

Secret Order

FBI Sent to Probe Dominican Rebels

Johnson Policy Switch

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Washington

President Johnson has ordered a team of FBI agents into the Dominican Republic to investigate the extent and nature of Communist influence in the civil war there.

Details about the FBI's activities in the Dominican Republic are being kept strictly secret. In fact, White House spokesmen denied yesterday that the FBI had been brought into the Dominican situation.

However, it is known that the President personally contacted FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover last week and ordered him to undertake the investigation.

NUMBER

The number of FBI agents involved in the investigation and whether any of them have yet gone to Santo Domingo is still unknown.

Mr. Johnson's decision to bring the FBI into the situation represents a departure from the policy followed by every American president since the immediate post World War II period.

At that time, the FBI was assigned primary responsibility for countering subversion and espionage activities within the United States. Responsibility for evaluating and

dealing with subversive activities in other countries became the general province of the Central Intelligence Agency.

CIA

From time to time, the FBI has been known to extend its activities abroad. But in general, the rule has been that the FBI concentrates on domestic security while the CIA handles overseas operations.

Until now, this has been the case in the Dominican Republic. The Administration's decision in the early days of the revolt that the rebel forces were in danger of a Communist takeover was based in large measure on evidence gathered by the CIA.

The adequacy of this evidence has since become a matter of considerable controversy.

SOURCE

In the meantime, however, the CIA has continued to be the chief source of intelligence on which U.S. policy decisions in the Dominican situation have been based.

The reasons why Mr. Johnson now has decided to have the FBI go over what appears to be essentially the same ground are not clear.

Despite the charges of inaccuracy and inadequacy that have been brought against the CIA evidence, administration officials are known to feel that the CIA estimates were substantially correct and a proper basis for U.S. actions.

Two general theories have been advanced to explain the President's decision to call on the FBI.

One holds that an FBI investigation would reach the same conclusions as the CIA regarding past Communist involvement with the rebel forces. This would give the

Administration additional ammunition to answer those critics who have charged it with intervening precipitously in the Dominican fighting.

The other theory is that Mr. Johnson wants an additional check of those Dominicans who appear to be possible candidates for spots in the coalition government that the United States is trying to bring about.

HEDGE

This would constitute a hedge against possible criticism from domestic conservatives who would prefer to see the U.S. back a rightist, avowedly anti-Communist government rather than one encompassing leftist and center political groups.

Since the FBI's opinions about communism carry great weight among Congressmen and other Americans of this sort, Mr. Johnson's hand in backing a coalition government would be greatly strengthened if its members had what amounted to an FBI security clearance.

Echoes of precisely such congressional apprehension about the Communist threat were contained in speeches made yesterday by two Senators.

'APPREHENSIONS'

Senator Frank J. Lausche (Dem-Ohio) said he has "grave apprehensions" that the coalition government under consideration "will be found on the side of communism." Saying he believed that the former Dominican government of Juan Bosch had been infiltrated by Communists before it was overthrown in 1963, Lausche warned that "we cannot have another Communist government at our southern shores."