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BIR RTS - 2B

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (DR) HAITI (HA)

REPORT NO:

14-25X1

TITLE: DOMINICAN-HAITIAN BORDER (U)

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SUMMARY: (C) This report covers RO's observations on trip along the Northern Border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti; an area of current high interest to the Dominican Military. Topics discussed include road networks, border posts, improvement projects, border delineation project, illegal immigration, and military facilities at Monte Cristi.

DETAILS: (C/NOFORN) During the past few months the Dominican Military has developed a high level of interest in the region of their common border with Haiti. Projects have been planned to improve the quality of life for troops assigned to this remote area, increase Dominican control and public interest, and to stem the flow of illegal Haitians entering the Dominican Republic. Moreover, units from all the Armed Forces have been instructed to familiarize themselves with the terrain and population in this region. For these reasons RO; accompanied by Dominican Army G-2, took a familiarization trip along the northern section of the border on 17 and 18 October 1980. Travelling in the Jeep, we departed Monte Cristi at 0600 hours on 18 October and arrived in Pedro Santana at 1500hrs the same day. The following paragraphs provide information obtained by RO through personal observations and conversations with military personnel assigned in this zone:

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1. (C) Monte Cristi: This town houses the 15th Co, 8th Bn, of the 2nd Bde; commanded by CPT Ramon ((De La Cruz)) Tejada. The 15th Company is located in a small fort on the southwest corner of the town. The fort is on a hill providing a commanding view of most of Monte Cristi (See Photos A-1,A-2). The fort is small, in fair condition, and has half of its facilities taken up by the Monte Cristi public jail (See Photos 2A-4,A-5). The Grounds of the fort were poorly kept; garbage was lying out in the open and a goat farm surrounds most of the facilities. There were two large antennas

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on the roof of the fort (See Photo A-3) and CPT De La Cruz said that their only communications was with the ANPRC-77 radio. Very few soldiers were seen during the visit, probably not more than twenty. CPT De La Cruz asked the G-2 to get him a new S-2. He commented that the present S-2 has been assigned to the same job for the last seven years and has become indifferent about his work. The man in charge in Monte Cristi appeared to be MAJ Leonidas ((Mateo)) de los Santos, whose official title is Inspector General of the 8th Bn. However, the man who seemed to know everything and everybody was MAJ Arturo A. ((Aquino)) V., the military doctor for Monte Cristi. MAJ Aquino has been assigned to Monte Cristi for the past 16 years. He said that the major medical problems in the area is syphilis, but noted that malaria is on the rise. He blamed this on illegal Haitian immigrants coming into the area. (COMMENT: Monte Cristi is practically surrounded by mangrove swamps that are breeding grounds for mosquitos that descend on the town in swarms during the afternoon and evening hours. It is not surprising that a few cases of malaria are cause for concern.)

2. (U) Road Network: A. (U) From Monte Cristi to Dajabon, the road is two lanes wide, dirt, and in a very poor state of repair. There are a couple of sections where the original blacktop is still in place, but these are worse than the dirt portions. They amount to a continuous set of pot holes that are not leveled by grading. The bridge over the Yaque del Norte River is a single lane bridge, Roman-arch style, and was built during the U.S. Marine occupation in the 1920's. The side road to Pepillo Salcedo (where the border actually begins) is also characterized by deep ruts and mud holes, but it is between one and one-half lanes wide.

B. (U) Between Dajabon and Restauracion the road is almost entirely paved. Those sections that are unpaved had recently been graded (See photos A-17, A-19). All pot holes on the paved portion were freshly filled with dirt. (COMMENT: President Guzman was visiting this area on the 18th also and special crews had been working on the roads for several days and nights. Therefore, this section of highway was seen at its best). From Dajabon to Loma de Cabrera the road is 1.5 lanes wide and from Loma de Cabrera to Restauracion the road is only one lane wide (See Photos B-2, B-3). In this latter section a recent landslide had completely blocked the road. Two teams from the Ministry of Public Works had finished clearing the road during the night of 17 Oct. Such blockage would probably have remained for several days if the President were not visiting. From Restauracion to Villa Anacaona the road is unimproved dirt (See Photo B-11), 1.5 lanes wide, and shows no signs of maintenance. Villa Anacaona is the last border post belonging to the 8th Bn, 2nd Bde.

