

TELEGRAM

OUTGOING Amembassy PANAMA

Foreign Service of the
United States of America

62-23-8
Jan 9

Charge:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification

Control: 1942

ACTION: Secstate WASHDC PRIORITY

Date: 1/10/68

INFO : Analysis Unit PRIORITY
PanCanal Govt
USCINCSO

PANAMA 1942

SUBJECT: Activities on Fourth Anniversary of Events Jan 9, 1964

REF : PANAMA 1905 of Jan 5

AMB
DCM
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CHRON

1. Fourth anniversary of anti-US disturbances which occurred on Jan 9, 1964, passed without major incident. Official acts commemorating event were in low key with minor GOP representation at small ceremonies held principally at Amador Guerro and Jardin de Paz cemeteries. Crowd participation was small with apparent public apathy.

2. Only incident during day occurred when hard-line communist student and labor elements proceeded from Amador Guerro cemetery along 4th of July Ave with American flag wrapped around foot of demonstrator. At Gorgas Rd after flag had been dragged for some distance, intersection, Jaime Alfaro, Panamanian citizen and graduate of West Point, attempted to speak to demonstrators in effort to prevent further indignity to US

Drafted by: POL:JEKashian:bms 1/10/68 Approving Officer: Amb: CWadair, Jr.

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flag. After brief scuffle, in which Alfaro received minor injuries and flag was torn, demonstrators burned portion of flag at Shaler Triangle before boarding buses for Jardin de Paz cemetery. National Guard units were in area, but foregoing events were over before they could take preventative action.

3. Media reaction has been moderate with fewer emotionally charged editorials and photos recalling 1964 disturbances than in previous years. Several editorials went so far as to deplore violence and emphasize peaceful attainment of Panama's aspirations.

4. Eleta-owned TV-4 editorial praised "heroic action" of 1964 martyrs, but said Panama's aspirations should be sought on "field of ideas, field of discussions and never on field of inopportune and useless violence." Hasty action and violence, the editorial concluded, could play into hands of enemies of those who sacrificed their lives. Estrella editorial said US position as leader of free world's great crusade against communistic imperialism could be morally strengthened by offering example of

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recognition of legitimate rights of small nation.

5. Contrary to past years, La Hora (Harmodio Arias, Jr.) dealt with the anniversary in almost reasonable manner. La Hora also asserted pro-Samudio elements tried to divide Panamanian people and take advantage of ceremonies at Jardin de Paz cemetery for partisan purposes. Paper accused pro-Samudio elements, including Roderick Esquivel (Second Vice-Pres candidate) and David Samudio, Jr., of hypocrisy, alleging they had never before bother^{ed} to attend commemoration ceremonies. Most demagogic ~~mt~~ media coverage appeared in Chiari-owned La Prensa.

6. Pres candidates Samudio and Arnulfo Arias also issued statements re anniversary. Govt candidate Samudio said he represented generation of Jan 9, 1964, which consolidated Panamanian nation and offered themselves and their blood to build strong and worthy future. In apparent reference to Arnulfo Arias, Samudio criticized those who on Jan 9, 1964, "stood aside, took refuge on their farms or left the country to avoid being involved." Samudio

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concluded by saying new generation which he leads is only one that understands Panama's future needs because it felt them in heroic days of Jan 9, 1964.

7. Arnulfo Arias Jan 9 statement referred to anniversary of sad events as opportune moment for Panamanians to state their firm intentions of "obtaining peacefully at conference table true and definite abrogation of 1903 Treaty." Arias said that on Dec 18, 1964, Pres Johnson proposed negotiating completely new treaty harmoniously to eliminate existing causes of conflict. In name of National Union, Arias asked Panamanian people to unite in patriotic struggle for Panama's ideals.

8. SUMMARY: As matter of record, I brought to attention of Acting FonMin Morgan Morales incident described above re US flag. He expressed his regrets, but added his satisfaction anniversary passed with such relative quiet. I share view that this probably least eventful Jan 9 commemoration to date. GP-3.

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