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Validity Study of NIE 80-54:

The Caribbean Republics,

published 24 August 1954

1. NIE 80-54 raised the question as to whether existing regimes could bring themselves to promote sufficient social and economic progress to maintain a modicum of stability in the area or whether static repression would lead to an eventual violent explosion. Since 1954 developments have been along the line of the first alternative, although, as predicted, there has been no substantial improvement in basic conditions. The Communists in the area have tended to play the game more cautiously than prognosticated in NIE 80-54.

2. NIE 80-54 estimated that Somoza and Perez Jiminez were unlikely to become reconciled to the continued existence of the Figueres regime in Costa Rica, and identified this antagonism as the greatest present threat to stability and order in the region. It did not specifically predict the filibustering attack on Costa Rica early in 1955, with their covert support, or Perez Jiminez' subsequent withdrawal from Central American affairs. Neither did it predict the improvement in Costa Rican-Nicaraguan relations subsequent to the assassination of President Somoza of Nicaragua. NIE 80-54 pointed up the instability in Honduras which eventually led to the fall of the government, but it did not anticipate the collapse of the Magloire regime in Haiti. The 1954 estimate did not foresee the transfer of the target of non-Communist subversive activity from the Central American region to Cuba. Perhaps one reason for this failure was the degree of confidence with which the political fortunes of Batista were viewed at that time.

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