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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : AMCONSUL, SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS

FROM : AMEMBASSY, SANTO DOMINGO

DATE: Feb. 8, 1 968

SUBJECT : UCN President Reports Difficulties in Obtaining Electoral Recognition

REF :

Transmitted herewith is a memorandum reporting a conversation between Dr. Abel Fernandez Simo, Acting President of the Unión Cívica Nacional (UCN), and Consul Lewis Kert, in Santiago de los Caballeros.

The thrust of Dr. Fernández' remarks was that he is worried that the UCN's request for recognition by the Central Electoral Board (JCE) may not be approved to permit the party's participation in the May 16 municipal elections. He alleges that strong resistance to recognition of the UCN exists in the Presidency, in the JCE, and in the JCE's inspection group. Dr. Fernández, an opponent of an electoral alliance with the Wessinista PQD, is obviously concerned lest an unrecognized UCN disintegrate in the face of a PQD campaign.

CRIMMINS

J.H.C.
by F.J.D.att
Enclosures:

1. Memorandum of Conversation
2. Letter to President dtd. Jan. 9, 1968
3. Letter to President dtd. Jan. 17, 1968

thermo-faxed copies

GROUP 3

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Santo Domingo A-419
Enclosure No. 1
Page 1

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Memorandum of Conversation

January 30, 1968

Participants: Dr. Abel Fernández Simó, President, Unión Cívica Nacional
Lewis Kert, Consul, Santiago de los Caballeros

Place: Home of Dr. Fernández, San Francisco de Macoris

Subject: U.C.N. Problems with the Junta Central Electoral

Kert called on Dr. Fernández at his home in San Francisco to discuss current developments in the U.C.N.

Dr. Fernández was preoccupied with the question of the party's recognition by the Junta Central Electoral. He claimed that strong resistance to this recognition exists at three levels:

1. The Presidency. Fernández claims that President Balaguer does not want the U.C.N. recognized (Fernández was evasive in response to the question of why the President does not want the party certified), and consequently has denied funds to the Junta so that they are unable to pay Inspector's per diem, or provide them transportation.
2. The Junta itself. Fernández says that Junta member Joaquin Castillo is "Trujillista from the tip of his toes to the top of his head", indicating that in itself this is sufficient reason for him to be violently anti-cívico. Also characterized as opposed to U.C.N. recognition were Lic. Danilo Santana, legal advisor to the Junta, and Sr. Adams, Secretary of the J.C.E.
3. The Inspectors of the J.C.E. These worthies, charged with spot verification of the names submitted by the party as members, demand--according to Dr. Fernández--bribes to pursue their task. Fernández lamented the party's lack of funds, and indicated a disposition to pay bribes if the money was at hand. (In this connection, he said the party had promises from "certain sectors" of substantial campaign contributions if the U.C.N. is recognized.)

Fernández provided copies (see attached) of two recent letters he had sent to the J.C.E. delineating some of the complaints above, and requesting fair and expeditious resolution of the party's request for

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Santo Domingo A-419
Enclosure No. 1
Page 2

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certification. He said the 83,000 names submitted (only 40,300 were required) were new inscriptions--bona fide and accurate, allowing for a small margin of human error in recording.

In light of rumors of a U.C.N-P.Q.D. alliance (see Ferch-Castillo Memcon dated January 24, 1968), an attempt was made to solicit Dr. Fernández' views, with poor results. He reiterated the necessity of J.C.E. recognition, and said without it the party would not be in a position to make alliances; if recognition is not made prior to February 16, the party will "place its supporters at liberty--to vote as they see fit." With recognition, alliances are possible: With the P.Q.D. in some locations; with Independent parties in Santiago (Movimiento Independiente Conciliatorio of Oscar Estrella Sahdala) and in La Vega.

Fernández, in a final comment on the P.Q.D., said they planned, if Balaguer did not permit Wessin's entry "soon", to make Wessin a candidate for office in the National District to force the President's hand.

Comment: Dr. Fernández, whether because of ideology or personal ambition, is single-minded in his desire to maintain the U.C.N. as a political entity. Without J.C.E. recognition of the party, he is apparently disposed to throw in the towel. In any case, for him, an alliance with the P.Q.D. is neither profitable nor desirable.

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