MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Student Disturbances in Mexico City

Since last Friday Mexico City has been the scene of almost constant student turmoil. The difficulty started when an authorized rally to celebrate the Cuban July 26 anniversary degenerated into vandalism and arson. The police intervened and had to use tough tactics against student participants to bring the situation under control.

The action against the students triggered increasingly violent confrontations between students and security forces in successive days, particularly on Monday and yesterday. The government had to bring in the riot police backed up by paratroopers to restore order.

We do not have an accurate picture of the number killed, injured and arrested. Unconfirmed reports claim four students are dead.

A cable from the Embassy this morning (copy attached) reports a claim by Mexican authorities that the Mexican Communist Party, with Soviet Embassy complicity, engineered the July 26 disturbance. The Embassy does not have independent information to back up this claim, but considers that Moscow may have ordered the militant tactics to counter the impact of events in Czechoslovakia.

There is no reason to think that Mexican security forces cannot control the situation. Events have not reached a point where President Diaz Ordaz has considered it necessary to stop his tour of the interior to return to the capital. What does worry Mexican officials is the image projected by the disturbances and the impact on the Olympics in which they have so heavily invested.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NH 95-188
By MARA, Date 10-2-75

Attachment

Mexico Embassy's message of July 30 (no. 6234).
SECRET

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HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS SIGNAL FOR STRONGER TACTICS BY PCM. FACT THAT CUBAN AMBASSADOR WENT TO MERIDA INSTEAD OF STAYING IN CAPITAL FOR JULY 26 FIESTA SUGGESTS HE MAY HAVE KNOWN WHAT WAS COMING THOUGH HE WANTED TO AVOID ANY SUGGESTION OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT.

4. WHILE SEEKING TO AVOID DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, SOVIETS MAY BELIEVE THAT MEXICAN ANXIETY TO AVOID ANY DIPLOMATIC CONTRETEMPS WITH COMMUNIST WORLD AS OLYMPICS NEAR GIVES SOVIET EMBASSY MORE ROOM FOR SUBVERSIVE MANEUVER. HOWEVER, THEY KNOW THEY RISK STRONG GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN ON PCM'S STATEMENT BY MEXICAN POLICE CHIEF WHO LINKED RECENT RIOTS WITH OLYMPICS. BOUND TO RECALL TO PCM AND MOSCOW PRESIDENT'S WARNING ON MAY 7 IN TALK WITH PCM POLTIBURO THAT GOVERNMENT WILL CRACK DOWN HARD IF PCM FORMENTS DISORDER IN NEXT FEW MONTHS. BUT PCM USED TO CRACKDOWNS AND MOSCOW MAY BE PROCEEDING BY LENIN'S OLD INJUNCTION "BETTER FEWER BUT BETTER."

5. DEPT MAY WISH TO PASS MOSCOW.

FREEMAN
SECRET 673

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ACTION ARA 16
INFO NSCE 00, CIAE 00, DODC 00, GPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSC 10, P 04,
RSC 01, SP 02, SS 20, USIA 12, NSA 02, SAH 02, EUR 15, NIC 01, CU 04,
RSR 01, 1/106 W

R 301900Z JUL 68
FM AMBASSADOT MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7106

SECRET MEXICO 6234

PASS TO WHITE HOUSE

1. MEXICAN GOV'T HAS SOLID EVIDENCE CORROBORATING
   PUBLIC CHARGES OF MEXICO CITY POLICE CHIEF THAT COMMUNIST PARTY
   ENGINEERED JULY 26 STUDENT FRACAS. GOV'T EVIDENCE ALSO INCLUDES
   INDICATIONS OF SOVIET EMBASSY COMPLICITY (INCLUDING TAUNT BY A
   PCM OFFICIAL THAT SECURITY POLICE WOULD FIND 'NO IMPORTANT
   DOCUMENTS SINCE THEY WERE ALL IN SOVIET EMBASSY.')

2. MEXICANS OFTEN BLAME FOREIGN ELEMENTS FOR SUCH INCIDENTS
   AND PCM LATELY HAS STRESSED ITS DESIRE TO PURSUE LEGAL MEANS
   BUT EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT STRONG POSSIBILITY EXISTS MOSCOW
   HAS ORDERED PCM TO ADOPT MORE MILITANT TACTICS. ONE MOTIVE
   MAY BE SOVIET DESIRE TO COUNTER IMPACT ON PCM OF CZECH EVENTS;
   PCM PAPER 'LA VOZ DE MEXICO' AFTER INITIALLY CARRYING FAVORABLE
   ARTICLES ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA COMPLETELY SILENT ON EVENTS IN LAST
   FEW WEEKS LINKED TO THIS MAY BE DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN
   INTERNATIONAL DISCIPLINE OF PCM AS ALSO SUGGESTED BY REFURBISHING
   AND MORE PROMPT PUBLICATION BY PCM OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST
   JOURNAL REVISTA INTERNACIONAL.

3. MOSCOW AND PCM MAY BE SEEKING TO TAKE PLAY AWAY FROM
   PRO-CUBAN EXTREMISTS THOUGH ELEMENTS OF COMPPLICITY ALSO SEEM
   PRESENT. PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-CUBAN STUDENT ELEMENTS JOINED
   IN JULY 26 CELEBRATION OF CUBAN ANNIVERSARY. REVISTA INTER-
   NACIONAL APRIL ISSUE CONTAINING ARTICLE TAKING MORE FRIENDLY
   ATTITUDE TO CUBAN TACTICS HAS JUST BEEN ISSUED HERE AND MAY