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ACTION ARA 16

INFO NSA 02, CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSC 10, P 04,
RSC 01, SP 02, SS 25, USIA 12, AID 28, PC 04, E 15, SIL 01, LAB 06,
COM 08, EUR 15, NIC 01, OPR 02, OC 06, CCO 00, DOT 10, O 02, PER 02,
SCA 02, SCS 04, SY 03, FBO 01, SAH 02, RSR 01, /201 W

R 121945Z SEP 68
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6071
INFO AMCONSUL SAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 3658/1 SECTION ONE OF TWO
SUBJECT: CURRENT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE

REF: SD-3410 *POL 2 DOM REP*

1. SUMMARY. SINCE ASSESSMENT CONTAINED REFTEL, SOME OF LISTED PROBLEMS AND PRESSURES FACING GODR OVERCOME AND OTHERS MODIFIED SUFFICIENTLY TO PLACE GODR IN NEW AND SOMEWHAT EASIER POLITICAL POSTURE FOR TIME BEING. HOWEVER, CONTINUED AND IN SOME CASES STRENGTHENED ATTACKS BY OPPOSITION PARTIES, COMBINED WITH NEW AND POSSIBLY MORE SERIOUS LABOR PROBLEMS, WILL MAINTAIN PRESSURES ON GOVERNMENT AND WILL REQUIRE SKILLFUL HAND DEAL WITH THEM. WHILE DEVELOPMENTS THEMSELVES AND ACTION BY BALAGUER MAY HAVE MARKED TEMPORARY CHANGE IN GODR'S PASSIVE AND/OR DEFENSIVE REACTIONS, FUDAMENTAL PROBLEMS AND ISSUES REMAIN ESSENTIALLY SAME.

REFTEL OUTLINED SERIES POLITICAL PROBLEM AREAS AND OTHER PRESSURES WHICH BALAGUER GOVERNMENT FACED AS AUGUST 16 APPROACHED. SINCE THAT DATE, SOME PROBLEMS OVERCOME AND OTHERS MODIFIED SUFFICIENTLY TO PLACE GOVERNMENT IN NEW AND SOMEWHAT BETTER POLITICAL POSTURE, TEMPORARY THOUGHT IT MAY BE. REVIEW AND UPDATED ASSESSMENT CURRENT SITUATION THEREFORE

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DESIRABLE.

3. A. HUNGER STRIKE SELF-STYLED POLITICAL PRISONERS LA VICTORIA AND SANTIAGO PRISONS RECENTLY TERMINATED. COMBINATION GOVERNMENT'S FIRM STANCE AGAINST CONCESSIONS TO STRIKERS, GRADUAL AND FAIRLY QUIET SPEEDING UP OF HEARINGS OF SELECTED CASES "POLITICAL PRISONERS", AND LIMITED PUBLIC SYMPATHY PROVED EFFECTIVE PARTICULARLY IN FURTHERING GENERAL APATHY AND INTERNAL SQUABBLING WHICH BEGAN PERVADE STRIKERS' RANKS. SPLIT IN COMMUNIST SUPPORT FOR STRIKERS PLUS EL NACIONAL'S AND PRD'S DIMINISHING INTEREST IN ISSUE AS STRIKE BEGAN TO FALL APART WERE ADDITIONAL FACTORS IN LEADING TO PROBLEM'S DEMISE. PROBLEM COULD FLARE UP AGAIN, BUT MOVEMENT'S INTERNAL WEAKNESSES AND GOVERNMENT'S STANCE THIS TIME WILL TEND DISCOURAGE MAJOR NEW ATTEMPTS USE THIS PARTICULAR TACTIC.

B. REPORTS NEW RUMBLINGS IN ARMED FORCES, WE BELIEVE, LARGELY PRODUCED BY RUMORS SPREAD BY NIVAR SEIJAS AND HIS COHORTS, AND DO NOT IN OUR JUDGMENT CONSTITUTE IMMEDIATE AND ACUTE DIFFICULTY FOR BALAGUER. PRESIDENT TOLD AMBASSADOR SEPT. 5 HE CONSIDERED RUMORS "THE USUAL THING". WHILE, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT SEE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, AMBITIONS CERTAIN OFFICERS COULD LEAD MORE SERIOUS DISCONTENT AND, AS STATED REFTEL, COULD MATURE INTO MORE SERIOUS PROPORTIONS UNDER RIGHT SET CIRCUMSTANCES.

C. THREE MORE HAITIANS SOUGHT ASYLUM MEXICAN EMBASSY SEPT. 5 CLAIMING SAME REASONS (DUVALIER AGENT AND DR POLICE PERSECUTION) AS THEIR PREDECESSORS IN SEEKING ASYLUM IN VENEZUELAN AND CHILEAN EMBASSIES. MEXICAN AMBASSADOR DENIED HAITIANS ASYLEE STATUS AND TREATED THEM AS VISA APPLICANTS (A-757). THIS DEVICE IS CONTINUING IRRITANT TO GOVERNMENT BUT NOT OF SERIOUS PROPORTIONS ALTHOUGH PRD, PRSC, AND COMMUNISTS FIND IT USEFUL AS MEANS BEATING DRUM AGAINST GOVERNMENT.

D. WIDE-SCALE VIOLENCE IN CONNECTION AUGUST 16 AYUNTAMIENTO CHANGE, REPORTS OF PLANNING FOR WHICH WERE PROBABLY ACCURATE, DID NOT COME OFF IN LARGE PART BECAUSE OF WORKER HESITATION JOIN IN ACTION WHICH CLEARLY WOULD HAVE BEEN MET WITH PROMPT AND STRONG RESPONSE BY GODR. THERE WERE SOME TERRORIST-TYPE ACTIONS, BUT THEY WERE QUITE LIMITED. GENERAL STRIKE CALL NOT HEEDDED PARTIALLY OUT OF INTIMIDATION AND PARTLY BECAUSE THOSE WITH JOBS NOT DISPOSED DO ANYTHING PREJUDICE THEMSELVES. NEW MAYOR'S TROUBLES (AND THEREFORE GODR'S AS WELL) NOT OVER, HOWEVER, AND THESE STILL SIMMER,

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CAREFUL TO QUALIFY. WHILE BALAGUER MAY HAVE HIT TEMPORARY PLATEAU ON WHAT WE VIEWED AS "GRADUAL DOWNHILL SLIDE", IN GOOD MEASURE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS AND ISSUES STILL CONFRONT HIM. DETERMINED OPPOSITION WILL BE EMBOLDENED TAKE NEW INITIATIVES AND ONLY FURTHER SIGNS OF REASSUMPTION FIRM DIRECTION BY BALAGUER WILL SERVE REDUCE THEIR IMPACT.

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