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AMBASSADOR ASSESSES JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

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26 Nov 63

Urgent

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Confidential.

The personality and political background of President LYNDON B. JOHNSON, as well as the circumstances which brought him to power, seem to indicate that American foreign and domestic policies, under the new Administration, will probably adhere to the following basic directives:

1. In the short run, as a natural result of the momentum of a strong Administration, such as that of President KENNEDY, no profound changes are expected, especially in the field of foreign policy (President JOHNSON has already stated that he will follow the foreign policy of President KENNEDY);

2. In the longer run, however, one can foresee:

A) In the field of foreign policy, with the pre-dominance of the State Department over the White House "staff"((A)) (which reflected the strong personality of President KENNEDY and his marked interest in international policy), there probably will be:

I) No substantial change from the KENNEDY line in relations with the Soviet Union; the new Administration will tend toward a wait-and-see attitude;

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II). In the field of relations with Western Europe, or more precisely with France, a less rigid attitude and one of greater acceptance of the French position, with the objective of maintaining a united Western front vis-à-vis the possibility of a political offensive by the Kremlin;

III). In relations with Latin America, the interview which President JOHNSON will have this afternoon with the Foreign Minister will certainly be more enlightening than any prediction made at this time;

B) In the field of domestic policy, there will possibly be an improvement in relations between the Executive and the Legislative within the line of "compromise"((A)); the new President, much more the conservative than the innovator, with intimate connections with the Congress, and a Southerner, will have more facility in [gaining] approval of the big bills ("civil rights," "fiscal reform," "medical aid," "aid to the aged," etc.) precisely because he will accept more conservative formulas of compromise; the new Administration will also tend to be more conservative with regard to government intervention in the economy; however, radical changes cannot be expected, since JOHNSON will also face the pressure of the more liberal wing of the Democratic Party, and any more pronounced split within the Party would be fatal to the hopes for victory in next year's election.



((A)) English in text.

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