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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

17 November 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Proposed Confrontation of
President Figueres of Costa Rica
Concerning His Relationship with
the Soviets

1. Further intelligence corroborates our earlier report that President Jose Figueres Ferrer of Costa Rica received a large sum of money from the Soviets, and makes clear that this information is now known to several Costa Rican Communist Party (PVP) leaders. Subsequent reporting indicates that Figueres has received an amount in excess of the \$300,000 given him by the Soviets through the Secretary General of the PVP, Manuel Mora, on 24 February 1970.

2. A review of Figueres' activities since his inauguration in June this year shows that he has developed increasing ties to the Soviets. Before he drifts further into the Soviet camp, we feel that positive steps should be taken to stop or at least slow this trend. To this end we believe Figueres should be confronted with the fact that we know he took Soviet money, and that we are doing this in an effort to convince him to limit his cooperation with the Soviets and the PVP. We would also seek his agreement to join us in specific undertakings designed to hinder the effectiveness of the Soviets in Central America.

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3. We propose that Figueres be confronted by a senior US Government representative from Washington. Such a direct confrontation, which would spell out his complicity with the Soviets, would be designed to highlight the seriousness with which the US views this activity. The US representative we have in mind is a friend of Figueres', and thus their meeting would be on a personal, as well as an official level. This approach would be most direct, with the US representative saying that our Government is concerned over what he has done, and that we now want him to work with us in controlling the Soviets.

4. Figueres' reaction to such a meeting could range from openly admitting that he has accepted money from the Soviets, [REDACTED] to one of rage that the United States would be acting on "false" information. We anticipate however that Figueres might also claim that he is a "bridge-builder" between East and West and is in control of Mora and the PVP, and is using them for his own purposes. This reaction, while partly face saving, would provide the basis for him to offer to "work with us against them." We have discarded any serious thought that Figueres be used as a classic "double-agent". His devious nature could make such a professional undertaking unwise, at least for the present.

5. As the person to confront Figueres in the direct manner which we have in mind, we recommend Ambassador C. Allan Stewart, a retired Foreign Service Officer who last served in Venezuela and is a long-time and close friend of Figueres'. Ambassador Stewart has known Figueres since he served as counselor of our Embassy in San Jose twenty years ago. Given these credentials, Ambassador Stewart can not only speak frankly with Figueres, but also can insure the necessary impact.

6. Ambassador Ploeser has reported that in a conversation with Figueres on 9 November, the latter offered to act as "a medium of intelligence for the U. S." This offer

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came during a discussion of a Washington Star article which spoke in terms of the dangers inherent in the anticipated arrival of the Soviets in Costa Rica. This 6 November article called attention to what appears to be a slide by Figueres and Costa Rica into the arms of the Soviets. Figueres' reaction to this news story - one of offering help to us - points up his ability to play several roles simultaneously. We therefore will attempt to insure that the confrontation spells out clearly what we know, and that we want Figueres to take some positive action to prove his intentions toward the U. S. We do not plan to threaten him, however.

7. Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson concurs in making an approach to Figueres in the manner described above. We are tentatively scheduled to work out the details of the approach on 23 November in a conference here in Washington with Ambassadors Ploeser and Stewart, [REDACTED]

8. Your approval is requested to send Ambassador Stewart to Costa Rica with the mission of confronting Figueres.

Rich

Richard Helms
Director

cc: Under Secretary of State
for Political Affairs

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