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TELEGRAM

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA POL-15

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 8386

SUBJECT: LIKELY POSITION OF MEDICI ON "POLITICAL OPENING"

SUMMARY: QUESTION OF PRIME IMPORTANCE FOR US AND BRAZIL AS MEDICI PREPARES TO TAKE OVER PRESIDENCY IS WHETHER HE HAS DISPOSITION AND ABILITY PURSUE COURSE LEADING TO BROADENING OF BASE OF GOVT AND RELEASE OF SOME OF PRESSURES BUILDING UP IN BRAZILIAN SOCIETY. THIS IS SOMETHING COSTA E SILVA WAS WORKING ON AT TIME OF HIS STROKE. CIRCUMSTANCES FACING MEDICI IN THIS REGARD SOMEWHAT MORE DIFFICULT SINCE INTERVENING TIME HAS WITNESSED (1) INCREASING CONCERN WITHIN MILITARY OVER SECURITY THREAT AND (2) SURFACING OF ALBUQUERQUE LIMA OPPOSITION, BOTH FACTORS WHICH MIGHT INDUCE CAUTION IN POLITICAL SPHERE. HOWEVER, MEDICI HAS CLEAN SLATE AND NO POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS, HENCE CONSIDERABLE FREEDOM OF ACTION. HE HAS MADE CLEAR IN HIS MAIDEN SPEECH HIS INTENTION TO GIVE HIS ADMINISTRATION A NEW LOOK, AS WELL AS HIS INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING DEMOCRACY IN BRAZIL DURING HIS TERM. BIG QUESTION WILL BE WHETHER HE HAS SENSE OF PURPOSE AND FORCEFULNESS NECESSARY TO SET SUCH A COURSE AND MAINTAIN IT CONSISTENTLY IN FACE OF ANTICIPATED CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION.

1. PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE MEDICI IS KNOWN TO BE VERY FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD US, DEEPLY (EVEN NAIVELY) CONFIDENT THAT US-BRAZILIAN RELATINSHIPS WILL REMAIN CLOSE AND WARM. OBVIOUSLY, HOWEVER, OUR FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS WITH BRAZIL WILL BE AFFECTED BY POLICIES NEW PRESIDENT DECIDES TO PURSEU INTERNALLY, BOTH ECONOMIC (E.G., CLIMATE FOR US AID AND INVESTMENT AND POLITICAL. ECONOMY SEEMS TO HAVE PULLED THROUGH LEADERSHIP CRISIS WITHOUT SERIOUS HARM. FROM WHAT WE KNOW OF MEDICI SO FAR WE WOULD NOT EXPECT RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM GENRALLY SOUND ECONOMIC POLICIES OF HIS REVOLUTIONARY PREDECESSORS. MEDICI APPOINTMENTS CABINET OFFICERS AND OTHERS IN ECONOMIC FIELD WILL AFFORD BETTER INDICATION OF WHERE HE STANDS.

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2. IN POLITICAL FIELD, WE WILL OF COURSE BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED TO SEE WHETHER MEDICI SHOWS DISPOSITION AND ABILITY PURSUE COURSE LEADING TOWARD BROADENING OF BASE OF GOVERNMENT OUTSIDE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND TO GRADUAL RELEASE OF SOME OF PRESSURES WHICH HAVE BEEN BUILDING UP WITHIN BRAZILIAN SOCIETY. IN COMING WEEKS THERE WILL BE ANUMBER OF USEFUL INDICATORS OF HIS POSITION CONCERNING WUCH AN "OPENING," I.E.:

- A. ROLE WHICH A REOPENED CONGRESS IS PERMITTED TO PLAY;
- B. BACKGROUND OF NEW VICE PRESIDENT AND CABINET OFFICERS;
- C. PROVISIONS OF NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION SOON TO BE ANNOUNCED;
- D. EXTENT OF FURTHER CASSATIONS;
- E. WHETHER ELECTIONS IN STATES AND MUNICIPALITIES ARE HELD ON SCHEDULE;
- F. WHETHER GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO STEP UP AND INVIGORATE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY;
- G. WHETHER ANY LET-UP IS NOTICEABLE IN PRESSURES ON ACADEMIC COMMUNITY, AND ON PRESS.

3. COSTA E SILVA WAS MAKING SOME FORMAL MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION AT THE TIME OF HIS STROKE; HOW MUCH REAL SUBSTANCE WULD HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN HIS PROGRAM FOR POLITICAL "OPENING" WILL NEVER BE KNOWN.

4. IN FIRST SPEECH SINCE NOMINATION LAST NIGHT MEDICI LENT CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS TO HOPES FOR "INSTALLATION" DEMOCRACY IN BRAZIL (RIO'S 8385) AND SPOKE OF NEED FOR ESTABLISHING DIALOGUE WITH ALL CITIZENS. HE PROBABLY WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO CLOSE RANKS NOW AND GET ON WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OBJECTIVES OF REVOLUTION AND ALSO TO REGAIN SOME LOST SUPPORT FOR THE REVOLUTION BY MOVING AHEAD WITH CERTAIN OF THE STEPS LISTED IN PARA 2. ABOVE. BUT IN SOME RESPECTS IT WILL BE HARDER FOR MEDICI TO PROGRESS ON THESE FRONTS THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR COSTA EARLIER. STEPPED-UP TERRORIST ACTIVITY OF LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, INCLUDING KIDNAPPING, HAS DEEPEDED GENERAL CONCERN OVER SECURITY SITUATION. RESULT HAS BEEN NEW SECURITY LEGISLATION WITH UNPRECEDENTED DEATH PENALTY, AS WELL AS GROWING SENTIMENT WITHIN MILITARY FOR TOUGH MEASURES AGAINST THOSE DISSENSERS WHO THREATEN STABILITY OF SOCIETY. SECONDLY, GEN. AFFONSO ALBUQUERQUE LIMA WAS FORCED BY COSTA E SILVA STROKE TO MAKE HIS BID FOR SUPPORT EARLY INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR 1970 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. TOP MILITARY LEADERSHIP HAS TAKEN FIRM AND UNIFIED STANCE AGAINST HIM AND HE PRESENTS NO IMMEDIATE THREAT TO MEDICI'S POSITION. WE

