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General

After last week's relative calm, the more normal condition of "politics as usual" returned to the DR this week. Catching nearly everyone by surprise, President Balaguer made some changes in his cabinet and other top government positions. At the same time the President dismantled the Palace's intelligence service headed by Air Force Colonel Luis Ney TEJEDA Alvarez, who was named Dominican Ambassador to Nicaragua (Item 1). President Balaguer devoted his New Year's Day speech to education (1969 has been formally designated the Year of Education), and the National Education Council met for the first time since 1964 (Item 3). The PRD played host to Pierre SCHORE, Secretary for International Relations of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, whose visit was also the occasion for PRD Secretary General PEÑA GÓMEZ' first public remarks since returning from Spain (Item 2).

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Other news this week 1) President Balaguer, accompanied by a high ranking delegation, attended the January 2 inauguration of Puerto Rican Governor Luis A. FERRE; 2) Police and Interior Secretary Federico Máximo SMESTER said the GODR would not object to "an orderly reception" at the airport when ex-General Elias WESSIN y Wessin returns from exile (Item 5); 3) a police colonel and two Cubans were arrested on charges of arms smuggling (Item 6); 4) President Johnson's New Year message to President Balaguer received front-page play in most of the capital's papers; 5) a special committee of the Ayuntamiento is studying the complaints of some ex-workers that checks they received for back pay were subject to excessive discounts; there were reports that some checks still had not been issued; 6) El Caribe, the PRSC and other groups commented on 1968 (Item 7); 7) the Armed Forces Secretariat issued a communique alerting the citizenry to be aware of rumors spread by "certain political sectors" that members of the military support their campaign to gain converts (Item 4); 8) a strike of employees at the Autonomous University ended when the Consejo largely met the workers' demands by paying a regalia pascual of a month's salary to those earning RD\$130 a month or less and 50 percent of a month's salary for those earning between that figure and RD\$200 monthly; and finally 9) President Balaguer issued a decree declaring void all permits to carry guns except those issued by the Secretary of Interior and Police. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

#### 1. Balaguer Switches Key GODR Figures

President Balaguer issued a decree on December 30 abolishing the Palace intelligence service headed by Air Force Col. Luis Ney TEJEDA Alvarez. The intelligence service had been under constant attack from the press and opposition political quarters. Tejeda was named Ambassador to Nicaragua. In response to press queries December 31, Tejeda denied having conspired against the Balaguer Government or having anything to do with the attempted introduction of firearms at the Punta Caucedo airport on December 27 (see Item 6).

In other personnel changes announced at the same time, the President designated Army Col. José Joaquín MENDEZ Lara as Secretary of Interior and Police, replacing Dr. Federico Máximo SMESTER who will remain in the cabinet as a Secretary Without Portfolio. Other changes involved Secretary Without Portfolio Altagracia Bautista de SUAREZ, who was assigned as Director General of the Dominican Institute of Social Security; Luis SUAREZ to Under Secretary of Finance from head of CORDE; Dr. Gilberto HERRERA Báez as Economic Affairs Chief of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (a job that Herrera turned down); and Col. Rafael de Jesus CHECO as Deputy Army Chief of Staff replacing Col. Julio Antonio SOTO Echevarría (see SD-4617 for a complete list of personnel changes).

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Page 3COMMENT

Noteworthy about President Balaguer's year-end reshuffling of certain key government figures was that it dealt mainly with the state security apparatus, e.g., the Palace intelligence service and the Secretariat of Interior and Police with a new Secretary and two new Under Secretaries. The Embassy's analysis of other changes indicates that there is little if any relationship to the previously reported rift between President Balaguer and Vice President LORA. In fact, it is reliably reported that the two consulted jointly on the personnel changes announced. Checo's transfer and Tejeda's ouster require further study to determine the relationship to recent reports connecting Tejeda and Col. Neit NIVAR Seijas to anti-government plots.

