

TELEGRAM

INCOMING

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

Foreign Service of the
United States of America

Pal 15-1

ACTION

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CHRON
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CONFIDENTIAL

Classification

Control: SAO PAULO 2486

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1023
INFO RUESUZ/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 267
RUESUA/AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO 940
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ACTION TAKEN

BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L SAO PAULO 2486

REF: SAO PAULO'S 2474

1. COMMENTING ON CARDINAL'S REFUSAL ACCEPT ORDER MERIT AND SUBSEQUENT CANCELLATION MASS ON PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY TO HAVE BEEN CELEBRATED BY CARDINAL, GENERAL LISBOA TOLD ME SATURDAY NIGHT THAT IN CIRCUMSTANCES "PRESIDENT SIMPLY COULD NOT ATTEND SUCH MASS."

2. LISBOA SAID PRESIDENT HAD BEEN VERY UNHAPPY INDEED OVER CARDINAL'S ACTION. LISBOA RECOUNTED THAT PRESIDENT, APPARENTLY SEARCHING FOR MOTIVES FOR CARDINAL'S REBUFF, HAD QUESTIONED LISBOA ABOUT LATTER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CARDINAL. LISBOA HAD ASSURED PRESIDENT HE WAS ON EXCELLENT TERMS WITH CARDINAL. HE TOLD PRESIDENT THAT WHEN MISUNDERSTANDING HAD DEVELOPED BETWEEN THEM A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, HE HAD PERSONALLY GONE TO SEE CARDINAL AND SUBSEQUENTLY CARDINAL HAD LUNCHED WITH HIM. LISBOA SAID PRESIDENT WAS ANGRY AND DEPRESSED WHEN HE LEFT TOWN. INTERESTINGLY IN THIS CONNECTION, VICE ADMIRAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BRAZILIAN MARINE CORPS TOLD ME FRIDAY IN RIO HE HAD ATTENDED PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY PARTY NIGHT BEFORE, JUST AFTER PRESIDENT HAD RETURNED FROM SAO PAULO, AND HAD FOUND PRESIDENT QUITE DEPRESSED.

3. LISBOA THEN CRITICIZED CARDINAL. HE SAID CARDINAL'S REFUSAL HAD NEEDLESSLY MADE MATTER POLITICAL, THE VERY THING THE ARCH-DIOCESE'S STATEMENT SAID CARDINAL WAS TRYING TO AVOID BY HIS ACTION. LISBOA THOUGHT IT WAS TOO BAD CARDINAL HAD CHOSEN TO DEFER TO CHURCH'S LEFT WING RATHER THAN TO PRESIDENT OF BRAZIL WHO, INCIDENTALLY, WAS DEVOUT CAHTOLIC.

4. WHEN I ASKED LISBOA WHETHER PEOPLE AROUND PRESIDENT MIGHT HAVE BEEN CARELESS IN NOT ASCERTAINING BEFOREHAND WHETHER CARDINAL WOULD ACCEPT DECORATION, HE ANSWERED: "ABSOLUTELY. I TOLD PORTELLA THIS MESS COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED BY SOUNDING OUT (SONDAGEM)."

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5. VICE C/S SECOND ARMY CONFIRMED TO DEPUTY PRINCIPAL OFFICER LAST NIGHT THAT PRESIDENT HAD BEEN IN ANGRY MOOD OVER CARDINAL. HE SAID GOB'S INTENTION CONFER DECORATION HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO CARDINAL MORE THAN MONTH AGO AND GOB WAS JUSTIFIED IN ASSUMING CARDINAL WOULD ACCEPT HONOR ALONGSIDE OTHER DISTINGUISHED PAULISTAS. COLONEL CHAVES TOOK CARDINAL TO TASK FOR ALLEGEDLY LACKING COURAGE TO STAND UP TO LEFT WING IN CHURCH, FOR TRYING TOO MUCH TO COMPROMISE AND THUS IN EFFECT FAVORING LEFT, ETC.

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