Soviet Communist parties in the various countries, they espouse the "Via Pacifica," or peaceful, parliamentary road to power.

A. This is not to say that the Soviet Union is necessarily opposed to revolution. Moscow's current view is that non-violent methods of subversion should be stressed, with violence to be used only when the circumstances require or warrant it.

1. We have strong evidence, for example, that Moscow and Havana have agreed that violent revolution will be necessary in Haiti. At present, I might note, they fall somewhat short of the necessary assets ^{there} to try it, ~~in~~
~~Haiti~~

B. I want to stress that the Communist view of a so-called "peaceful" path to power does not exclude subversion.

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1. As ~~my deputy~~ General Cushman ^{Indicated to} ~~told~~ you on July 9th, the Soviets over the past 10 years have raised the number of their diplomatic missions in Latin America from three countries to nine and in the process have stationed nearly 300 officials in Latin America.

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B.

1. The far left at present is badly fragmented. In most Latin American countries, there are two or three rival Communist factions in some cases, rival independent parties of Communists taking their leads from Moscow, Peking, and Havana.
2. Some of these factions have as few as 50 to 100 members, while in Brazil and Ecuador the pro-Chinese faction numbers about 3,000 members in each case.
3. Outside Cuba, Communists function as a legal party only in Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Guyana,

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but there is a Communist organization in every Latin American country.

C. The Chinese Communists provided minor support— particularly training—to small groups of Latin American Communists and other militants ^{some} ~~several~~

^{time} ~~years~~ ago, but this aid has dwindled sharply during the past year or two, and is now insignificant.

1. The remaining Chinese support consists largely of propaganda, and is confined almost completely to splinter groups in Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru.

2. Peking is handicapped by the fact that its official representation is limited to an embassy in Cuba and a trade mission in Chile.

D. All of the groups of the extreme left, no matter how sharp their rivalries or how divided their loyalties, still constitute a channel through which the Communists can seek to inflame and exploit the vulnerabilities and causes of domestic discontent in each Latin American country.

1. The question that remains open is the extent to which the Communists can take and keep control over these forces of discontent.

IV. This brings me to the major question of the domestic and not necessarily Communist challenge to internal security in Latin America.

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- A. Much of the area is experiencing growing social unrest, generated by strong pressure for early change.
1. Student, labor, church and other groups are becoming increasingly active proponents of reform.
 2. The Latin American governments, however, ~~even~~ in those cases where there is a willingness to advance the Populist demands for social and economic improvement ~~remain~~ limited in their ability to find solutions to the complex problems.
- B. These demands for change, as you have noted, are being expressed by relatively small leadership and elite groups, which must contend with the Communists and other extremists for the right to speak for the larger masses.
- C. Their success in appealing to the landless peasants and the unemployed or underemployed urban populations will in large part determine just how violent things are going to be in Latin America.
1. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish among rival groups in their methods. The extremists, the moderate opposition, and the government politicians alike are all willing, for example, to use the long-standing

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ploy of criticizing the United States
to rally supporters.

2. If Castro has become disenchanted with the immediate prospects for exporting his revolution, however, it is because the masses of Latin Americans are not yet willing to support either insurgency in the countryside, or armed violence in the cities.

D. Urban terrorism in Latin America has been on the rise for the last year or so. Incidents have a dramatic propaganda impact, but the security forces in most countries appear able so far to keep ~~terrorism~~ ^{the attacks} from becoming widespread.

1. In all cases, the total numbers involved in the terrorism are relatively small, and the ability of the security forces to cope depends on keeping it that way. In 1940, there were only five cities in Latin America with populations over one million. By 1980, there will be 26, filled with the young, poor, dissatisfied and jobless.

E. As for the countryside, there are even greater numbers of largely landless and in many cases illiterate peasants, ~~peopled~~ ^{often isolated} in hinterlands where the government does not penetrate with schools, markets, and sanitation or with public authority.

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1. In Peru several years ago, some of the discontented descendants of the Incas overran one of the Cerro de Pasco copper mines using nothing but sticks, pitchforks, and young teen-aged Indians throwing stones with slings.
 2. More orthodox guerrilla movements have been formed from time to time in a number of countries. They are active at present in Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, and Guatemala.
 3. None of them has attracted any substantial mass support or sympathy, and over the past few years, local security forces have developed increased capability to deal with armed rural insurgency, as shown in Bolivia and Peru.
 4. There seems to be little likelihood, therefore, of a successful rural-based revolution in the foreseeable future, although a well-organized guerrilla movement might become a serious threat in such politically fragile small countries as Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
 5. Again, the determining element would be which leadership--the militant or the moderate--can win the support of the population.
- V. To summarize, Mr. President, there are strong forces for change in Latin America that are going to become

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even more intense as problems and populations multiply. Politically motivated violence will continue to rise.

- A. So far, the existing governments appear unable--if not unwilling--to solve the complex problems of meeting these demands.
- B. Orthodox Communist movements, exploiting the existing discontent to bid for power, will emphasize the use of legal political mechanisms or of subversion, in preference to open violent revolution.
- C. For the time being, circumstances--and the influence of the Soviet Union--are restraining Fidel Castro's past advocacy of guerrilla warfare.
- D. Meanwhile, within each country, there are growing domestic elements--in the spectrum between the governing regimes and the militant extremists--who are pushing harder and harder for improvement of the social fabric, and who have probably not yet determined whether it can come by evolution, or only by revolution.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

Pages 7+10 retyped. (old
pages clipped to back.)

Repetitions eliminated
or reduced in several other
spots.



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FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED

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