

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: September 20, 1967

SUBJECTS: Frente Ampla; "Imaturos"; Anti-Americanism

PLACE: AnEmbassy Office, Brasilia

SUBJECT

PARTICIPANTS: Federal Deputy Bernardo Cabral (MDB-Amazonas)
Federal Deputy Franco Montoro (MDB-São Paulo)
Federal Deputy Ulysses Guimarães (MDB-São Paulo)
Senator Adalberto Senna (MDB-Acre)

Melvyn Levitsky, Political Officer, Brasilia

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1. During the course of an evening reception at the Embassy, I spoke with MDB Deputies CABRAL, GUIMARAES, MONTORO, and MDB Senator SENNA, separately and together. The following is a distillation of their remarks.

2. Frente Ampla. I asked Cabral if it was true that he would adhere to the Frente Ampla, as some of the press had reported. He denied this vigorously, saying that the Brazilian press was always making up stories for lack of anything better to do. He attacked Carlos LACERDA at length, calling the Frente's leader a "crazyman" without scruples. Lacerda, he noted, had been backed by conservative groups, but now was courting the left wing. Cabral stated outright that the Frente was "being supported by Communists." He turned to Montoro who was standing nearby and asked him if this were not true. Montoro agreed and said that groups of MDB members were meeting to decide how to cope with the Frente. Both Deputies scoffed at reports that there were numerous MDB members interested in joining the movement. Cabral laughed when I mentioned the estimate of 50 to 60 cited by some papers. He felt that the "popular mobilization" called for by Lacerda would come to nothing. Later in the evening, Senna told me that there was no real backing for the Frente in the MDB.

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According to Senna the "older" opposition leaders would take care of the problem in their own good time and in their own way. Guimarães said Lacerda was highly intelligent and an orator and agitator of the first order, but that he, as yet, saw no great support for Lacerda, or his movement.

3. "Immatures". I asked Cabral about the group of young MDB deputies called immatures ("immature ones") by the press. He said that this was a misnomer which was being used because the group was young and held the same views in a number of areas, particularly on matters of nationalism. He admitted that the group (basically composed of Deputies Hermanno ALVES, David LEFER, Marcio MOREIRA ALVES, Doin VIERA and Cabral) spoke a great deal more in the Chamber of Deputies than its numbers warranted, but he ascribed this to enthusiasm and unwillingness to accept the state of things merely because the government said so. He pointed out that the "immatures" were not always united, as indicated by their disagreement over the Frente Ampla.

4. Anti-Americanism. Cabral said he was not anti-American and again criticized the press for distorting his views. He said, however, that he was against Americans engaged in illegal activities and specifically mentioned the American convicted of smuggling (Ralph DIAL). The latter, he said, was lucky to have left Brazil quickly after having made such nasty statements about Brazilians.

5. Comment

The comments of the deputies demonstrate that there is no real agreement on how much support the Frente has at present, in light of other, more optimistic reports heard by the Embassy. Cabral's statements are of particular interest, since he has been linked with the Frente in the press. It should be noted, however, that Cabral, a young, ambitious politician, is quite opportunistic (his speeches in Congress are at complete odds with what he told me regarding the irresponsibility of the press and his denial of anti-Americanism) and could shift his position with the political winds.

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