



TURMOIL IN BOLIVIA

The military leaders who overthrew President Paz Estenssoro on 4 November have not yet formed a government although radiobroadcasts continually refer to a military junta. General Alfredo Ovando Candia, the commander in chief of the Bolivian armed forces, supposedly heads the "junta." General Hugo Suarez Guzman, the commanding general of the army, has announced that he will be a member of the junta, but his status is unclear.

Vice President Barrientos, the key figure in the ouster of Paz, was scheduled to confer with Ovando on 5 November regarding the form of government to be established.



The military revolt was triggered by the mutiny of a por-



41105 Paz Estenssoro Gen. Barrientos

tion of the Ingavi Regiment, a security detachment of the army general staff, in La Paz on the morning of 3 November. Both Ovando and Suarez were held briefly by the mutineers. It is unclear whether Barrientos was directly connected with the La Paz uprising; he claims he had nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, he announced his support of the rebels. Other military units, most opposition political parties, and the miners joined the rebellion as the day progressed. Paz resigned on 4 November when it became evident that a civil war would ensue if he attempted to remain in power. He left for Lima, Peru.

The absence of any effective government, with resultant violence and chaos, provides an opportunity for Communists and other extremist elements to exert their influence in the formation of a new government. Extreme leftist Juan Lechin, ex - vice president and head of the National Leftist Revolutionary Party (PRIN) has already tried to force his participation in the junta. He appears to have failed, but his attitude can be expected to influence those who will organize an interim government. Communist inroads can be controlled only if the new government quickly imposes strong military rule.

The nation's tin miners, who are under Communist and

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FEB

Page 199

extreme leftist leadership for the most part, are also a force to be reckoned with. The mine leaders announced on 4 November that they will fight the army if necessary unless permitted an important role in the government.

Maintaining law and order is the most pressing problem presently facing the army leaders. Sacking of government offices and looting have continued,

and the army has been ineffective in controlling the situation.

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