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TO : Department of State

DEPT PASS: Amembassy CARACAS *Air* → OSI District
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1. Introduction

The week continued to be a relatively quiet one in the Dominican Republic marred only by several more violent incidents with most of those killed or seriously wounded being connected with the Partido Reformista or the National Police. Statements on internal political matters by a variety of presidential candidates and other prominent persons received considerable coverage in the Santo Domingo press but there was little substantive content of significance to affect the week's basic tranquility. Local press coverage of Vietnam Moratorium activities in the United States and elsewhere was based largely on straight wire service reports and the anti-war statement by 38 Peace Corps Volunteers in the DR was headlined only in El Nacional. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

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2. Political Potpourri

Among the more interesting declarations made by prospective presidential candidates and other public figures this week were the following:

A. PRSC presidential candidate Alfonso MORENO Martínez suggested that all prospective presidential candidates meet in a series of round table discussions to study "urgent and unpostponable National Goals". His purpose, he said, was to search for "areas of understanding" which could help unify Dominicans in reaching common objectives and which could create a friendly dialogue. Former Provisional President Hector GARCIA GODOY called the idea a "constructive proposition", while most of the other prospective candidates who commented were lukewarm in their responses.

B. During a lengthy press conference attended by Vice President Lora, Reformista Secretary General Raul GONZALEZ (who holds the position in name only) 1) again strongly supported the Vice President's bid for the PR presidential nomination and just as strongly opposed reelection activities; 2) asked for an immediate convocation of the PR national convention in order to "confront the crisis situation" now facing the party; and 3) said that unfortunately he had not been able to prevent the present division of the party which he described as "deep" and "lamentable".

C. Dr. Gilberto HERRERA Báez, a Secretary of State Without Portfolio and Director General of Hospitals, charged that García Godoy wanted the presidency handed to him "on a silver platter". He criticized García Godoy's "frequent trips" to Puerto Rico and alleged that such trips were designed to pressure that island's political leaders into seeking support for García Godoy within the U.S. government.

D. As for García Godoy, he continued to preside over the opening of more municipal headquarters of his Movimiento de Conciliación Nacional and refused to comment on charges made against his conduct as Provisional President by R. A. FONT Bernard, Administrative Subsecretary of the Presidency.

E. Rafael MOLINA Ureña, president of the newly-formed Alianza Nacional and GODR Ambassador to France, stood by his declarations that the present situation in the country could degenerate into a golpe de estado. President Balaguer termed Molina's statement "fantastic" and "absolutely impossible". Molina replied he had not said that a coup was imminent, only that "because the division in the Dominican family was deepening each day, the way is open for all kinds of negative actions". (UNCLASSIFIED)

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3. PRD Notes

A. As the primary PRD spokesman, Secretary General PEÑA Gómez claimed the majority of PRD-focused attention this week by heading up a high-level party delegation to the "Northwest Line" and the Cibao; his speeches described the tour in enthusiastic terms, dwelling on the "vast crowds" which turned out to greet the PRD caravans at each of its 20-odd stops. He noted that the military and police had acted very well concerning the PRDers' trip, but he charged that new repressions were on the increase elsewhere in the country. Later, in a Santiago radio interview, Peña Gómez stated that the party's National Council had resolved against, but had not definitively discarded, the possibility of electoral participation. At midweek he was back on the air, in a lengthy interview much of which repeated many of his well-known views but which became noteworthy when he shifted the PRD's position on a possible golpe by saying that the party would not participate in a government resulting from a military coup, for that would simply mean trading one oligarchic dictatorship for a worse one; he added, however, that the PRD would support a truly revolutionary golpe by the military, although he considered such an eventuality unlikely.

B. In other PRD developments (1) erstwhile leftist (and new PRD member) Marcio MEJIA-Ricart opined that the PRD would come to power in 1970 "with votes, boots or a cassock", which El Nacional (leftist/nationalist) understood to mean by whichever means the party considered most appropriate; (2) Senator CASIMIRO Castro publicly disagreed with Juan BOSCH's insistence that the PRD's failure to adopt his "Popular Dictatorship" thesis would mean the end of the party (WPR #39); (3) more Bosch remarks were made public, these warning the Autonomous University students that the Dominican people's real enemy was neither Trujilloism nor Balaguer's reelection, but was the Dominican oligarchy and U.S. imperialism; and (4) it was announced that the party's National Convention, scheduled for November, had been postponed until January 1970. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

Comment: A. Peña Gómez' restated position on possible PRD participation in or support for a military coup is interesting in that it appears to be a clear warning to the Wessinista forces that they may not look for cooperation or support from the PRD. (There have been indications that both the GODR and the PRD are becoming increasingly concerned about the Wessinistas' possible intentions and capability of carrying them out.)

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B. PRD Press and Propaganda Secretary "Manny" ESPINAL told an Embassy officer this week that it had been the party's pro-electionists who had been pushing for the November convention date, and that the shift to January marked a clear defeat for them; he incidentally and rather surprisingly included Marcio Mejia-Ricart in that group and said that Mejia-Ricart, despite his "communist" reputation, favored the PRD's electoral participation whether or not the President ran for reelection. (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. Upsurge in Acts of Violence

Among the more significant acts of violence which occurred during the week were the following:

A. In the small village of Bohechío (San Juan Province) a group of armed men in uniform appeared at the home of local mayor Rogelio ABREU Sánchez on the evening of October 9 and requested the mayor's "cooperation" in arresting a local PR activist, Mario SANCHEZ, for allegedly possessing a weapon and Communist literature in his home. The bodies of both Abreu and Sánchez were later fished from the Yaque del Sur, Abreu having been strangled or garroted and Sánchez shot in the left eye. The police commander in San Juan de la Maguana denied he had ordered the arrest of anyone and in the absence of robbery, political motives are presumed. Thirteen persons have been arrested in the San Juan area in connection with the crime.

