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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Ecuador

DATE DISTR. 7 APR 1949

SUBJECT Popularity of Carlos Mancheno

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

1. Colonel Carlos Mancheno, military dictator of Ecuador in 1947, was elected President of the Liberal Party Council in Quito on 7 March 1949. This election, which culminated weeks of clandestine meetings between certain Liberal Party leaders and military officers, is expected to touch off a vociferous opposition from those Liberals who interpret the move as a preparatory step to returning Mancheno to power.
2. Mancheno's popularity and prestige among his former troops are daily becoming greater,* so much so that the transfer of the Yaguachi Cavalry Group from Riobamba to Quito has been delayed because of the mounting evidence of support for Mancheno among this Group. On one occasion this loyalty was shown when the remarks of a Captain Wagner Holguin, who called a group of cavalymen traitors for supporting Mancheno, served only to provoke "vivas" for the ex-dictator.
3. Although unconfirmed to date, it has been reported that Vice President Manuel Sotomayor y Luna stated confidentially that the Minister of Foreign Relations, Nefalli Ponce, felt certain that money was coming into Ecuador via the Argentine Embassy to finance a pro-Mancheno revolution. Mancheno's son, who has been studying in Argentina on a scholarship, has recently returned to Quito and is believed to have brought back pertinent information for his father.
4. Dr. Moreno Espinoza, pro-Mancheno Liberal leader, stated confidently that, should a special session of the National Congress be called, as has been rumored, it would more than likely declare President Calo Plaza Lasso incompetent and remove him from office. Espinoza further stated that there was a strong likelihood that a military dictator would soon take over if the present economic crisis did not improve. This statement was echoed by several responsible members of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ecuador who very much resented the announcement by the Minister of Defense, Manuel Diaz Granados, that Army personnel would be used for agricultural work and road building. These men said they would take over the government rather than see military men employed as com on laborers.

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