

## WITHDRAWAL NOTICE

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Withdrawn: 10-09-2003 by: Ray Hess

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3393

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S PRE-CONSULTATION CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT

1. FOLLOWING NOT CLEARED BY AMBASSADOR BEFORE DEPARTURE.
2. AMBASSADOR HAD FAR-RANGING 80-MINUTE CONVERSATION ON POLITICAL AND MILITARY TOPICS WITH PRESIDENT APRIL 27. PRESIDENT WAS RELAXED AND FRANK THROUGHOUT, FORESAW NO IMMEDIATE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS, DID NOT REACT DEFENSIVELY (AS HE HAS OCCASIONALLY IN PAST) TO ANY QUESTION OR OBSERVATION ON TOUCHY ISSUES, AND GAVE OVERALL IMPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS STRENGTH AND HIS ABILITY HANDLE WHATEVER MAY COME UP. CONVERSATION WAS MARKED BY ATMOSPHERE OF QUIET FRIENDLINESS AND, AT SOME POINTS, JOVIALITY.

2. AMB FIRST DISPOSED OF VARIOUS INCIDENTAL TOPICS, INCLUDING ISSUE OF UN ARREARS [REDACTED] AND SUPPLIED BALAGUER WITH NAMES PROMISED EARLIER OF AIR FORCE OFFICERS AT SAN ISIDRO WHO [REDACTED] HAVE BEEN TALKING STRONGLY AGAINST ADMINISTRATION.

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3. AGAINST BACKDROP AMB'S IMMINENT DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON, AND NOTING WASHINGTON WOULD BE INTERESTED IN PRESIDENT'S CURRENT EVALUATION HIS OWN POSITION, AMB ASKED PRESIDENT FOR HIS ESTIMATE OF CURRENT SITUATION AND OF PROBLEMS NOW EXISTING OR THAT MAY DEVELOP.

4. PRESIDENT STATED SITUATION HAS BECOME "NORMALIZED," EXPLAINING HE MEANT BY THIS THAT MACHINERY OF OPPOSITION NOW APPARENTLY GOING INTO ACCELERATED OPERATION, AT LEAST IN SENSE IT NOW PREPARED TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF AND EXPLOIT ANY ELEMENT OF SITUATION THAT MAY BE USEFUL TO ITS VARIED PURPOSES. THIS, AS [REDACTED] TRADITIONAL HERE, PRESIDENT SAID. DISSATISFIED ELEMENTS ARE ALWAYS JOCKEYING FOR ADVANTAGE, IF

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NOT POWER, AND BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT ARE NOW ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS PRECEPT. PRESIDENT ESTIMATED TROUBLESOME ELEMENTS INCLUDED COMMUNISTS, OTHER RADICAL LEFT-WING ELEMENTS, TRADITIONAL RIGHTIST DISCONTENTS, SOME MILITARY ELEMENTS, AND "RADICALIZED" URBAN YOUTH GROUPS, PARTICULARLY IN SANTO DOMINGO. HE DID NOT FEEL, HOWEVER, THAT ANY SINGLE ELEMENT OF OPPOSITION AS IT NOW EXISTS, OR ANY ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL COMBINATION THESE ELEMENTS, PRESENTLY POSES SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO STABILITY OF GOVT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED OPPOSITION HAS CONSIDERABLE MISCHIEF-MAKING POTENTIAL, BUT

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STRONGLY AGREED WITH AMB'S OBSERVATION THAT BULK OF MILITARY, MOST IMPORTANT FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS, AND POPULATION AT LARGE SEEM SATISFIED WITH HIS LEADERSHIP AND CONSTITUTE SIGNIFICANT PILLARS OF SUPPORT FOR HIS ADMINISTRATION.

5. AMB NOTED MULTITUDE OF RUMORS CIRCULATING IN PREVIOUS FEW DAYS, PARTICULARLY THOSE HOLDING US HAS DECIDED WITHDRAW SUPPORT FROM BALAGUER AND IS CASTING ITS LOT WITH ONE OR ANOTHER SUPPOSED ALTERNATIVE. PRESIDENT LAUGHED AT THIS, STATING EVERYONE SEEMED TO BE TALKING THIS WAY, AND RECOUNTED INTELLIGENCE REPORT GIVEN HIM FEW DAYS BEFORE TO EFFECT PENA GOMEZ HAD TELEPHONED VENEZUELAN SECTION OF PRD IN CARACAS TO TELL IT US WAS WITHDRAWING SUPPORT FROM BALAGUER AND WAS ARRANGING SITUATION WHEREBY VICE PRES LORA WOULD ACCEDE TO PRESIDENCY. PERSON AT CARACAS END OF LINE RESPONDED "BUT THAT WOULD BE WORSE," PRESIDENT ADDED WITH CHUCKLE, STATING PERSON HAD ASKED PENA GOMEZ TO SEND LIST OF PERSONS KILLED AND BEATEN BY SECURITY FORCES HE HAD PROMISED AS AID TO STEPPED UP PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. BALAGUER ATTRIBUTED ALL THIS TO BOSCH WHO, HE SAID, HAS INSTRUCTED PRD HERE TO STEP UP ITS CAPAIGN ABROAD TO CORRESPOND WITH HIS OWN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IN EUROPE.

