

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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NO DISSEM ABROAD

COUNTRY Bolivia

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Barrientos/Armed Forces Relationship

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE [REDACTED]

1. The relationship between the Bolivian military and President Rene Barrientos is a marriage of convenience with the military playing the role of husband. Barrientos although a general, is not a military professional. He concedes that his rapid rise in the Bolivian Air Force was due more to his political activities as a party worker for the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) than to his military virtues. The professional officer corps resents him for this reason.
2. Sophisticated officers at the level of General Alfredo Ovando Candia, dislike Barrientos because they consider him crude, tactless and carthy. They distrust him because they think he is devious and insincere, and his word cannot be relied upon. They also question his judgment.
3. General Ovando has the complete support of the military and is the real power behind the throne. A patriot of proven leadership and administrative ability, he does not actively seek support for his presidential aspirations, thereby allaying the fears of Barrientos' unprincipled supporters. Though he would run for office if there was mass support for him to do so, he prefers to guide the government from behind the scenes. He recognizes the enormous complexity and difficulty of the problems facing the government, and prefers that Barrientos, under military guidance, take the blame for the unpopular measures required to solve those problems or for the failure of the government to bring order out of chaos. As long as Barrientos follows broad military guidelines and does not become too unpopular, Ovando will continue to support him. However, if the situation becomes unmanageable and civil war breaks out, Ovando is prepared to depose Barrientos and take over control of the government.

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Excluded from automatic
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