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ACTION ARA 15

INFO GPM 03, SC 01, RSC 01, USIA 12, H 02, NSC 10, L 03, INR 07, P 04, CIA 04,
DOD 01, SR 02, SS 20, SAH 03, IO 15, NSAE 00, AID 30, PC 15, OPR 02,
MM 01, RSR 01, CU 04, /156 W

R 302133Z NOV 67
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4183
INFO AMCONSUL SAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS 577

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 1210

SUBJ: NEW WAVE OF COUP RUMORS

REF: (A) SD-1108; (B) A-294 AND A-307, WEEKAS #46 AND 47

1. WE HAVE IN PAST FEW WEEKS REPORTED IN RELATIVELY LOW KEY SPIRALLING CAMPAIGN OF RUMORS AND ATTENDANT ROILING OF POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE (SEE REFS). AS RESULT PRESIDENT'S AND AMBASSADOR'S SPEECHES LAST WEEK, RUMORS CONCERNING ALLEGED SHIFTING OF US SUPPORT FROM BALAGUER TO WESSIN HAVE ABATED BUT HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY OTHERS TO EFFECT THAT HIGH USG CIRCLES NOW LEANING TOWARDS BENEVOLENT MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS IN LATIN AMERICA TO PROVIDE PEACEFUL COVER FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN AREA. (ON THIS ASPECT, GARCIA GODOY EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR HIS CONCERN OVER EFFECTS ON DOMINICAN MILITARY OF WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS

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WIDESPREAD MISINTERPRETATIONS OF RECENT STATEMENTS BY AMBASSADOR LINOWITZ ABOUT USG ATTITUDE TOWARD MILITARY REGIMES. MOREOVER, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE REPORTS, GERMAN

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ORNES OF EL CARIBE IS TELLING HIS CONTACTS THAT, AFTER VISIT TO WASHINGTON, HE IS CONVINCED "HIGH CIRCLES" USG PREFER MILITARY GOVERNMENTS AS MEANS ENSURING STABILITY REQUIRED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THIS, COUPLED WITH HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE INTERWEAVING OF MULTIPLICITY ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING SUPPOSED INTENTIONS OF BALAGUER AND ONE OR ANOTHER SECTOR OF HIS OPPOSITION, HAS RESULTED IN NEW RUMOR WAVE PERHAPS MORE INTENSE THAN ANY SINCE BALAGUER'S INAUGURATION.

2° THIS NEW WAVE SEEMS HAVE BEEN KICKED OFF BY PUBLICATION NOV 23 OF NEWS OF CAAMANO DISAPPEARANCE (SD-1156). BY NEXT DAY STORY WAS CIRCULATING AROUND TOWN, INCLUDING IN MILITARY CIRCLES, THAT BALAGUER HAD BROUGHT CAAMANO BACK TO SANTO DOMINGO CLANDESTINELY AND INTENDED SURFACE HIM AT APPROPRIATE TIME TO BALANCE OFF WESSIN MOVEMENT. THIS RUMOR, WHICH ONE HIGH MILITARY SOURCE PRIVATELY CLAIMS ORIGINATED IN MIAMI, WAS POPULARLY INTERPRETED TO BE AIMED AT HEIGHTENING FRICTION IN ARMED FORCES IN PREPARATION SOME

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MOVE BY WESSIN FORCES. THAT NIGHT STORY WAS PHONED TO EMBASSY FROM PUERTO RICO THAT PLOT TO ASSASSINATE FIRST BRIGADE COMMANDER NIVAR SEIJAS AND OZAMA FORTRESS COMMANDER CHECO WAS IN WORKS AS "FIRST STEP" TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION WIDER PLOT AGAINST BALAGUER BY NEUTRALIZING CAPITAL'S DEFENSES. THIS STORY WAS ALSO SAID HAVE ORIGINATED IN MIAMI. ON SAME NIGHT POLICE, ACTING ON TIP THAT "REVOLUTION" WAS TO BREAK OUT THAT NIGHT, PASSED REPORT TO ARMED FORCES, WHOSE HIERARCHY DID NOT TAKE TIP SERIOUSLY BUT ORDERED LOSSE ALERT IN CASE SOMEONE PLANNING TROUBLE OF ANY KIND.

3° SINCE THEN RUMORS HAVE INCREASED. NIGHT OF NOV 28 WORD DOWNTOWN WAS THAT COUP WAS IMMINENT AND THAT PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY CONSTITUTIONALISTS, SHOULD REMAIN IN HOMES OR GO INTO HIDING. THIS STORY IN PART RESULTED FROM RADIO NEWS STORY, LATER PUBLISHED IN NOVEMBER 28 NACIONAL, THAT BALAGUER HAD CANCELLED SOME 15 MILITARY OFFICERS INCLUDING FORMER AIR FORCE C/S FOLCH PEREZ AND FORMER POLICE CHIEF SOTO ECHAVARRIA FOR POLITICAL (I.E. WESSINISTA) ACTIVITIES. FURTHER, DELEGATES TO ONGOING POLITICAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE AT UASD NOVEMBER 28 RECEIVED ANONYMOUS PHONE CALLS SUGGESTING THEY LEAVE TOWN SO AS NOT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN "WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN".

