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29 October 1965

BRIEFING NOTES

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- I. In the Dominican Republic, the situation is touch-and-go again.
 - A. As you know, the Inter-American Peace Force--which consists primarily of US troops -- has deployed over the week-end into the former rebel zone to maintain security there, in an attempt to facilitate the collection of weapons.
 - B. Provisional President Garcia Godoy has repeatedly temporized on this matter of cleaning up the rebel zone, and appears far more concerned with rebel demands that he take action against the right wing and the military.
 - C. Armed forces leaders had threatened to clean out the zone themselves if Garcia Godoy would not. They appear determined to resist any effort by Garcia Godoy to dismiss the Armed Forces Secretary, Rivera Caminero, and the three service chiefs.
 1. Ambassadors Bunker and Bennett have won agreement in principle from Garcia Godoy that an equal number of top rebel leaders--like Caamano and Montes Arache-- will have to be given overseas assignments if the controversial military leaders are to be exiled.
 - D. When violence broke out again October 16, some rebel militants who had just moved into a military camp for

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that camp. There were reports that they were back in the rebel zone, reorganizing their commandos and restoring the barricades.

E. Rebel militants and right-wing vigilantes have apparently both decided that the OAS settlement is coming unstuck and that the issues will be settled by force. There have been sporadic fire-fights and mob actions ever since the assassination of Severo Cabral, a leading right-wing politician, on October 16.

F. When the IAPF moved into the rebel zone, however, it met no forceful resistance, and found no signs of barricades or organized commandos. Rebel weapons have been hidden, either in the zone itself or in the countryside.

G. The arms search continues, but it is producing no weapons to speak of. The collection teams are led by "judicial police" recruited by the pro-Communist Attorney General, Morel Corda. They apparently give rebels enough warning to ensure that weapons are well hidden.

II. Garcia Godoy's provisional government was installed September 3 with a nine-month mandate to reconcile the opposing forces and run general elections.

A. Garcia Godoy has alienated most of his original supporters, however. He has hardened the discontent of the military, conservatives, and moderates by

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the appointment of Communists and Communist

sympathizers to relatively important positions, including the justice ministry. His indecisiveness and inaction have cost him the broad public support he needs for an orderly transition to elected government. The IAPF can probably preserve public order indefinitely, but peaceful elections within the agreed nine months now appear highly unlikely.

III. The three-man OAS commission was to meet with Garcia Godoy this morning, to try to re-open lines of communication between the provisional president and the military chiefs. The OAS mediators are trying to persuade him to maintain the status quo in the military command at least until the former rebel zone is cleaned up.

A. Garcia Godoy himself apparently realizes he has got to take action against the left as well as the right if he is to bring the situation under control. Yesterday he ordered the national police to close down two particularly extreme pro-rebel newspapers.

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IV. The IAPF at present has about 10,655 men--principally 8,800 US troops and some 1,100 Brazilians. Most responsible Dominican leaders agree that the presence of the IAPF is essential, but they find it politically expedient in their public speeches to call for its removal. ###

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