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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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Attention *Mrs Mullett*
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14863

September 30, 1969

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Substantive Briefing Material for
Presentation of Credentials to the
President by Ambassador Mario READ
Vittini of the Dominican Republic
at 11:00 a.m. on October 2, 1969

Enclosed are the substantive briefing materials which
will be included in the Chief of Protocol's memorandum to
the White House for Ambassador Read's presentation of
credentials to the President.

Wingate Lloyd
Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.
Executive Secretary

Enclosures:

1. Talking Points
2. Biographic Data

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

Subject: Your Meeting with the Dominican
Ambassador-designate Mario Read Vittini

1. The Ambassador may bring up:

a. Sugar Quota

The Dominicans contend that an assured permanent U.S. import quota of 700,000 tons annually is needed to help stabilize the economic, social, and political situation in the Dominican Republic. They point to their proven ability to ship such an amount each year, and believe the United States should reward such a reliable supplier with a quota closer to their actual exports to the United States.

2. You may wish to express:

a. Sugar Quota

We are mindful of the importance of the United States sugar quota to your country and sympathetic toward your aspirations for a somewhat larger basic quota. However, since the revision of the Sugar Act is two years away and since the Congress will be subject to considerable pressure by both domestic and other foreign sugar producers for increased quotas of their own, it is premature to speak in terms of any specific level of quota. Therefore, it would be imprudent for the Dominican Republic to base its planning on the specific figure of 700,000 tons.

In any event, we believe that the Dominican Republic should continue to diversify agricultural production in order to reduce its overdependence on sugar.

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b. United States Interest in Dominican Progress

(You may wish to refer to the United States' extensive involvement in assisting the Dominican people to improve economic and social conditions following the disruptive civil war in 1965.) We have followed closely the efforts made in the Dominican Republic to restore economic and social well-being and peaceful, orderly political processes; we are gratified by the reports we have had regarding your country's successes in these fields. We sincerely hope that these successes will continue and be strengthened through the new elections next May.

c. Confidence in Ambassador

I want to affirm the confidence I have in our Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Francis E. Meloy, Jr., on whose good judgment and understanding I rely heavily in guiding and strengthening the relations between our two countries.

noted constitutional lawyer, and at the time of his appointment to Washington he was maintaining a private law practice and was teaching political science at the Pedro Henriquez Ureia University. In recent years, however, he has devoted most of his time to politics rather than to his profession. Essentially a clever opportunist, Read has often been characterized as brilliant but unscrupulous. Extremely ambitious, he is said to have considered his talent as a conspirator and political "fixer." Read is anti-Communist and personally friendly toward the United States, although he usually takes a strong pro-DR stand in public. In the past he has evidenced considerable concern about the racial situation in this country.

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End
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ARA/CAR - Mr. Long
ARA - Mr. Hurwitsch *RAH*

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Mario Antonio READ Vittini

Ambassador-Designate
to the United States



In June 1969 Mario Read, founder and past president of the conservative Christian Democratic Party (PDC), was named Dominican Ambassador to the United States. Read has been a leading opponent of the government of President Joaquín Balaguer, and competent observers have stated that the latter offered him the ambassadorial portfolio in order to remove a potential source of trouble from the country. Read replaces Héctor García-Godoy, who returned to the Dominican Republic to campaign for the 1970 presidential election.

Read has been characterized in the past as a noted constitutional lawyer, and at the time of his appointment to Washington he was maintaining a private law practice and was teaching political science at the Pedro Henríquez Ureña University. In recent years, however, he has devoted most of his time to politics rather than to his profession. Essentially a clever opportunist, Read has often been characterized as brilliant but unscrupulous. Extremely ambitious, he is said to have considerable talent as a conspirator and political "fixer." Read is anti-Communist and personally friendly toward the United States, although he avoids taking a strong pro-US stand in public. In the past he has evidenced considerable concern about the racial situation in this country.

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Born on 15 May 1926 in San Cristóbol, Mario Antonio Read Vittini is a mulatto descendant of a Bostonian who lived for many years in the Dominican Republic. He graduated from the Law School of the University of Santo Domingo in the late 1940's. Between 1948 and 1952 he apparently practiced law and held a variety of political positions. During 1952-54 he was First Secretary of the Dominican Embassy in Madrid.