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4. RUMORS HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH EFFECT TO IMPEL PRD SENATOR CASIMIRO CASTRO, LEADER OF LESS RADICAL FACTION OF PARTY LEADERSHIP TO SPEAK NOVEMBER 28 OVER PARTY'S RADIO PROGRAM FOR FIRST TIME IN MANY WEEKS. CASIMIRO CATALOGUED ILLS AND ERRORS OF BALAGUER ADMINISTRATION BUT ENDED WITH OBSERVATION THAT NO MATTER HOW BASZ BALAGUER MAY BE, REGIME RESULTING FROM COUP WOULD BE WORSE AND THAT, AS SUCH, PRD MILITANTS SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY COUP THAT MIGHT BE IN WORKS. (WE WISH NOTE HERE THAT CASIMIRO WAS SPEAKING FOR PARTY' "LESS RAEGICAL" ELEMENTS. IN STRONGLY ANTI-BALAGUER BROADCAST NOVEMBER 29 PRD SECGEN PENA GOMEZ AGAIN REITERATED PARTY POSTURE ADOPTED LAST MARCH TO EFFECT PRD WOULD NEITHER ALLY ITSELF WITH COUP NOR "IN ANY WAY" DEFEND BALAGUER AGAINST COUP. HE POINTEDLY STATED THAT ANY STATEMENTS MADE BY PARTY LEADERS THAT WERE AT VARIANCE WITH THIS POSITION REFLECTED PERSONAL VIEWS OF SPEAKER ONLY.)

5. RE ALLEGED MILITARY CANCELLATIONS, MORNING PRESS NOV 29 CARRIED COMMUNIQUE SIGNED BY ARMED FORCES SECRETARY PEREZ Y PEREZ, WHICH "MOST CATEGORICALLY" DENIED "INSIDIOUS VERSIONS" OF "ALLEGED MASSIVE CANCELLATIONS" WHICH SPREAD BY SOME (UNIDENTIFIED) "OPPOSITION RADIO STATIONS" AND NACIONAL. PEREZ STATED "WE IN

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PRESENCE VILE CAMPAIGN, OSTENSIBLY AIMED AT CREATING MALAISE IN ARMED FORCES", AND SAID THAT ONLY RECENT "SEPARATIONS" FROM MILITARY HAVE BEEN THOSE OF COL. BENOIT, WHO WAS RETIRED, AND ARMY 1ST LT. PERSIO ANTONIO RODRIQUEZ, WHO CANCELLED. SAID BOTH OF THESE "ROUTING MEASURES" HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH PERSONAL INTEGRITY OR LOYALTY OF THOSE AFFECTED. PEREZ CONCLUDED RUMORS WERE "MANIFESTLY INSPIRED BY POLITICAL INTERESTS SEEKING CREATE ARTIFICIAL CLIMATE OF INTRANQUILITY AND AGITATION" AND INVITED MILITARY NOT TO BELIEVE THEM AND TO MAINTAIN "SPIRIT OF DISCIPLINE AND DEVOTION TO DUTY THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED THEM" IN PAST. (IN THIS CONNECTION RADIO CRISTAL WAS BARRED FROM AIR FOR ONE DAY.)

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6. ANOTHER INGREDIENT OF PRESENT SITUATION WAS AP STORY CARRIED BY CARIBE NOVEMBER 29 IMPLYING BALAGUER HAD RECENTLY STATED THAT WESSIN'S RETURN AT THIS TIME WOULD "CREATE CONTROVERSY THAT NATION CANNOT TOLERATE". IT WAS UNCLEAR WHEN BALAGUER WAS SUPPOSED HAVE MADE THIS STATEMENT, WHICH WAS REPORTED AS VERBATIM QUOTE. (PAO YESTERDAY LEARNED STORY WAS WRITTEN IN PUERTO RICO AND BASED ON BALAGUER INTERVIEW WITH AP CORRESPONDENT FEW DAYS AGO.) TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, BALAGUER HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON WHETHER OR NOT PERMIT WESSIN'S RETURN.

7. IN ADDITION ALL THIS, THERE IS HEIGHTENED AIR OF EXPECTANCY IN

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PRD AND CONSTITUTIONALIST CIRCLES OVER PRD DISSIDENT PLANS HOLD THEIR LONG-PLANNED CONVENTION NEAR SANTIAGO DEC 3, AND OVER PREPARATION FOR NEW MARCH ON PALACE NOW SCHEDULED FOR DEC 1 (GODR ON NOV 29 DENIED ORGANIZERS' REQUEST FOR PERMISSION HOLD MARCH). FURTHER, BOSCH'S NEW THESIS ON "PENTAGONISM, SUBSTITUTE FOR IMPERIALISM" WAS TO BE READ AT UASD CONFERENCE NOV 30, FED PLANNED CAMPUS DEMONSTRATION IN MEMORY "CHE" GUEVARA NOV 30 AND THERE IS MUCH TALK OF HIGH LEVEL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CHANGES ALLEGEDLY PLANNED BY BALAGUER IN NEAR FUTURE.

8. ATMOSPHERE, THEN, IS ONE OF CONSIDERABLE UNCERTAINTY AND SEEMS TO HAVE AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS DELIBERATE STIMULATION PERHAPS FOR VARIETY OBJECTIVES. COULD POSSIBLY REPRESENT BEGINNING OF CONCERTED DRIVE BY PGD FOR WESSIN'S RETURN, OR MIGHT POSSIBLY HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH CAAMANO'S DISAPPEARANCE. WE HAVE NO REPEAT NO INFORMATION POINTING TO POSSIBILITY OF ANY MAJOR ACTION-- EXCEPT IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SENSE--AGAINST GODR, AND ARE SATISFIED THAT BALAGUER REMAINS IN CONTROL OF SITUATION. AS USUAL, HOWEVER, WE CANNOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY THAT SOME ACCIDENT, OR SURFACING OF SOME WELL-BURIED ACTIVITY, COULD IN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE SET OFF CHAIN REACTION.

GP-3 CRIMMINS

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