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HAVE NO SUBSTANTIATION FOR HIS CLAIMS THAT MANY OF COLONELS AND MOST OF JUNIOR OFFICERS IN ARMY ARE ON HIS SIDE. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LEKELY GEN. AFFONSO WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS RECRUIT SUPPORTERS FROM WITHIN RANKS, AND HIS PROGRAM COULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE APPEAL TO THOSE WHO, FOR ONE REASON OR OTHER, ARE DISAFFECTED AND FRUSTRATED OVER STATE OF AFFAIRS WITHIN MILITARY AND NATION. ANY SUCH THREAT TO NEW PRESIDENT'S POSITION FROM WITHIN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT COULD BE FURTHR FACTOR INDUCING CAUTIOUS POLICY ON POLITICAL "OPENING."

5. THERE ARE SOME POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN THE PRESENT SITUATION. MEDICI HAS FEW, IF ANY, POLITICAL DEBTS. HE HAS NOT BEEN A POLITICKING GENERAL, AND FROM ALL INDICATIONS HE DIDN'T WANT THE JOB OF PRESIDENT. HE HAS VERY BRAOD SUPPORT WITHIN THE TOP MILITARY LEADERSHIP. HE IS THUS IN A FARILY GOOD POSITION TO ASSEMBLE HIS GOVERNMENT AND DEVISE HIS OWN PROGRAMS WITHOUT COMPROMISING OR YIELDING TO POLITICAL PRESSURES. INDEED HE HAS LET IT BE KNOWN THAT HE PLANS TO AVOID THE "CONTINUISMO" LABEL AND MAKE A FRESH START, A THEME WHICH CAME OUT STRONGLY IN HIS SPEECH LAST NIGHT. MEDICI HAS SHOWN A TALENT FOR APPOINTING GOOD MEN AND A READIENESS TO REMOVE INCOMPETENTS QUICKLY (HIS APPOINTMENTS AS DIRECTOR OF SNI MIGHT, HOWEVER, BE CITED AS AN EXCEPTION). AS HE TAKES OVER OFFICE HE WILL HAVE GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC SUPPORT OF THE BRAZILIAN PRESS. FINALLY, HE HAS SHOWN HIMSELF VERY CONSCIOUS OF U.S.

PUBLIC OPINION, A FACTOR WHICH MIGHT AT LEAST SERVE AS A PARTIAL BRAKE ON POSSIBLE FURTHER RETROGRESSION.

6. TO ALLOW THE LID TO BE LIFTED SLOWLY AND BREATHE SOME LIFE BACK INTO BRAZIL'S DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD REQUIRE STRONG AND DETERMINED LEADERSHIP AS WELL AS A BASIC BELIEF IN THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY, A BELIEF WHICH WE BELIEVE MEDICI HAS (EVIDENCED, FOR EXAMPLE, BY HIS OPPOSITION TO IA-5). WE ARE INCLINED TO VIEW MEDICI AS BEING MORE TEMPERATE THAN COSTA, WHICH WILL PROBABLY HELP HIM TO ASSEMBLE A TEAM AND KEEP THEM TOGETHER. HOEVER, HAVING COME TO HIS POSITION SUDDENLY, UNEXPECTEDLY AND WITH SOME RELUCATNCE, HE WOULD UNDERSTANDABLY LACK ARTICULATED IDEAS OF HIS OWN AT THIS STAGE. HE MAY ALSO LACK A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND THE FORCE AS WELL AS THE DEDICATION TO KNOWCK HEADS TOGETHER AND HEW TO THE LINE WHEN CONFRONTED BY CONSERVATIVE OPPSITION TO MEASURES TO ACHEIVE A MEANINGFUL POLITICAL OPENING.

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7. IN ANY CASE, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT MEDICI WILL PROCEED VERY CAREFULLY, IN THIS SPHERE, AT THE OUTSET. HE WILL AVOID THE "CONTINUISMO" LABEL BY APPOINTING A TEAM WHICH IS LARGELY HIS OWN AND BY PROPAGATING THE IDEA OF A "NEW LOOK". HE MAY PICK UP A MEASURE OF POPULAR SUPPORT AT THE OUTSET BY THIS APPROACH AND BY THE ENUNCIATION OF PROGRESSIVE-SOUNDING GOALS IN SUCH SPHERES AS EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND LAND REFORM. BUT NO FORECASTS CAN BE MADE NOW CONCERNING HIS LIKELY INTENTIONS AND POLICIES IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE; HERE HE WILL HAVE TO BE JUDGED IN THE COMING WEEKS ON THE BASIS OF HIS PERFORMANCE ON THE COUNTS MENTIONED IN PARA 2. ABOVE.

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