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INFO: Amconsul SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS

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DATE: 22 Sept 68

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Introduction:

The first part of the week was marked by heavy rains (and minor floods) in many areas of Santo Domingo. It appeared that the weather dampened political activity as well; few political issues were dramatic enough to claim headlines, and the capital at least seemed to be taking a breather in anticipation of possible troubles to come (on or after September 30, should Mayor Guarionex LLUBERES fail to pay the dismissed municipal workers by that date, as promised -- WPR #26 and SD A-776). The week's most interesting political controversy centered around the question of whether or not President Balaguer would run for re-election, and a pro-Balaguer movement which quickly flowered and was also quickly disowned by the President (Item 1). Meanwhile, it was a crisis-as-usual at the Autonomous University (Item 3); and the Wessinista PQD kept up its pressure on the Balaguer Government (WPR #26) by continuing its charges of politically-motivated military dismissals (which charges generated statements by Armed Forces Secretary PEREZ y Pérez and a draft law by the PRD's CASIMIRO Castro -- see Item 2).

If lively political issues were relatively scarce this week, the same was not true on the economic side, and headlines were dominated to a large extent by (1) problems related to sugar production

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(President Balaguer and others reaffirmed that the country would meet its U.S. sugar quota, but the President did say that an investigation would be conducted to determine whether U.S.-owned Central Romana Corporation's failure to meet its production goals merited sanctions); (2) charges by the PRSC's Caonabo JAVIER that the State Sugar Council had lost "nearly three million pesos" by allegedly mismanaging sugar sales (this was denied by Gaetán BUCHER, CEA Director, who challenged the PRSC to a public debate -- which the Social Christians declined); (3) the possible sale of some state-owned enterprises (the President denied that this was being contemplated); and (4) the question of GODR participation in a Venezuelan fertilizer plant, whose establishment in the DR reportedly was under consideration (the President expressed himself as "generally" opposed to the GODR entering any new business enterprises in competition with private industry).

Other events during the week included (1) a bomb blast at a local nightclub during the performance of a Cuban-exile troupe; (2) the opening of a new submarine telephone cable by a President-to-President conversation between the DR and Mexico (highlighting Dominican-Mexican Friendship Week); (3) the denial by Balaguer and his service chiefs that the DR might be used as a base for a Haiti-directed invasion; and (4) a press story that a "Ton Ton Macoute" serving in the Dominican "Secret Service" was ejected from the Presidential ante-chamber after he had momentarily obstructed the path of the British Ambassador (National Palace spokesmen and the Secretary of Interior and Police denied the story, claiming that the man in question was neither Haitian nor a "Ton Ton Macoute", but in fact Dominican and a private in the National Police). (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

1. President Terms Re-election Speculation "Premature"

One of the most discussed topics of the week was "will he, or won't he" -- and the President was not saying. First, a group of Reformistas and members of the Independent Movement of Hato Mayor published a "Manifiesto to the Dominican People" proposing the re-election of President Balaguer and Vice President Lora in 1970. Then, on September 16 El Caribe published a letter dated September 6 to President Balaguer from Eleodoro DE LOS SANTOS, announcing his resignation as Chief of the Office of Inspection of the Presidency to devote himself to working for the President's re-election. The De los Santos letter also announced the formation of the "Movimiento Patriótico Acción Nacional del Pueblo Pro-re-elección Presidencial". (A-769).

At mid-week the re-election issue became a subject of debate in the Chamber of Deputies when Victor RAMIREZ Abreu (PR-LaVega) praised the re-election movement and the accomplishments of the Balaguer government. Ambiorix DÍAZ (PRD-Santiago) PRD Chamber leader, criticized Ramírez for raising the issue on the Chamber floor,

saying it was exclusively a Reformista party matter. Earlier Jottin CURY (PRD-National District) reminded the deputies that when the Constitution was being discussed in 1966 the PRD had fought for the inclusion of a specific prohibition against re-election. The discussion ended shortly after Roque BAUTISTA (PR-National District) remarked that at this time all talk about re-election was "pure conjecture" and that, in any case, the Congress was not going to decide anything about the issue.

Early in the week the President would not go beyond his often-repeated comment that it is too early to talk about 1970. However, in response to repeated questions at his regular Wednesday news conference, in addition to repeating that political activities "in that sense" (obviously referring to the re-election movement) are "premature", he said, "(the movement) already is unauthorized because I say I am not in agreement." "I consider them premature activities which contribute to bringing agitation and, as a consequence, to obstructing the economic movement of the country", Balaguer added.

(At week's end, however, de los Santos said his movement was "unauthorized but not prohibited", and that it would continue the re-election fight.)

Although individual PRD members immediately condemned the re-election movement as did PRSC President Caonabo Javier Castillo, the PRD did not officially comment until later in the week when Tribuna Democrática took note of and discounted the President's statement. ^{The} PRD editorial said that by postponing a definitive statement on re-election issue the President was endangering the peace of the country as well as whatever chances Vice-President Lora might have in 1970, noting that while Lora was opposing the Triumvirate, the President was in exile. The statement added that if Balaguer decides to run or shows that he intends to run the PRD would be "with the people in taking more appropriate measures".

