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22 January, 1969.

MEMORANDUM FOR : 

SUBJECT : The Haitian Government

A. Political:

1. President Duvalier IS the Government of Haiti not only in the Presidential Palace but in the smallest sub-district as well. All appointees are his, be they civil, military or legislative, appointed or "elected". It works like this:

a. There are eight Departments - North, Northwest, Center, Artibonite, West, South and two special Depts. within the Port au Prince Dept. created by Duvalier to control the Palace Guard and the Army unit stationed there. The Chief of Staff of the Army has no command function over these units. They are directly responsible to the President and take orders only from him.

b. In each of the six legitimate Depts. there is a Prefect, unpaid by the Government, who controls all civil affairs. He gets his money through diverse schemes such as having the sole right to sell tobacco in his area or being able to tax bars, etc. He has assorted office help.

c. Each Dept. is divided into Districts or Sections, some have four, others nine. A sub-Prefect controls each with a small staff. He is also unpaid and earns his keep by various means.

d. Each Section is split into sub-Sections, two or more, with a Chef de Section at its head. This is the smallest political entity and can comprise anywhere from twenty family hovels to 1,000 people. He too, makes his own salary, usually by head tax or market place squeeze.

2. In no case is the responsible administrator particularly qualified for his job. He is there at the whim of Duvalier. He can be replaced tomorrow and returned to office next week. As a result, each is interested entirely in his own welfare and pocketbook to the exclusion of trying to organize a competent, productive political area.

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B. Military and Police:

1. All uniformed troops belong to the Forces Armees d'Haiti (FAdH). These include: The Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, Police, Prison Guards and Fire Departments. Personnel are inter-changeable and in the lower commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, there doesn't seem to be much interest in which service they are.

a. Each Dept. has a military or police Commandant with the usual staff and troops. The Commandant is usually a colonel.

b. Each Section has a military or police sub-Commandant with appropriate personnel.

c. Each sub-Section is staffed by the rural police headed by a junior officer or senior non-com.

C. The Ton-Ton Macoute: Real name: Volunteers for National Security-VSN.

1. These thugs are distributed throughout Depts., Sections and sub-Sections in about the same proportion as the civilian and police authorities.

2. They are personally responsible to the President and are above the law. They have no regular TO&E and the local head of this TTM in any given area is, like his civilian and military/police colleagues, put there by the President. In short, the entire governmental system is sketchy, loose and very flexible.

D. Communications:

1. These three entities, civil, military/police and TTM, each responsible to its own superior, work very closely together. Contact from superior to subordinate and vice-versa is as often as either cares to make it, in person, by telephone, by radio, by courier or by mail. Each uses his own or his counterpart's communication equipment interchangeably.

2. If the President wants to know something about a certain area, the civil administrator and his military/police colleague jeep to Port au Prince with the TTM representative riding shotgun in the back seat.

3. Since the Single Side Band radio gear used throughout the country is on the same frequency, communications can and do become chaotic. Word of mouth is often faster.

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E. Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. Nothing gets done without the consent of Duvalier, even at the lowest political, military or police level. This includes such minutiae as Presidential approval before an Army recruit can take leave.

2. If, as reported, Duvalier is interested in setting up a civic action program, there is a great opportunity to use the sub-Section heads as more than political hangers-on and grifters. After sufficient training in any needed speciality - peanut growing, hog breeding or what have you - they can become valuable assets to their communities. This is particularly true since many of the better families have devoted their lives to agriculture. By better families is meant those with enough money and drive to get university training.

3. Brains for this sort of activity are not lacking in Haiti. But approval and support must first come from Duvalier. No other man's say so is valid.

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