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22 October 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Intelligence Officer for Latin America  
 Chief, Latin America Division, OPA/NFAC  
 Chief, Latin America Division, DDO

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: White House Meeting [REDACTED]

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1. Want to let you know I much appreciated the fine preparatory work for the meeting on the Situation in the Caribbean and Central America. The way it developed, Bowdler and Habib were given the first opportunity to make remarks, and they took a full half-hour to do so. (The meeting was billed for 30 minutes.) The combination of what they had already said and the time that had elapsed made me feel that I should compress my prepared remarks. [REDACTED]

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2. Immediately after these two presentations, and before Secretary Vance, who was directing the meeting, could call on me as he had indicated he planned to do, the discussion got going on how far Manley has gone. Most of the people were taking a much more sanguine view of Manley's position and intentions than we do. In due course I was able to interject the substance of our views on Manley. Perhaps I made them a little stronger than we would all agree on. In part I felt some balance was needed here. Essentially I simply stated that Manley didn't seem to have any real hope of correcting the economic problems and that he had lost his political base and consequently appeared to be turning to the radical left in Cuban/Soviet advisors. I relied then on four or five excerpts [REDACTED] of Soviet/Cuban involvement with Manley and his people to illustrate how deeply in he was. [REDACTED]

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3. While I had the floor I also felt that a less optimistic view than had been presented by Bowdler on El Salvador was warranted. I presented the case that we were all pleased by what had happened but that

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it only bought some time. I further pointed out that there was only a 50-50 chance that there would not be a civil war within the next year. (One paper I had said it was 40-60 and the other 60-40, so I split the difference!) I added that if civil war was to be avoided there would have to be strong leadership developed in the new junta. We didn't know if that was likely but it might be; that there would have to be external support for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, including training and weapons and that the junta would have to co-opt some of the moderate left as well as not antagonize the conservative right. [Redacted]

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4. Overall, I didn't give the full presentation we had anticipated but I believe we made a very useful contribution in, hopefully, putting some of the issues into a different perspective than was emerging. [Redacted]

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