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**INFORMATION REPORT**

CD NO.

*File 240*

COUNTRY Colombia

DATE DISTR. 7 JUNE 1949

SUBJECT Pre-Election Political Activities

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE 25X1A

NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW)

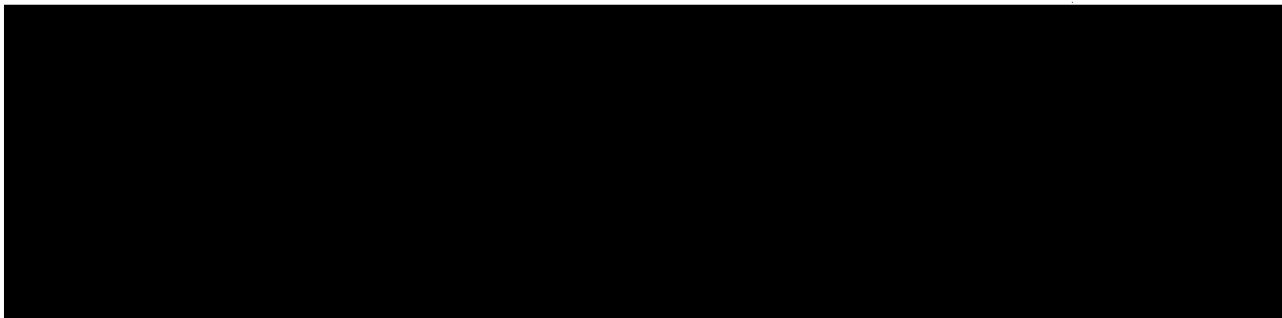
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1. With less than one month to go to the congressional elections in Colombia the two main political parties, the Conservatives and Liberals, were intensifying their activities, with both sides confident of obtaining a majority of seats in the National House of Representatives. Although there are no statistics available on which to base an accurate forecast of the June elections, a Liberal Party plebiscite held through the country on 24 April indicated that the leftist Liberal groups had obtained control of the larger cities, but at that time no returns had been received from the smaller towns. However, in early May it was reported that the two parties were equally balanced, and for that reason have intensified their activities in order to gain the few doubtful posts that would give them the majority and control of the lower house.
2. The Conservative Party is apparently fairly unified in spite of the opposition of some of its members to President Mariano Ospina Perez' policy of a "national union" government. The Departmental Committee of Cundinamarca is in complete disagreement with this policy and in March called upon the conservative ministers to resign from the Cabinet in opposition to the program being followed by the National Conservative Directorate. Later both the Conservative and Liberal members of the Cabinet resigned. This crisis was caused by the desire of Conservative groups to remove Dario Echandia, Liberal Minister of Government, from his post as well as Eduardo Zuleta Angel, Conservative Minister of Foreign Affairs, who has supported Echandia. President Ospina Perez promptly refilled his Cabinet and, although the Conservatives have a majority, his actions were commended by the Liberal press as an endeavor to maintain "union nacional".
3. The Departmental Committee of Cundinamarca for some time opposed the military plans formulated by Colonel Manuel Agudelo for use by the Conservative Party in case of an emergency. However, in March they made preliminary contacts with Agudelo stating they are anxious to put his plan of operation into effect. Agudelo has been reluctant to cooperate with the Departmental Committee inasmuch as his military plans are being considered by the National Directorate.
4. In an effort to unify their party, the Liberal Directorate issued an appeal in March to all dissident groups, particularly the "corando" groups which had been founded by Jorge Uribe Marquez and which later refused to accede to the

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Party Directorate when Uribe Marquez was named a co-director on the National Directorate. This appeal was directed mainly towards Carlos H. Pareja, who at that time was conducting political rallies throughout the country. Although Pareja had not been able to obtain the backing of the Gaitanist masses, he was able to encourage the animosity of the leftist Liberal groups against the National Liberal Directorate. Pareja's answer to the appeal is not known, and the future of the Party is still very much in doubt.

5. The traffic in arms has increased considerably, and rifles bearing Colombian Army indicators, and machine guns are readily available. On two occasions military warehouses have been raided and arms, ammunition, and great quantities of dynamite removed. There is no indication, however, that these robberies are instigated by either political party for the purpose of obtaining stores of arms to be used against the authorities. All investigations reveal that the arms are being stolen for resale to private individuals. Representatives of both parties are endeavoring to purchase any arms available and forward them to the more militant sectors of the country.
  
6. Although the directorates of both the Conservative and Liberal Parties have been meeting constantly in an endeavor to formulate plans to suppress the political violence rampant in Colombia, their efforts have not been successful. In order to control such violence a law was promulgated which nationalized departmental and municipal police forces under the authority of the Minister of Government. Both directorates as well as the press have requested that the President take more stringent measures to curb this violence, but Ospina Perez is adamant in his belief that the violence is the result of the activities of the respective parties, and that it is incumbent upon the directorates to control their constituents. The government has placed 54 military mayors in municipalities where closer control is needed and has called up a class of reserves who have been sent to the troubled areas. The Department of Cundinamarca will be placed under military control during the elections.