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SNIE 81-68
28 MARCH 1968

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SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
NUMBER 81-68

SECURITY CONDITIONS IN MEXICO CITY

Submitted by

Richard Helms

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

as indicated overleaf

28 MARCH 1968

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The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, the NSA, the FBI, and the Secret Service

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Mr. Thomas L. Hughes, the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

Vice Adm. Vernon L. Lowrance, for the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

Lt. Gen. Marshall S. Carter, the Director, National Security Agency

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

28 March 1968

SUBJECT: SNIE 81-68: SECURITY CONDITIONS IN MEXICO CITY


THE PROBLEM

To estimate the likelihood of incidents that would endanger or embarrass Vice President Humphrey during his visit to Mexico City, 31 March-1 April 1968.

CONCLUSION

We believe that the efforts of the Mexican Government and security forces will keep to a minimum the number of potentially embarrassing incidents during Vice President Humphrey's visit to Mexico City, and that the risk of a dangerous incident will be small. One may not rule out, however, an attempt at violence by a psychopath or fanatic.

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DISCUSSION

1. President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz places special emphasis on maintaining cordial relations with the US and will receive Vice President Humphrey as an honored guest. Furthermore, Díaz Ordaz will probably take considerable pride in the occasion for the Vice President's visit to Mexico City: the signing by the US of a supplementary protocol to the Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967), which bans nuclear weapons from Latin America, and which was principally initiated by the Mexican Government.^{1/}

2. The political situation in Mexico is stable, and security conditions in Mexico City, a metropolis of nearly five million residents, are good. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) virtually monopolizes Mexican politics, while Díaz Ordaz dominates the party without significant challenge to his authority. Not only is the PRI effective in maintaining stability generally, but it also contributes specifically to security arrangements for visiting dignitaries. It helps insure friendly and peaceful popular receptions by using its supporters to line

^{1/} Protocol II of the Treaty obligates the states possessing nuclear weapons not to violate the nuclear-free zone created by the 21 Latin American signatory nations.

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motorcade routes and to surround the sites of public ceremonies. Díaz Ordaz has ordered that much the same measures be laid on for the Vice President as were taken during the visits of President Johnson in 1966 and 1967.^{2/}

3. The Mexican security forces will provide a high degree of personal safety for the Vice President. These forces are politically reliable, tough, and reasonably competent. The police of the Federal District are effective in handling crowds and quashing incipient disorders. They will be assisted by the crack Presidential Guard of the Army. Additional well-trained army troops are stationed in the Federal District and would be available as needed.

4. There are a number of anti-US elements in Mexico. These include the small Mexican Communist Party, the larger Popular Socialist Party, and various small extremist groups. Mexico City is also a haven for political exiles from other countries, mostly Communist and leftist extremists but also including anti-Castro Cubans. All these groups, Mexican and foreign, exist largely

^{2/} Díaz Ordaz has kept a personal watch over security forces in the metropolitan area ever since the years (1958-1964) when as Minister of Interior he was in charge of security arrangements for visiting dignitaries.

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by the sufferance of the government, and fear risking its wrath. They will be warned not to cause trouble during the Vice President's visit and are unlikely to attempt to organize major disorders. The Mexican Government maintains surveillance over the activities of most of these groups and would probably have advance warning if any major disorders were planned. Mexican legal procedures do not inhibit the police from detaining as many individuals as the government considers necessary to maintain order on special occasions, and this license will be exercised for the Vice President's visit.

5. Nonetheless, some individuals and small groups, including students not affiliated with extremist organizations, will probably attempt to demonstrate against the Vice President's visit.^{3/} This would almost certainly be the case if he were to visit the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Though the issue of US policy in Vietnam is not particularly heated in Mexico, it will probably be the principal focus of protests; we believe that any demonstrators will not be seeking deliberately to endanger the Vice President. Furthermore, the security forces will probably

^{3/} Several small protest demonstrations, all quickly put down, were attempted during President Johnson's 1966 visit.

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intercept most demonstrators before they get within sight of the Vice President, and those achieving that objective will almost certainly be removed by the police soon thereafter. With the possible exception of a university audience, we believe there will be very little popular support for demonstrators.

6. In sum, we believe there is little chance of an incident that would endanger the Vice President, and that the number of potentially embarrassing incidents will be small. One may not, however, rule out the possibility of an attempt at violence by some individual, perhaps a psychopath or a fanatic, who could be Mexican, American, or any other nationality.

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