2. Swedish Social Democrat Visits PRD; PEÑA GÓMEZ Statements

As part of a quick tour of Latin American countries preparatory to a Social Democrat-sponsored conference to be held later this month in Chile, (WPR #41) Swedish Social Democrat Pierre SCHORE (the party's Secretary for International Relations) arrived in the DR last weekend and held a series of meetings with PRDers in Santiago and Santo Domingo. The Santiago conference was also the occasion for Secretary General Peña Gómez' first public performance since his return from Spain on December 22; he elaborated on the Benidorm Accord by saying that the PRD could participate with any other political organization in an anti-imperialist front, providing the other revolutionary groups supported "Popular Dictatorship". In a later press conference in Santo Domingo, Schore urged Latin Americans to forget integration (which allegedly would serve only U.S. economic interests), and to concentrate on attaining complete independence from US economic and political domination. Advocating a "third road" between capitalism and communism for the solution of Latin America's development problems, Schore also ruled out the Social Christian movement as having failed in West Germany, Italy and Chile. This last point drew a predictable reaction and defense of the Frei Government from the Chilean Embassy. (See SD-A-1).

At week's end Peña Gómez made another public presentation in an interview on Crónica Radial (the party's regular program, Tribuna Democrática, has been shut down during the holidays). Peña Gómez sharply criticized as "irresponsible" an Armed Forces communique concerning the apolitical character of the military (see Item 4), and turned to Bosch and Benidorm to say that: (a) the "Popular Dictatorship" thesis will make a great impact on Latin America and revolutionaries throughout the world; (b) the PRD aims to unite all "progressive social sectors" in a great anti-imperialist front; (c) the Benidorm Accord did

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not renounce elections "definitively" but conditioned PRD participation on approval of the directing organs and elections are not a final end for the PRD but only a step toward national liberation; (d) the PRD must continue to function as a legal organization; (e) Juan BOSCH will return to the DR at the end of 1969, but first he plans to visit the USSR, North Korea, Finland, North Viet-Nam and Red China (the latter two in April); and (f) the President's dissolving of Ney Tejeda's intelligence service (Item 1) was "healthy and beneficial" for the country. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

COMMENT

With recent public PCD announcements of support for "Popular Dictatorship" in mind, our Consul in Santiago asked PRD'er Salvador JORGE Blanco whether Peña Gómez' remarks about participation in an anti-imperialist front (conditioned on other groups supporting the Bosch thesis) might mean such a front was actually in the making. Jorge Blanco replied that he not only was unaware of any such front, but that he doubted that Peña Gómez had really made the statement reported in the press. Senator CASIMIRO Castro, when asked how the PRD viewed the PCD's overtures, termed them completely without importance and the "cries of an orphan child seeking a parent". Both these reactions, however, seem to indicate a sort of pollyanna approach, and do not necessarily voice the views (or intentions) of the PRD's radical leadership. As for Bosch's planned trips to other communist countries, PRD confidant Sacha VOLMAN told the Embassy that he had learned that the arrangements had been made in Paris by ex-Constitutionalist Hector ARISTY, acting as go-between. (CONFIDENTIAL).

3. President's New Year's Speech

In keeping with the previous designation of 1969 as the Year of Education, President Balaguer's New Year's speech, preceded by the swearing in of members of the National Commission for the Year of Education, was appropriately devoted to education. In addition to stressing that the GODR would devote "an important part of its resources" to school construction and other educational needs in 1969, the President commented at some length on the controversial subject of diversified secondary school education. Among other things he said that "diversified education can be converted into a useful instrument of national economic development" but added that it "should not be seen as a panacea". (SD-007).

In other education news this week, the long-dormant National Education Council met on two separate occasions and approved the gradual implementation of an educational reform program, including the introduction of additional diversified high schools. The three university rectors, by law all members of the Council, voted in favor of the diversified education plan, but advised that the schools

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ould be directed "exclusively" by Dominicans and should not depend "in great measure" on foreign assistance. The Council also discounted the objections raised by one of its members, Professor Antonio CUELLO (who did not attend the meeting where the plan was approved), that the reform plan counted only on foreign economic assistance and therefore could compromise national sovereignty. (UNCLASSIFIED).

