

NSC BRIEFING

Document No. 6
No Change in Class. <input type="checkbox"/>
Class. Change for: PG 3 C
Next Review Date: 2 July 1958
Auth: C-103
Date: <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; vertical-align: middle;"></span>

VENEZUELA

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- I. Commies believed to have achieved some penetration of govt at all levels with members or sympathizers.
- A. Cabinet may include 6 Commies or sympathizers.
- B.  Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV) leaders claim that:
1. Ministers of Interior and Education are active members.
  2. That Minister of Foreign Relations is former member and active sympathizer.
  3. That two other ministers are cooperating with PCV.
  4. This Commie claim may be exaggerated, but it is indicative of considerable Commie gains.
- C. Minister of Finance and Under Secretary of Interior have record of Commie activity.
- II. Govt unlikely seriously to restrict Commies.
- A. President Larrazabal stated that Commies numbered only 12,000 (our estimate is 25,000), were patriotic Venezuelans without international ties.
1. PCV had endorsed Larrazabal's presidential candidacy.
- III. Commies active in united political and labor organizations.
- A. Only one leader of major non-Commie party--COPEI (social christian)--has publicly opposed Commie participation in future govt.
- IV. Commies reportedly have substantial influence in universities.
- V. Commies have considerable influence in press.

- A. Non-Communist press, with exception of Catholic paper, is favorably oriented toward PCV.
- B. PCV apparently has substantial financial resources for its own press.
- VI. PCV is not known to have penetrated military, whose top leaders allegedly are staunchly anti-Communist.
- VII. There is little effective civilian opposition to Commies.
  - A. And the military thus far has been reluctant to take unilateral action against the Commies.
  - B. We conclude then, that govt is Commie-penetrated but not dominated.
    - 1. Commies do not have capability of seizing or dominating govt at present.
    - 2. Control of top govt positions by known Commies would probably not be in their interest because of possible military coup.
    - 3. Commie objective probably to maintain present highly favorable climate.
    - 4. And in meantime they are in good position to influence the govt's actions.