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ACTION ARA-01

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| INFO | LOG-00 | AID-01 | CIAE-00 | DEAE-00 | OASY-00 | DODE-00 | ANHR-01 |
| | DS-00 | EB-01 | H-01 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 | IO-16 | JUSE-00 |
| | LAB-01 | L-01 | ADS-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OIC-02 | OMB-01 |
| | PA-01 | PM-00 | PRS-01 | P-01 | SCT-03 | SNP-00 | SP-00 |
| | SR-00 | SS-00 | STR-01 | TRSE-00 | T-00 | USIE-00 | PMB-00 |
| | DSCC-00 | SSAH-00 | PRME-01 | DRL-09 | G-00 | /043W | |

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9430
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 006175

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, KDEM, DR
SUBJECT: CIVIL UNREST IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 6070 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN THE LAST WEEK STRIKES AND WORK STOPPAGES HAVE SPREAD TO MANY CITIES OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, IN PROTEST OF ELECTORAL FRAUD COMMITTED BY THE RULING PRSC. THERE HAS BEEN SOME VIOLENCE, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS RESPONDED WITH NUMEROUS ARRESTS, SOME OF WHICH APPEAR TO BE PREVENTIVE IN NATURE. THE PRD HAS

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THREATENED TO INTENSIFY THESE PROTESTS IF BALAGUER IS PROCLAIMED THE WINNER OF THE RECENT ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) BEGINNING LAST WEEK IN THE TOWN OF LICEY AL MEDIO, IN THE CIBAO VALLEY, A SERIES OF WORK STOPPAGES AND 24 HOUR STRIKES HAVE BEEN STAGED BY POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE "COMMITTEE AGAINST THE ELECTORAL FRAUD" AND THE "ASSOCIATION OF POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS". THE PRD HAS NOT FORMALLY CALLED ON ITS MEMBERS TO JOIN THESE DISTURBANCES, BUT HAS DECLARED THAT IT

"SYMPATHIZES" WITH THE DEMONSTRATORS. PRD PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ HAS CALLED PUBLICLY FOR NEW ELECTIONS AND SAYS THAT IF PRESIDENT BALAGUER IS DECLARED THE WINNER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, HE WILL CALL FOR NATIONWIDE NON-VIOLENT PROTESTS. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CURRENT DEMONSTRATIONS ARE PROTESTING A VARIETY OF ISSUES, BUT THE MOST PROMINENT ARE ELECTORAL FRAUD AND THE "DISAPPEARANCE" OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR NARCISO GONZALEZ. THESE DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE SPREAD RAPIDLY TO OTHER CITIES OF THE INTERIOR, AND ON MONDAY TO THE POORER BARRIOS OF SANTO DOMINGO ITSELF. THE WORK STOPPAGES HAVE SEVERELY COMPROMISED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND FORCED MANY BUSINESSES TO CLOSE TEMPORARILY IN SELECTED AREAS. THE POLICE HAVE REINSTALLED ROADBLOCKS IN SOME PARTS OF SANTO DOMINGO AND ARE CONFISCATING PRIVATELY OWNED WEAPONS AGAIN.

3. (C) THERE HAVE BEEN MANY REPORTS OF VIOLENCE. THESE TYPES OF DEMONSTRATIONS USUALLY INCLUDE TIRE
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BURNING, ROCK THROWING, AND THE SPREADING OF BROKEN GLASS AND NAILS ON ROADS, BUT THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN MANY REPORTS OF HOME MADE BOMBS AND MOLOTOV COCKTAILS BEING USED TO INTIMIDATE BUSINESS OWNERS INTO CLOSING THEIR DOORS. ON MONDAY, BANDS OF ARMED PRSC SUPPORTERS CONFRONTED STRIKERS IN A BARRIO OF NORTHERN SANTO DOMINGO, THREATENING THEM AND REPORTEDLY FIRING SEVERAL SHOTS TO TRY AND DISPERSE CROWDS. THE POLICE DID NOT INTERVENE AT THE TIME, BUT APPARENTLY PLAN TO ARREST THE PRSC LEADER OF ONE OF THESE BANDS.

4. (C) THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE ALSO BEEN ARRESTING POLITICAL ACTIVISTS. MANY HAVE BEEN ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF HAVING PARTICIPATED IN VIOLENT AND OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES CONNECTED TO THE PROTESTS, BUT MANY OTHERS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE TO KEEP THEM FROM ORGANIZING OR PARTICIPATING IN FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS. THE PRD, THEIR ALLIANCE PARTNER THE UD, AND THE SYMPATHETIC MOVEMENT MIUCA ALL REPORT THAT LOCAL PARTY LEADERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED, FREQUENTLY ARRESTED AT THEIR RESIDENCES. IT IS UNCERTAIN PRECISELY HOW MANY ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE, OR HOW LONG THEY WILL BE HELD.

6. (C) OPPOSITION LEADERS FEAR THAT THIS WAVE OF ARRESTS COULD BE PREPARATION FOR DECLARING BALAGUER THE WINNER. THEY CLAIM THE SECURITY FORCES ARE TRYING TO NEUTRALIZE POTENTIAL TROUBLEMAKERS IN ADVANCE OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT TO TRY AND WEAKEN THE INEVITABLE PROTESTS. THEY ALSO FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE OMINOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF PROFESSOR GONZALEZ WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE SECURITY

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FORCES TO SHUT HIM UP. MANY SEE DISTURBING PARALLELS TO THE FIRST TWELVE YEARS UNDER BALAGUER (1966-78), WHEN THE SECURITY FORCES WERE MUCH MORE REPRESSIVE, AND GOVERNMENT CRITICS WERE FREQUENTLY ARRESTED OR "DISAPPEARED" FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

7. (C) COMMENT: THE VIOLENCE IN THIS ROUND OF PROTESTS IS DISTURBING, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT THE PRD HAS NOT YET PUBLICLY CALLED FOR ITS MEMBERS TO TAKE TO THE STREETS. IF AND WHEN THE PRD SENDS OUT THIS CALL, THE SITUATION COULD BE VERY EXPLOSIVE. PARTICULARLY DISTURBING ARE THE ARMED BANDS OF PRSC SUPPORTERS WHO CONFRONTED THE STRIKERS, WITHOUT INTERFERENCE FROM THE POLICE AT THE TIME. THESE "INCONTROLABLES" ARE DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN THE PRSC IN POWER, NO MATTER WHAT, AND THEY COULD EASILY SPARK A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WHICH COULD ESCALATE. END COMMENT.
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