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1. Introduction

The moon landing and the successful completion of the Apollo 11 Mission dominated all other news in the D.R. this week. Although all was relatively quiet on the domestic political front, continued maneuvering with respect to the 1970 presidential elections was evident just beneath the surface. For example, despite the staged show of "unity" at last week's meeting of the Reformista Central Executive Committee, all indications are that nothing has really changed and that Vice President Lora and his supporters maintain their opposition to reelection. The also badly divided PRD was obviously waiting for newly-returned Secretary General José Francisco PEÑA GÓMEZ to take the lead in bringing the present confusion in the party under some kind of control. On yet another level, the week brought the President another potentially serious

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political problem in the dispute between the Secretariat of Agriculture and Industry and Commerce over the question of importing onions. The Secretary of Industry and Commerce, Jose A. BREA Pella, threatened to resign if the Secretariat of Agriculture does not change its decision not to permit the importation. Another foodstuff, this time meat, was the subject of a dispute between Mayor Guarionex LLUBERES Montás and the State Sugar Corporation. The city government, which began selling meat at almost half the prevailing price in six stands in the poorer sections of town, wants to purchase cattle from the CEA. The Mayor has asked that a CEA contract with a firm which exports meat to Puerto Rico be rescinded and that the meat be made available to the city for sale in the barrios. Domestic economic problems of a relatively minor nature, therefore, are being related to the national political scene. (CONFIDENTIAL)

2. Reformista "Unity" Appears Fragile

The fact that neither Vice President Lora, nor the pro-Lora Mayor of Santiago, Miguel Angel LUNA Morales, nor other known Loristas attended this week's inauguration of Santiago's new RD\$1.3 million city hall presided over by President Balaguer lends further evidence to the interpretation that the public show of abrazos and the declarations of unity which emerged from last week's Reformista Central Executive Committee meeting represented only a temporary papering-over of deep political and personal differences between the two camps. The content of paid ads placed by the party in newspapers this week gives credence to charges by many Santiagueros that the event was less an inauguration of a new city building and more a campaign rally for Balaguer. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

At week's end El Nacional reported that the party's Secretary of Finances, Rafael DAVID, had moved his office from party headquarters into the National Palace. Late last week a newspaper ad informed local party officials that all collections of funds for the party should be sent directly to President Balaguer. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment:

In a luncheon conversation this week, Vice President Lora and other Loristas made clear to an Embassy officer their view that reelection will be exceedingly dangerous for the future political stability of the country, and Lora indicated that he intended to continue to fight against Balaguer's reelection. (CONFIDENTIAL)

3. PRD Notes

The atmosphere of political quietude which was generally prevalent in Santo Domingo this week extended also to the PRD, which remained essentially out of the news with two noteworthy exceptions: the return of PRD Secretary General José Francisco PEÑA Gómez from his extended

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trip abroad and a television appearance by PRD Senator Pablo Rafael CASIMIRO Castro.

Upon his arrival in Santo Domingo on July 20, Peña Gómez announced that sometime after this August Professor Juan BOSCH would spend a month visiting Yugoslavia, Korea, and North Vietnam and added that before doing so he would consult with certain PRD leaders among them Hatuey DECAMPS, Secretary General of the Federation of Dominican Students (FED). Peña Gómez also commented on the possibility of Bosch's return to the DR explaining that the Professor would come as soon as the party invited him officially. Discussing his own trip, which lasted more than two months, and took him to Sweden, Germany and France, the Secretary General allowed that the motive of his journey was to have contact with the socialist organizations of these countries and to consult with Bosch. In closing, Peña Gómez proclaimed his agreement with Professor Bosch that the electoral system was not the way to political power. The PRD National convention in February of 1970, he said, would decide on both whether the party would participate in the elections, and if it would adopt the Bosch thesis of Dictatorship with Popular Support.

"Popular Dictatorship" was also the theme of a television appearance of PRD Senator Pablo CASIMIRO Castro on this week's "You be the Jury" program. Casimiro was not too forthcoming during the interview and refused to answer when asked how many times he had had to read the Popular Dictatorship thesis before understanding it. Likewise, when asked his opinion of Bosch's plan to nationalize the country's import-export business, Casimiro replied "this is the opinion of the ideologist whose brain produced the work". The Senator further stated that the thesis "contains brilliant points" and others which require some refining, but declined to offer any examples of the latter. Lastly, Casimiro declared that Bosch himself, was the only individual properly qualified to speak on the means by which the Popular Dictatorship thesis might be implemented. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment:

The "moderate" and "radical" problem remains basically unchanged at this point in time and it remains to be seen whether Peña Gómez can continue his difficult balancing act and his efforts to act as the leader of both camps. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

4. Apollo 11 Captures Attention of Dominicans

The successful flight and lunar landing of Apollo 11 was by far the most important news event and topic of discussion during the week. Apollo 11 received exceptionally heavy news media coverage from count-down to splash-down, with the press front-paging major wire service stories, and giving extensive treatment to human interest

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and feature articles in the inside pages. The moon walk was carried live over Dominican television. USIS reports that Apollo 11 was covered by 30 radio stations (out of an approximate national total of 90) and by the two television stations and estimates that the coverage was seen or heard by about 2.5 million persons (65 per cent of the population). President Joaquín Balaguer sent a congratulatory message to President Nixon and declared July 21 a day of "National Joy" (but a working day, nevertheless).

