

TELEGRAM

INCOMING

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

Foreign Service of the
United States of America

POL-13-2

ACTION

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CHRON

RF

P R 301700Z JUN 68

FM AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 9438

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Classification

Control: RIO 9438

Recd: JULY 1, 1968
1:24 PM

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ACTION TAKEN.....

SUBJECT: CURRENT ESTIMATES IMPACT OF STUDENT
DEMONSTRATIONS.

SUMMARY:

WHILE NOT POSING IMMEDIATE THREAT
OVERTHROW GOVERNMENT, BRAZILIAN STUDENT DEMON-
STRATIONS BROUGHT TO A HEAD LATENT DISCONTENT WITH
COSTA E SILVA ADMINISTRATION AND HAVE PRESENT IT
WITH ONE OF MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO DATE. HAVING
SUCCEEDED IN GAINING PUBLIC SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY AMONG
CLERGY, PROFESSORS AND OTHER INTELLECTUALS, STUDENTS
MAY BECOME POWERFUL CATALYST OF FORCES WHICH NO LONGER
SATISFIED WITH USUAL PIOUS PLATITUDES. THUS SERIOUS
SHOW DOWN MAY BECOME UNAVOIDABLE. BACKGROUND
AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES ANALYSED BELOW.

1. BASIS STUDENT UNREST GUANABARA AND ELSE-
WHERE IS OUTMODED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, INADEQUATELY
FINANCED, POORLY EQUIPPED AND STAFFED, WITH INSUFFI-
CIENT FACILITIES TO ACCOMMODATE ELIGIBLE STUDENT ENTRANTS.
PRESENT SYSTEM CLEARLY DISCRIMINATORY AND IN EFFECT
PRESERVES ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION MAINLY FOR PRIVI-
LEGED ELITE. SPORADIC AND INADEQUATE ATTEMPTS AT EDU-
CATIONAL REFORM NEITHER CONCEIVED NOR DESIGNED EFFECT
MEANINGFUL CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE.

2. CURRENT STUDENT MOVEMENT FIRST EMERGED TO PUBLIC
VIEW EARLY JUNE, AS RUN OFMILL PROTEST ON EDUCATION BY
MINORITY GUANABARA STUDENTS FROM ONLY ONE UNIVERSITY AND
ATTRACTED MINIMAL PUBLIC ATTENTION. OVERREACTION BY POLICE
JUNE 19, 20, AND 21, NOT ONLY LED TO WIDER SUPPORT FOR
MOVEMENT IN STUDENT SECTOR BUT TURNED PUBLIC OPINION
AGAINST POLICE AND AUTHORITIES. AS RESULT OF DAYS OF
DISORDER, LACK OF GOB EDUCATIONAL REFORM POLICY AND POOR

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STEWARDSHIP OF EDMIN TARSO DUTRA WERE FIXED SQUARELY IN PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT AND SYMPATHY FOR STUDENT DEMANDS ROSE SHARPLY. ANTI-AMERICANISM REMAINED PERIPHERAL ISSUE THROUGHOUT. BY TIME OF IMPRESSIVE, PEACEFUL STUDENT RALLY AND MARCH JUNE 26, STUDENTS DISPLAYED UNUSUAL ORGANIZATION, DISCIPLINE, AND LEADERSHIP, PLUS OPEN BACKING FROM OTHER ORGANOLEQU GROUPS SVH AS CLERGY, PROFESSORS, AND INTELLECTUALS. NO RPT NO SIGNIFICANT LABOR SUPPORT REGISTERED.

1 true, but only part of story...

STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS SPREAD TO OTHE BRAZILIAN CITIES WITHIN LAST FEW DAYS. PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT THAT SAO PAULO STUDENTS UNABLE GENERATE MUCH POPULAR RESPONSE; THIS TRUE TO VARYING DEGREES IN OTHER BRAZILIAN CITIES.

3. ACCORDING TO POLICE SOURCES, STUDENTS AWARE POLICE WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO INTERVENE IN JUNE 26 DEMONSTRATION. THEREFORE MARCH CAREFULLY PLANNED AND CAUTION EXERCISED TO AVOID DISORDER. THIS WAS DELIBERATE ACTION BY STUDENTS LEADERS TO GIVE IMPRESSION PRIOR VIOLENCE BY STUDENTS DUE SOLELY POLICE ACTION.

4. EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT, AS RESULT DEMONSTRATIONS AND PRESS COVERAGE MUCH BROADER PUBLIC SENTIMENT DEVELOPED THAT STUDENT COMPLAINTS IN EDUCATIONAL SPHERE JUSTIFIED, PAST GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE UNINSPIRING, AND COSTA E SILVA ADMINISTRATION MUST PRODUCE ON URGENT BASIS. ATTENTION TO EDUCATION PROBLEM HAS LED TO WIDER PUBLIC AWARENESS EXTENT PAST GOVERNMENT UNRESPONSIVENESS TO POPULAR NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS. THUS STUDENT LEADERS EASILY SHIFTED EMPHASIS FROM PURELY EDUCATIONAL ISSUES TO OUTRIGHT ATTACKS ON REGIME ON JUNE 26. SUBSEQUENT GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES THAT STEPS IN EDUCATIONAL FIELD WILL NOW BE TAKEN TENDS TO INDICATE ONLY DIRECT CONFRONTATION IN STREETS STIMULATES RESPONSE. HAVING LEGALLY PERMITTED DEMONSTRATION WHICH REVEALED APPRECIABLE DEGREE POPULAR ANTI-GOVERNMENT SENTIMENT, REGIME SET PRECEDENT WHICH MAY PROVE TROUBLESOME IN FUTURE, IF STUDENTS MAINTAIN DISCIPLINED APPROACH.

5. NOT ONLY IS HIS GOVERNMENT UNDER GUN BUT ALSO PRESIDENT COSTA E SILVA HIMSELF VULNERABLE. BY HIS STUBBORN, LENEY SUPPORT OF COLERLESS, INCOMPETENT EDMIN TARSO

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DUTRA, PRESIDENT DREW EXASPERATION AND RESENTMENT TO HIMSELF. THOUGH TO GREAT EXTENT DUTRA VICTIM DECADES OF NEGLECT OF EDUCATION, HE HAS DESERVEDLY BECOME SCAPEGOAT BECAUSE OF INABILITY SHOW HE EVEN UNDERSTANDS STAGGERING PROBLEMS CONFRONTING HIM. IF EDUCATION MINISTRY FAILS COME TO GRIPS WITH SITUATION NOW AND MORE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION ENSUES, MORE PUBLIC BLAME THAN PREVIOUSLY WILL SHIFT DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT HIMSELF, WITH POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS REFLECTIONS ON HIS OVERALL PERFORMANCE.

6. THESE EVENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE ON 21 AND 26 JUNE, HAVE STRUCK SENSITIVE CHORD IN BRAZILIAN ARMY'S PUBLICLY-ATTUNED POLICY COUNCILS. ARMY NOT FEARFUL ITS CAPABILITIES TO HANDLE ALMOST ANY SECURITY SITUATION, NOR IS IT MISLED THAT DEMONSTRATORS ALL ALTRUISTIC OR REPRESENT FEELINGS OF 90 MILLION BRAZILIANS. ARMY IS DISTRESSED OVER SUGGESTION THAT BLOODY CIVIL WAR MIGHT OCCUR. ARMY BELIEVES HOWEVER THAT EVENTS HAVE GENERATED VERY REAL THREAT TO MILITARY UNITY AS A WHOLE, AND ARMY UNITY IN PARTICULAR. ON BASIS OF THESE CONCLUSIONS, ARMY HIGH COMMAND HAS GATHERED OVERWHELMING CONSENSUS FROM OFFICER CORPS THAT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST URGENTLY DO SOMETHING. PRESIDENT COSTA E SILVA NOW APPRISED THIS CONSENSUS, REPORTEDLY HAS AGREED SHAKE-UP HIS CABINET IMMEDIATELY AND IMPOSE A STATE OF SIEGE MOMENT STUDENTS OR ANYONE ELSE TAKES TO THE STREETS IN DISORDERLY FASHION. WE MUST WAIT AND SEE HOWEVER.

*whose suggestion
why? what is origin of threat?*

7. AT PRESENT, WHATEVER COMPOSITION OF CABINET, GOVERNMENT FACES TASK FORMULATE REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION IN CONCRETE TERMS WHICH MUST CONVINCE PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT ALREADY IN PROCESS. SHOULD GOVERNMENT ACTIONS NOT DETER STREET AGITATION, INCREASED TENDENCY TOWARDS AUTHORITARIANISM ALMOST CERTAIN.

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