

BRASILIA
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

January 12, 1966

To : The Acting Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes
Subject: Brazil's War Minister Tosses Cap Into Ring

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On January 5, War Minister Arthur Costa e Silva sent the presidential succession race off to an early (and perhaps premature) start through press and TV announcements of his candidacy. The election date is not yet set. The Second Institutional Act specifies only that the election be indirect, i.e. by the National Congress, and be held prior to October 3, 1966. The inauguration is scheduled to take place on March 15, 1967.

ACTION TAKEN

Trip Hopefully Will Build Prestige. Costa e Silva's announcement came on the eve of his departure on a 35-day official visit to Europe and the Middle East. He hopes that the trip will enhance his prestige by underlining the fact that he heads an Army which is not only the bulwark of the Brazilian government but which also, at the behest of international organizations, has contingents serving in important hot spots around the world: the Dominican Republic, the Gaza Strip, Kashmir, and formerly in the Congo.

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The Making of a President. Theoretically, there will be only two presidential candidates, since there are only two political parties legally empowered to nominate candidates: the regime's National Renovating Alliance (ARENA) and the opposition Brazilian Democratic Movement (MODEBRA). In fact, the regime's candidate will emerge from interaction among the military establishment, President Castello Branco, and civilian political forces mainly in the Congress and among the governors of important

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states. The victor in that maneuvering will then receive ARENA's blessing, nomination, and, in all likelihood, election by the Congress -- with the military exerting whatever pressure may be required.

Costa e Silva out to Obtain, and Keep, Army's "Nomination". The 64-year old Costa e Silve is not the President's choice. Castello Branco would prefer a younger, more intelligent man with a broader outlook, who, while protecting the achievements of the Revolution, would start the nation back on the road toward broadly based government. Under pressure, however, the President in the past has bent to opposing military elements to avoid serious dissension in the armed forces. Examples are his acquiescence in the ouster of Mauro Borges from the governorship of Goias in November 1964 and in the proclamation of the Second Institutional Act of October 27, 1965. It will therefore probably be Costa e Silva's strategy to make it appear that a denial of his claim to the presidency would cause sufficient resentment in the military to threaten the stability of the regime. Of paramount importance to Costa e Silva, therefore, will be winning the solid support of the military. This support might be expressed through public statements from the commanders of the four major armies. So far these commanders have not been forthcoming. In fact, two of these officers -- General Amaury Kruel, commanding the Second Army in Sao Paulo, and General Justino Alves Bastos, commander of the Third Army in Rio Grande do Sul -- themselves harbor presidential hopes, perhaps even as candidates of the opposition. The "hard-line" has not made known its views on the succession. The degree of its support for Costa e Silva may depend on how attractive they find Castello Branco's choice which has yet to be announced.

Further complicating, and dampening, Costa e Silva's chances is the constitutional requirement that cabinet members leave their posts six months prior

to running for public office. Such a long period out of the War Ministry would erode much of Costa e Silva's influence within the military. The resignation requirement could not be by-passed simply by a government decree, particularly since Castello Branco does not support the idea. Amendment of the Constitution by Congress would probably be required. To overcome these obstacles, Costa e Silva will have to demonstrate considerably more power and support than he has shown thus far.

N. Superficial

Lacks Popular Support. It is doubtful that Costa e Silva enjoys any substantial popularity among Brazil's disenfranchised electorate of 20,000,000⁷ people. His reputation among Brazilians, which perhaps exaggerates the facts, is that of a pistol-packing, superficial man of action, suitable for commanding troops, but not for leading a nation nearing world power status. While not disdaining public opinion, Costa e Silva has on several recent occasions made it clear that he regards support by the armed forces as virtually the sole prerequisite for the Presidency.