As for another possible candidate in 1970, Dominican Ambassador to France Rafael MOLINA Ureña was quick to deny reports that he would soon resign his position in order to boom the candidacy of his "good friend", Ambassador (to the U.S.) Héctor GARCIA-GODOY (SD-3698). (UNCLASSIFIED)

2. PQD Keeps up the Pressure

Fallout from last week's PQD attacks on the Balaguer Administration continued this week. Colonel Miguel A. HERNANDO Ramírez, former Military Attaché at the Dominican Embassy in Quito, claimed that the Wessinista sympathizers recently separated from the Armed Forces had been plotting against the government and said their cancellations were entirely justifiable. Asked about Col. HERNANDO's pronouncement at his weekly press conference, President Balaguer refused to comment.

The President scoffed at the draft bill proposed by Senator CASIMIRO Castro which would prevent the separation of career military officers on political grounds. The bill, a response to PQD charges that military personnel had been separated because of their Wessinista sympathies, was summarily dismissed by President Balaguer as "an absurd project that does not even deserve comment".

The PQD carried its campaign to secure Gen. WESSIN y Wessin's return one step further this week. Party leaders submitted to officials of the OAS in Santo Domingo on September 17, 1968, a copy of the letter sent to the Supreme Court (WPR #26) and petitioned an OAS judgement on the legality of the restrictions prohibiting the return of the PQD president. This petition was also the subject of questions at the Presidential press conference. The President replied, "that is the concern of the OAS, not mine". In other activity this week the PQD accused the Partido Reformista of controlling and corrupting the National Police. (UNCLASSIFIED)

3. FEPROUASD Fears "Grave Crisis" at UASD

UASD Rector Andrés AYBAR Nicolás this week denied charges by the recently-formed Federation of Professors of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (FEPROUASD) that a "grave crisis" existed which could close the school. The published FEPROUASD declaration said that "external enemies" of the UASD and other persons "foreign to the University" are breaking up the University's "teaching, academic and administrative life with the deliberate aim of provoking its closure". Among the specific complaints made by the Federation was the charge that these persons had committed "aggression" of various kinds against ten named professors and others. The professors strongly hinted that the Rector and the Consejo were not doing enough to impose order and to stop anarchy. (SD A-773). (UNCLASSIFIED)

COMMENT: Rector Aybar, clearly unhappy over the FEPROUASD allegations and the fact that they had been made public apparently without his knowledge, indicated to the press that he soon would invite the Federation's Board of Directors to a meeting of the Consejo to discuss "problems" and to "suggest forms of improving discipline" at the University. Although the reported postponement of the beginning of the next semester until early January may have a salutary effect on life at the UASD, it seems likely that the University will be faced with persistent internal problems as long as the various student groups as well as some professors and administrators continue to view all aspects of university life through glasses heavily tinted with political colors. (SD A-773) (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. PRD Notes

The Partido Revolucionario passed a quiet week, both in actions and announcements. The JRD (the PRD's youth wing) National District

Committee's convention was held as scheduled, and was unaccompanied by the usual arrests or charges of police harassment. When it was over, the following officers had been elected: Secretary General, Frank RODRIGUEZ; Secretary of Organization, Miguel ANDUJAR; Secretary of Culture and Education, Nelson MARTES; Secretary of Press and Propaganda, Rafael MENA Castro; Secretary of Student Affairs, Miguel VARGAS; Secretary of Labor Affairs, Roberto GONZALEZ ("Muñita"); and Secretary of the Women's Branch, Maria BADIA.

Later in the week, the party radio program announced that the PRD's National District Committee had formed a permanent commission consisting of Organization Secretary Aridio GARCIA de Leon and several other PRD and JRD leaders, to "reorganize" the party in the capital area. The program also editorialized (rather belatedly) against the President's statement on re-election (Item 1); but in general the PRD radio voice was rather well modulated this week, and stridency was notably missing (like the local press, the program seemed to devote most of its attention to economic issues).

What little news the party made was mostly produced by Senator CASIMIRO Castro (PRD, Pedernales), who tabled a draft law designed to prevent the politically-motivated separation of Armed Forces and National Police members (Item 2), and made his own pronouncement on the re-election issue (he was opposed to any re-election, he said, "including that of Juan BOSCH"); he added that should Balaguer continue in power after 1970, a dictatorship "worse than that of Trujillo" would be the result. Professor Bosch also received some gratuitous criticism from the Social Christians' Caonabo Javier, who declared that Bosch's judgement that the future of Latin America was "Castro-type" revolution (WPR #24) was "a solemn stupidity".

COMMENT: While the JRD's National District convention produced no notable friction with the forces of law and order, it appeared that things were not so calm inside party headquarters. A PRD source said that the pro-Soviet Partido Socialista Popular (PSP) had infiltrated the meeting, and that some PSP infiltrators had been proposed for election. These apparently were all defeated, amid a caloric debate that at one point resulted in the thorough beating of a PSP member by JRDers. Some time ago the JRD's problems with extreme leftist infiltration caused it to announce "reorganization" plans, and it is possible that the most recent attempt to "reorganize" the PRD National District Committee is related to the same issue.
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