

# TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the  
United States of America

INCOMING

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

POL 15-1 (SILVA)

ACTION  
P O

CHRON

P R 092340Z JAN 69

FM AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6272

INFO RUESUZ/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3127

RUESUP/AMCONGEN SAO PAULO 2306

RUESEI/AMCONGEN RECIFE 1963

RUESDO/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 486

RULPAL/CINCSO

STATE GRNC

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 196

LIMIDIS

SUBJECT: CALL ON PRESIDENT COSTA E SILVA

ACCOMPANIED BY POL COUNSELOR I PAYED FALF HOUR FAREWELL CALL TODAY ON PRESIDENT IN PRESENCE OF FONMIN AT PRESIDENT'S SUMMER PALACE IN PETROPOLIS.

PRESIDENT'S GREETING WAS EFFUSIVE AND FOLLOWING COURTESIES AND RAMBLING EXCHANGE ON MERITS OF CONTACT LENSES COSTA E SILVA HIMSELF BROACHED SUBJECT OF RECENT EVENTS BY NOTING I WOULD BE LEAVING AT A TIME WHEN LATIN AMERICA GIVES A CONFUSED IMPRESSION; COLUMBIA IN STATE OF SIEGE, PERU, BOLIVIA, ARGENTINA AND NOW BRAZIL UNDER "EXCEPTIONAL REGIMES." URUGUAY DIDN'T EVEN HAVE STRENGTH LEFT TO GO INTO EXCEPTIONAL REGIME. IT WAS GOOD NEIGHBOR BUT HAS BEEN "VIRTUALLY TURNED OVER TO COMMUNISTS."

COSTA E SILVA SHOWED CONSIDERABLE AWARENESS AND APPARENT COMPREHENSION OF US CRITICISM. SAID US HAD "STRATIFIED LIFE" AND COULD NOT BE EXPECTED UNDERSTAND PROBLEMS OF COUNTRIES IN DEVELOPMENT STAGE. YOUR DEMOCRACY IS THE IDEAL, HE NOTED, BUT WE CANNOT PATTERN OURSELVES AFTER YOUR SYSTEM. IF US WERE IN DEVELOPING STAGE NOW IT WOULD BE GOING THROUGH SAME PROBLEMS WE ARE EXPERIENCING. EVEN THEN, US HAD ADVANTAGE OF ELITE IMMIGRATION WHEREAS PORTUGAL SENT US IT SCASTOFFS.

I ASSURED HIM US DID NOT WISH TO IMPOSE ITS PATTERN UPON ANY COUNTRY BUT I RECALLED THAT PRIOR HIS ELECTION COSTA E SILVA HAD TOLD ME OF THREE THINGS I MUST BEAR IN MIND: 1) THE MILITARY IS THE MOST POLITICAL INSTITUTION IN BRAZIL, 2) THE MILITARY WANT COSTA E SILVA TO BE PRESIDENT AND 3) HE, COSTA E SILVA WOULD WORK FOR A RETURN TO A SITUATION IN WHICH EITHER A CIVILIAN OR A MILITARY MAN COULD BE CHOSEN PRESIDENT. TOLD HIM I HAD USED HIS STATEMENT IN MY REPORTS TO WASHINGTON, WHICH WAS FOLLOWING PRESENT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS WITH CONCERN. WAS THERE ANY MESSAGE HE WISHED ME TO CONVEY?

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ACTION TAKEN

*Handwritten notes:*  
RUEHC  
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Recd:

PRESIDENT DAID THAT I AS ONE WHO HAD LIVED HERE SHOULD EXPLAIN "ENTIRE SITUATION" TO WASHINGTON, POINTING OUT THAT THERE IS "COMPLETE TRANQUILITY" IN BRAZIL. (ONE OF HIS FAVORITE PHRASES WHICH HE USED SEVERAL TIMES AGAIN TODAY.) WE HAVE QUOTE MAINTAINED ORDER UNQUOTE. WE HAD TO SACRIFICE SOME OF THE "NON FUNDAMENTALS TO PRESERVE THE FUNDAMENTALS", BUT AS SOON AS WE CAN WE WILL RETURN TO STATE OF NORMALITY. THIS WILL BE DONE "OPPORTUNELY", BUT WITH THE NECESSARY CAUTION.