By the age of 24, Read had attained the position of vice president of Dictator Rafael Trujillo's Dominican Party, in which capacity he developed valuable friendships among military leaders and in business circles. Subsequently, however, he turned against Trujillo and developed contact with an underground opposition group. Forced to seek asylum and then exile in 1960 because of his political activities, Read traveled to Brazil, Venezuela, and the United States.

Six months after the assassination of Trujillo in May 1961, Read returned to the Dominican Republic and, with Guido D'Alessandro and Alfonso Moreno, founded the Revolutionary Social Christian Party (PRSC), of which he became vice president and leading theoretician. He was expelled from the PRSC in late 1962, after party president Moreno and secretary general D'Alessandro charged him with failing to follow party discipline and attempting to build his own political machine. Read then formed the PDC as his personal political vehicle. In the national election of December 1962 he was an unsuccessful candidate for Vice President of the Republic, running on the ticket of the small Dominican National Revolutionary Party since there was insufficient time to register his own PDC.

The PDC never became a significant political group, but Read himself became steadily better known as a political figure. He was a leading, constructive spokesman for the democratic opposition to Juan Bosch during the latter's brief Presidency (February-September 1963) and was one of the most articulate and effective critics of the regime. Following the overthrow of Bosch, Read was one of the six different party leaders asked by the military to form a new government.

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After selecting a Triumvirate to govern the country, the six politicians divided the Cabinet posts among themselves and their fellow party members. Read emerged as Secretary of State for the Presidency. Three months later, Read, along with the heads of three other parties, was forced from the Cabinet when the ruling Triumvirate decided to assert its independence from the six parties participating in the government. After his removal from the Cabinet Read became a violent critic of the Triumvirate and worked assiduously to bring about its downfall.

In the turmoil that followed the April 1965 revolt which finally overthrew the Triumvirate, Read acted as an adviser to the rebel leader, Col. Francisco Caamaño Deñó. Before long, however, he withdrew his support of Caamaño and announced his allegiance to the loyalist Government of National Reconstruction, headed by Antonio Imbert and backed by the United States. After the Organization of American States negotiated a political settlement, Imbert's interim government was dissolved, and Héctor García-Godoy became Provisional President in September 1965.

Almost at once Read began to attack the new administration because of its alleged leftist sympathies, and in the unsettled months that followed he engaged in extended political maneuvering. After a long flirtation with Rafael Bonnelly's Movement of National Integration, he publicly took the PDC into Joaquín Balaguer's camp in April 1966, just 2 months before the latter's election to the Presidency. Observers felt that he had done so primarily because he had determined that there was little future for him in remaining with Bonnelly. Read claimed at the time that he was joining Balaguer with no strings attached to his commitment.

Read ran for the Senate in the 1966 elections but was defeated. According to his own account, he then spent his time trying to give aid or counsel to his many followers who came to seek his help. In September 1966 Read was named an alternate delegate to the 21st Session of the UN General

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Assembly in New York. This appointment was regarded both as a reward for his considerable support of Balaguer and as a genteel form of temporary exile, as suggested to Balaguer by defeated candidate Juan Bosch, in the interest of national tranquility. In February 1967 Read was a delegate to the Third Special Inter-American Conference in Buenos Aires.

In late January 1968, just before the municipal legislative elections, Read withdrew the PDC both from electoral participation and from its alliance with Balaguer's Reformist Party and joined the opposition. He charged the Electoral Board, which refused to recognize his party, and the Dominican Government with closing all doors to opposition parties, and expressed his dissatisfaction with Balaguer's method of governing. For a time he lent his support to the rightist Democratic Quisqueyan Party of Elías Wessin y Wessin. Over the next several months Read continued to express his unhappiness with the Balaguer government, but he was apparently not very active in politics. In August 1968, for unknown reasons, he resigned as president of the PDC. Subsequently, he was named a delegate to the 23rd Session of the UN General Assembly, probably in another attempt to remove him temporarily from the domestic political scene.

Read is described by US officials as extraordinarily articulate and one of the Dominican Republic's most persuasive political speakers. In his leisure time he enjoys painting and wood-carving. He is married to the former Carmen Escobar Rodríguez and is the father of three daughters and a son. He reads and understands some English.

July 1969

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