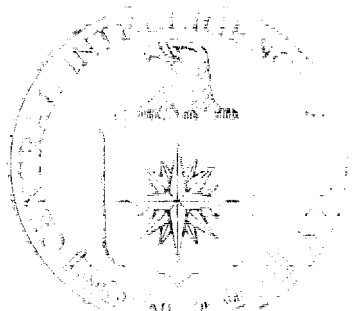


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29 August 1966

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AFTER THE
DEPARTURE OF THE IAPF

MORI pages 1-9 and 13-18

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

State Department review completed

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
29 August 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Dominican Republic After the Departure
of the IAPF

Summary

The withdrawal of the Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF) in late September will remove the primary element that has ensured Dominican stability during the past 16 months. Although there is presently no evidence that the IAPF's departure in itself will serve as the immediate trigger for a coup or insurgency, the chances for a confrontation between Balaguer and dissatisfied elements are likely to increase appreciably over the ensuing months.

Balaguer has not developed a political base strong enough to withstand severe reactions to his reforms, particularly those affecting right-wing military elements. He will have to balance carefully the opposing political forces if he is to implement his program without the backing of something like the IAPF. If the President succeeds in implementing those reforms through which he seeks to curb the power of right-wing military elements prior to the IAPF's departure--and then can make them stick--his chances for retaining power will be improved. It is by no means certain, however, that he can successfully negotiate this Dominican tightrope.

NOTE: This memorandum has been produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated with the Office of National Estimates.

1. The scheduled withdrawal of the Inter-American Peace Force in late September will remove the primary element that has ensured Dominican stability during the past 16 months. Without the IAPF, the civil war would have been protracted, a provisional government might not have been installed, Garcia Godoy would have been ousted by the military on one of at least three occasions, and recent elections could not have been held so successfully. The structure of Dominican political life has undergone little appreciable change since the end of Trujillo's era, and the latent forces that have promoted continual instability since that time can be expected to resume their "normal" role when the IAPF leaves. Thus, the chances that Balaguer's regime will survive for four years are not encouraging.

2. Despite this gloomy prospect, there is presently no firm indication that the IAPF's departure in itself will serve as the immediate trigger for a coup or insurgency. The US Embassy feels that conspiratorial plans are not yet beyond the talking stage. Over the ensuing months, however, the departure of the IAPF is likely to increase appreciably the chances for a confrontation between Balaguer and dissatisfied elements. There probably will be some upsurge in violence, as vendettas that were an outgrowth of the revolt are settled. Elements of both the extreme left and right may believe they can engage in terrorism and reprisal with less chance of being checked. There will remain the ever-present possibility that a dedicated band or individual will assassinate the President, which would upset any prospects for stability and reform. In addition, there is a distinct danger that elements in the military and other security services, who remain incapable of distinguishing the moderate non-Communist from the extremist, will overreact to leftist actions or engage in indiscriminate repression. This could in turn lead to a coalescence of the entire left.

3. Although Balaguer has gained a good measure of control over the government bureaucracy, has dominated the congress, sacked leftist judges, and

installed his own police chief, he has still failed to establish the firm, organized political base needed to ensure the stability of his regime. He has not only failed to build up his Reformist Party, but has even antagonized some followers by restricting patronage and by pursuing policies some regard as too liberal. Balaguer has not attempted to mobilize his rural political following to make its weight felt in Santo Domingo. Moreover, mutual suspicion exists between Balaguer and the non-Communist left, and the President is dependent on the tolerance of the military.

4. Balaguer seems conscious of this lack of a firm political footing and has commented that he must rely on his election mandate to provide a psychological impetus that will overcome discontent. So far, the magnitude of Balaguer's election victory and the resulting aura of legitimacy that surrounds him has provided the President with his strongest political asset. At present there is widespread popular reluctance to agitate or conspire against a government that many regard as the nation's last chance to establish a sane and sensible political system. Nevertheless, democratic political institutions and traditions are almost nonexistent, and continuation of Balaguer's broad public support is largely dependent on fulfillment of his sweeping campaign promises, particularly in the economic sphere. The public's fickleness was demonstrated by the apathy that greeted Bosch's ouster in 1963, barely nine months after he was elected by an even larger margin than that achieved by Balaguer.

5. The major factor determining the stability of the regime will be Balaguer's relations with the military. With the departure of the IAPF, the military will resume its traditional role as the arbiter of Dominican politics. Although no serious intrigue within the military has been reported so far, some officers probably are discontented. Balaguer's retention of an ambitious military aide, Colonel Nivar, has unsettled the military chiefs, who have indicated to the President that they fear Nivar is undercutting their authority. In turn, there is some suspicion that the President is carefully watching them to check on their loyalty. Balaguer's

failure to remove some of Garcia Godoy's top-level military appointees may have irritated conservative officers. Balaguer's austerity program has stirred some grumblings, and his failure to permit the honorable return of General Wessin has probably created disgruntlement among Wessin's former subordinates.

6. The most serious potential impediment to civil-military harmony, however, is Balaguer's determination to press ambitious military reforms designed primarily to consolidate his control over the armed forces and to curb the power of right-wing officers. The President wants to break up Wessin's old unit and shift air force ground combat troops to the army. Although Balaguer realizes that some risk is involved--as shown by his insistence that these reforms be implemented while the IAPF is still there--he may be underestimating it. If the President succeeds in implementing the reforms through which he seeks to curb the power of right-wing military elements prior to the IAPF's departure four weeks from now--and can make them stick--his chances for retaining power will be improved. No Dominican ruler since Trujillo has been able to impose his will on the military; those who have taken even tentative steps to do so, as did Reid in early 1965, soon faced the military's pronounced displeasure.

