

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the
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AMEMBASSY OFFICE BRASILIA

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Control:

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BT
CONFIDENTIAL APRIL 18.

REF: A) EMBTEL 2286, B) BRASTEL 207

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

1. SUCCESSION ISSUE AGAIN DOMINATED WEEKEND NEWS AS ARENA INITIATED POLL OF MEMBERSHIP (REFTEL A) AND SERIOUS CONTENDER GENERAL CORDEIRO DE FARIAS WITHDREW FROM RACE.
2. ARENA ANNOUNCED MEMBERSHIP BEING CANVASSED THROUGH REGIONAL DIRECTORATE FOR EXPRESSION OF PREFERENCE AMONG SIX NAMES: GENERAL COSTA E SILVA, MARSHAL CORDEIRO DE FARIAS, PETROBRAS PRESIDENT ADEMAR DE QUEIROS, AMBASSADOR BILAC PINTO, MINISTER NEI BRAGA AND MINISTER (JUDGE) ETELVINO LINS (TRIBUNAL OF FEDERAL ACCOUNTS). THOUGH SENATOR KRIEGER TOLD PRESS APRIL 15 NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER ONE, TWO OR THREE NAMES WOULD BE DISTILLED FROM POLLING FOR SUBMISSION TO NOMINATING CONVENTION, DAY FOLLOWING HE QUOTED AS STATING SINGLE NAME WOULD BE SUBMITTED. ARENA SPOKESMEN STRESS HOWEVER THAT NAMES OTHER CANDIDATES MAY BE RAISED AT CONVENTION EITHER BY INDIVIDUALS OR "MINORITY GROUPS." PARTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE (GABINETE) TO MEET APRIL 28 TO EXAMINE POLL RESULTS AND DECIDE ON MAJORITY CHOICE.
3. MINISTER CORDEIRO DE FARIAS DEMANDED HIS NAME BE TAKEN OFF ARENA LIST OF SIX, IN LETTER SENT APRIL 16 TO SENATOR KRIEGER, AFTER REPORTEDLY TALKING MATTER OVER WITH PRESIDENT CASTELLO

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BRANCO. MINISTER STATED SYSTEM DEVISED AND DATES SET FOR POLLING PARTY AND CONVOKING CONVENTION SUCH THAT CANDIDATES WOULD HAVE NO REAL CHANCE EXPOUND IDEAS AND PROGRAMS TO PARTY AND PUBLIC. CONTENDED THEREFORE THAT NO GENUINE COMPETITION POSSIBLE. CORDEIRO'S LEADING SPOKESMAN IN CONGRESS, DEPUTY GERALDO GUEDES, HAS REPORTEDLY TOLD PRESS SYSTEM IS "FARCE" AND THAT MINISTER'S SUPPORTERS WILL REMAIN ALOOF FROM PARTICIPATION IN IT.

4. COMMENT:

A) REPORTED NEWS THAT ONLY ONE NAME WILL BE PRESENTED BY ARENA LEADERSHIP TO CONVENTION IS UNEXPECTED AND NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT WHICH APPEARS RUN COUNTER TO NOTION STRONGLY HELD BY PRESIDENT THAT PARTY SHOULD HAVE SOME REAL CHOICE AMONG CANDIDATES. LIST OF (NOW) FIVE NAMES DOES NOT SATISFY THIS REQUIREMENT BECAUSE IT UNBELIEVABLE AT THIS STAGE ANY BUT COSTA E SILVA COULD COME OUT ON TOP IN POLL. THIS DEVELOPMENT ALSO CAUGHT HIGH GOVERNMENT CIRCLES UNAWARES JUDGING BY STATEMENT TO CHARGE APRIL 16 BY NEI BRAGA'S ASSISTANT THAT "MINISTER VERY SURPRISED". PERHAPS IN END SINGLE CANDIDATE IDEA WILL NOT PREVAIL.

B) POSSIBLY VALID OBSERVATION BY SOME ANALYSTS IS THAT IF POLLING REQUIRES STATEMENT OF PREFERENCE FROM INDIVIDUAL PARTY MEMBERS (WHICH WOULD BECOME KNOWN) RATHER THAN (ANONYMOUSLY) EN BLOC BY REGION, THEN RESULTS OF POLL WILL BE IN EFFECT ELECTION OF NEXT PRESIDENT. REASONING IS THAT SAME DEPUTIES AND SENATORS NOW BEING CANVASSED WILL ELECT PRESIDENT OCTOBER 3 AND IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR INDIVIDUAL TO CHANGE VOTE BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, WHEN OPEN ROLL CALL VOTE WILL BE TAKEN. SECRET VOTING AT NOMINATING CONVENTION DOES HOLD OUT THEORETICAL BUT EXTREMELY REMOTE POSSIBILITY COSTA E SILVA MAY BE UPSET THERE.

C) CORDEIRO DE FAIRAS' WITHDRAWAL DOUBTLESS REFLECTS HIS CONVICTION SYSTEM FOR CHOOSING ARENA CANDIDATE ALLOWED HIM NO WORTHWHILE CHANCE AT BRASS RING. CORDEIRO AIDE TOLD DAO TODAY MINISTER'S MAIN OBJECTION WAS THAT CANVASS BOUND BE BIASED SINCE BEING CARRIED OUT BY SENATOR KRIEGER, WHO CORDEIRO ALLEGES COMPLETELY COMMITTED TO COSTA E SILVA. AS EMBASSY SEES IT, CORDEIRO WAS ONLY NAME ON LIST OF SIX WHICH WOULD CONVEIVABLY HAVE DRAWN ANY CONSIDERABLE VOTE AWAY FROM WARMIN AND SYSTEM THEREFORE HURTS HIM, WITH PROBABLE EXCEPTION OF NEI BRAGA, WHEREAS OTHERS LARGELY INDIFFERENT

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AND PROBABLY INCLINED LET NAMES REMAIN. INCIDENTALLY INDICATIVE THAT LIST IS EXERCISE IN MANIPULATION IS FACT SENATOR MILTON CAMPOS' NAME WAS STRUCK OFF ORIGINAL (REFTEL B) AT HIS REQUEST AND REPLACED BY MINISTER LINS, WHO RESPECTED BUT VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN. AIDE FURTHER SAID CORDEIRO HAS BEGUN PACKING UP TO LEAVE CABINET, WHICH APPEARS LOGICAL SINCE HE OBJECTING TO KRIEGER WHO APPOINTED BY CASTELLO BRANCO.

D) AS POT BEGINS TO BOIL MORE, COSTA E SILVA SEEMS FURTHER AHEAD THAN EVER.

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