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6. CONCERNING PRD, AMB ASKED PRES FOR HIS ESTIMATE OF EFFECT PRD'S RADICAL LEADERSHIP HAD HAD ON PARTY, AND TOLD PRES WE HAD HEARD RECENTLY (FROM SACHA VOLMAN) OF PLANS FOR REORGANIZATION OF PRD'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WITH ANTONIO GUZMAN'S NAME HAVING BEEN MENTIONED FOR NEW SECGEN. (WE HAD HEARD OF PLANS TO THIS EFFECT FOR SOME WEEKS, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS FIRST TIME GUZMAN'S NAME MENTIONED). PRES SAID HE BELIEVED PRD HAD SUFFERED CONSIDERABLE EROSION ITS FORMER STRENGTH, ESPECIALLY AROUND COUNTRY, ALTHOUGH FELT IT STILL STRONG WITH URBAN YOUTH OF

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CAPITAL. AMB AGREED THIS SEEMED BE CASE, BUT PRES AGREED IN TURN WITH OBSERVATION AT LEAST PART THIS APPARENT EROSION MAY IN FACT BE TACTICAL FALL-OFF FROM PARTY BE ELEMENTS REPELLED BY PARTY'S CURRENT LINE OR FOR OTHER REASONS. PRES ACKNOWLEDGED THERE MAY STILL BE STRONG PRD IN BACKGROUND WAITING CHANGE OF PARTY LINE OR FORTUNES. PRES NOTED VERY GOOD, OR AT LEAST RECOVERABLE, ELEMENTS REMAIN IN PARTY OR ON ITS FRINGES WHO COULD SERVE USEFUL PURPOSE IF IT MODERATED ITS STANCE. HELD THAT INDIVIDUALS LIKE JOTTIN CURY, EMANUEL ESPINAL AND POSSIBLY PENA GOMEZ NO LONGER SALVAGEABLE, HOWEVER, TO SAY NOTHING OF GAMUNDI "WHO HAS BEEN COMMUNIST FOR SOME TIME."

7. WITH REGARD TO OPPOSITION IN GENERAL, AMB ASKED PRES

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IF HE FELT RESTRICTED IN ANY WAY IN HIS DEALINGS WITH IT OR, FOR THAT MATTER, IN ANY OTHER ASPECT OF HIS OPERATIONS BY PRESSURES FROM MILITARY AND/OR POLICE OR OTHER ELEMENTS WITHIN HIS ADMINISTRATION. PRES STRONGLY AND CATEGORICALLY RESPONDED "ABSOLUTELY NOT," AND REPEATED THIS BEFORE EXPLAINING THAT EXCEPT FOR KNOWN TROUBLEMAKERS AT SAN ISIDRO AND A FEW OTHER FRINGE ELEMENTS WHICH HE DID NOT IDENTIFY, MILITARY WERE BEHAVING PROPERLY AND RESPONDING FAITHFULLY TO HIS DIRECTION. HE STATED HE FELT HIMSELF COMPLETELY FREE TO MAKE WHATEVER CHANGES HE CONSIDERED NECESSARY IN MILITARY, INCLUDING AT SAN ISIDRO, ALTHOUGH NOTED THAT CHANGES THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED "TACTFULLY." AMB ASKED IF THIS HELD TRUE FOR CONTINUED EFFORTS TOWARD MILITARY REFORM ALONG LINES REVIEWED WITH PRES AND MILITARY CHIEFS LAST YEAR, AND INQUIRED FURTHER AS TO WHETHER PRES STILL INTERESTED IN PURSUING REFORM INITIATIVES AS SUGGESTED. PRES REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY ON BOTH COUNTS, STATING HE AMENABLE TO GETTING ON WITH REFORM PROGRAM AND INDICATING USEFULNESS OF SCHEDULING FURTHER MEETINGS ON SUBJECT WITH MILITARY CHIEFS.

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8. HAVING IN MIND RUMORS OF ALLEGED US WITHDRAWAL OF SUPPORT FROM BALAGUER, AND AS INTRODUCTION TO OBSERVATION ON SENSITIVE ISSUE OF ALLEGED TRUJILLISMO, AMB REASSURED PRES OF OUR CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR HIS GOVT, NOTED OUR SATISFACTION WITH OVERALL TENOR HIS ECONOMIC POLICIES, AND EXPRESSED HIS OWN

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PERSONAL POSITION OF SUPPORT AND REGARD FOR PRES. AMB THEN NOTED THAT OPPOSITION CHARGES OF TRUJILLISMO SEEMED TO BE HAVING SOME EFFECT, AND THAT WHILE HE RECOGNIZED THAT SUCH CHARGES EXAGGERATED, THIS WAS AN ISSUE ON WHICH GOVT WAS VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION BY DIFFERENT POLITICAL GROUPS FOR THEIR OWN PARTISAN ADVANTAGE. WE HAD, FOR INSTANCE, RECENTLY RECEIVED INDICATIONS, AMB CONTINUED, OF SOME ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL UNHAPPINESS IN MILITARY CIRCLES OVER REPORTED REINSTATEMENT OF SOME TRUJILLISTA OFFICERS IN ARMED FORCES. AMB THEN SOUGHT PRES' S VIEWS ON EFFECT THESE CHARGES MAY BE HAVING.

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