

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969600

DEPT. DISTRIBUTION

ORIGIN/ACTION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

POL 2 DOM REP

ARA-10

RM/R REP AF ARA

Original to be Filed in _____ Decentralized Files.

FILE DESIGNATION

EUR FE NEA CU

CONFIDENTIAL

614

INR E P IO

HANDLING INDICATOR

NO.

L FBO AID

TO : Department of State

S/P

INFO : Amconsul SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS

AGR COM FRB INT

FROM : Amembassy SANTO DOMINGO

DATE: 26 May 68

LAB TAR TR XMB

SUBJECT : Weekly Political Summary No. 10 (May 17-23, 1968)

AIR ARMY NAVY OSD

REF :

USIA NSA CIA

HSC FBI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION

1. Various Political Groups React to Elections.
2. PRD Comments on Elections.
3. Bonnelly and Others React to Balaguer Audit Order.
4. Haitian Invasion Causes Dominicans to Strengthen Border Defense.
5. Cabinet Changes.
6. CLASC-Sponsored Meeting on Latin America Integration.

Introduction

Public and political attention this week focused on the variously-interpreted results of the May 16 municipal elections (Items 1,2), the Haitian situation (Item 4), and the reaction to President Balaguer's May 15 order that an "exhaustive audit" be conducted of all government spending since 1961 (Item 3).

Unofficial returns indicated that over 1,028,000 Dominicans voted in the municipal elections (the first in Dominican history). While some 317,000 under the 1966 vote, this very healthy mid-term vote was actually over 75% of that record turnout and almost equalled the 1962 vote of 1,054,944 (the latter two were for presidential elections). Regular Reformista candidates won in 66 of the nation's 77 municipalities

Downgraded at 12-year intervals; not automatically declassified

POST ROUTING

TO: Action Info. Initials

AMB/PO

DCM

POL

ECON

CONS

ADM

AID

USIS

FORM 10-64 DS-323

CONFIDENTIAL

For Department Use Only

☒ In ☐ Out

Drafted by: See last page

Drafting Date:

Phone No.:

Contents and Classification Approved by:

DCM:FJDevine

Clearances:

POL:JWWilson

CONFIDENTIALSanto Domingo A- 614
Page 2

(including Santo Domingo and Santiago) and obtained over 60% of the vote. Independents won in 9 municipalities and obtained about 27.5% of the vote. The Social Christian PRSC obtained about 12.5% of the vote, won in two municipalities (WPS#9), and became--after the PR, the PRD and the UCN--the fourth political party in contemporary Dominican history to top the 100,000 level. The election results offered something for all major contenders, whether participationist or abstentionist. The PR, led by Vice President Lora, congratulated itself on a smashing victory, claiming 85% of the vote by adding "independent" Reformistas to the "official" 60%. (By week's end, however, some PR dissidents had formally returned to the PR fold, and groups in other areas were expected to follow suit.) The PRSC was eminently satisfied. The PRD, picking and choosing its own set of figures and charging the PR with "massive and scandalous" vote padding, claimed that a majority of eligible voters (locally estimated at about 1.5-1.6 million) followed its abstentionists call and thereby "repudiated" the government. However, the PRD did not sound very convincing and, in fact, outside the "revolutionary" left, Dominicans did not appear inclined to agree with this interpretation. The PQD and UCN, also claiming abstentionist victories, were even less convincing. More convincing were those few observers who gave the PRD some points for abstentionism but noted that a substantial majority of voters had, in fact, voted.

While those directly concerned were variously interpreting the elections, however, most public attention focused on the exhaustively reported Haitian situation, ^{and} the reaction by former Council of State President Rafael F. BONNELLY and others to the President's extensive financial audit (Item 3). And it was in the latter developments that most foresaw the greatest potential for future fireworks. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

1. Various Political Groups React to Elections.

Listin's comment the day after the elections that "everybody won" -- PR, PRSC, independent groups, and abstentionists--still seemed to hold up after a week of charges and counter-charges by various political groups.

