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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# AIRGRAM

*George Brown*  
*POL 12 DOM REP*

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A-77

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TO : Department of State DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : Amconsulate SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS

RS/AN  
ANALYSIS BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF  
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
AUG 15 1967  
*Carroll*

FROM : Amembassy SANTO DOMINGO DATE: August 6, 1967

SUBJECT : Power Shift Creates Disarray in PRD

REF :

### SUMMARY

A significant, if only temporary, shift in the public posture of the PRD has clearly taken place over the past two months. This followed and was brought on by the sudden collapse of the PRD's efforts to attract support for a broad opposition front to the Balaguer Government at the height of the terrorism of late April and early May and by the subsequent reassertion of moderate influence in the party in connection with the return to Congress of the PRD delegation which had withdrawn in protest over the terrorist attack on PRD Senator Casimiro Castro. The culmination of the moderates' upsurge was the election of moderate Virgilio Mainardi Reyna as Vice Secretary General to act in the current absence abroad of Secretary General Peña Gómez. The present ascendancy of the moderates and the moderation of the party's line has not been accepted nor gone unchallenged by the more radical and youth sectors of the party for whom Jottin Cury and Rafael Gamundi are the principal spokesmen. On the basis of past performance, it is dubious that the continued truculence and intransigence of the radicals can be withstood for long by the moderates, who may be inclined to accommodation rather than confrontation. Moreover, Bosch, while still abroad, continues to be a key element, as each faction seeks his acceptance of its views on developments and party strategy and tactics. In terms of policy, this probably means that the

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PRD will continue to run a zig-zag course until and unless some over-riding circumstance unites the party again.

\* \* \* \* \*

1. Until May 20, the political behavior of the leadership of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano appeared to be based on two related considerations: (a) that the constitutional government of Joaquin Balaguer could not overcome the force of history to survive the period of its mandate; (b) that the PRD's own ambitions to power would be best served by hastening the demise of the Balaguer government, thus creating a new situation subject to new exploitative tactics. These considerations were never formally adopted by the PRD as policy or even as policy guidelines, and there almost certainly was not a consensus within the party that they should serve as such. Nevertheless, radical elements of the PRD, who gained practical control of the party at the October 1966 national convention (SD 1361), apparently were in agreement as to their validity, and on this basis planned and conducted an intensive opposition campaign designed to exacerbate political passions and to create a monolithic front of opposition to the Balaguer government. The issues chosen as a framework for the public campaign, i.e., atropellos, renascent Trujillismo, government-tolerated terrorism, etc., were all grossly distorted and inflated but had enough basis in fact and history to make the campaign potent and sustainable, at least for a limited period of time. On May 15, apparently judging that the terrorism crisis that began on April 28 had not yet run its course, the PRD made its major play, issuing a public call for all patriotic Dominicans to unite with the PRD in an opposition movement, the implied objective of which would be overthrow of the Balaguer government (SD A-595). Five days later, after only the assorted communist parties had endorsed the PRD initiative, Secretary General José Francisco PEÑA Gómez quietly announced that the PRD had decided to defer organization of the opposition front.

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2. The collapse of the PRD initiative probably was due to a combined variety of factors: Extremely poor timing, lack of adequate advance coordination, a sudden retreat to reason by previously conspiratorial or potentially conspiratorial political conservatives, forceful opposition by influential segments of public opinion to any anti-constitutional adventure, and a realization and rejection of the implied goal of the proposed front by a significant number of moderate PRD leaders. The depth and intensity of this internal PRD opposition to the

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party's public position, however, became clear only in the following week when the PRD legislative bloc, against the strident opposition of Minority Leader Jottin CURY, forced the party to issue a virtual vote of confidence in Balaguer by approving the bloc's return to Congress (SD-3740), from which it had walked out following the early May terrorist attack on Senator CASIMIRO Castro. An additional but no less significant element in the PRD retreat was the timely reiteration of U.S. support for Balaguer represented by the increase in the Dominican Republic's sugar quota allocation. The point to be made here, however, is that in "deferring" organization of the united opposition front, the PRD in effect conceded the strength and survivability of the Balaguer government and, at least for the time being, abandoned a course whose logical goal seemed to be attainment of power through non-constitutional means.

