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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum

PRESIDENT BOSCH AND INTERNAL SECURITY
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

14 June 1963

*Declassified
27 Sep 1977
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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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OCI No. 1564/63
14 June 1963

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
MEMORANDUM**

President Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic rightly considers that he has a popular mandate to bring about a radical transformation of political, economic, and social conditions in the Dominican Republic. He hopes to accomplish this purpose by such measures as agrarian and tax reform, economic development primarily through private foreign investment, and a more equitable distribution of earnings than has been the case hitherto.

There is currently under way a concerted campaign to discredit Bosch by charging that he is himself a crypto-Communist engaged in establishing a Communist dictatorship, or else that his ineptitude will lead to a Communist takeover in the Dominican Republic. Manifestly, this campaign represents the reaction of vested interests who see their privileged position threatened by Bosch's revolutionary purposes. It also reflects genuine concern regarding Bosch's remarkably tolerant attitude toward Communist activities.

With reason, Bosch believes that the principal immediate threat to the accomplishment of his mission is the possibility of a reactionary coup. In this context, he has not hindered Communist organizational and agitational activities, so long as the Communists have avoided direct interference with him. He argues that to crack down on these activities would only precipitate a campaign of urban terrorism and guerrilla resistance like that in Venezuela, which would hinder the accomplishment of his constructive purposes.

Bosch understands that the security of his regime depends ultimately upon continued US support, particularly as a restraint upon the Dominican military. At the same time, he is nationalistic, egotistic, and aware of the political inexpediency of appearing to be a US puppet. Consequently, he is not readily amenable to US advice regarding

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his policy with respect to Communist activities.

The Communist danger in the Dominican Republic is not immediate, but potential. It is none the less serious. Given present freedom to organize and agitate, the Communists will become better prepared to exploit some future opportunity. If Bosch should fail to satisfy the expectations of the Dominican masses, or if he should be overthrown by a reactionary coup, the Communists would have an opportunity to seize the leadership of the popular revolutionary movement. This does not mean that they would directly come to power--the Dominican military have the will and ability to prevent that for the foreseeable future. It does mean that the Communists would have gained the advantage of identification with the popular side in a continuing class struggle.

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BASIC FACTS ON DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Capital City:	Santo Domingo (pop: 350,847)
Area:	18,815 square miles
Population:	3,100,000 (1961)
Racial Composition:	White 13% Mulatto 67% Negro 20%
Rural to Urban Ratio:	76 to 24 per cent
Illiteracy:	36 per cent
Budget:	\$174,371,498 (1963)
Percent of Budget for Military:	18 per cent
Total Value of Exports:	\$172,500,000 (1962)
Total Value of Imports:	\$123,300,000 (1962)
Chief Exports:	Sugar 56% of Total Value (1962) Coffee 11.6% of Total Value (1962) Cacao 7% of Total Value (1962)
U.S. Investment:	\$105,000,000 (1961)
Per Capita GNP:	\$234.00
Distribution of GNP.	Agriculture, 41%; trade, 17%; manufacturing, 15%; government, 7%; other, 20%. (1958 AID estimate)
Per Cent of Labor Organized:	8 per cent
Armed Forces:	28,250
Army	12,280
Navy	3,100
Air	3,700
Police	9,170

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President Bosch and Internal Security
in the Dominican Republic