CONFIDENTIAL

Santo Domingo A- 614
Page 3CONFIDENTIAL

On the participants' side, President Balaguer described the outcome of the elections as the "worst defeat of the opposition" and said the Reformistas had been strengthened (SD-2546); and the PR Secretary General Raul GONZALEZ said the outcome was a brilliant victory for the party. Social Christian leaders generally were very satisfied with the results, and PRSC President Caonabo JAVIER Castillo told the press that the elections were very successful for his party, having quadrupled its 1966 vote. Even though challenging the results in Moca, the PRSC clearly felt it had a vested interest in defending the electoral results generally and took the lead in refuting the PRD charges of massive fraud (SD-2546, SD-2575).

For the abstentionists, the communists this week joined the PRD in claiming that the Balaguer government had been repudiated: (a) MPD Secretary General Maximiliano GOMEZ said that the masses had used abstention as a means of rejecting the sale of Dominican sovereignty to North American monopolies and of rejecting economic and political repression, and commented that it was more imperative than ever to construct a clandestine commando force to join together in one "revolutionary torrent" of all abstentionist forces; (b) the PCD issued a communique which claimed that all of those who did not vote showed they do not recognize elections as a way of promoting revolutionary change (SD-2546); and (c) the 14th of June said that the popular masses had responded with revolutionary resolution in rejecting the Yankee-Balaguer electoral farce, while at the same time taking a swipe at the Social Christians whom it accused of serving the interests of imperialism which is interested only in a "constructive" and docile opposition. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

2. PRD Comments on Elections.

The first unofficial returns were scarcely in when the PRD took to the air over its May 18 radio program and, in a communique read by Secretary General PEÑA GÓMEZ (and later published in the press), proclaimed the elections a great victory for the PRD and other abstentionists and claimed that some 50% of the electorate had spurned the ballot boxes. To justify this claim in the face of the figures indicating a rather impressive turnout, the PRD charged massive electoral fraud by the Reformista Party and the GODR; this complaint was based primarily on an allegedly large discrepancy between very early returns for the National District and the figures

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIALSanto Domingo A-614
Page 4

later announced by the Central Electoral Board (JCE), supposedly after the government had belatedly realized it was suffering a disastrous defeat at the hands of the abstentionist forces and had decided to do something about it. To these specific fraud allegations, the PRD added its charges that many polling places were inadequately observed by the PRSC, that the PR ran unopposed in many municipalities and that widespread fraud was also shown by opposition parties' complaints in Santiago, Moca, and San Pedro de Macoris (SD-2603).

In other PRD comment this week (a) Sen. CASIMIRO Castro characterized the elections as a "total failure", due to a combination of the PRD's abstention and an alleged lack of public confidence in the government; (b) Santo Domingo's lame duck Mayor BAEZ Acosta, also basing his judgment on early (and low) voting figures, claimed that the DR had established a Latin American precedent and credited the PRD for the abstentionists' claimed success; (c) Political Committee President Jottin CURY (in two broadcasts of the same radio speech) further developed Peña's fraud charges and outdid himself in sarcasm and invective; and (d) later in the week Peña himself returned to the airwaves to repeat essentially the same arguments he had adduced earlier to "prove" extensive electoral fraud--and at the same time to lend his support to ex-President Bonnelly's criticism of Balaguer (Item 3). (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

Comment: For the moment at least the PRD appears officially to be sticking to its charges of electoral fraud, as evidenced by private conversations with Deputy "Manny" ESPINAL and other PRD legislators. However, time will probably dull the lustre of the fraud allegations and we may expect that more PRDers in their private comments will come to reflect those of the Santiago "moderates" (reported in Santiago's 84) who are talking neither of fraud in Santiago nor of "the people repudiating the government". (CONFIDENTIAL)

3. Bonnely and Others React to Balaguer Audit Order.

That President Balaguer had stirred a hornet's nest by announcing in his May 15 speech that he had ordered an "exhaustive" audit of all government spending since 1961 soon became apparent as press and political commentary focused on the issue immediately after

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIALSanto Domingo A-614
Page 5

elections (SD-2550). The first major reaction came on May 20 from former Council of State President Rafael F. BONNELLY Fondecu, who broke an almost two-year public silence to address the nation over radio and television in defense of his own financial behavior as head of state. Assuming the guise of an elder statesman and speaking in gently ironic tones, Bonnelly offered full cooperation with the President's audit and suggested that Balaguer might wish also to look into and report on the disposition of the resources--including RD\$1 million in cash--of Trujillo's old Partido Dominicano, which was dissolved towards the end of Balaguer's 1961 administration.

