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COUNTRY Ecuador

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SUBJECT Disaffection in the Armed Forces of Ecuador

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The following information on the armed forces of Ecuador was revealed to Vice President Sotomayor y Luna during a tour he made from 20-27 December 1948 through the coastal and southern regions of Ecuador.

1. Sub-Lieutenants Piedra and Rodriguez of the Carchi Infantry Battalion located at Arenillas reported that they and others among the 400 officers and men of the battalion have received very tempting offers from persons visiting their station to engage in a movement against the present government of Ecuador. They stated that most of the officers, with the exception of Major Jorge E. Rocha, Captain Edgar de la Torre, and themselves, have agreed to join the movement. They were of the opinion that a greater part of the troops had also fallen in with the plan.
2. The agitators for this movement told the two sub-lieutenants the following:
  - a. The opposition group is headed by a triumvirate made up of Dr. Carlos Guevara Moreno, Dr. Jose Vicente Trujillo, and Colonel Carlos Mancheno.
  - b. Lieutenant Colonel Cesar Alfaro (at present Deputy Chief of Staff) will assume command of the Army if the coup is successful.
  - c. Three-fourths of the Army are behind the movement.
  - d. The Guardia Civil along the coast was in favor of the movement whereas the Navy was cool to the proposition, and the Air Force pilots nonreceptive.
  - e. The enlisted personnel at the Guayaquil and Salinas bases were said to be very much in favor of the idea.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Comment. When the President of Ecuador received the report of the two sub-lieutenants, he ordered that they be sent to Quito for further questioning by him.)

3. The Commander of the Anti-Aircraft Battery (20 mm.) at Santa Rosa, Captain Baquero, stated confidentially that he was very much disturbed over the conspiring against the government which was going on within his command. He said that the conditions under which his personnel had to live were a most influential

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factor in their support of the conspiracy. Not only the enlisted personnel, but also the officers were said to be involved. Captain Baquero displayed letters which had been sent to his soldiers and officers from various politicians in Guayaquil. These letters asked that the addressees work quietly to recruit followers for the movement since it would be a class movement directed against the higher social levels.

4. The Governor of El Oro reported that the civil authorities felt that the situation was already lost in view of the large numbers of supporters gained by the movement in the coastal provinces and the failure of the government to take the appropriate measures necessary to halt this opposition.
5. Information was submitted to the Vice President which proved the fact that Captain Montano, commander of a tank detachment which was ordered to Guayaquil to take care of any public disorders (of. [REDACTED]), is pro-Manchano and a member of the resistance movement. Montano has stated that he was collaborating with Colonel Manchano and that the only thing holding up the coup at the moment was the matter of getting the various elements to pull together. Montano stated that there was a civilian commission in Quito which was trying to obtain pledges from the Sierra units to join the coastal units in order to be assured of final success. Major Jorge Cortaire was pointed out as one of the coordinators in the Sierra. Montano added further that he and a group of officers had written Manchano assuring him of their continued support and received in a reply a letter of thanks. Manchano wrote that he was ready to do what he could to vindicate the honor of the Mechanized Group (Tank Corps), many members of which had so gallantly died in August and September 1947 that he might remain President of Ecuador. Manchano requested that no further communication be sent to him direct as he was being watched. He suggested that messages should be sent to his brother-in-law, Jaime Jarrin.

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