3. The May 20 announcement and the subsequent return to Congress of the PRD legislative bloc connoted a shift of the balance of power within the PRD in favor of the party's moderate wing. This shift was confirmed with the election as PRD Vice Secretary General of José Virgilio MAINARDI Reyna over the candidacies of Jottin Cury and Rafael GAMUNDI Cordero (SD A-634), and with the election of representatives of the moderate wing to fill most of the other newly-created positions on the National Executive Committee. It was further demonstrated by a number of unusual PRD statements of respect for President Balaguer and expressions of restrained optimism over the future of the PRD even under the Balaguer government. The most significant of these, of course, was the completely unexpected statement of Secretary General Peña Gómez as he departed for Europe on June 16 (SD A-669). Peña Gómez' almost gratuitous praise of Balaguer on this occasion was interpreted as an intended affront to the PRD radicals whom he had tried hard to mollify, and was regarded as the final proof that the PRD officially had come to believe that its own best interests dictated the need for a reasonable modus vivendi with Balaguer.

4. The sudden change toward reason, moderation and optimism in the PRD line was the cause of considerable relief in the nation, which only a few weeks earlier had passed through the most serious and alarming crisis since Balaguer's inauguration. The President himself took public note of the new PRD attitude (SD 3883) and stated his hope that it would continue to develop to the point at which a real, continuing PRD-government dialogue might be undertaken. The PRD moderates, and particularly the influential Cibao group, appeared elated over the apparent success of this first real effort to assert themselves since the radicals seized control of the party at the October election, and they waxed enthusiastic and optimistic over the party's future electoral strength which would grow as the result of the reorganization and rebuilding tasks that now could be undertaken effectively.

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5. However, just as many observers had overlooked the potential force of the PRD moderates during the period of radical control of the party, so were they now inclined, in view of the shift toward the moderate sector, to dismiss out of hand the still substantial influence and strength of the party's radicals. Only one prominent political figure, Secretary of Industry and Commerce (and influential PRD dissident) José BREA Peña, publicly observed that while the official PRD attitude seemed to have changed for the better, whether the attitude was harshly negative or moderate and constructive really depended on who was speaking for the PRD.

6. Brea Peña's observation was well taken. Having only sullenly accepted the legislative bloc's return to Congress, and having concurred in the election of Mainardi with the greatest reluctance, the PRD left wing made clear immediately that it did not endorse and would not honor the shift in party position. This did not necessarily mean that the left wing would continue the conspiratorial activity in which it is widely believed to have been engaged; it did mean that regardless of the position taken by the PRD, the party's left wing would continue its "resolute and revolutionary," across-the-board opposition to Balaguer. This was demonstrated dramatically on June 19 when Rafael Gamundi, speaking on Tribuna Democrática, pointedly contradicted earlier Mainardi statements on the improved political situation and outlook as a result of a change in the behavior of the Balaguer administration. In effect, Gamundi warned PRD members not to be deluded by false prophets or tactics of confusion. The government has not abandoned its plans for the physical elimination of all "constitutionalists," he said, so true PRD members must continue to prepare for the inevitable revolution. Similar statements, all conflicting with or contradicting the official PRD position of the moment, have been issued frequently by Jottin Cury, José de Mariano Peña, Almánzor González, Gamundi, and other radical leaders.

7. These same leaders, and particularly Cury and Gamundi, in league with Ahora and El Nacional publisher Rafael MOLINA Morillo, have mounted a press campaign to undercut the authority of Mainardi and to discredit the proponents of moderation within the PRD. This is conducted in the form of frequent publication of "reports" and "analyses," attributed to unnamed PRD sources, which tie the return to Congress, the election of Mainardi, the shift in the party line, even the naming of Miss World as an Honorary Citizen of Santo Domingo to an imaginary U.S. Government plot to corrupt and subvert the PRD. Additional elements of the campaign have included filing of charges by PRD youth leaders against nine party moderates, allegedly for having conspired to betray the principles of "revolutionary nationalism," and the public urging of a local PRD sub-committee that the party eject the "rightist, Balaguerista" Mainardi and name Cury, "true representative of the PRD masses," as its leader.

