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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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SUMMARY

The belief of Vice President Francisco Augusto LORA and his supporters that President Joaquin BALAGUER intends to seek reelection on May 16, 1970 has effectively created two warring camps within the Partido Reformista (PR) with the Vice President determined to seek the presidential nomination of the PR or, failing that, to establish his position as the leading anti-reelectionist working through the Movimiento de Integración Democrática Anti-Reeleccionista (MIDA). The Vice President has also maintained contacts with other opposition groups, particularly the PRD and the PQD, and some sources speculate that a coalition between Lora and ex-General Elias WESSIN y Wessin is a possibility for the future. Meanwhile, President Balaguer has been attempting to consolidate his own position of absolute leadership within the party ostensibly with a view to dominating the PR's national nominating convention when held. From a critical analysis of Balaguer's various actions, we believe the facts point to Balaguer's desire to run again and we believe the odds appear better than even that he will in fact do so.

NOTE: This report is intended only to give an overall view of the present state of the Partido Reformista and to summarize in one report other information transmitted

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to the Department. It is not intended to be a definitive report on the pre-electoral situation in the Dominican Republic -- the information contained herein obviously cannot be considered in a vacuum apart from developments affecting other political parties and the Armed Forces. Its purpose, then, is to look briefly and in isolation at the PR and its two leading figures, President Balaguer and Vice President Lora.

Present State of the Party

1. Although the estrangement between President Balaguer and Vice President Lora has persisted for some time, first as an open secret and subsequently as a fact recognized and commented upon publicly by both men, the final and open breach came about shortly after the July 1969 meeting of the PR's National Executive Committee. At that time, or shortly thereafter, the PR's Secretary General Raul GONZALEZ, an anti-reelectionist and a Lora supporter, was shunted to one side -- although retaining his title -- while two "Assistant Secretaries General" or "Executive Secretaries," Senator Atilio GUZMAN and Deputy Domingo ROJAS Nina, both pro-Balaguer reelectionists, were named by the President to wield the effective authority within the party. President Balaguer also stated at the time that he was assuming the leadership of the party and would direct its activities and speak for it thereafter. It was shortly after this that the Vice President began to speak out publicly and sharply against the dangers of continuismo and reelection and to begin to develop the direction of his political power base in such a way as to look towards his possible presidential candidacy in May 1970.

2. Since July, President Balaguer has attempted to consolidate his support in the provincial and municipal committees of the PR and has permitted a pro-election campaign in the provinces to be directed by his subordinates in the Palace. Much of the publicity has consisted of "voluntary" pro-election declarations from almost all of the provinces with each receiving 2-page treatment in El Caribe in the form of paid space. In addition, the President has not hesitated to use the presidential appointment procedure to reward the faithful and punish those whose loyalty was questionable. The President's efforts in short, both in Santo Domingo and in other parts of the country, have seemed directed essentially at bolstering his position of absolute leadership within the PR.

3. It is generally conceded -- except by Lora and his supporters -- that the President has been quite successful in

retaining the bulk of the PR's leadership in his camp up to now. Most PR representatives in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies remain either outspokenly pro-reelectionist or at least have not been bold enough publicly either to oppose reelection or desert the President's cause. While there are Lora supporters among the PR congressional representation, they are believed to be in the minority at this time and few have dared to risk presidential displeasure or retaliation by openly breaking with Balaguer. The Mayor of Santiago, Miguel Angel LUNA Morales, remains in Lora's camp, but President Balaguer has succeeded in retaining control over the PR's apparatus in Santiago Province through the efforts of Jose ALVAREZ Bogaert, the brother of the Secretary of Agriculture. The President's biggest failure to date is in the National District where Mayor Guarionex LLUBERES Montás still holds sway and figures as an important political figure in his own right. Although pressured by Balaguer to come out for reelection, Lluberres resisted strongly and finally on December 1, 1969 joined Lora and four opposition parties in issuing separate declarations condemning reelection. Guarionex Lluberres, with unconcealed political ambitions for 1974, publicly still figures strongly as a possible vice presidential candidate in 1970 with Lora, although Lluberres is thought to favor running again for the office of Mayor of Santo Domingo, believing that this position offers him a better political springboard than does that of the vice president.

