

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

Wednesday - July 31, 1968 - 3:30 p.m.

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

rec'd 8:30 P

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.

WGB
William G. Bowdler

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 95-188By *sig*, NARA, Date 10-2-95

Attachment



Department of State

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TELEGRAM
4

~~SECRET~~ 673

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SUMMARY

87-5
ACTION ARA 16

INFO NSCE 00, CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPH 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, EU 04,
RSR 01, /106 W

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

SANITIZED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 95-120

By cap, NARA, Date 10-4-95

~~SECRET~~ MEXICO 6234

PASS TO WHITE HOUSE

1. MEXICAN GOVT HAS SOLID EVIDENCE CORROBORATING PUBLIC CHARGES OF MEXICO CITY POLICE CHIEF THAT COMMUNIST PARTY ENGINEERED JULY 26 STUDENT FRACAS. GOVT 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 COMPLICITY ALSO SEEM PRESENT. PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-CUBAN STUDENT ELEMENTS JOINED IN JULY 26 CELEBRATION OF CUBAN ANNIVERSARY. REVISTA INTERNACIONAL APRIL ISSUE CONTAINING ARTICLE TAKING MORE FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TO CUBAN TACTICS HAS JUST BEEN ISSUED HERE AND MAY



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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. 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 POLITBURO 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~~