C. (U) The worse section of road lies between Villa Anacaona and Pedro Sanatna (See Photos C-9, C-10, C-12, C-17 thru C-20). This section is dirt road built on a solid rock base. The road is mostly one lane wide with occasional portions 1.5 lanes wide. The terrain is mountainous and during most of the trip one travels on the side of a steep mountain (See Photos B-18, C-14 thru C-16). Seldom does one find a straight-of-way over 50 meters in length. This section is subject to land slides, especially during this period of the year. Heavy rains have been falling daily for the past few weeks, usually starting in the late afternoon hours. Many small slides remained in the road and are hazards to driving (See Photos C-12, C-13). One slide had obviously buried a 25 foot section of road, but was cleared before our arrival (See Photos C-15, C-16). Since the road is on the side of a steep mountain, even a small landslide effectively blocks any vehicle travel. Another problem is that the Haitians block the culverts under the road and use the resulting "ponds" as public baths. Thus the streams in many places run over the top of the road, increasing erosion. The bridge over the Rio Libon near Villa Anacaona was in unsafe condition. Erosion has caused the first span to be situated at approximately 50 degrees from horizontal. Also the approaches to the bridge over Rio Joca near Pedro Santana were practically eaten away. Moreover, the upstream side of the bridge was covered with logs and branches that no one bothers to remove. Even a small flood through this area could completely destroy the center spans. All other bridges along

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the road were concrete slabs with no guard rails. Everyone assigned in the border region agreed that this section of road averaged between two and three vehicles per day. (COMMENT: From Villa Anacaona to Pedro Santana, the road is the border. One side is Haiti the other Dominican Republic, but the road itself is freely used by both countries without restriction).

3. (C/NOFORN) Border Posts: A. (C/NOFORN) The building that houses the border posts are of two types. One is a square cement building approximately 30 feet by 30 feet (See Photos B-12,B-13). The other type has the same base, but is topped with a four to five story observation tower (See Photos B-15,B-17,C-1,C-2,C-3,C-7,C-8). All are painted the same dark green color. Located near the main buildings are four to eight wooden shacks that house the families of the troops assigned border duty. (See Photos B-14,B-19,C-4). The buildings contain the absolute minimum essential comforts, e.g. cots and one foot locker per individual. Water comes from wells located nearby and the universal standard outhouse is just a "sniff" away. The border posts are located where they give the best view of the surrounding terrain. On the curvy, mountainous portion of the drive one sees the same border post, from different angles, for a half hour (See Photos C-7,C-8). However, the higher terrain is on the Haitian side of the border, placing the Dominican forces at a distinct disadvantage. Between Villa Anacaona and Pedro Santana there were no means of communication between the border posts and their parent organization, the 3rd Bde. (COMMENT: Reportedly, the Chief of Staff of the Army has ordered that ANPRC-77 radios be sent to each border post since receiving the G-2 report of the trip). All soldiers were armed with the locally produced San Cristobal rifles. The only crew served weapons seen were .30 cal. MG at Dajabon and Pedro Santana.

B. (C/NOFORN) The border posts that we visited were manned by six to ten people. The man incharge was usually a corporal. Everyone was sitting around talking or laying in bed when we arrived. There were no signs of any recent activity at any location. The post in general suffer from a lack of leadership, supervision, and motivation. The effectiveness of the border posts is highly doubtful. However, the lack of vehicles and the high cost of gasoline makes it equally doubtful that any improvements in these conditions will be forthcoming. Personnel problems result from two extremes. The first group consists of those who have made a career of border assignments. These are characterized by a "What-me-worry" attitude. They have no ambition and do little regarding their military assignments, but dedicate themselves to farming or other private interests. The second group is made up of those who dedicate themselves to getting reassigned, beginning with their first duty day at the border. Their sole interest is "returning to civilization". The G-2 informed one Lt that he was going to inspect a project that the Army Chief of Staff had ordered (see next paragraph). The Lt assured the G-2 that everything had been done. Upon our arrival 30 minutes, we observed that nothing had been done nor had work even begun. Obviously the Lt had never personally inspected his own area.

4. (U) Border Delineation: Several months ago the Army Chief of Staff had ordered that a project be undertaken to help facilitate recognizing the actual route of the border. The plan was to plant a "Franoyan" (See Photo C-5) (a fast growing tree with red flowers) on the Dominican side of each border marker to make the border line more readily distinguishable. The present markers are 18 inch, cement pyramids that were installed in 1929. Today they are crumbling and are often hidden by weeds. The G-2 was to take a picture of each border marker to show the Army Chief of Staff how the project was progressing. During the entire trip, not a single Franoyan was seen at a border marker. Two posts had planted one each, but these were directly in front of the border post; thus eliminating any need for the soldiers to walk in the hot sun. Once again, a lack of communication and supervision in an area no one want to visit.

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5. (U) Haitian Border Posts: While the Dominican border posts were in poor condition, the Haitian counterparts were worse. The Haitian posts consisted principally of three wooden shacks, set back 200 to 300 meters from the border (See Photos B-16, C-6). The Dominicans were lounging around doing nothing, but the Haitian guards were not even seen. The Dominican troops assured us that each Haitian post was manned by three people. We did stop to greet one Haitian guard who was walking along the road. He was dressed in khaki shorts and a short-sleeve khaki shirt. His only weapon was a .38 cal. pistol. He gave his name as PERALTA, but his Spanish accent was only fair and his grammar was poor.