B. National Police Captain Juan Esteban CRUZ Peña, while standing on the porch of a private residence, was shot and gravely wounded in the chest by two unknown assailants on October 12. Before firing on Captain Cruz, the attackers reportedly tossed a home-made bomb at him.

C. A young employee of the Dominican Social Security Institute (IDSS), José JAVIER Diaz, missing since September 21, was found bound and gagged in Ensanche Naco October 10. Diaz asserted he had been abducted by four persons and apparently taken outside the capital where he claimed to have been confined and beaten. He was unable to describe his captors but claimed that he was warned that what had happened to Henry SEGARRA was going to happen to him.

D. The Javier case led El Nacional and a local radio station to report speculation on the existence of jails around the country which are beyond the control of the National Police and possibly "operated by the CIA". The National Police publicly dismissed the rumor and the Secretary of Interior and Police also denied the speculation.

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E. After an investigation by the National Police, the death by hanging of a young prisoner in the jail in Dajabón was ruled a suicide.

F. Three smoke bombs were set off just prior to the arrival of President Balaguer at the October 12 inauguration of 8 multi-family housing units and La Trinitaria square just west of the Duarte bridge. There was no damage, some arrests, and the ceremony took place without further incident.

G. Tomás Dario BERROA, the son of the President of the municipal directorate of the PR in Barahona was shot and killed by unknown assailants in the early morning hours of October 13 on a street in that city.

H. A 36-year old cloth salesman was shot and killed also by unknown assailants in the early morning hours of October 16 in Santo Domingo. (UNCLASSIFIED)

5. Peace Corps Volunteers Protest Vietnam War

Two editorials prompted by an anti-war declaration signed by 38 Peace Corps volunteers appeared in the Dominican press together with comment on the October 15 protests against the Vietnam war. The Peace Corps declaration, which appeared as a paid ad in leftist/nationalist El Nacional, expressed the signers' "solidarity" with people the world over "who have deplored this unjust and irrational war" and demanded the "immediate withdrawal" of U.S. troops from Vietnam. In one editorial El Nacional declared that the current anti-war sentiment in the U.S. was a new sign of "civic maturity". The editorial characterized as "comforting" the fact that 38 PCVs had declared themselves in opposition to the war, and concluded that "those youngsters deserve the respect of all those who aspire to create free nations for free men" (SD-4092). In another editorial, El Nacional commented that if indeed the Peace Corps volunteers brought a message of peace and humanity, nothing could be more logical than for them to oppose an "unjust and irrational" war. The Peace Corps message, the paper said, merited "an appreciable amount of support and respect". In the only other editorial comment on Vietnam Moratorium Day, rightist El Tiempo declared that the moratorium represented a manifestation of the free spirit of an immensely great and powerful nation which the communists, who crush liberty in the North and terrorize the people of the South, are unable to appreciate or understand. The editorial went on, however, to criticize U.S. policy as "slow, parsimonious and dubious" in the face of situations which only can be taken advantage of by the communists. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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6. Civil Defense Director Criticizes U. S. Policy

President Balaguer told his mid-week press conference that he disagreed with recent criticisms of U.S. Latin American policy made by Civil Defense Director Mario ARIZA Hernandez. The President said that Ariza, who termed U.S. policy in the hemisphere "arbitrary and humiliating", had made a "demagogic approach" to U.S. policy. The President said that U.S. policy had "many defects" but "is constructive in many respects". The Palace press office also issued a statement emphasizing that only the President and the Foreign Secretary could speak for the government about international affairs and that Ariza's comments were "strictly personal". (UNCLASSIFIED)

7. Other Developments

In other developments this week a) the Chamber of Deputies named a special committee to investigate charges by some members that "something strange and extraordinary is happening" at the METALDOM complex; one deputy charged that prices of some steel products in the country were double what they were before the installation of the Spanish-controlled factory; b) the Chamber of Deputies also approved the GODR agreement with Falconbridge signed last week; the Senate has yet to act on the contract; c) the Senate rejected a proposal by Senator Secundino GIL Morales (PRD - La Romana) to abrogate the 1966 agreement providing for the importation of Haitian cane cutters; d) Secretary of Finances Antonio MARTINEZ Francisco and Secretary of Commerce and Industry José A. BREA Peña both announced that they would resign their government positions in December in order to devote themselves to unspecified "political activities"; e) a special judge appointed by the Supreme Court cleared PRD Senator Pablo Rafael CASIMIRO Castro of charges that he shot and killed a policeman during a fracas at PRD headquarters in Azua last June; eight others, including the Secretary General of the PRD National District Committee, were also cleared of all charges brought against them as a result of the incident; f) no decision has yet been taken in the case of a self-proclaimed ex-Constitutionalist, Gonzalo PEREZ Cuevas, who sought asylum in the Mexican Embassy; and finally g) students at a secondary school in Santiago (which was plagued by problems during the last school term) clashed with police during demonstrations protesting the removal of the school's director who was shifted to another position in the Secretariat of Education; during the demonstrations extremist students distributed PCD, MPD and UER leaflets.

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