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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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March 13, 1968

TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S R
FROM: ARA - Covey T. Oliver e.t.o.
SUBJECT: Ambassador Tuthill's Contact with the Opposition -
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

Ambassador Tuthill's recent meetings with an opposition leader in Brazil have created a certain stir in high government circles. I thought it desirable, therefore, to summarize briefly for you the main aspects of the matter.

Ambassador Tuthill had lunch with principal opposition leader and enfant terrible of Brazilian politics Carlos Lacerda on January 25 and met briefly again with him on February 4. These meetings took place in a routine social manner and provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on a variety of current topics. During a call by Ambassador Tuthill on February 22, President Costa e Silva made several critical observations respecting these meetings with Lacerda. A wave of stories and speculation regarding the meetings appeared in the main Brazilian papers during the last week in February. On March 6, the New York Times also carried a story on the meetings and the Brazilian government's negative reaction.

On March 5, Ambassador Tuthill met privately with Foreign Minister Magalhaes Pinto, who assured him he considered the contacts with Lacerda to be normal. At a meeting here on March 8, Brazilian Ambassador Leitao da Cunha told me he thought Ambassador Tuthill's meetings with Lacerda had been entirely proper and within acceptable international practice for ambassadors abroad.

One of the better consequences of this affair has been to disassociate us somewhat further in the Brazilian public mind from the Costa e Silva administration, an administration which Ambassador Tuthill reports has been increasingly revealing some of its military characteristics.

cc: U - The Under Secretary

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