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8. Perhaps not an integral part of the same campaign but demonstrating vividly the most extreme position within the radical bloc are recent public statements of JRD (Juventud Revolucionario Dominicano) and FUSD (Frente Universitario Social Democratica) leaders reiterating PRD youth's rejection of the concepts of representative democracy, its disdain for elections as an approach to social change, its conviction that the revolutionary process in Latin America must necessarily follow a violent path, and its recognition of Cuba and the Cuban revolution as the example Latin American democrats, students, workers, and exploited classes must follow (Embassy's A-76).

9. The truculence of the PRD radicals may be an expression of sheer frustration and humiliating impotence with roots in the 1963 golpe de estado and the failure of the PRD to regain control of the government either with the 1965 revolution or through the 1966 elections. It is also a serious and direct challenge to the moderates for the right and power to determine what sort of a party the PRD is going to be, now in opposition and, theoretically, at some later date in the government.

10. Mainardi and the moderates he represents are not of a single mind as to how to meet this challenge. Mainardi himself has reacted defensively to radical assertions that he lacks the revolutionary qualities needed to lead the PRD, and he has tried hard to balance off his moderating statements with more revolutionary-sounding declarations. He has also pointedly avoided taking any serious disciplinary measures against his detractors or against those party members who publicly contradict or attack the new moderated position of the PRD, and from this it is inferred that Mainardi prefers to try to accommodate rather than confront the radicals. However, there are some influential moderates, reportedly including Antonio Guzmán, who had hoped to exploit the opportunity created by Mainardi's temporary control of the PRD to force a showdown with party extremists, the intended outcome of which would be either the extremists' acceptance of the moderate party line or their expulsion or resignation from the party. One manifestation of this willingness to force a showdown was in the recent filing of charges of "disruptive activities" against Jottin Cury by the same group the JRD has accused of conspiring against the party. Another was in the threat of PRD Deputy Eliseo ROMEO Pérez to sue for slander a group of party colleagues who had accused him of defending the lauded oligarchy in a dispute with PRD-affiliated campesinos.

11. It must be recognized, however, that with very few exceptions, those who figure prominently in the moderate group have not shown themselves to possess the courage, vigor, and skill needed to do successful battle with the aggressive and ably led radicals. The moderates did not concur in the positions adopted at the radical-packed October convention but were unwilling to expose themselves by demanding that a new convention

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be called. They did not agree with the expulsion of Enriquillo DEL ROSARIO and MOLINA Ureña from the PRD but were unwilling to rise to the defense of these two respected and relatively moderate leaders. They found the PRD declaration of February 4 to be hysterical but would say so only privately and to trusted friends. Many disagreed with the wording and implication of the March 3 declaration, which they regarded as a hostile and belligerent response to a rather conciliatory speech of Balaguer on February 26, but even those over whose names the declaration was published made no protest. It was not until May, when the adventures of the radicals in the name of the PRD seemed capable of bringing on a crisis of tragic proportions (in which they might suffer personally) that the moderates finally were moved to assert themselves. In the post-May 20 period, when the shift of the balance of power gave the Cibao-based moderates the opportunity to choose the Vice Secretary General, they settled on Mainardi who, if not exactly discredited, no longer commands substantial respect or loyalty in the PRD. Guzmán, the most prominent moderate and probably the only one with sufficient prestige to hold the radicals in line, declined to accept nomination to the position.

12. Confirming the essentially caudillista character of the PRD, neither the moderates nor the radicals expect definitive victory in their inter-cine conflict except at the mercy of Juan BOSCH. Thus, at its most important level, the battle takes the form of communication with Bosch in an effort to get his acceptance of one or the other analysis of local developments and his endorsement of one or the other conclusion as to appropriate PRD strategy and tactics. Only in very fast-moving situations, as in May, is Bosch too far away to bear direct influence on major party decisions.