PRESIDENT WENT ON TO CASTIGATE QUOTE POLITICAL CLASS UNQUOTE MUCH ALONG LINES HIS NEW YEAR'S EVE SPEECH. HE HAD WORKED FOR AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN POLITICIANS AND MILITARY BUT POLITICIANS DIDN'T WANT UNDERSTANDING. IF WE ONLY WERE ACQUAINTED WITH ALL FACTS WE WOULD KNOW THAT POLITICIANS WANTED TO UNDO ALL THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF REVOLUTION. "NO ONE WORKED HARDER WITH POLITICIANS THAN I BUT THEY REFUSED TO UNDERSTAND."

AS EXAMPLE OF DIFFICULTIES HE FACED, COSTA E SILVA CITED CORREIO DA MANHA. I WANTED TO EASE PRESS CENSORSHIP, HE SAID, BUT AS SOON AS I DID CORREA DA MANHA PRINTED A LETTER I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SENDING TO PRESIDENT ELECT NIXON (RIO'S 149). NO SUCH LETTER EXISTS. THIS TYPE OF THING WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED IN US AND CORREIO COULD BE SUED BY YOU, BUT OUR LAWS ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH IRRESPONSIBLE PRESS ("YOURS IN US IS MORE RESPONSIBLE"). CORREIO EVEN PRINTED ALL THE CRITICISMS OF THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN PRESS. FOR THESE REASONS WE HAD TO SEIZE YESTERDAY'S EDITION.

PRESIDENT NOTED MILITARY IN BRAZIL HAVE TRADITIONALLY PLAYED POLITICAL ROLE. I HAVE TRIED TO BREAK THAT TRADITION (HE POINTED TO HIS CIVILIAN ATTIRE), BUT THIS CAN'T BE DONE FROM ONE HOUR TO ANOTHER. FOR THE MOMENT I HAVE HAD TO STEP BACK INTO MY MILITARY ROLE BUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE I WILL RESUME FORWARD PROGRESS IN MY CIVILIAN ROLE.

OF ONE THING YOU CAN BE SURE, COSTA E SILVA SAID. THERE WILL BE A PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION AS PROVIDED FOR IN CONSTITUTION. JOKINGLY REMARKED THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT HE SOESN'T LIKE THE JOB-IT IS TOO DIFFICULT.

PRESIDENT CLOSED CONVERSATION BY ASKING ME TO ASSURE MY GOVERN-

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MENT THAT BRAZIL IS NOW A TRUE FRIEND OF THE US. THIS MIGHT NOT BE THE CASE UNDER "THE OTHERS" (PRESUMABLY HE WAS REFERRING TO THE PRE 1964 GOULART GROUP).

COMMENT: COSTA E SILVA TOOK ON THE ATTITUDE OF A GARRULOUS, KINDLY - AND TOLERANT- GRANDFATHER WORRIED ABOUT THE WAYWARD AND DISORIENTED MEMBERS ON THE BRAZILIAN POLITICAL SCENE. HE OBVIOUSLY WANTED TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ALL WAS QUIET AND THAT HE HAD ONLY TAKEN A SLIGHT - AND TEMPORARY - DETOUR FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PATH. FOLLOWING INITIAL PLEASANTRIES, HE LAUNCHED INTO ONE OF HIS LONG MONOLOGUES AND BROUGHT CONVERSATION TO ABRUPT BUT CORDIAL END AFTER 1800 BUGLE SOUNDED. IT WAS HARD TO GET WORD IN EDGEWISE.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW HOW MUCH OF THIS HE BELIEVES HIMSELF. HE IS, OF COURSE, NOW AWARE OF THE RESTLESS FORCES WITHIN THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY BUT HE MAY BE CONVINCED (OR TRYING TO CONVINCCE HIMSELF) THAT HE CAN CONTAIN THEM. THE GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT HE GAVE US WAS THAT, DESPITE HIS NATIVE SHREWDNESS, HE MAY WELL BE UNDERSTIMATING THE FORCES AT WORK IN THIS COUNTRY.

TUTHILL

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*And + Calucci  
interpretation*

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