7. The apparently widespread relief within the military that Bosch was not elected will work to curb discontent for a while. In addition, the military will carefully eye foreign support for Balaguer. Nevertheless, the reaction to Balaguer's reform plans remains a major question. Some officers are bound to become restive as they see plans developed to cut back not only their numbers, privileges, and prerogatives, but also their power. This could lead to a split in the military that not only could upset the government but impair the military's capability to combat insurgency. The left would rapidly move to exploit any such division, as it did in April 1965.

8. Perennial right-wing plotters and power seekers such as Antonio Imbert and Rafael Bonnelly

are sure to fan military discontent. Balaguer suspects that they are already doing so and has identified the right as the major threat to stability. Some individuals who supported Balaguer's campaign, already disturbed by what they believe to be his liberalism and by his failure to suppress the left, may join such plotting. Conspiratorial ranks could be swelled if Balaguer presses policies designed to implement his sweeping campaign and inaugural promises to curb the wealth and privileges of upper-class businessmen and landholders.

9. Despite protestations of the non-Communist left that the survival of the government serves its interests, it is not likely to give Balaguer its active backing in any confrontation he may have with the military and the right. Indeed, Bosch, who has been talking about a trip to Europe, recently told Ambassador Crimmins that he preferred to be out of the country during what he thinks is a looming crisis. Although he cannot count on the active support of non-Communist leftists, Balaguer, if he handles himself deftly, will probably avoid their open hostility. The President, however, is suspicious of the intentions of Bosch and his cohorts, and appears to fear that they too are engaged in plotting against him. The recent draft law curtailing some political activity seems designed at least in part to warn Bosch's party against opposition for opposition's sake. Its heavy-handed implementation could easily antagonize the left.

10. Communists and other extreme leftists have frequently hinted darkly that an outbreak of insurgency will occur once the IAPF leaves. So far, however, there is no firm indication that they have plans for this. The three Communist parties are split by internal feuds of varying intensity--the pro-Peking Dominican Popular Movement is so badly divided as to be almost ineffective--and have not united on a common strategy. Although the mystique of guerrilla warfare still entrances many extremists, the Dominican military will be able to contain and probably eliminate any rural insurgency, since the extremists are unlikely to receive peasant support.

Extremists, however, retain their weapons and can easily disrupt Santo Domingo. Nonetheless, in order to become a serious threat to governmental stability, the extremists must recruit non-Communist support by seizing on latent popular discontent.

11. The IAPF's departure will probably add to the unease of businessmen and investors, on whom Balaguer is counting heavily to stimulate the economy and ease the balance of payments problem. Moreover, outbursts of unrest and violence would impede implementation of badly needed government programs to increase employment. This in turn could lead to a gradual dissipation of support from those Balaguer partisans who have high expectations of his ability to improve their lot.

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26 August 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Current Intelligence
FROM : Chief, Western Hemisphere Area
SUBJECT : Talking Paper To Accompany the Proposed
DDI Memorandum on The Dominican Republic

1. This memorandum was requested by the Acting Chief WH/DDP and focuses on what we expect to happen in the Dominican Republic when the IAPF leaves in late September. The memorandum points out our concern that Balaguer will have difficulty surviving his four year term, and that a crisis could develop between Balaguer and disaffected Dominican elements during the months following the IAPF's departure.

2. This memorandum was carefully coordinated with DDP/WH and with ONE.

3. I recommend that this paper be published as a DDI memorandum and receive Category A elite dissemination.

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26 August 1966

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Dominican Republic After the Departure of the IAPF

Summary

The withdrawal of the Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF) in late September will remove the primary element that has ensured Dominican stability during the past 16 months. Although there is presently no evidence that the IAPF's departure in itself will serve as the immediate trigger for a coup or insurgency, the chances for a confrontation between Balaguer and dissatisfied elements are likely to increase appreciably over the ensuing months.

Balaguer has not developed a political base strong enough to withstand severe reactions to his reforms, particularly those affecting right-wing military elements. He will have to balance carefully the opposing political forces if he is to implement his program without the backing of something like the IAPF. If the President succeeds in implementing those reforms through which he seeks to curb the power of right-wing military elements prior to the IAPF's departure--and then can make them stick--his chances for retaining power will be improved. It is by no means certain, however, that he can successfully negotiate this Dominican tightrope.

1. The scheduled withdrawal of the Inter-American Peace Force in late September will remove the primary element that has ensured Dominican stability during the past 16 months. Without the IAPF, the civil war would have been protracted, a provisional government might not have been installed, Garcia Godoy would have been ousted by the military on one of at least three occasions, and recent elections could not have

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2. Despite this gloomy prospect, there is presently no firm indication that the IAPF's departure in itself will serve as the immediate trigger for a coup or insurgency. The US Embassy feels that conspiratorial plans are not yet beyond the talking stage. Over the ensuing months, however, the departure of the IAPF is likely to increase appreciably the chances for a confrontation between Balaguer and dissatisfied elements. There probably will be some upsurge in violence, as vendettas that were an outgrowth of the revolt are settled. Elements of both the extreme left and right may believe they can engage in terrorism and reprisal with less chance of being checked. There will remain the ever-present possibility that a dedicated band or individual will assassinate the President, which would upset any prospects for stability and reform. In addition, there is a distinct danger that elements in the military and other security services, who remain incapable of distinguishing the moderate non-Communist from the extremist, will overreact to leftist actions or engage in indiscriminate repression. This could in turn lead to a coalescence of the entire left.

3. Although Balaguer has gained a good measure of control over the government bureaucracy, has dominated the congress, sacked leftist judges, and installed his own police chief, he has still failed to establish the firm, organized political base needed to ensure the stability of his regime. He has not only failed to build up his Reformist Party, but has even antagonized some followers by restricting patronage and by pursuing policies some regard as too liberal.

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