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Intelligence**

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Latin America Review (U)

9 February 1990

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Jamaica: Communists Working To Moderate Image [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Leaders of the Communist Worker's Party of Jamaica are reacting to recent developments in the USSR and Eastern Europe by trying to take a more moderate course and broaden the party's popular appeal.

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Briefs

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Jamaica: Communists Working To Moderate Image [redacted]

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(b)(1) Leaders of the Communist Worker's Party of Jamaica (WPJ) are reacting to shifting political and ideological realignments in Eastern Europe and the USSR by trying to steer the party toward a more moderate course and broaden its popular appeal. [redacted]

(b)(3) [redacted] although WPJ General Secretary Trevor Munroe, who founded the party in late 1978, remains a committed Marxist, the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and his party's failure to attract significant support have forced him to reconsider his strategy. [redacted]

(b)(1) [redacted] the WPJ, which has a membership of only some 1,000 and an additional 2,500 sympathizers among labor and student groups, realizes it must open its membership to non-Communists and expand its support base to compensate for almost certain cutbacks in the already minimal financial assistance provided by Moscow and Havana. According to press reports, the WPJ scrapped its constitution and dogmatic program at a recent party congress. [redacted]

(b)(3) an interim party executive has been tasked to prepare a wide-ranging political platform incorporating a mix of socialism and private enterprise for ratification by the party rank and file in early 1991. [redacted]

The WPJ leadership's new strategy is geared toward establishing the party as a credible challenger to the ruling People's National Party (PNP) and opposition Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) in the next national election,

which must be called by 1994. [redacted]

[redacted] WPJ leaders calculate that their program will appeal to the large number of voters who are weary of continued economic austerity and fed up with the inept performances of the PNP and JLP. Munroe reportedly expects that his party will capture enough seats in parliament to give it control over swing votes and, therefore, greater leverage on key issues. [redacted]

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We believe that a variety of problems probably will handicap Munroe's efforts to move the WPJ into the political mainstream. Munroe's autocratic style has alienated many of his core supporters—it spawned party infighting in 1988—and his longstanding commitment to Marxist dogma may repel many Jamaicans. [redacted] although Munroe has won over some malcontented PNP and JLP members, he will be hard-pressed to smooth over potentially debilitating political and personal rivalries that are certain to arise as he reorients the party. Furthermore, many Jamaicans who might opt to support the WPJ in the near term out of frustration with the traditional parties eventually may return to their home parties, particularly if economic conditions improve or the PNP and JLP become more responsive to the needs of their constituents.

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