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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

INFO : Amconsulate SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS

FROM : Amembassy SANTO DOMINGO

SUBJECT : PRSC Charges Spark New Wessinista Controversy

REF :

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 1967

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
OCT 24 1967

1. Charging that high officials of the Armed Forces are carrying out a proselytizing campaign in favor of ex-General Elías Wessin y Wessin, the PRSC touched off another round of Wessinista controversy on October 12. According to the Social Christians, they were prepared to prove the existence of such a movement, and, as their first evidence, they cited the appearance of cards bearing the ex-CEFA chief's picture and a cross (with the title, "Wessin, the Christ of Liberty"). These cards, they alleged, are being used as safe-conduct passes by party members in many areas.

2. Major General Enrique Perez y Perez, the Armed Forces Secretary, promptly and "categorically" denied the PRSC charges and declared that the military would remain apolitical, "let it cost what it costs." He stated that he had no knowledge of any such Wessinista activities, adding that the Social Christians should have published the names of those officers supposedly involved.

3. At his October 15 press conference, President Balaguer also commented, backing up the statements of the Armed Forces Secretary and dismissing the PRSC accusations as "pure propaganda." The Government and the Armed Forces are "absolutely and totally" united, he declared, although not discarding the possibility that some officer might be engaged in pro-Wessin activities.

4. Meanwhile, the Social Christians replied with two statements, front-paged by El Nacional. On October 14, Press and Propaganda Secretary Rafael Martínez G. declared that there was no need for the party to name names, for the President and Armed Forces--as well as the general public--"know perfectly well" which military

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Drafted by:

POL:JJYule/sch 10-21-67

Clearances:

POL:JWWilson

Contents and Classification Approved by:

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Page 2

officers are working for Wessin. Finally, on October 18, PRSC Secretary General Caonabo Javier C. denied a supposed rumor that the party had in fact submitted a list of pro-Wessin military officers to the Government, resulting in immediate cancellations of the offending officials.

5. Comment: According to PRSC sources, what was meant as a "routine" denunciation got "somewhat out of hand." The party's intention had been merely to focus attention on a significant problem of the Government, they said, and the party possesses no hard proofs (by name, date, etc.) to back up its statements, as Javier admitted when interviewed by El Nacional of October 18.

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