Taking advantage of the occasion ("now that I am here"), Bonnelly also discussed several other aspects of contemporary Dominican life which, he said, made him and "various social sectors" uneasy. These included: (a) the "scandalous" proliferation of governmental intelligence services and the subtle climate of persecution and terror for which they are allegedly responsible (Wessin had made the same charge last week--WPS #9, item 3); (b) the President's "choleric" reaction to criticism; (c) Balaguer's alleged propensity to dissociate rather than conciliate the Dominican family; (d) overcentralization of the government and Balaguer's lack of an effective working team; and (e) the President's alleged insensitivity to public opinion and to the need for continuing dialogue with the opposition. Bonnelly ended by stating he was returning to anonymity and his normal pursuits (this prompted the private quip from one moderate PRD congressman that this last remark was not necessarily reassuring as Bonnelly's "normal pursuit" is conspiracy).

Balaguer reacted to Bonnelly immediately by ordering an audit of the disposition of Partido Dominicano funds and by promising a rejoinder in the indefinite future. Listín Diario reacted to this pledge with the thought, in effect, that discretion might be the better part of valor. The PRD's Peña Gomez lauded Bonnelly's chastisement of the President, said that it echoed what the PRD has been saying for some time, and spoke of the alleged community of interests and fears shared by all "anti-Trujillista" forces.

Meanwhile, PRD Senator CASIMIRO Castro, who had originally charged that Balaguer's audit was intended to divert public attention from the "disastrous" election results, quickly reversed his field and urged the Senate to declare the audit in the national

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Santo Domingo A-

Page 6

interest and to appoint a commission to help government investigators do the job. PRD schizophrenia on the issue was also displayed by Deputy Jottin Cury, who was for the audit, and Senator Secundino GIL Morales, who was against it. The week's final development was the announcement that Wessin would respond to Balaguer in a taped broadcast on May 25.

Comment: Bonnelly sounded reasonable throughout his address and, in fact, racked up some telling points against the President. His motives, however, were hardly as lofty as he made them sound. Extremely embittered by Balaguer's refusal to deal with him during the 1966 election campaign or to seek his counsel thereafter, Bonnelly has long been considered the eminence grise of the Wessin movement--although no proof of this has yet been adduced. (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. Haitian Invasion Causes Dominicans to Strengthen Border Defense.

News of the Port-au-Prince "air raid" (and attendant guerrilla landing) itself burst like a bombshell May 20, and dominated the front pages of Dominican newspapers for the rest of the week.

Upon learning of the Haitian invasion, President Balaguer ordered the Armed Forces to establish a special air, sea and land service to guard the frontier and to prevent any incursions on Dominican territory (SD-2549). Later, in reply to a conjecture made by the Haitian Ambassador to the US that the Dominican Republic was one of the countries from which the guerrillas could have launched their attack, Army Chief of Staff Juan Esteban PEREZ Guillén stated categorically that no expeditionary force had either trained on or departed from Dominican soil to attack Haiti (SD-2585). On May 22, Balaguer told the press he did not discount the possibility that the Haitian conflict constituted a danger for the Dominican Republic, but that he considered the nation to be well prepared to guard its frontier with Haiti (SD-2606). On May 23 General Enrique PEREZ y Pérez, Secretary for the Armed Forces, informed the press that the only reason troops were mobilized along the frontier was to prevent subversive elements from violating the integrity of Dominican soil and the mobilization betokened no offensive design against Haiti; and, in an arrival statement of the same date, Dominican Ambassador to Washington Héctor GARCIA-GODOY, (here for a "family" visit) criticized a statement reportedly made by the Haitian Ambassador before the UN Security Council to the effect that Dominican authorities seemed to think that the Haitian situation could be directed against the Dominican Republic.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIALSanto Domingo A-614
Page 7

