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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC-7122-80
28 October 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: Latin America

1. Action Requested: none; for your information only.
2. Jamaica

Political violence is rising sharply as the 30 October election approaches, and rumors persist of last-minute radical efforts, with Cuban assistance, to derail or "steal" the election. Nonetheless, the odds strongly favor the election taking place as scheduled. And we still see the opposition JLP as the winner--probably by a comfortable majority of seats.

Political violence is almost certain to continue for some time after the election, with revenge-taking by the rival gangs the immediate driving force. This might encourage the radicals to try to keep Seaga from taking office (he would become Prime Minister immediately after winning the election). Only if the election is close and the bloodletting widespread would any such plot have much chance of working. Even then, JLP stalwarts, now with the open cooperation of the security forces, would very likely prevail. The Cubans would probably lend some assistance to the radicals in the post-election period, but would be unlikely to intervene directly or on a large scale.

3. El Salvador

The leftist extremists are being weakened by casualties, defections, and factionalism. Factionalism continues within the government as well, and far-right military and civilian groups may see the immediate post-election period in the US as a good opportunity for a coup attempt or for

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an indirect move for pressuring the government toward more decisive control by hardliners. Moreover, government forces are also taking heavy casualties, and the junta is extremely vulnerable to the extremists' campaign of sabotage against the harvests in particular and the economy in general.

If the present junta survives this assault, and if its rightist supporters do not move against it, the odds are good that it will hold on to office for at least the next several months. The chances of it increasing its popular and political support and consolidating its rule decisively, however, still seem small. It still desperately needs foreign assistance for the long haul, and still suffers from a highly unfavorable international image.

4. Nicaragua

The Sandinistas are facing mounting problems and are increasingly vulnerable to organized and "spontaneous" popular challenges to their policies. Here, too, the immediate post-election period in the US may be seen by the Sandinistas (and the Cubans) as a good opportunity for installing more openly dictatorial practices. If Governor Reagan is elected, and in anticipation of increased strains with the US, the Sandinistas may be especially motivated to move in this direction.

5. Cooperation Among Rightist Governments

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Again, if Governor Reagan wins the election, rightist Latin American governments may conclude that they have more leeway to move not only against leftist extremists but against "suspect" centrist political groups as well.



Jack Davis

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