

TELEGRAM

OUTGOING

AmEmbassy Office Brasilia

Foreign Service of the United States of America

SUBJECT
Pal 13

Charge: _____
Classification: CONFIDENTIAL

Control: ~~XXXXX~~ 728

Date: April 22, 1967
1745

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 386

INFO : AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO 431

AMCONGEN SAO PAULO 164

RIO PASS OTHER BRAZILIAN CONSULATES BY POUCH

BRASILIA 728

SUBJ: Comment on April 20 Student-Police Clash at Brasilia University

REF : Brasilia 706

1. From all information available, appears certain that student disturbance at library was engineered by small group communist or communist-allied agitators. Ambassador's visit was not cause of student discontent but rather pretext seized by this group to make trouble. All signs indicate that incident was coordinated with student disturbances same day at almost same hour in Rio and Sao Paulo.

2. University Brasilia has unique history, being only university actually to close doors as result 1964 Revolution (school did not hold August-December semester in 1965 following general

Pal 23-8 Brasilia

Drafted: Ambassador/RHines:mjm
(typed: 4-24-67)

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walk-out of teaching staff in protest against firing by new government of several professors considered subversive). Appears pro-communist element within student body has held breath for past year, and is now starting to test new government. First opportunity was freshman hazing parade April 15 (Brasilia 657). We informed that student "leader" (who among group arrested April 20) had promised local police chief that parade would be quiet affair with no anti-government or anti-American banners. In fact, biggest sign of all read "Down with Dictatorship" others read "Out with USAID" etc. and large number students were disorderly. No incidents occurred that day because police were restrained and took no action.

3. April 15 parade caused reaction of anger and distrust within security forces and in some of press. When students mounted new challenge by publicly distributing anti-U.S. manifesto on eve of Ambassador's visit, decision was taken at highest level of GOB to use all force necessary to suppress demonstration. This position made public by statement issued by Secretary of Public Safety that evening. We informed message was also passed directly to known

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student agitators. Thus group of 20-30 students who started disturbance (out of student body of more than 2000) were knowingly and purposefully inviting repressive action.

4. This analysis of factors underlying incident does not exonerate police, whose decision to move in with force to evacuate building seems to have been hasty. Once Ambassador, Rector and other authorities had left scene, police could have waited to see if demonstrators would tire themselves out in limited confines of library room. (Hardcore group could easily have been spotted and arrested as they left building through its only exit.) However, what could be considered overreaction resulted from accumulated police hostility after April 15 parade, from desire show that students cannot get away with flaunting authorities, from honest embarrassment at student behavior before Ambassador, and from historic sensitivity to "subversion" within University. To date however, we have seen no repeat no sign that Costa e Silva shares feeling that police went too far or handled themselves badly. In fact, on evening of disturbance he stressed to

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Defense Attache that he had ordered that students be "taught a lesson".

5. It is also evident that Costa e Silva thinks Rector is "weak" and that he may "get rid of him". Rector, in turn, feels that police broke their agreement with him which he says was to enter building only if physical disturbance required such action. Rector also believes that entry was with Costa e Silva's blessing.

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