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TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA 16

INFO CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPM 03, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10, P 04,

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4900
INFO AMCONSUL SAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS 743

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2103

SUBJECT: RUMORED PLAN TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS

1. NACIONAL MARCH 24 REPORTED PRD SEC GEN PENA GOMEZ DENIED REPORT (GIVEN PREVIOUS DAY OVER LOCAL RADIO STATION) THAT PR HAD APPROACHED PRD RE FORMING BIPARTISAN FRONT IN CONGRESS TO POSTPONE MAY ELECTIONS BY AMENDMENT 1966 CONSTITUTION. IN DENYING REPORT, PENA SAID HAD NEITHER OFFICIAL NOR UN-OFFICIAL CONTACT WITH GODR MV PR. ADDED, HOWEVER, IF HAD RECEIVED PROPOSITION "WOULD HAVE STUDIED IT."

2. NOTWITHSTANDING PENA'S DENIAL, NACIONAL CLAIMED THERE HAD BEEN MEETING OF SEC W/O PORTFOLIO POLIBIO DIAZ, SD CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT ARES MALDONADO, AND "TWO HIGH PRD LEADERS,"

AT WHICH DIAZ SUPPOSED HAVE PROPOSED PRD SUPPORT GODR IN AMENDING CONSTITUTION TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS UNTIL DECEMBER.

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ACCORDING NACIONAL PRD POL COMM REJECTED PLAN IN EMERGENCY SESSION MARCH 20, ON GROUNDS WOULD SET PRECEDENT WHICH PR MIGHT USE TO POSTPONE 1970 ELECTIONS ALSO, AND CONTINUE ITSELF IN POWER. POL COMM SUPPOSEDLY SAID PURPOSE POSTPONEMENT NOT CREATE BETTER ELECTORAL CLIMATE, AS GODR SPOKESMEN HAD ARGUED, BUT CONTINUE SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION ALL OPPOSITION.

3. POL COMM PRESIDENT JOTTIN CURY TOLD EMBOFFS MARCH 25 HE KNOWS

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NOTHING OF SUPPOSED OFFER, HAD ASKED NA IF APPROACH HAD BEEN MADE, PENA DENIED IT HAD. WHEN ASKED BY PRESS, CURY SAID IF SUCH APPROACH WERE MADE, WOULD OPPOSE IT ON GROUNDS AMENDING CONSTITUTION WOULD SET DANGEROUS PRECEDENT.

4. ARES MALDONADO, RECENTLY PROPOSED BY INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT AS CANDIDATE SANTO DOMINGO MAYOR, MADE STATEMENT PRD RADIO PROGRAM MARCH 25 IN WHICH REJECTED CANDIDACY BECAUSE PUT PARTY DISCIPLINE ABOVE PERSONAL AMBITION, WOULD THEREFORE CONFORM TO ABSTENTION DECISION PRD FIFTH NATL CONVENTION.

5. COMMENT: NACIONAL STORY DIFFERS FROM ACCOUNT PRESIDENT GAVE AMBASSADOR MARCH 21, WHEN BALAGUER SAID (IN STRICT CONFIDENCE) PRD HAD APPROACHED HIM WITH SUGGESTION PR, PRD

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COOPERATE IN CONGRESS TO AMEND CONSTITUTION TO CANCEL MAY ELECTIONS (WHICH ARE UNIQUE AS MID-TERM ELECTIONS). BALAGUER DID NOT REVEAL WHO IN PRD HAD MADE APPROACH AND THIS NOT INDICATED BY OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMB. PENA GOMEZ REPORTED DISCLAIMER OF COURSE NOT NECESSARILY TO BE TAKEN FACE VALUE. WE HAVE TOO LITTLE INFORMATION ON WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED TO DO MORE THAN SPECULATE ON POSSIBLE PRD MOTIVATION IN THIS CASE. ONE OBVIOUS POSSIBILITY IS, OF COURSE, PRD INTEREST IN PRESERVATION PATRONAGE BASE IN MUNICIPALITIES IT NOW CONTROLS (CERTAIN LOSS OF THIS BASE WOULD SEEM HAVE BEEN ONE OF MOST PAINFUL ASPECTS OF PARTY'S ABSTENTION STRATEGY). THIS WOULD, AS WELL, DENY SOCIAL CHRISTIANS OPPORTUNITY (EAGERLY ANTICIPATED BY PRSC LEADER CADNABO JAVIER) TO DEMONSTRATE EXISTENCE SUBSTANTIAL BASE FOR PRSC. WITH COMPLETE FREEDOM CONTINUE ATTACKING BALAGUER GOVERNMENT, PH

WOULD IN EFFECT BE ABLE HAVE CAKE AND EAT IT.
DECEMBER DATE MENTIONED IN NACIONAL STORY UNEXPLAINED.
WHOEVER GAVE STORY TO NACIONAL, LATTER PREDICTABLE EXPLOITED IT AGAINST GOVERNMENT.

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