

AN

AN 1585

14 APR 1948

1948

PANAMA, COSTA RICA

Registry Number AN 585/441/32

TELEGRAM FROM

Mr. Sullivan
No. San José

Dated 24.
Received 12 April.
in Registry 14

Insurrection in Costa Rica

Ref San José Tel 23 (AN 511/441/32).
Reports increase in military action.
Opposition Rouse captured Port Simon.
Refighting near San José. Increased
newsmongers among responsible
people is noticeable.

Last Paper.

AN 575. ✓

(Minutes.)

A). Press Cuttings dated 14th April.

It is to be hoped that the
intervention by the diplomatic corps will be
successful, but we have had no
further news from San José. Meanwhile,
Mr. Sullivan has asked for no specific
instructions and will presumably take
all necessary steps to safeguard
British interests.

The extent of communist
participation in the ~~street~~ fighting is
uncertain; the press apparently thinks
it is on the Govt. side, but we
had previously been led to believe
that any Soviet influence was being
exercised through Pres. Arcevalo of
Guatemala, who is reported to
be assisting the rebels.

C. n. Dept. are preparing a
Short

11-app.
auth.
has d.
then to
now as
as local

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

8) Mr. Ingleton EPI
(see memo)
Apr. 14th

(Action
completed.)

(Index.)

Next Paper. ✓

AN 1603

note on the resolution for the Dominican
Growth.

As regards recognition, if the revolution
succeeds, I imagine we shd. be
quite willing to accept Ulate immediately.
He won the election without, as far
as we know, any unduly dishonest
tactics and is the accepted leader
of the opposition, enjoying the prestige
which goes with that position.

/ agree

J. Jackson 14/4.

S.A. Dept. 12/4
C.L. Dept. 12/4
Consul Dept. 12/4
W.A. Dept. 12/4
Northern Dept. 12/4

This is the previous tel has been
given Political distribution.
The Costa Rican situation is
indeed confused. Press reports, no
doubt influenced by the alleged
Communist responsibility for the
recent disturbances in Colombia
are making much of the
Communist participation in the
Costa Rican disorders. The
alleged "commandos" in Costa
Rica are the "Vanguardia
Popular", a fellow-travelling
left-wing party led by Manuel
Nora who are on the left of
the present Govt. They
cannot, I think, be
described as genuine Communists
/ particularly

Minutes.

particularly as,
 according to previous
 reports from San Jose,
 they are to some extent
 pro-Catholic. Furthermore
 the port forces are being
 assisted by Nicaragua,
 whose ^{support} is under the
 direction General Somoza
 is rapidly anti-
 communist. While the
 insurgents are being
 supplied with arms
 by Guatemala, whose
 present Govt is strongly
 suspected of communist
 sympathies. This
 affair seems to be
 a typical Latin
 American political
 far-far-all.

P. Liphers
 8/14/4.

DD. 15/4.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

Minutes

DAILY TELEGRAPH.

Cutting dated 14 APR 1948 194

DIPLOMATS INTERVENE IN COSTA RICA CIVIL WAR

FORCES NEAR CAPITAL AFTER DEFEAT OF COMMUNISTS

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT
WASHINGTON, Tuesday.

Foreign diplomats in San Jose, capital of Costa Rica, to-night intervened in an attempt to stop the civil war which has been raging since March 12.

They asked the opposing commanders for a cease-fire order as a preliminary to negotiations. A message from the capital, however, states that their appeal failed.


Earlier, Señor Bonia, Costa Rican Acting Foreign Minister, had appealed to the Diplomatic Corps to take over the capital, which was considered likely to fall to anti-Government forces.

The crisis following the Communist-directed riots in Colombia, had drawn the attention of the State Department here. Civil war broke out as the result of a disputed Presidential election.

Señor Rafael Calderon, the Government candidate, representative of the National Republican party, was defeated by the Opposition candidate, Señor Otilio Ulate, representing a coalition called the National Union.

On the night of the election, Feb. 8, Señor Calderon conceded his defeat, but the Communist leaders insisted that the Government party should challenge the voting on the contention of fraud.

Efforts to nullify the election and find a compromise candidate took place amid growing disorder. A month ago Opposition groups, fearing that they would be robbed of their



victory, moved down from the mountains towards San Jose, the capital.

The Government party accepted the aid of organised Communists and provided them with arms. The Communists' objective appears to have been to aid the Government, defeat the Opposition and claim a strategic Cabinet post as a reward.

Latest reports, however, indicate that the Government troops are being defeated.

Cartago, the second largest city, has been captured after heavy fighting. Communists and Calderon factions have sent out appeals to all trade unionists to rally to their support. Communists have seized the telephone headquarters in San Jose.

United States officials scarcely hide their hope that the legally elected Opposition party will be victorious.

No direct connection is believed to exist between the outbreak in Colombia and the civil war in Costa Rica, but the two events form part of an obvious pattern of Communist activity in the western hemisphere.

Colombia borders Panama on the east, while Costa Rica adjoins it on the west. Communist-controlled or Communist-influenced government on either side would present security risks.

CONFERENCE DECISION

Resumption In Bogota

Senior delegates to the Inter-American conference to-day formally resolved to continue the conference, which was interrupted by the Colombia disorders, in Bogota.

To expedite the conference the delegates have agreed to shelve all the economic matters formally scheduled for discussion before revolt interrupted the meeting on Friday.