6. (U) Haitian Migration: LTC ((Reyes)) Jimenes, Commander of the 8th Bn in Dajabon, noted that the terrain around his area makes it a popular route for Haitian illegals entering the Dominican Republic. Occasionally the 8th Bn conducts "round-ups" of illegals and takes them back across the border at Dajabon (See Photos A-12 thru A-16). LTC Reyes stated that during the past month the 8th Bn has returned a total of 549 illegals to Haiti, with 51 being the largest number returned at any one time. The Haitian border authorities seem to cooperate fully with the operations, but are unable to stem the flow across the border. However, the Dominican population is not so cooperative. Dajabon is an agricultural area and local Dominican farmers and dairymen will hide the illegals from authorities in order to keep their cheap source of labor. Another frustration is the fact that most illegals are back working on the same farms two to three days after they have been returned to Haiti. The company commander in Restauracion just shrugged his shoulders when asked about the number of Haitians his unit picked up. He finally stated that Haitians weren't a problem in his area.

7. (C/NOFORN) Control Efforts: At each unit visited the G-2 had a private conversation with the commander. RO was never closer than 15 meters and usually in a separate room, but there were indications that the G-2 was issuing orders on control of illegal Haitians. While talking, the G-2 would hit the palm of his hand with the other fist (indicating "crack down") and would make a pinching motion with his fingers (indicating "tight control"). At one point RO overheard some of the conversation. The commander was told to increase patrolling and to instigate more thorough checks on the documentation of persons residing in the area. Anyone without proper papers was to be taken immediately to the nearest border post ("don't waste gasoline taking them to headquarters") for their return to Haiti. There were no signs of any major effort underway in preparation for a large scale deportation. However, it should be noted that the northern border comprises the most rugged terrain and that illegal immigration, except for Dajabon, is less of a problem than the southern part of the border.

8. (U) Border Improvements: The Armed Forces have reportedly established a program to improve the quality of life for the troops assigned border duty. The program was to include improving living conditions and increasing rations. The 8th Bn at Dajabon is housed in a complete new fort (See Photos A-10, A-11). The 17th Co at Restauracion has a new dispensary (30' X 20" concrete construction) and a new wood frame barracks (See photos B-4 thru B-8). (COMMENT: There is no doctor assigned to the 17th Co, but one visits from Dajabon twice a month). The G-2 had been assigned in Restauracion in 1948 and he commented that the only change he saw was the fact that in 1948 the well had a mechanical pump; today the water is drawn by hand using a pole and a bucket (See Photo B-5). No other improvements were noted at any of the border posts (See Photo B-1) and everyone RO asked about increased rations either looked dumbfounded or asked when the program was to begin. In short, the border improvement program has a long way

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to go. RO was told that the small, isolated posts in the Dajabon area have new buildings. The old wooden constructions were destroyed by a hurricane in Sept 1979. One fact did stick out: most of the troops manning the border posts had been assigned within the last two months. Perhaps shortening border tours will be an interim solution to full scale improvements in living conditions.

9. (U) Demography: Between Dajabon and Restauracion there were numerous small farms and diaries. RO was surprised that very few of the people observed were negroid considering the overall percentage in the Dominican Republic and the supposed Haitian influence in this area. Between Villa Anacaona and Pedro Santana the only civilians observed, except for the families of the Dominican border guards, were Haitians. On the Haitian side of the border crops were growing right up to the edge of the road, while the Dominicans side consisted of unimproved, unoccupied brushland. The Haitians observed were lean, rugged looking individuals. They would neither smile nor return greetings when spoken to. They seem to fear having their pictures taken. Once a camera was produced all teenagers and adults would lay face down on the ground (See Photos A-13, A-14).

10. (C/NOFORN) Miscellaneous: A. (C/NOFORN) The 8th Bn has been authorized to set up a breeding farm to produce mules, a valuable animal in the rough terrain. Some border posts are occasionally isolated due to rains and land slides and the mules would serve as pack animals to resupply these posts. The project has the added advantage of saving gasoline which costs \$2.46 per gallon in this area.

B. (U) At Pepillo Salcedo we observed a line of women carrying water on their heads from storage tanks located approximately two kilometers from the town. One of the water pipes that follow the road into town was broken and spewing water into the air some five kilometers from town. This observation is one of several that indicate the need for a government program of development in the border area.

C. (C/NOFORN) The G-2 has his own personal resources in the border region to report illegal entries and contraband. We ate at the home of an individual in Pedro Santana (he was never introduced by name) who reports directly to the G-2 and not the local company commander nor the 3rd Bde. The G-2 said the man was a member of the armed forces, but he wore no uniform and his appearance was anything but military.