13. While admitting frankly this felt need for Bosch's approval and support, even the most combative of the moderates do not appear particularly distressed by the alien content of most of Bosch's pronouncements since his arrival in Madrid. The former President's unrelieved pessimism and gloom concerning the development of democracy in the Dominican Republic, his vitriolic attacks on the United States, his advocacy of popular dictatorship as the ideal form of government for nations of the Caribbean, all reflect a pattern of thinking with which the party radicals can identify, but not the moderates. Nevertheless, Bosch continues to hold the loyalty, respect, and affection of the great majority of the moderates, who regard his wildest statements as aberrational and not truly indicative of the man who utters them.

14. Leaving aside the apparent similarity of attitude and view between Bosch and the left wing of the PRD, there are probably several important reasons why Bosch would not want to see party power consolidated in the hands of the moderates. One is that Bosch has an almost obsessive fear that the PRD may "lose its appeal to Dominican youth." Bosch probably

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sees the PRD as the only alternative to communism or anarchistic revolutionism for the progressively radicalizing youth of the country, and he fears that permanent moderate control of the party would destroy its attractive quality for youth. Moreover, he undoubtedly assumes that the PRD's already limited strength within organized labor and other lower class urban voters would shrink further if the party were to be given over to the moderates for direction and control.

15. At the same time, Bosch may well recognize the difficulty the PRD would have in surviving as a legitimate political party were it to become so radical as to drive out the moderates in number. Not only do the moderates account for the bulk of the party income -- and this last year has been exceedingly difficult, financially -- but they also control the PRD's access to the essentially conservative rural voter without whose support no party can aspire to an electoral victory in the Dominican Republic. And, as Bosch has had proven to him repeatedly over the past four years, even within a caudillista party there are definite limits beyond which the leader cannot go without driving friends and supporters away.

16. The immediately foregoing is intended to suggest that Bosch and those whom he designates to act in his name will probably seek to continue to balance power between moderates and radicals of the PRD, giving each side continuing encouragement to the extent possible without incurring the hostility or permitting the defection of the other. In terms of policy, this probably means the PRD will run a zig-zag course, veering sharply first in one direction and then in the opposite direction, and continuing this until and unless circumstances unite the party again.

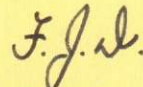
17. In this context, Bosch's late July letter to Mainardi (which we know of only from intelligence sources), asking the latter to announce Bosch's resignation as adviser to the National Executive Committee of the PRD, probably can be viewed in this context, i.e., as an effort to restore the balance between moderates and radicals in the PRD. This typical Bosch play clearly was designed to force Mainardi's resignation or at least to reduce to insignificance any authority he might have as Acting Secretary General. While the resignation ostensibly was motivated by Mainardi's criticism of Bosch's famous 1966 "sticks and stones" speech (which is almost unanimously condemned by PRD leaders in private) the transmittal of the letter of resignation through the hands of Cury and Gamundi, and the sending of an extra copy of the letter to Molina Morillo, urge the conclusion that the resignation is directly related to the PRD's internal conflict.

18. Short-term prospects for the PRD, then, include persistent disarray and disorganization, continuing enervating internal conflict with a constantly shifting balance of power between the two competing blocs, and, in consequence, no cohesive or consistent policy framework on which

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to rebuild party strength or to prepare seriously for elections. To be sure, there will arise issues which will force both sides in the PRD to join together against the government. Almost certainly, one of these will be the government's projected removal of the municipal water system from control of the Santo Domingo city government, the only significant PRD bastion in the country (SD-126). Whatever the government's motives behind this move, and however little support Mayor BAEZ Acosta has within either faction of the party, no PRD leader will be able to interpret the move except as an assault on an important PRD power base. Under these circumstances the PRD undoubtedly will unite to attempt to thwart the government on this issue. Nevertheless, as damaging to the PRD as this move might be, it does not appear to be sufficient to restore lasting internal unity to the party. More than likely, such unity could be achieved only with the recurrence of a major, national political or security crisis involving a very real threat to the existence of the party or the lives of its leaders. In the absence of such a crisis, the party seems incapable of achieving the internal harmony and unity of purpose needed to participate seriously in the 1968 and 1970 elections.



DEVINE

\* Subsequent to the writing of this airgram, the story of the resignation letter broke in El Nacional on August 3. Comment in Nacional as well as in an article in Ahora! the next day viewed the resignation as directed against moderate Mainardi and toward a more radical revolutionary line for the party.

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