



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA 19

INFO GPM 03, SC 01, RSC 01, USIA 12, H 02, NSC 10, L 03, INR 07, P 04, CIA 04,
DOD 01, SP 02, SS 20, NSAE 00, SAH 03, SAL 01, AID 30, E 19, AGR 20,
INT 06, RSR 01, /169 W

*Santo Domingo 918
8/22/67*

R 221152Z OCT 67
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3945
INFO AMCONSUL SAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS 528

I O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 918

SUBJ: BRIEF OPPOSITION BLOC WALKOUT OVER FORESTRY BILL PREDICTED

REF: (A) SANTO DOMINGO A-178, ITEM 7; (B) SANTO DOMINGO A-239, ITEM 6

1. PRD DEPUTY RUBEN SURO INFORMED EMBOFF OCT 21 THAT CHAMBER OPPOSITION BLOC WILL STAGE BRIEF PROTEST WALKOUT IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO ANTICIPATED FAVORABLE VOTE BY REFORMISTA MAJORITY ON SECOND

READING OF CONTROVERSIAL FORESTRY BILL. BILL APPROVED ON FIRST READING OCT. 18 IN STRAIGHT PARTY-LINE VOTE (REF. B).

2. EXECUTIVE ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED THIS DRAFT LEGISLATION (WHICH TRANSFERS CONTROL AGRICULTURE SECRETARIAT'S FORESTRY DIVISION TO ARMED FORCES) IN MID-SEPTEMBER, CAUSING STORM OF PRESS AND OPPOSITION PROTEST (REF. A). BILL THEN REFERRED TO MIXED COMMITTEE, WHICH CHAIRED, IN EFFECT, BY PRD DEPUTY LUIS VARGAS. COMMITTEE HELD EXTENSIVE HEARINGS AND WAS

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PAGE TWO RUESSD 918 C O N F I D E N T I A L
GRANTED TWO EXTENSIONS IN SUBMITTING REPORT. MEANWHILE,
NUMEROUS EFFORTS ACHIEVE SATISFACTORY COMPROMISE REPORTEDLY
MADE BY BOTH REFORMISTA AND PRD CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS.
SPOKESMEN FOR PRD DEPUTIES ALSO MADE SEVERAL APPROACHES TO
EMBASSY DURING THIS PERIOD, ASKING OUR "GOOD OFFICES" TO
CONVEY THEIR MAJOR OBJECTIONS TO PRESIDENT BALAGUER. WHEN
INFORMED OF PRD APPRTACH, BALAGUER SENT BACK WORD THROUGH
AMBASSADOR THAT HE AGREEABLE TO RECEIVE PRD CONGRESSMEN TO
DISCUSS THEIR VIEWS. PRD LEASERS IN CHAMBERS INDICATED
READINESS (AND DESIGNATED GROUP) SEE PRESIDENT BUT BACKTRACKED
FOLLOWING BALAGUER'S OCT. 2 SPEECH ATTACKING PARTY'S RADICALS.

3. COMPROMISE

EFFORTS BROKE DOWN COMPLETELY OCT. 11 WHEN PRD
COMMITTEE MEMBERS LEAKED WHAT THEY CLAIMED BE COMMITTEE'S
REPORT TO PRESS. REFORMISTA SOURCES ON COMMITTEE DENIED
REPORT APPROVED BY THEM AND FINALLY, REFORMISTA AND PRD
MEMBERS SUBMITTED SEPARATE REPORTS. THAT SUBMITTED BY PR
RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF DRAFT LEGISLATION WITH ONE AMENDMENT,
WHILE PRD REPORT CLAIMED ASPECTS OF BILL UNCONSTITUTIONAL
AND RECOMMENDED AMENDING 1962 FORESTRY LEGISLATION AND ISSUANCE
PRESIDENTIAL DECREE AS SOLUTION.

PAGE THREE RUESSD 918 C O N F I D E N T I A L

4. NOT SURPRISINGLY, REFORMISTA MAJORITY ACCEPTED REPORT
THEIR COMMITTEE MEMBERS (WITH, THEY ADMIT, PUSH FROM
PRESIDENTIAL LIAISON POLIBIO DIAZ) AND VOTED SOLIDLY FOR
EXECUTIVE-SUBMITTED DRAFT OCT. 18. CONTROVERSY CONTINUED
FOLLOWING DAY WHEN ATTENDANCE ONLY 14 OF 48 REFORMISTA
DEPUTIES (PREVENTING QUORUM) WAS DERISIVELY ATTRIBUTED BY
PRD LEGISLATORS TO MAJORITY'S "FEAR OF BILL." NACIONAL
ADDED NEW ELEMENT TO PICTURE OCT. 20 WITH SNIDE ARTICLE
ATTRIBUTING REFORMISTA ACCEPTANCE OF FORESTRY LEGISLATION
TO EMBASSY PRESSURES ON PALACE.

5. NOW LIKELY THAT SECOND READING BILL WILL TAKE PLACE AT
NEXT SESSION, OCT. 24.

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6. COMMENT: OF NOTE HAS BEEN SHIFT OF OPPOSITION BLOC'S
OBJECTIONS FROM ORIGINAL POLITICAL GROUNDS

(CHARGING BILL
WOULD HEIGHTEN MILITARY INFLUENCE ON PEASANT THINKING) TO
SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL CONSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS. PRD CONGRESSIONAL
SOURCES, THOUGH PRIVATELY REITERATING THEIR ORIGINAL POLITICAL
OBJECTIONS, STATE THAT SHIFT OF PUBLIC POSITION NECESSARY TO
COINCIDE WITH PARTY'S EFFORTS CONVINCING ARMED FORCES THAT PRD
DOES NOT REGARD THEM AS "ENEMIES."

GP3. CRIMMINS

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