D. (U) The entire trip along the northern border can be made without using a four wheel drive vehicle. However, a vehicle that sits high above the ground is a necessity. The mountainous portion of the road is cut from solid rock so there is danger of getting stuck in the mud (See Photos C-18, C-19). A shovel to clear land slides should be carried, along with food and water. It was interesting that the G-2 would not drink water at any border post, even water that had been boiled.

ORIGINATORS COMMENTS: (C/NOFORN) [redacted] or further information on the interest of the Dominican military in development of the border region. [redacted]

[redacted] discusses the possibility of mass deportation of illegals. Embassy message number 8427, 271300Z Oct 80, covers the entire spectrum of the Haitian problem vis-a-vis the Dominican Republic. Two facts should be reiterated, 1) RO observed no indication of preparation for large-scale deportation of Haitian illegals, but the northern section of border constitutes a less popular route; and 2) it appears that the Armed Forces have been directed to increase vigilance and controls in the border area to stem the flow of illegal aliens from Haiti.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC TITLING LOG

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ROLL A
FRAMEDESCRIPTION

1,2	[] UNK, 1953N 07139W, Town of Monte Cristi and Fort, 801017, 1600Z	25X1
3	[] UNK, 1953N 07139W, Roof of Fort at Monte Cristi, 801017, 1600Z	25X1
4,5,	[] UNK, 1953N 07139W, Jail at Monte Cristi Fort, 801017, 1600Z	25X1
10,11	[] UNK, 1933N 07142W, New Fort at Dajabon, 801018, 1300Z	25X1
12	[] UNK, 1933N 07142W, Bridge at Border, 801018, 1300Z	25X1
13,14	[] UNK, 1933N 07142W, View of Haitians crossing border from bridge, 801018, 1300Z	25X1
15,16	[] UNK, 1933N 07142W, View of border crossing point, 801018, 1300Z	25X1
17	[] UNK, 1933N 07142W, Street scene of Dajabon, 801018, 1300Z	25X1
19	[] UNK, 1925N 07136W, Street scene of Loma de Cabrera, 801018, 1400Z	25X1

ROLL B
FRAME

1	[] UNK, 1925N 07136W, Border post at Loma de Cabrera, 801018, 1400Z	25X1
2	[] UNK, 1925N 07136W, Street conditions in Loma de Cabrera, 801018, 1400Z	25X1
3	[] UNK, 1925N 07136W, Road between Loma de Cabrera and Restauracion, 801018, 1430Z	25X1
4	[] UNK, 1918N 07142W, Commo towers in Restauracion, 801018, 1500Z	25X1
5	[] UNK, 1918N 07142W, Fort and well in Restauracion, 801018, 1500Z	25X1
6	[] UNK, 1918N 07142W, Wooden barracks in Restauracion, 801018, 1500Z	25X1

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PHOTOGRAPHIC TITLING LOG CONTINUES

7	[] UNK, 1918N 07142W, Fort in Restauracion, 801018, 1500Z	25X1
8	[] UNK, 1918N 07142W, Dispensary in fort at Restauracion, 801018, 1500Z	25X1
11	[] UNK, 1918N 07142W, Road between Restauracion and Villa Anacaona, 801018, 1530Z	25X1
12,13	[] UNK, 1915N 07141W, Border post at Villa Anacaona, 801018, 1600Z	25X1
14	[] UNK, 1915N 07141W, Military housing at Villa Anacaona, 801018, 1600Z	25X1
15,17	[] UNK, 1915N 07141W, Observation tower at Villa Anacaona, 801018, 1600Z	25X1
16	[] UNK, 1915N 07141W, Haitian border post near Villa Anacaona, 801018, 1600Z	25X1
18	[] UNK, 1915N 07141W, Terrain around Villa Anacaona, 801018, 1600Z	25X1
19	[] UNK, 1915N 07141W, Family housing in Villa Anacaona, 801018, 1600Z	25X1

ROLL C
FRAME

1	[] UNK, , Border post at La Palmita, 801018, 1700Z	25X1
2,3,	[] UNK, , Border post at La Palmita, 801018, 1700Z	25X1
4	[] UNK, , Military housing at La Palmita, 801018, 1700Z	25X1
5	[] UNK, UNK, Sample of plant on border delieanation, 801018, 1700Z	25X1
6	[] UNK, UNK, Haitian border post 801018, 1715Z	25X1
7	[] UNK, 1909N 07141W, Border post at El Corde, 801018, 1730Z	25X1
9,10,12,17-20	[] UNK, 1908N 07141W, Road between Villa Anacaona and Pedro Santana, 801018, 1800Z	25X1
13-16	[] UNK, 1908N 07141W, Land slide between Villa Anacaona and Pedro Santana, 801018, 1800Z	25X1

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2 ENCLOSURE(S):

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1. 3 rolls of negatives (C)
2. Map showing Border Posts (C), 2 pgs.

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