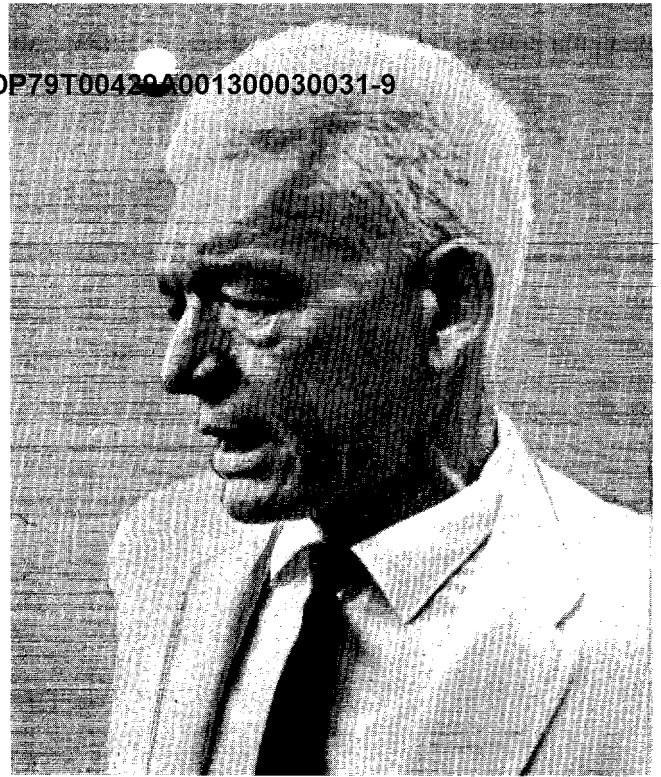
1. Release from the repressive stability of the 30-year Trujillo dictatorship suddenly confronted the Dominican government and people with accumulated political, economic, and social problems with which they were ill-prepared to cope. To survive, and to conduct the first free election in Dominican history, absorbed the energies of the interim Council of State. The more fundamental problems were left for President Bosch to solve when he took office in February 1963. They include: (1) how to make democratic processes work in a country which has had no experience of civil liberty or representative government; (2) how to use efficiently or distribute equitably the vast properties accumulated by the Trujillo family; (3) how to obtain the capital required for economic development while at the same time denying economic special privilege and ensuring a more equitable distribution of earnings; (4) how to prepare the largely illiterate and unskilled Dominican people to participate efficiently and gainfully in a modernized economy; (5) how to transform a traditional society without precipitating either social disorder or a reactionary coup. In dealing with such formidable problems, popular impatience for results, two years after the demise of the dictator, must also be taken into account.

President Bosch and His Program

2. Juan Bosch, now almost 54, is a native Dominican of humble origin, though white. In his youth he worked as a clerk in a tobacco warehouse. His formal education was limited, but he was a part-time student at the University of Santo Domingo, where he led an anti-Trujillo student organization. This activity led to 25 years of exile, chiefly in Cuba--his wife is Cuban--but including sojourns in the US, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Costa Rica. On a visit to Israel, he was much impressed by Israeli agricultural cooperatives.

3. During his years of exile, Bosch occupied himself as a teacher and writer, but was also an active participant in various revolutionary conspiracies against the several Caribbean dictators

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of that period. He thus became closely associated with the leaders of the "Democratic Left" in the Caribbean, notably with Jose Figueres, the former President of Costa Rica, Romulo Betancourt, now President of Venezuela, and Governor Munoz Marin of Puerto Rico.

4. Bosch's political attitudes are conditioned by this background of experience. It has prepared him to function as an eloquent protagonist, but not as an efficient administrator of public affairs or as a politician adept in the accommodation of various political interests. Bosch is a professed revolutionist against the traditional order in Caribbean society. He is also a professed democrat--but, as is the case with many new rulers in countries which have never known representative government, his concept of democracy is mass support for his one-man leadership. In the light of his own experience of Caribbean intrigue, he is not only deeply suspicious of any manifestation of political opposition, but even indisposed to share power with colleagues of any stature.

5. Bosch rightly considers that he has a popular mandate to bring about a radical transformation of political, economic, and social conditions in the Dominican Republic. In a free election held in December, 1962, he won 58 percent of the presidential vote, gaining a two-to-one advantage over his principal opponent, the relatively conservative Viriato Fiallo. His party, the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), won overwhelming control of the legislature (22 of 27 seats in the upper house and 49 of 74 seats in the lower house). Insofar as the electoral process confers authority, Bosch has a free hand to accomplish his purposes.

6. The principal accomplishment of Bosch's "hundred days" has been the formulation and promulgation of a new constitution. In keeping with

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Bosch's reformist purposes, the tenor of this document has been very disturbing to the traditionally privileged elements in Dominican society. The Church, for example, has been offended by omissions and provisions affecting the traditional relations of Church and State. Provisions of the original draft regarding proprietary rights and worker-management relations have been modified in such a way as to leave the specifics to future legislation, but the implication of an impending "syndicalist" development remains.