These included the question as to how the United States could aid Latin America.

A conference to be held later this year, probably in Buenos Aires, will deal with them. All decisions at the Bogota conference will be speeded up and the debates curtailed.

Ref: FO 371/68007

84679

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COMMUNISTS BLAMED

News that Mr. Marshall, Secretary of State, had [as briefly reported in the late editions of THE DAILY TELEGRAPH yesterday] blamed international Communism for the attempted revolution in Colombia has reached this country in the first uncensored despatches from the Colombian capital.

Mr. Marshall stated at a Press conference that the revolt followed the same pattern as the outbreaks which provoked labour trouble in France and the pre-election unrest in Italy. He was the first conference delegate, apart from Dr. Perez, President of Colombia, to attribute the disturbances directly to the Communists. He said:

"This situation must not be judged on a local basis. The occurrences go far beyond Colombia."

Mgr. Ferdomo, Primate of Colombia, has condemned persons of "Communist anti-Christian doctrines" who, he declared, were responsible for sacking and burning many of Bogota's historic churches. He said the home of the Papal Nuncio and his own residence were burned and valuable Roman Catholic archives destroyed.

RUSSIAN "FIFTH COLUMN"

To-day's reports state that Bogota is still paralysed. Banks and shops are closed, there is no transport and many places are without light. There are still a number of snipers active, and the hospitals are crowded with wounded.

One despatch stated that M. Oumansky, former Russian Ambassador to Mexico, who was killed in a plane crash in Mexico in 1945, planned the Latin-American fifth column, which was held responsible for the Colombian revolt.

The network which he started is supposed to stretch from Alaska to the tip of South America. It was based on the idea that it would later become difficult to introduce Russian agents into the Americas, especially the United States. This was said to be common knowledge in most Latin-American Foreign Offices.

The Chilean Government said the Colombian uprising was part of a Communist "master plan" calling for similar outbreaks in Chile and Bolivia.

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Minutes.

TIMES.

14 APR 1948

Cutting dated

194

COSTA RICAN REVOLT

CAPITAL IN DANGER

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON, APRIL 13

The State Department has news to-day that rebel forces in Costa Rica are on the point of capturing San José, the capital of the country. Limón, the chief port on the Atlantic coast, fell yesterday, and it is also reported that Cartago is in rebel hands. A house-to-house defence of San José has been ordered, and Vanguardia Popular, the Communist Party of Costa Rica, has issued a call to all supporters of the Government to gather at its headquarters in the city. The acting Foreign Minister has, however, asked the diplomatic corps to take San José under their protection.

The revolt in Costa Rica began on March 12 after some weeks of disorder since the elections on February 8. The present President, Señor Teodoro Picado, was due to leave office on May 8, and, since by Costa Rican law he is unable himself to succeed, the Government party had nominated Señor Rafael Calderón, the President from 1940 to 1944. In the elections a coalition of opposition parties elected Señor Otilio Ulate, of the Unión Nacional, by a small majority. Republican Nacional, the Government party, conceded the election at first but later, at the insistence of the Communists, who support the Government, declared the election fraudulent. Attempts to agree on a compromise candidate failed, and fighting broke out.

SAN JOSÉ, April 13.—Foreign diplomatists intervened to-night in the civil war here, appealing for a "cease fire" order at 5 a.m. to-morrow, when they will try to get through the rebels' lines to arrange an armistice.—
Reuter.

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

Minutes.

A.

NEWS CHRONICLE.
14 APR 1948

U.S. envoy saves the day in Costa Rica

WASHINGTON, Tuesday.

THE Diplomatic Corps in San Jose, capital of Costa Rica, have been asked to take the city under their protection against the threat of a rebel force.

The appeal was made by Senor Alvaro Boria, Acting-Foreign Minister of Costa Rica.

Later it was announced that the U.S. Ambassador was mediating and that "Cease fire" orders were issued by both sides.

The rebels, according to reports reaching the State Department here, had already captured the Atlantic port of Limon (by a surprise amphibian attack), and Cartago, ten miles from San Jose and the country's second largest city.

They were driving the Government's forces back on the capital, the fall of which was described as "imminent."

The revolt broke out on March 12, four days after Dr. Ulate Blanco had been elected President. Congress annulled the election as a fraud. President Picado refused to give up his post, but was pushed aside by Communist Manuel Mora. Conservatives revolted under Gen. Figueres.—Reuter and B.U.P.



Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

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AMENDED DISTRIBUTION (14th April, 1948).

Code R POLITICAL DISTRIBUTION
FROM SAN JOSE TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr. Sullivan.
No. 24. AN D: 12.05 p.m. 12th April, 1948.
12th April, 1948. R: 5.45 a.m. 13th April, 1948.

Repeated to: Washington.

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 24 of
12th April repeated to Washington.

My telegram No. 23.

Military activities have increased. The opposition have captured Port Simon and I am pretty reliably informed that fighting is now going on a few miles from San José. The situation may become acute shortly and all communications may be interrupted which are reasons for my telegraphing now. San José so far is quiet but increased nervousness amongst responsible people is noticeable.

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Code R

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

FROM SAN JOSE TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr. Sullivan

D. 12.5 p.m. 12th April, 1948

No. 24

12th April, 1948

R. 5.45 a.m. 13th April, 1948

Repeated to Washington

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PPP

