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7 December 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

Venezuela: President Betancourt is advocating strong hemispheric measures to curtail Castro's subversive activities in Latin America.

Betancourt told US Ambassador Stewart that a "blockade" limited to ships outbound from Cuba for Latin American countries would prevent the delivery of arms to insurgents in Venezuela. Although he reiterated his strong opposition to the presence of foreign military units in Venezuela, he stated that foreign vessels participating in the blockade could pursue suspected arms carriers into Venezuelan waters.

Betancourt also favors a break in diplomatic relations with Cuba by those Latin American nations still maintaining them, and wants measures which will hold economic relations and other communications with Cuba to a minimum.

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Bolivia: President Victor Paz Estenssoro is re-vamping his cabinet as part of a systematic campaign to neutralize extreme leftist opposition in the ruling MNR party.

The cabinet presented its collective resignations on 5 December, probably at Paz' direction. The foreign minister has advised the US Embassy in La Paz that the lines of combat have become sharply drawn between Paz and his major political rival, Vice President Juan Lechin. He said the President could no longer tolerate Lechin's supporters in his cabinet.

Lechin, head of the pro-Communist wing of the MNR, is challenging Paz for control of the party in an effort to be named as its presidential candidate for the elections of 1964.

In addition to removing those cabinet members with close ties to Lechin, Paz also may replace one or more key ministers, who recently have come under Lechin's criticism, in an effort to eliminate one pretext for the vice president's attacks against government policies.

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NOTES

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UK-Malaysia: Senior officers of the British Far East Command believe there is increasing likelihood of major military action between UK and Indonesian forces. Strengthening of Malaysian-UK defenses is under way. A medium V-bomber unit of about eight aircraft is being sent to Singapore to provide a long-range, all-weather capability which the 15 Canberra light bombers already in the area do not have.

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Laos: Distrust among the various factions in Vientiane has sharpened in the wake of Thursday's slaying of Colonel Leuang, chief of neutralist intelligence in the city. Responsibility for the killing has not been fixed, but neutralist leaders in the capital are inclined to blame the right-wing security forces under Colonel Siho. The shooting also has revived rumors that right-wing military elements connected with former Premier Phoui Sananikone may soon try to take over control in Vientiane.

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DAILY BRIEF

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