7. Bosch's most immediate socio-economic problems are agrarian reform and urban unemployment. With respect to the former, Bosch is fortunate in that he does not have to expropriate any present private landholdings in order to obtain lands for distribution to landless peasants. The already confiscated Trujillo properties include 60 percent of the country's arable land, as well as a large proportion of its industrial capacity. So far, however, very little of this land has been distributed. One reason is probably bureaucratic unpreparedness for the task. Another consideration may be that, with present high sugar prices, these national properties are making good profits, useful for financing other government undertakings; it may seem inexpedient to disrupt a going and profitable concern. A more impressive distribution of land will soon be necessary, however, in order to allay peasant impatience.

8. Bosch plans to relieve unemployment by means of a program of public works to be financed by a new line of credit (\$150 million) recently obtained from a consortium of US and European interests. These public works--chiefly highways and hydroelectric dams--are also intended to provide a base for further economic development.

9. In the longer view, Bosch hopes to accomplish social amelioration through economic development and a more equitable distribution of earnings. For such development he relies primarily on foreign private investment, considering US governmental aid too slow and ineffective. He hopes to attract private investment, not only by providing the necessary infrastructure through public works, but also by restoring the financial credit of the Dominican Republic. To the latter end, he has paid off existing foreign obligations and is seeking to balance the

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budget by the reduction of unessential expenditures and by the imposition of more effective and progressive taxation. However, his antagonistic attitude toward foreign corporations already established in the Dominican Republic (which he tends to identify with the old regime and with his present political opposition) and the measures he has adopted to secure for the workers greater benefits from the present high price for sugar may repel the new foreign private investment which he desires to attract.

10. Bosch's organized political support comes from the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano. The PRD was organized by Angel Miolan before Bosch's return from exile, at a time when political activity in the Dominican Republic was still a risky venture. Miolan is still the effective head of the party organization. His relations with Bosch are political, not personal. He is presently disgruntled by Bosch's denial of anticipated patronage. This denial is the result of Bosch's penchant for personal leadership, his distrust of any potential alternative leader, and his disinclination to accept political dependence on Miolan. The organizational development of the PRD is hindered by this attitude. The possibility of a disruptive clash between Bosch and Miolan is evident. Such a clash may occur at the party convention to be held in July.

Opposition on the Right

11. Bosch came late to the Dominican political scene. While he was safe in exile, other men, at the risk of their lives, endured the Trujillo tyranny, overthrew it, and made possible the free election which brought Bosch to power. Notable among them are Antonio Imbert and Luis Amiama, the only survivors of the group which assassinated Trujillo, and Viriato Fiallo, leader of the Union Civica Nacional (UCN), a liberal organization (conservative by comparison with Bosch) whose persistent pressure was instrumental in bringing about a democratic solution of the succession crisis. Such men naturally resent their own displacement and Bosch's authoritarian tendencies. Moreover, many of them are sincerely concerned about the political trend in the Dominican Republic.

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12. The more conservative elements in the Dominican Republic cannot effectively oppose Bosch by political means. Fiallo and the UCN were soundly defeated in the 1962 election. The grounds on which they criticize Bosch are not likely to enhance their popular appeal. Indeed, the UCN itself is apparently breaking up as the result of a policy dispute between its liberal and conservative wings which Fiallo has been unable to resolve. The only alternative focus of political opposition is the Partido Revolucionario Social Cristiano (PRSC). It is bitterly opposed to Bosch, but there is little to distinguish its program from his except its Catholic rather than secular inspiration. The PRSC got only 5 percent of the vote in the 1962 election, but might serve as a rallying point for popular as well as conservative opposition if Bosch should fail to satisfy popular demands for effective change.

13. The present danger to Bosch from the right resides in the fact that he does not have effective personal control over the armed forces and the national police. A military move to depose him might be instigated by disaffected civilians who see their vested interest threatened by his reformist programs, or by the personal ambition of a military leader. The principal deterrent to such a move is the well-known attitude of the US in support of the Bosch administration as the duly elected constitutional government.

14. For the present, Bosch appears to have an effective understanding with the military high command. He has pledged himself to respect their control of the armed forces (and their perquisites), and they in turn have engaged themselves to respect his constitutional position. However, neither party to this agreement can be fully confident of the other; the relationship is a wary and uneasy one. Bosch's tentative approach toward the development of a peasant militia (through the organization of unarmed "vigilantes" to prevent the burning of canefields) has stirred some military resentment and suspicion.

