



Department of State

TELEGRAM

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA POL-15

ACTION

POL

CHRON

RF

R 192130Z SEP 69

FM AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1110

INFO RUESUZ/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4794

RUESEI/AMCONSUL RECIFE 2831

RUESUP/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 3940

RULPAL/USCINCSO

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 7784

FOLLOWING IS BRASILIA 403 WITH EMBASSY COMMENT:

QUOTE

BRASILIA 403

1. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATEMENTS BY SOURCES CLOSE TO PRESIDENCY IN LAST TWO DAYS INDICATE CAMPAIGN BEING MOUNTED TO CALM POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE AND SQUELCH SPATE OF RUMORS CIRCULATING IN RIO AND BRASILIA CONCERNING IDENTITY AND TIMING POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR PRESIDENT COSTA E SILVA. CAMPAIGN APPEARS HAVE BEEN KICKED OFF BY LOYAL SUPPORTER TRANSPORT MINISTER ANDREAZZA SPEECH SEPT. 17 TO EFFECT COSTA E SILVA STILL PRESIDENT AND ANY DISCUSSION SUCCESSION PREMATURE UNTIL HE ABLE EXPRESS HIS VIEWS. FOLLOWING DAY, LABOR MINISTER PASSARINHO MADE STATEMENT TO PRESS EXPRESSING HIS LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT WHICH SENTIMENT HE SAID HE WAS SURE WAS SHARED BY MILITARY CHIEFS.

2. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS RIO SAME DAY CIVIL HOUSEHOLD MINISTER RONDON PACHECO AND CEREMONIAL CHIEF GIL OURO PRETO--WHO SOUGHT OUT MEETING WITH EMBASSY --STRESSED CERTAINTY OF PRESIDENT'S RETURN EITHER TO TAKE OVER OFFICE OR AT LEAST GIVE OPINION ON SUCCESSOR.

3. OURO PRETO CONTENTED AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED AT HIGH COMMAND MEETINGS TO POSTPONE DECISION ON SUCCESSION FOR EIGHT WEEKS FROM DAY PRESIDENT FELL ILL, APPROXIMATELY OCTOBER 23. THIS CONFORMS HE SAID WITH DOCTORS' REQUEST FOR AT LEAST SIX WEEKS BEFORE GIVING CONCLUSIONS. ALL CONTENDERS INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY ALBUQUERQUE LIMA HAVE AGREED TO THIS DECISION. MEANTIME PRESIDENT IS GRADUALLY IMPROVING. COMMUNICATION IS THE BASIC PROBLEM SINCE HE STILL CANNOT SPEAK OR

RIO 7784

SEPT 20, 1969

ACTION COMPLETED
ACTION TAKEN

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WRITE. HE DOES UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING SAID TO HIM AND NODS HIS HEAD TO INDICATE THIS. ON SEPT 17 SIX PEOPLE SAW HIM INCLUDING DELFIM NETO WHO BRIEFED HIM ON ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE WAS TOLD ABOUT AMBASSADOR ELBRICK'S KIDNAPPING SEPT. 16. HE WILL SOON TAKE EXERCISE LIKE SWIMMING AND BE EXPOSED TO MORE AND MORE PEOPLE. OURO PRETO ADMITTED THE SUCCESSION PROBLEM REMAINS IN BACKGROUND WITH GENERAL GEISEL AND GARRASTAZU MEDICI THE FRONT RUNNERS. THE FORMER HOWEVER STILL A CASTELISTA, MEDICI IS THE "PALACE CANDIDATE".

4. COMMENT: THOUGH BASED ONLY ON SPECULATION IT SEEMS DIFFICULT ESCAPE CONCLUSION THAT PALACE FORCES MADE UP OF CLOSE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN BACKERS COSTA E SILVA, UNABLE OBTAIN ACCEPTANCE THEIR CANDIDATE GARRASTAZU MEDICI IN THREE DAY MEETINGS ARMY HIGH COMMAND, SUCCEEDED IN GETTING POST-PONEMENT OF DECISION WHICH OTHER UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES ALSO WILLING ACCEPT. SINCE THEIR JOBS DEPEND ON SELECTION COSTA E SILVA SUCCESSOR, PALACE GROUP NOW PLAYING ON HOPE PRESIDENT WILL RETURN TO STATE OF HEALTH AT LEAST ENABLE HIM MAKE PRONOUNCEMENT IN FAVOR MEDICI AND THEY WILLING RUN RISKS INVOLVED IN FURTHER DELAY TO DO SO.

5. ACTION THROWS THOSE MILITARY AND PARTICULARLY CIVILIANS (PRESS AND CONGRESS) WHO HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN PREPARING SUCCESSION INTO AWKWARD POSITION OF APPEARING TO BE WORKING FOR OVERTHROW PRESIDENT. FURTHER POLITTING ON THEIR PART LIKELY BE VIEWED AS VERGING ON SUBVERSION EVEN MORE THAN IN PAST (BRASILIA 401). SUCH ACTIVITY THEREFORE LIKELY BECOME MORE SURREPTITIOUS. DIVISION BETWEEN PALACE GROUP AND THOSE SEEKING SOLUTION COULD INCREASE. EXPECTATIONS OF PUBLIC, PRESS, AND CONGRESS HAD BEEN HIGH THAT RESOLUTION CRISIS IN OFFING. CONGRESSIONAL GROUP, FED BY OPTIMISTIC REPORTS FROM DEPUTIES PADILHA AND STENZIL GATHERED HOPEFULLY IN BRASILIA. IN MEANTIME MUCH GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY OUTSIDE PALACE SLOWING DOWN. ARMA IMPRESSION FROM INTERIOR MINISTER COSTA CAVALCANTI (DAO RIO 948) SUPPORTED BY REMARK OF LABOR MINISTER PASSARINHO TO EMBASSY OFFICER SEPT. 7 THAT HIS DESK CLEAN AND HE AWAITING EVENTS. IN SUCH SITUATION PRESSURE FOR SOLUTION SEEMS LIKELY CONTINUE. SOME CONGRESSEMENT SPECULATING THAT WAY NOW OPENED TO ALBUQUERQUE LIMA ONCE MORE. UNITY OF ARMED FORCES AND POSITION OF JUNTA UNDOUBTEDLY STRENGTHENED BY HIGH COMMAND MEETINGS OF THIS WEEK. BOTH LIKELY BE TESTED BY HOLDING PERIOD AS LONG AS THAT INDICATED. SIGNED LOW
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RIO COMMENT ON PARAGRAPH 4. WE BELIEVE THAT DELAY IN DECISION SPRINGS FROM MILITARY'S DESIRE PRODUCE CANDIDATE WITH GREATEST POSSIBLE DEGREE OF ARMED FORCES SUPPORT AS WELL AS FROM GROWING APPRECIATION OF DESIRABILITY HAVING PRESIDENT COSTE E SILVA GIVE HIS BLESSING TO SOLUTION. ALSO SEEMS ONLY NATURAL THAT LOYAL CABINET MINISTERS OF COSTA E SILVA LIKE ANDREAZZA AND PASSARINHO WOULD SEEK POSTPONE COSTA'S REPLACEMENT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, IF ONLY IN FAINT HOPE HE WILL RECOVER SUFFICIENTLY TO RESUME OFFICE. INDICATIONS HERE ARE THAT MEDICI IS STILL A FRONT-RUNNING CANDIDATE.

BELTON

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