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SUMMARY

Although most political observers consider that the Partido Revolucionario Social Cristiano (PRSC) is a political force to be reckoned with in the future, they also agree that at present the party has only limited appeal to the Dominican electorate. Probably the most favorable outcome that the party can expect from the 1970 elections is to win some seats in Congress. The PRSC, like many other Dominican political parties, is faced with internal divisions but these do not seem as serious as others which have rocked the party in the past. Despite the party's apparent enthusiasm for the campaign, the possibility exists that the PRSC would be willing to participate in an abstentionist anti-reelection front provided all other prospective candidates likewise agreed not to contest the elections. There is a segment of the party, which includes the PRSC youth wing, the JRSC, which is opposed to participation in the 1970 elections if President Balaguer is again a candidate, and if the party leaders decide to contest the elections regardless of the President's decision, a serious crisis in the JRSC's ranks would almost surely result and there could well be some attrition of PRSC members to the PRD or even the extreme left. The party's widely respected presidential candidate, Dr. Alfonso MORENO Martínez, still the only officially declared candidate of any party, has thus far been concentrating his campaign in the interior and claims that his "politics of dialogue" policy has been well received.

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1. Prospects. The Partido Revolucionario Social Cristiano (PRSC), a few years ago generally regarded as the country's most promising political force because of its ideological elan and appeal to youth, has not lived up to its early expectations, and despite the appeal of a widely-respected presidential candidate, Dr. Alfonso MORENO Martínez, it is unlikely that it will be in serious contention when the votes from the 1970 elections are counted next May. Probably the best that the party can hope for is to win some Congressional seats and to improve on its over-all showing in the 1968 municipal elections when the party received somewhat less than 100,000 votes, over 50,000 of them in the National District. Nevertheless, the party is still generally considered a political force to be reckoned with in the future -- perhaps 1974 or 1978. Most political observers agree that at present, the party, for a variety of reasons, has only limited appeal to the Dominican electorate. Almost since its founding in mid-1961 (the principal founders were Moreno Martínez; Guido D'ALESSANDRO, the present GODR Ambassador in Caracas; and Mario READ Vittini, the present GODR Ambassador in Washington, who left the party in 1962 to found his own more conservative political movement) the party has experienced internal frictions that have blurred its image and perhaps lessened its appeal. Considered too radical by many conservatives and too conservative by many left of center voters, the PRSC has been unable to compete successfully with either the PRD or the Reformistas. The party has also been handicapped by a chronic shortage of funds, and promised financial support from the Venezuelan Social Christians has not yet been forthcoming. According to party sources, PRSC President Caonabo JAVIER Castillo will make another plea for help to President Caldera shortly after the first of the year.

2. Present Division Within the Party. The present division within the party, on the surface at least not as serious as others which have rocked the PRSC in the past, is between a relatively small group of younger and more radical members which is critical of Javier's leadership and the party's "constructive opposition" line and the bulk of the party which is committed (at least for the present) to bring about change within a democratic and constitutional system. These young radicals, eight of whom were recently expelled from the party (another 40 or so have resigned), have picked up the standard of the late Colombian guerilla-priest Camilo Torres. This so-called Camilista sector of the party has accused Javier of permitting no criticism of his leadership which, they claim, "has carried the PRSC to a flirtation with the oligarchy and imperialism, betraying

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in this manner the revolutionary sentiments of thousands of Social Christian companions and thereby earning the praise of Dr. Balaguer." Earlier this year the Camilista sentiment was so strong within the party's traditional university arm, the Bloque Revolucionario Universitario Cristiano (BRUC), that party leaders lost whatever control they ever had over the organization.

3. JRSC Takes More Radical Line Than Party. The electoral pact between BRUC and the UASD student arm of the Partido Comunista Dominicano (PCD) to run joint BRUC-PCD slates for some student offices last May (the pact was commonly referred to as the "black alliance" by leaders of the PRSC's official youth wing, the Juventud Revolucionaria Social Cristiana) put even further strains on the already divided youth wing of the party. Mainly because of a lack of funds the party has not carried through on its threat to form a new university organization to be more closely tied to the parent party. Both JRSC dissidents and BRUC have accused present JRSC leaders of being "lackeys" of Javier Castillo. Hand picked by Javier, the JRSC leaders do not step too far out of line without the party's knowledge or approval. They do, however, go beyond the party's official line in some pronouncements and at times seem to be at odds over major policy. Far from being concerned by these actions, the party leadership apparently finds it useful to have a youth wing which talks in much more radical terms than the party itself and which can launch trial balloons which, if convenient, the party can disown -- attributing such incidents to "excesses of youthful zeal." For example, during the most recent PRSC National Convention held on October 26, 1969, the JRSC delegates were clearly less enthused about participation in next year's elections than Javier, Moreno and other party leaders. Addressing the convention, one of the JRSC delegates went so far as to say that the party's youth wing would oppose participation in the elections "by all possible means" if President Balaguer again were a candidate. The convention approved a JRSC-sponsored resolution postponing the selection of the PRSC vice-presidential nominee because of a lack of "appropriate guarantees" to carry out an electoral campaign. This resolution was cleared in advance with the PRSC leadership which agreed to support it principally because there was no party consensus about who the nominee should be but also because it was a concession to the JRSC which could be at little or no cost to the party.