15. The national police are controlled by General Antonio Imbert, a national figure in his

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own right, but one who is mistrusted by most of the military. Before Bosch's inauguration, Imbert several times moved tentatively toward seizing power for himself and was dissuaded only by strenuous US representations. Bosch greatly fears Imbert's ambition, but dares not attempt to remove him.

16. There is currently under way a campaign to discredit Bosch by charging that he is himself a crypto-Communist engaged in establishing a Communist dictatorship, or else that his ineptitude will lead to a Communist seizure of power in the Dominican Republic. The recent concerted propagation of this theme suggests a deliberate effort to win US sanction for a military coup against Bosch. There is in fact no evidence that Bosch is a Communist--that charge is actually a matter of tenuous inference from the alternative charge that he is too tolerant, to which Bosch is indeed vulnerable. In the circumstances to be reviewed below, concern on this score is reasonable.

Bosch and the Communists

17. Present Communist strength in the Dominican Republic is not formidable. For the present at least, it is Bosch who holds the leadership of the popular revolutionary movement.

18. There are four Communist or quasi-Communist political organizations now operating in the Republic. They are: (1) the Partido Socialista Popular Dominicano (PSPD), the orthodox Communist party; (2) the Partido Nacionalista Revolucionario (PNR), a heterodox Communist party; (3) the Movimiento Popular Dominicano (MPD), a Communist-dominated pro-Castro party; and (4) the Agrupacion Politica Catorce de Junio (APCJ, or 14th of June), a Communist-infiltrated pro-Castro party. Of these, only the 14th of June group has legal status as a political party. All told, the four groups have about 4,000 active members concentrated chiefly in urban areas and among youth and student elements.

19. Since taking office, Bosch has permitted the return of about 100 Communist leaders and agitators

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expelled from the Dominican Republic by the interim Council of State--but it should be noted that even Fiallo was committed to permit this, as a restoration of civil liberties to all Dominicans. Notable among these returnees are Juan and Felix Ducoudray Mansfield, leaders of the orthodox Communist PSPD, and Maximo Lopez Molina, Communist chief of the pro-Castro MPD. Bosch has allowed these well-trained and dangerous men complete freedom of organizational and agitational activity--so long as their attacks are directed against the traditional social order and not against him.

20. Given this freedom of action, the Communists have been busily engaged in infiltrating labor organizations and (to a lesser extent) the bureaucracy, in stimulating popular demands for a prompt realization of anticipated benefits, and in recruiting, indoctrinating, and organizing new members. There is no effective government surveillance of these activities, but current rumors on the subject are almost certainly exaggerated.

21. Efforts to form a united front of all four Communist elements have so far been frustrated by the refusal of the 14th of June group to merge itself with the others. This refusal reflects the personal ambition of the 14th of June leader, Manuel Tavarez Justo, and the advantage which the group enjoys as a legal party with a larger membership than the other three combined and no public commitment to communism.

22. Confident of his own popular strength, Bosch sees no threat to his regime in Communist activity. He may consider that his tolerance demonstrates this strength and the democratic character of his rule. He probably welcomes any assistance in discrediting the traditional society and any potential support in resisting a possible military coup. His own explanation of his remarkable tolerance is that to crack down on present Communist activities would only precipitate urban terrorism and guerrilla resistance like that in Venezuela, to the great hindrance of his constructive program, the success of which will defeat the Communists. However, when some Communists recently