The local newspapers, quite expectedly, gave almost exclusive treatment to Apollo 11 on July 21 with Listín Diario headlining, "Man Arrives at Moon" and editorializing, "All men have been united in the hope that the brave astronauts will successfully carry out their mission...the courage, skill and discipline of astronauts honors all humanity...the U.S. merits admiration and congratulations of all...may the new technical capabilities of humanity be placed at the service of the well-being and peace of all nations". El Caribe headlined on July 21, "Man Walks on Moon" and in its editorial praised the feat as the "greatest adventure man has yet undertaken...the feat is unquestionably a victory of the U.S. in the space race, but is also a triumph of humanity". The editorial concluded saying, "It is hoped that with the triumphal return of the astronauts, those who direct the space programs in the U.S. as well as in Russia, will turn their attention back to the earth and will contribute with their wisdom and resources to bringing more happiness and progress to those human groups who need both so much". Rightist El Tiempo on July 21 said the moon landing is further proof of "greatness of system of free life" and lauded the U.S. for treating the moon landing in word and deed as belonging to all humanity, rather than simply a great national achievement. El Tiempo expressed doubt that the Soviet Union would have acted with similar magnanimity. El Nacional also gave full coverage to Apollo 11; however, its editorial of July 21, expressed doubt whether ^{the} cost of space program was merited in view of the fact so much remains to be done about the majority of the people on the earth who live in misery. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment:

Political and other leaders have expressed their view to Embassy officers that Apollo 11 has raised U.S. prestige to a new high. (UNCLASSIFIED)

5. Honduran-Salvadoran Conflict

The Dominican Secretary of State for Foreign Relations, Fernando AMIAMA Tió, left Santo Domingo on July 24 to attend the meeting of the hemisphere's Foreign Ministers called to discuss the Honduran-Salvadoran conflict. The dispute continued to receive front-page treatment in most of the Dominican press, but there was no editorial reaction this week. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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The Foreign Secretary told the Ambassador on July 22 that, in view, the MFM was necessary to bring effective pressure to bear on El Salvador to withdraw its troops from Honduran territory. Amiana Tió said that any decision to employ any kind of sanctions would have to be taken by the Foreign Ministers and not by the OAS Council acting as the Organ of Consultation. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. Court Orders Return of Confiscated Property

President Balaguer said this week that he was "astonished" by a recently announced decision of the Court of Appeals in Santiago which declared Salvadoran industrialist Elias GADALA Maria not guilty of illicit enrichment during the Trujillo era and which ordered the GODR to return his property seized in 1962. All five companies, which when confiscated reportedly had a value of RD\$20 million, are presently operating under CORDE control. The PRD and several labor organizations have protested the court's decision, which was termed "unbelievable" by El Nacional. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment:

The court's decision undoubtedly will be subject to considerable public debate and governmental consideration in the weeks to come. The Embassy does not foresee the prompt return of the properties to Gadala control. (SD-2244). (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

7. Other Developments

In other developments this week (a) the country is celebrating Tourism Week, the Merengue Carnival and Puerto Rican-Dominican Friendship Week -- all rolled into one -- with a parade, a bullfight, and other special activities; Minister Without Portfolio and Tourism Director Angel MIOLAN claimed that some 4,000 Puerto Ricans could not attend the festivities because of transportation problems from San Juan and lack of hotel space in Santo Domingo; (b) the new Ambassador of Uruguay, Edmundo NOVOA Garcia, presented his credentials to President Balaguer; (c) despite repeated statements by officials of the Dominican Electric Company that the problems affecting the new Haina electric plant have been solved, periodic blackouts which have plagued Santo Domingo and other parts of the country for the past month continued this week; (d) Listin Diario carried a report from Kingston quoting the Jamaican Minister of Industry and Commerce as saying that Jamaica could buy RD\$25 million worth of vegetables and other foodstuffs yearly from the D.R. if appropriate governmental and private agreements could be reached; (e) a police private was shot and killed in Santo Domingo by unknown persons who also stole his police revolver; (f) the National Police charged two of the persons detained for the recent attempted robbery of the Dominican Cement Factory (WPR #28) with participation in the deaths of a police lieutenant last January and a night school director last June 3; (g) the last of the ex-METALDOM workers who had

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been occupying the Santo Domingo Cathedral since July week, leaving behind several damaged religious paintings as a result of the damage, the Apostolic Administrator, Bishop POLANCO Brito, declared (in a circular to be read in all churches that police force would be used to prevent any groups from taking over any churches in the future; (h) PQD President Elias WESSIN y WESSIN paid a courtesy call on the Ambassador; (i) Hector GARCIA GODOY's Movement of National Conciliation will apply for registration as a political party probably next week (Garcia Godoy told an Embassy officer that the MCN registration petition was signed by just over 103,000 persons; and finally (j) Rafael MOLINA Ureña's party, the Alianza Nacional, made its public debut this week. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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