4. The PR then, at this time, is a party deeply divided both over the issue of reelection and over personalities. Vice President Lora is believed to be strong in party ranks in the Cibao and has stated privately that he has been most pleased and even somewhat surprised by the reception accorded to him on his initial probings as a possible candidate. However, until President Balaguer decides on his candidacy and makes his public announcement one way or the other, the majority of PR leaders at all levels and government employees will understandably hesitate to jump to Lora's camp. The longer the President waits, however, the more difficult it will be for these leaders to determine what his intentions really are and to resist pressures on them from Lorista and other sources. Lora's initial campaigning moves, therefore, will more than likely remain without substantial public and other expressions of support until the issue is settled by the President's decision.

5. A national convention of the PR technically should be held in 1969, but all indications are that it will not be held this

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year largely because of the reelection issue and because President Balaguer is not yet ready to see the convention held. Lora's supporters maintain -- probably correctly -- that the nominating convention will not be held until late February or March at the earliest since Balaguer must wait this long to ensure that pro-reelectionists will constitute the great majority of the 308 delegates who will be elected in January and February of 1970. To do this, Balaguer will have to ensure that his supporters control the provincial and municipal committees from which the delegates will come.

#### Situation of PR's Youth Organizations

6. President Balaguer has skillfully managed to maintain the loyalties of both Victor GOMEZ Bergés, the President of the Movimiento Nacional de la Juventud (MNJ), ostensibly an independent national youth organization, and the leaders of the newly-formed Avanzada Reformista de la Juventud (ARJ), which functions as a pro-Balaguer youth organization but not as the PR's official youth wing. The leaders of the latter are generally in their early or mid-30's and many of them have been associated with the Balaguer administration since its inauguration. They profess that Balaguer is the preferred alternative to the other options open to the people and believe that his second administration would give "youth" a greater voice in the affairs of the country. Victor Gomez Bergés, on the other hand, leads essentially a one-man organization whose main purpose is to further his own aspirations to obtain the vice presidential nomination under Balaguer.

#### Vice President Lora's Intentions

7. Although personally bitter about Balaguer's unwillingness to declare himself at this time, the Vice President has been careful publicly to state that all of his differences with the President would disappear should the latter decide not to be a candidate in 1970. Lora continues to stress that Balaguer should abide by the PR's statutes which call for alternation as one of the party's basic principles. Lora recognizes clearly that the President's name, position and power are a tremendous hold over the party's rank and file and fears that further delay on the President's part -- should he decide to step down -- will prevent the PR from campaigning effectively. Lora must also recognize, however, that Balaguer is in fact the PR and that it will be difficult for any other person to attempt to pick up the mantle of reformismo in his absence or to fight Balaguer within the party itself. Lora seems to

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hope, however, that prolonged delay on Balaguer's part in announcing his decision will be an unsettling factor which will induce many Reformistas because of uncertainty, to join the anti-reelectionist cause.

8. Lora so far is conducting his pre-campaign activities as a leader of the PR, and continues to state publicly and privately that he intends to fight for the party's presidential nomination on the floor of the national convention; he has, however, been realistic enough to support the establishment of the Movimiento de Integración Democrática Reelectionista (MIDA) which presumably will serve as his electoral vehicle should he not run as the PR's candidate. The MIDA recently filed for recognition as a political party and this is expected to be granted by the Central Electoral Board in the near future. Lora is also associated closely with Jose A. FERNANDEZ Caminero, President of the Frente Revolucionario de Unidad Nacional, another anti-reelectionist and former member of the Council of State. Lora is known to have had contacts with the PRD and with the PQD in particular. Although both Lora and ex-General Elias WESSIN y Wessin deny it publicly, the possibility of an eventual alliance between the two cannot be discounted should Balaguer be a candidate again. Up to now, however, each has maintained that if there is to be any talk of such an alliance, the other one must be the one to cede his position. Lora supporters have been the most outspoken on this issue privately, stating that Wessin knows that he cannot win the elections and that the Vice President would be willing to consider Wessin for a number of positions, including that of Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, and to give the PQD a number of Cabinet and other government positions. A number of other observers, however, have commented that given the visible upswing in Wessin's strength around the country, Lora should be the one to step down if any alliance is to be considered. In any event, this is another of the unknowns in Dominican politics which will remain pending until the President's decision is made.