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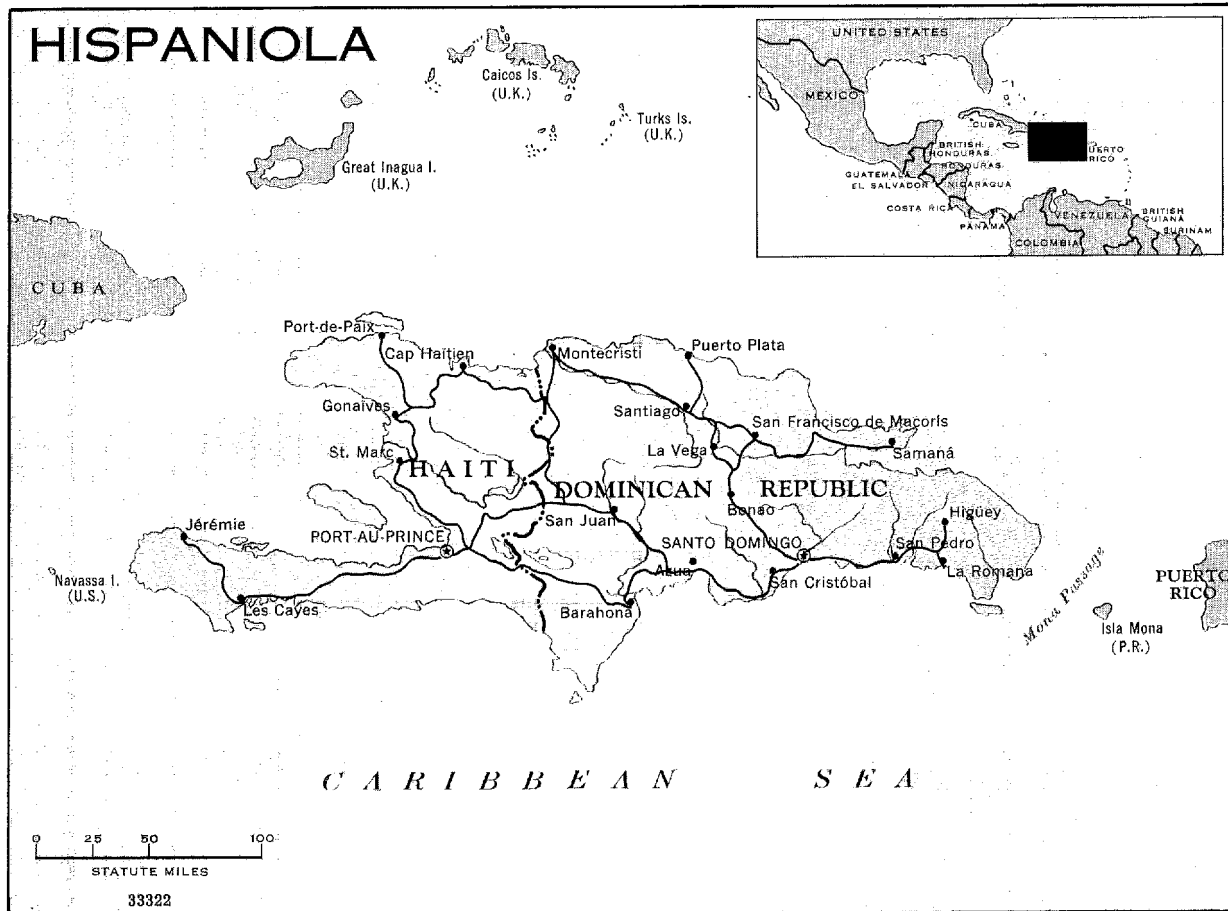
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ventured to call an illegal strike of government workers, Bosch's reaction was immediate and effective.

23. President Bosch understands that the security of his regime depends ultimately upon US support, particularly as a restraint upon the Dominican military--and that his tolerance of Communist activities is a sensitive issue. At the same time, he is nationalistic, egotistic, and aware of the political inexpediency of appearing to be a US puppet. Consequently, he is not readily amenable to US advice regarding his policy with respect to the Communists. Although he may accommodate to US demands in incidental matters, he is not likely to proscribe all Communist activities unless and until convinced that they are a direct and immediate threat to his regime.

24. The Communist danger in the Dominican Republic is not immediate, but potential. It is none the less serious. Given present freedom to organize and agitate, the Communists will become better prepared to exploit some future opportunity. There is at present no effective non-Communist political alternative to Bosch's personal leadership. If Bosch should fail to satisfy the expectations of the Dominican masses, or if he should be overthrown by a reactionary coup, the Communists would have an opportunity to seize the leadership of the popular revolutionary movement. This does not mean that they would directly come to power--the Dominican military have the will and ability to prevent that for the foreseeable future. It does mean that the Communists would have gained the advantage of identification with the popular side in a continuing class struggle.

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