On another Haitian note, the last six Haitian exiles remaining in the Dominican Republic under house arrest departed for Venezuela on May 20, traveling under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee (SD-2564). (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: While not overreacting to the week's sensational developments, the Dominican Government appears to be taking every precaution to avoid involvement in the Haitian conflict and to prevent refugees from infiltrating the country. It is recalled that Balaguer closed the border between the two countries on August 30, 1967 for the dual purpose of controlling the movement of contraband goods and the movement of unauthorized persons. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

5. Cabinet Changes

In a surprise move, President Balaguer late this week replaced Attorney General Manuel Rafael GARCIA Lizardo with Carlos Rafael GOICO Morales, until then Secretary of Interior and Police. Named to the Interior spot was Dr. Federico Máximo SMESTER, a Montecristi physician. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Former UCN stalwart Garcia Lizardo has been politically suspect by the Palace since shortly after the Imbert assassination attempt a year ago, and his replacement has been rumored for some time. He had himself forecast his resignation at some indefinite time for personal reasons. While the President's motives for replacing him at this time are unclear, it is possible that the move was in some way related to the President's audit of government spending (Item 3), the results of which are to be turned over to the Attorney General for appropriate action against dishonest officials, present and former. It is not unreasonable to surmise that for this purpose Balaguer wishes a more loyal and obedient Attorney General. Goico Morales fully meets these requirements.

Dr. Smester, who served as Senator and Ambassador to Haiti under Trujillo, is another of the President's old friends and has been practicing medicine in Montecristi, far removed from the public eye, for many years. One of his sons, a former Air Force colonel cashiered for disloyalty (to Bosch) during the Bosch administration, was Wessin's predecessor as head of the former Armed Forces Training Center (CEFA) at San Isidro. (CONFIDENTIAL)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIALSanto Domingo A-614
Page 86. CLASC-Sponsored Meeting on Latin American Integration.

This week's conference on labor's role in Latin American integration was held in Santo Domingo under the sponsorship of CLASC, the Latin American regional branch of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, and claimed an attendance of 100 participants from more than 40 countries, including 20 countries in the Western Hemisphere.

The municipal elections notwithstanding, full freedom of assembly and expression was granted to CLASC by the Balaguer government for this and the other meetings which CLASC has been holding in the Dominican Republic during May (SEE WPS #8, Item 4). The government's tolerance was even more remarkable considering the fact that at times the speeches proceeded from the ludicrous to the ridiculous. For example, after other speakers had lauded electoral abstentionism and popular dictatorship, the representative from Argentina favorably cited the dictatorship of Juan Domingo Perón as an exemplar of these principles and a model for the future. In calling for complete governmental control of the means of production, a French delegate said that even Communist China permits too much "middle-level capitalism"; he cited Tito's government in Yugoslavia as a better example towards which CLASC should lead the workers and the countries of Latin America.

Despite the fact that a main theme of the oratory was the argument that Latin American integration is necessary, but not as a part of the capitalist system and without direction by or the initiative of the United States, left-wing PRD labor representatives attacked the CLASC meeting and their local affiliate CASC as lackeys of North American imperialism (!) and as stooges of "the deceased former North American Vice Consul Fred Somerford (Note: actually Somerford was Labor Attaché) and the notorious official Andrew McLellan (Inter-American Representative, ALF/CIO)". Not surprisingly perhaps, the communist youth organization had already attacked the conference as serving the ends of Balaguer and the Yankees. CASC replied by saying that it is their attackers who play the game of the imperialists. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

Comment: The meetings have received extensive local publicity. One positive aspect which stands out is the excellent behavior of the local authorities towards the conference; indeed, President Balaguer said publicly that he welcomed the meeting to Santo Domingo. In a separate address, however, the President in effect refuted the CLASC statements by saying the United States is essential to the success of Latin American integration. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

CONFIDENTIALCRIMINAL
JH (M)

CONFIDENTIAL

Santo Domingo A- 614

Page 9

Contributors: FAlberti; JBazan; AArenales; GMitchell; LFleischer;
TNeely

COPIES POUCHED TO:

Amembassy BRASILIA
Amembassy BUENOS AIRES
Amembassy CARACAS
Amembassy PORT-AU-PRINCE
CG 72nd Bomb Wing
CINCLANTFLT
USCINCLANT
COMCARIBSEAFRON
CDR NAV BAS GUAN
CGFMFLANT
USCINCSO (7)

CONFIDENTIAL