#### 4. Armed Forces Statement on Political Activity

The Secretariat of State for the Armed Forces issued a communique this week alerting Dominican citizens against rumors spread by "certain sectors of political life" that members of military institutions support their campaign to gain converts. The communique said that the Armed Forces are "principally obedient and apolitical... prepared always to defend the sacrosanct laws of the country and the legally constituted government and do not conduct proselytistic campaigns in favor of any political party". PRD Secretary General Peña Gómez attacked the communique as "irresponsible" because, in his view, it was a blanket accusation against all the opposition parties, including the PRD which was "unjustly included". (UNCLASSIFIED).

#### COMMENT

The communique seems to have been designed to counter the increasing activity by the PQD to attempt to show the public through press statements that Wessin and the PQD enjoy great <sup>and</sup> increasing strength within the Armed Forces. (SD-007). (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

#### 5. "Orderly Reception" Permitted for Wessin

Interior and Police Secretary Federico Máximo SMESTER this week said the government would not object to "an orderly reception" in the airport terminal arranged by the PQD for ex-General WESSIN y Wessin but would not permit public acts with parades or crowds of people. (The PQD announced previously that it is preparing a special reception at the airport when Wessin returns from exile, presumably sometime after January 10.) At the same time Smester reiterated previous government statements that no political party may hold public demonstrations until such time as the Central Electoral Board declares the opening of the 1970 electoral campaign. (UNCLASSIFIED).

#### 6. Three Arrested for Arms Smuggling

Police Lt. Col. Raúl VALDEZ Montás and two Cuban employees of Central Romana, Ramon NODA García and Aresenio JURADO Orta, accused of smuggling arms into the country through Punta Caucedo airport, were released on RD\$5,000 bond each at midweek. No date has been set for their trial. Two others, Police Lt. Col. Rafael LOZADA Grullon and another Cuban employee of Central Romana, who originally were held

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in connection with the incident were later cleared of involvement by a special 3-man investigating board. (UNCLASSIFIED).

COMMENT

Based on the small size of the arms shipment, the kinds of weapons involved, and the absence of other information to the contrary, the Embassy believes that the weapons were intended for personal use or sale by the two Cubans. Valdez apparently was promised a pistol for arranging entry of the weapons and ammunition. (See SD-4594 and 4620). (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

7. Looking Back on 1968

This was the week in which to review the year just ended. El Caribe concluded that, when all was added up, 1968 was a good year for the Republic. The paper said that although the accomplishments of 1968 were not spectacular, they were indeed solid. Caribe criticized the "premature" start of the 1970 election campaign and the "apparition of dictatorial tendencies, especially in one of our principal political parties" but praised President Balaguer for setting the example of impeccable honesty in government, something, according to Caribe, others in government should but unfortunately do not emulate. Caribe saw demagoguery as the greatest danger to Dominican democracy.

The year-end statement by the Revolutionary Social Christian Party (PRSC) accused the Balaguer government of not even having begun to check the "grave problems which overwhelm this country in misery". Nevertheless, the PRSC "greet[s] the New Year with hope for the future and faith in the ability of the Dominican people". BRUC went somewhat further, saying that the only way out from under the institutionalized exploitation and violence of Yankee imperialism is Socialism. The BRUC statement contained a few reverent words for Camilo Torres and quoted the late Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

FOUPSA-CESITRADO claimed to have nothing to cheer about in 1968. This Communist-led confederation said that 1968 was a hard one for the working class and accused the government of developing to the maximum its "anti-worker and anti-national policies". The statement condemned the Austerity Law and claimed that "clandestine revolutionary commands are bursting forth in the factories like roses in the spring". (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

8. President Balaguer Attends Inauguration of Puerto Rican Governor

Accompanied by selected members of his cabinet and high ranking military, President Balaguer attended the inauguration on January 2 in San Juan of Puerto Rico's new Governor, Luis A. FERRÉ. President Balaguer returned the same day to Santo Domingo spending

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about six hours in San Juan. The Dominican press gave extensive coverage to the President's trip and to the mutual expressions of esteem and hope for greater economic exchange between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic that were expressed by President Balaguer and Governor Ferré. Following his return from the same event, Ambassador Crimmins noted the obvious warmth of President Balaguer's reception in San Juan and the genuine esteem for the Dominican Republic expressed by Puerto Ricans. (UNCLASSIFIED).

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