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CONFIDENTIAL

Pm. 12

PPDC

November 13, 1967

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

Alfonso Arenales, Esquire
American Embassy
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Dear Alfonso:

Ramon Castillo came by this morning to talk politics. This went on for a few hours. He said to assure you that he was not making a special trip to talk to us. He has full confidence in you and the Ambassador, but since he was in town he decided to come by.

He did most of the talking and I listened. In a rambling and wide-ranging conversation the real purpose of his visit did not emerge very clearly, but it seemed to me he wanted to make two points: (1) Perez y Perez should be replaced by Braulio Alvarez; and (2) Balaguer's political situation is deteriorating fast. On the first, I simply let it pass without comment. On the second, he says Balaguer is not using his people within the military or in the PR, and they in turn are disenchanted with him and are defecting. At the same time, Balaguer's efforts to win over some of his opponents, civilian and military, have failed, so he has suffered a sizable net loss in support. In the military, the soldiers do not have beds or adequate clothing and in the cuartels are openly blaming Balaguer for their conditions. "We were better off under Wessin," they are saying, according to Ramon. He believes that the Wessin movement has gathered considerable strength in the armed forces and is potentially dangerous. He also says many in the PR no longer support Balaguer and are turning to other parties, including his own. He does not see a crisis in the immediate future, but the situation is bad and getting worse. He predicts serious trouble for Balaguer before his term is over.

All this he blames on Balaguer, who, he says, is a good theoretician but not a practical politician willing to face up to the realities. I got the impression that Ramon, though still loyal, is a little put out with Balaguer, and that is certainly understandable since Balaguer has now fired him from two jobs.

Group 3

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*Dominican Republic
To - Arenales*

Pol DOM REP - US

DEF 6 DOM REP

Ramon's rambling talk with me lasted about four hours and cannot be described in detail. You have heard it all before, but I did want you to know the main points of the conversation, as he will surely mention it to you.

With best personal regards,

Sincerely,

George E. Brown

ARA/CAR:GEBrown:d1c

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