

9. Rioting in Venezuela

The three days of rioting in Caracas, which continued late on 27 November, were touched off by an illegal strike of Caracas telephone workers on 25 November. The strike itself was reportedly settled less than 24 hours after it began, but students and other pro-Castro opposition elements joined the agitation of the strikers and continued rioting, possibly with the organizational assistance of a dangerous Cuban student agitator who had been scheduled to arrive in Caracas on 22 November.

The union of telephone workers is reportedly controlled by the Democratic Republican Union (URD), the leftist pro-Castro party which withdrew from the three-party coalition government on 17 November and was

omitted from President Betancourt's reorganized cabinet on 21 November. The URD has been demanding a leftist reorientation of the Betancourt regime, and may be expected to continue agitation against the government.

The army and the government security forces, however, appear to be actively supporting the regime, and no widespread turmoil has been reported outside the capital. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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