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OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-
GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

In accordance with Article 54 of the United Nations Charter, I have the honour to forward to you for the information of the Security Council the following cable No. 929 of today's date, sent by the Ad Hoc Committee to the Chairman of the Tenth Meeting of Consultation:

"21 December 1965

"Message No. 929

"Dr. Guillermo Sevilla Sacasa
Chairman, Tenth Meeting of Consultation
of Ministers of Foreign Affairs

"The Ad Hoc Committee has the honour to address the Tenth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in order to inform it of the recent events in the Dominican Republic which interrupted the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in which the life of the nation was beginning to develop, as we had occasion to inform you in our last report.

"The Provisional Government's announcement of the size of the Christmas bonus led to angry protests by the trade unions of workers and civil servants, culminating in a general strike which began in the Río Haina sugar mill and rapidly spread to several government departments, including the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Public Works and Finance.

"In these circumstances, the Provisional President of the Republic addressed the nation by radio and television in the early evening of Wednesday, 15 December, establishing clearly the official position with regard to the Christmas bonus and appealing to the patriotic sentiments of the Dominican people. The Christmas bonus law enacted by the Provisional Government provides for the grant of a bonus of 60 per cent of salary to employees of public institutions and private enterprises earning up to 100 pesos per month, and of 50 per cent of salary to employees earning from 101 to 200 pesos per month.

"As a direct consequence of the tension created by the workers' demands and the general strike, crowds attacked various districts of the capital, seriously disturbing public order, damaging public property and causing a number of casualties, though fortunately there was no loss of life.

"On 16 and 17 December groups of anti-social elements caused a number of incidents, taking advantage of the vexed question of the Christmas bonus for the sole purpose of creating difficulties for the Provisional Government and exploiting the results of the incidents for their own political ends.

"These groups were led by communist agitators, who began by creating disturbances in the commercial districts of the city, where the crowds set themselves the task of overturning and setting fire to vehicles which they met on their way, destroying stalls owned by small traders and looting stores. At the request of the Provisional Government, personnel of the Inter-American Peace Force, in mixed patrols with personnel of the Dominican armed forces and police, were sent to the districts in question to bring the situation under control and restore order. These measures, which were fully supported by members of the sounder sections of the country, by political leaders and by the two principal newspapers, El Listin Diario and El Caribe, succeeded in restoring the life of the city to normality during the course of 17 December. Meanwhile, most public employees, dissatisfied with the turn events were taking, began to return to work. The sugar strike was settled by an agreement under which loans were to be granted to workers not receiving Christmas bonuses.

"By the following day, Saturday, 18 December, the crisis created in connexion with the Christmas bonus problem had been entirely overcome. There was nothing to suggest the possibility of new disturbances.

"On the evening of Saturday, 18 December, Colonel Francisco Alberto Caamaño Denó, leader of the former Constitutionalist Government, went to the city of Santiago de los Caballeros in company with a group of 150 heavily armed ex-soldiers and a hundred civilians to attend a mass in memory of Lieutenant-Colonel Rafael Tomás Fernández Domínguez, who had fallen on 19 May 1965 during an attack by the Constitutionalist on the Palacio Nacional.

"After the mass, which was celebrated without any incidents in the Cathedral of Santiago Apostol, a group consisting of Colonel Caamaño and several political leaders of the Dominican Revolutionary Party went to the municipal cemetery to place a wreath on the grave of Lieutenant-Colonel Rafael Tomás Fernández Domínguez. At this time some firing was heard.

"From the cemetery Colonel Caamaño and his group went to the Hotel Matum to attend a lunch. There a prolonged interchange of fire took place between the Constitutionalist civilians and soldiers, who barricaded themselves in the hotel, and regular troops of the Dominican Army and Air Force, which went to the spot because of the heavy firing which was going on. The cross-fire endangered the lives of hundreds of Dominicans and foreigners residing in or visiting the hotel.

"This situation continued for several hours. It has not yet been possible to determine the exact number of casualties suffered by both sides, but it is known that among those killed was Colonel Juan María Lora Fernández, former Chief of Staff of the Constitutionalist Army.

"Early yesterday afternoon, at the request of the Provisional President, Dr. Héctor García Godoy, and through the intermediary of the Ad Hoc Committee, which had kept itself informed of the situation from the outset, troops of the Inter-American Peace Force went to the city of Santiago de los Caballeros, where, after long conversations with both parties, they succeeded in establishing a cease-fire, and, in order to prevent greater bloodshed, proceeded to convey the Constitutionalist civilians and soldiers, including Colonel Caamaño Denó, Colonel Montes Arache and Mr. Héctor Aristy, to Santo Domingo. This evacuation was completed yesterday morning.

"At the same time, rumours relating to the Santiago events led to a number of disturbances and incidents in Santo Domingo between groups of persons gathered in the streets of the commercial district and other parts of the city. Mixed patrols of members of the Inter-American Peace Force and personnel of the Dominican police and armed forces were sent to prevent more serious disturbances.

"In a press communiqué issued yesterday by the Provisional President of the Republic, the Dominican people were informed that the Provisional President had promulgated a decree establishing a commission composed of Mr. Manuel Joaquín Castillo, Provisional Vice-President of the Republic and Minister of the Interior, Mr. Fidel Méndez Núñez, Minister without portfolio, and Mr. Gustavo Gómez Ceara, Procurator-General of the Republic. This commission, which went to Santiago yesterday afternoon, will carry out a full investigation of the incidents at Santiago and report to the Provisional President within seventy-two hours so that the Government can determine where the responsibility for these extremely grave incidents lies and can then act with the severity they demand.

"The Ad Hoc Committee is confident that the measures adopted by the Provisional Government will restore peace and bring about a return to normal activity throughout the country.

"Ad Hoc Committee

Ilmar Penna Marinho
Special Delegate of Brazil

Ramón de Clairmont Dueñas
Special Delegate of El Salvador

Ellsworth Bunker
Special Delegate of the United States"

Accept, etc.,

(Signed) William SANDERS
Assistant Secretary General
Organization of American States