4. Criticism of Javier Castillo. Most of the public criticism of Javier Castillo's leadership has come from BRUC and dissident

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JRSC members. However, several months ago four of the party's barrio committees demanded that Javier be judged by a disciplinary committee for allegedly violating party statutes. These dissidents, who were not permitted to press their charges, criticized the party's "constructive opposition" line, insisting that there were only two positions within the party -- one which favored the poor and revolution (theirs) and one against the poor and revolution (Javier's). Although Javier and other party leaders denied the existence of a party crisis last September when three top officials resigned, two of the resignations did have at least some connection with dissatisfaction with Javier's leadership. The resignation of Josefina Padilla vda. Sanchez, who was becoming increasingly inactive in party affairs, was apparently entirely due to "personal reasons." This was also given as the official explanation of the resignations of Secretary General Cesar ESTRELLA Sadhala and Alberto GUZMAN, the Secretary of Doctrine. Personal reasons undoubtedly played a part in their decisions to resign (Estrella, for example, was having financial difficulties and was able to spend less and less time at his party job) but both are known to have been upset with Javier's propensity to reserve for himself the right to make all important decisions. This disagreement never became public, however, and the resignations were all but ignored by the Santo Domingo press. Earlier this year two other members of the National Executive Committee were replaced; one resigned because of extended residence in Caracas and another was removed for failure to carry out his duties. The two replacements, both provincial leaders, were not reelected in October.

5. The October Convention. The October convention, the second held by the party this year, was a rather dull affair which besides electing party officers concerned itself mostly with discussing new party statutes. Both Moreno, elected a member of the Executive Committee, and Javier made speeches urging the party faithful to unite and work for an electoral triumph (this despite the resolution charging the absence of an "electoral climate"). The 9-member Executive Committee elected at the convention included only three holdovers: Javier, Andres Lockward, the new Secretary General, and Guillermo CARAM, the new Vice President of the Party. The other new members of the Executive Committee are mostly young Javier loyalists. Yet another convention will presumably be held early next spring to select Moreno's running mate and candidates for other offices. At the May 1969 convention the delegates agreed "in principle" to participate in the 1970 elections regardless of President Balaguer's decision on whether or not to seek another term, but left an opening to modify the decision

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"if warranted by a change in conditions." Despite the party's apparent enthusiasm for the campaign, the possibility exists that the PRSC would be willing to participate in an abstentionist anti-reelection front, provided all other prospective candidates likewise agreed not to participate in the elections. Prior to the nomination of Moreno last May, PRSC leaders held discussions about such a pact with Wessin y Wessin and Hector García Godoy. When García Godoy, who once had been offered the PRSC presidential nomination (under certain conditions) but turned it down, indicated that he planned to run even if Balaguer were a candidate, the PRSC concluded at that time that it would be difficult to establish an anti-reelection front with any real substance to it.

6. Opposed to President's Reelection. The PRSC was one of four opposition parties which (together with Vice President Lora and Santo Domingo Mayor Guarionex Lluberes Montás) signed a joint declaration in early December which stated that the prospect of President Balaguer's renomination constitutes the major difficulty for the Dominican people in freely choosing their destiny and is the principal cause of the intranquility in the country. In its separate but coordinated statement released at the same time, the PRSC reaffirmed its support for "the constitutional system as the best formula for strengthening the people and its institutions, limiting and regulating the powers of the government and guaranteeing the rights of the people." The party also affirmed its "unequivocal, categorical and tenacious" opposition to any attempted coup "by means of which a minority tries to frustrate the decisions of the majority." Only a very small minority of the party is probably opposed to elections under all circumstances. A much larger segment of the party, however, is opposed to participating in the 1970 elections if President Balaguer is again a candidate, and if the party hierarchy decides to contest the elections regardless of the President's decision, a serious crisis in the JRSC's ranks would almost surely result and there could well be some attrition of PRSC members to the PRD or even the extreme left. Available evidence suggests that in the absence of an effective abstentionist anti-reelection front, the party will participate in the 1970 elections regardless of President Balaguer's decision about seeking another term of office. PRSC leaders profess to believe that the policy of electoral abstention followed by the PRD last year seriously weakened that party. It follows that electoral abstention in a national election would not only weaken but also could destroy a much smaller party. This line of reasoning was used by some delegates in opposing the JRSC resolution postponing the selection of Moreno's running mate.

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7. Moreno's Campaign. Ever since his selection as the PRSC presidential candidate last May, Moreno has been hard at work on the campaign trail. As he promised in his acceptance speech, he has been concentrating his appearances in the campo and his statements on those issues, primarily agrarian reform, of particular interest to the campesinos. He has consistently stressed the need to incorporate the campesino into the effective life of the country; as long as the campesino remains isolated, Moreno has remarked, democracy will remain a facade for the great majority of Dominicans. Beyond assuring campesinos an effective voice in decisions affecting their lives, Moreno has deliberately made few promises to them and has said that land which they might receive under a Social Christian land reform program would not be a gift but would have to be paid for by the recipients. Despite the fact that he has up to now campaigned almost exclusively in the interior, Moreno has been receiving good press coverage in Santo Domingo. The subject of laudatory editorials in El Caribe and Listin Diario, the PRSC candidate has made several television appearances and speaks every week on the PRSC radio program. Even though he has been campaigning for six months now (he is still the only officially selected candidate) with the exception of the agrarian reform issue, he has yet to discuss in any detail the priorities and programs of a PRSC government. Nevertheless, Moreno claims that what he calls his "politics of dialogue" has been well received wherever he has campaigned. The next few months will test the validity of Moreno's judgment that "now it is not easy to trick the Dominican people with the false promises always made during political campaigns." In the meantime, Moreno is adding dignity to the still unofficial presidential campaign and undoubtedly adding some voters to the PRSC rolls. Even though Moreno and other PRSC leaders have publicly stated that the party will win the 1970 elections, in private they are not nearly as optimistic. They do believe that by concentrating their campaign in certain areas of the country where they have had some electoral success in the past they can win some seats in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. This would give the party a national platform and reinforce its claim to being one of the country's major political parties.

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