9. At this stage, Lora's "pre-candidacy" is a serious one with Lora viewing himself as the natural leader of all the various *anti-*reelectionist sectors. We believe that Lora will participate in the elections should Balaguer not be a candidate but we cannot make this same firm judgment should Balaguer decide to run <sup>again</sup> since Lora may very well hesitate to risk his reputation in what he may view as a lost cause.

#### Balaguer's Intentions

10. Although July 1969 (see paragraph 1) was significant in widening the breach between Balaguer and Lora, the former's



speech in February 1969 undeniably created strong suspicions in Lora's mind when the President held out the possibility that he might be a candidate again under certain conditions with the chief one of these being an expression of the popular will with respect to reelection. Various pro-reelection groups have sprung up in the intervening period and the papers have regularly published long lists of signatures imploring the President to seek reelection.

11. The majority of observers who believe that Balaguer will be a candidate again point to the following as "proof" of that intention: (a) his regular weekend project-inauguration trips outside Santo Domingo which normally turn into pro-reelection rallies arranged and directed by the local committee with the assistance of pro-reelectionists from Santo Domingo; (b) systematic removal of anti-reelectionists from positions of influence and authority within the PR (where possible) and within the government; (c) the appointment of pro-reelectionists to government positions in each province where they will be able to dispense favors; (d) the pro-reelection activities of certain key military officers, including Armed Forces Secretary General Enrique PEREZ y Perez; (e) the President's recent sharper line against the PRD, indicating to the latter that he wishes to discredit and even "smash" his largest opposition on the left. There are a few persons, but few indeed, who maintain that the listed moves can be justified on the basis of Balaguer's desire to maintain his position and freedom of action until such time as he eventually decides on reelection one way or another, and fewer still who believe that his actions have been taken only to ensure that he will be able to complete his mandate without important loss of prestige and authority. Our own best judgment at this time is that Balaguer has taken more actions than are probably necessary to maintain his position and that he is allowing an overt reelectionist campaign to be conducted on his behalf. We therefore agree with the majority opinion that the signs point to Balaguer's desire to run again and we rate the odds on his intention of doing so as [redacted] better than even. Balaguer has until April 1, 1970 to declare his candidacy; given his method of operation and expected political circumstances, we anticipate that he will wait as long as possible before announcing his decision.

12. One way around the reelection problem would be for President Balaguer to prompt an initiative in Congress to extend his term for an additional two years by amendment of

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the Constitution. We believe that he now controls the necessary support in both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies to do this. We know that the President has been in communication with the PRD with respect to this possibility and has sought that party's support, reportedly promising its leaders a voice in the government. The PRD, however, has rejected the offer. Whether the offer was made in good faith or not, or was simply a tactical move on the President's part to buy time, is not known and cannot be determined. We do not believe there is much likelihood of other opposition parties concurring in such a constitutional amendment, even one that would include a non-reelection clause. While a unilateral move in this direction is possible, we have no clear indication that this is Balaguer's intention. We believe, however, that this subject will be discussed and rumored more and more as time goes by.

13. Balaguer has not hesitated to criticize and deprecate in private his dislike for all the prospective presidential candidates with the exception of Hector Garcia Godoy. He has reportedly called Garcia Godoy the best qualified person to succeed him and has left the impression in a few quarters that he might tap Garcia Godoy as his chosen successor should he decide not to run. We rate this as possible but not at this point probable.

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