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*Pol 23-9 Brazil*  
of State  
**TELEGRAM**

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51  
ACTION ARA 16

INFO CCO 00, SSO 00, NSCE 00, USIE 00, CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPM 04, H 02, INR 07,  
L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10, P 04, RSC 01, SP 02, SS 25, AID 28, PC 04, O 02,  
OPR 02, OC 06, SY 03, CU 04, E 15, RSR 01, /139 W  
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O 141625Z DEC 68  
FM AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5811  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL RECIFE  
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO  
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 14310

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF BRAZILIAN POLITICAL SITUATION  
IN LIGHT OF 5TH INSTITUTIONAL ACT

REF: RIO DE JANEIRO 14305

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. INSTITUTIONAL ACT DECREED LAST NIGHT AMOUNTS TO A SELF-ISSUED  
LICENSE AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE TO GOVERN WITHOUT TRAPPINGS OR  
INCONVENIENCES OF DEMOCRACY. IT SIGNALS BANKRUPTCY OF AN EFFORT BY  
BRAZILIAN MILITARY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY BETTER ABLE THAN  
CIVILIAN ELEMENTS TO MOVE BRAZIL TOWARD GOALS OF DEVELOPMENT  
AND POLITICAL STABILITY THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MEANS. FAILURE OF EF-  
FORT IS NOT DUE TO ANY DEMONSTRATED INABILITY OF BRAZILIAN PEOPLE  
TO MEASURE UP TO THEIR ROLE, BUT TO INCAPABILITY OF MILITARY TO  
UNDERSTAND WHAT DEMOCRACY IS AND HOW IT WORKS.

2. PRESENT LEADERS OF BRAZILIAN MILITARY ARE PATRIOTIC, SINCERE,  
AND PROUD. HISTORIC MILITARY ROLE OF KEEPING COUNTRY ON THE  
TRACK BY CHANGING ITS GOVERNMENT FROM TIME TO TIME HAS PRODUCED  
AN ATTITUDE OF SELF-RIGHTEDNESS NOT EASILY PERMEATED BY OP-  
POSING VIEWS, ESPECIALLY WHEN ADVOCATED BY PERSONS OR GROUPS  
WHOSE ORIENTATION IS DIFFERENT FROM AND PERHAPS SUSPECT TO

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RECORDED IN 12/19

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DISCIPLINARIAN MINDS.

3. CURRENT CRISIS HAD ITS PRECISE BEGINNINGS IN A SPEECH BY OPPOSITION DEPUTY MOREIRA ALVES ON FLOOR OF CONGRESS WHICH WAS INSULTING TO ARMY. THIS INCIDENT, WHILE INJURIOUS TO PRIDE OF ARMY, HAD NO INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE AND WOULD HAVE BEEN IGNORED MOST PLACES. WHEN ISSUE WAS BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION BY MILITARY INSISTENCE ON DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST MOREIRA ALVES, IT HEADED FATALLY FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFRONTATION WHICH COULD ONLY BE RESOLVED BY DEFEAT OF CONGRESS OR OF THE MILITARY ACTING THROUGH WEAK AND VACILLATING EXECUTIVE. WHEN CONGRESS WON LEGAL BATTLE BY REFUSING TO REMOVE MOREIRA ALVES' IMMUNITY, MILITARY

FELT THEY COULD ONLY RECOUP BY EXTRA-LEGAL ACTION CLOTHED IN PSEUDO-LEGALITY OF AN CONSTITUTIONAL ACT.

4. THIS CONFRONTATION OCCURRED AGAINST A BACKDROP OF PROBLEMS GENERATED BY GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND BRAZIL'S REALLY FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS IN THIS ERA. GOB FAILURE TO TAKE IMAGINATIVE AND CONVINCING STEPS TOWARD IMPROVEMENT OF WOEFUL EDUCATIONAL SITUATION AND RELIEF OF DEPRESSED URBAN AND RURAL LABORING CLASSES PRODUCED AGITATION FOR CHANGING THESE CONDITIONS, ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE CHURCH AND AMONG STUDENTS. TO A CONSERVATIVE GROUP WHICH DOES NOT ACCEPT INEVITABILITY OF SOCIAL REVOLUTION TAKING PLACE IN WORLD, SUCH ACTIVITIES APPEAR UNPATRIOTIC AND DANGEROUS, AND THEREFORE ARE FURTHER JUSTIFICATION FOR STRONG MEASURES.

5. THE INSTITUTIONAL ACT AND THE ARBITRARY AND REPRESSIVE ACTIONS BEING BASED ON IT HAVE PRODUCED AS MUCH OF AN ABOUT FACE IN THE DIRECTION THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT CLAIMED TO BE GOING AS WOULD AN OVERTHROW OF THE GOVERNMENT. INDEED IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THAT IF CO T

E SILVA HAD HELD RIGIDLY TO THE CONSTITUTION, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN OVERTHROWN.

6. WITHIN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION IN THIS LIGME. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE NOT FACED WITH THE PROBLEM OF RECOGNIZING A NEW GOVERNMENT NOR WITH THE NEED TO ANNOUNCE SUSPENSIONS OF AID, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, AND OTHER PROGRAMS CUSTOMARY ON OVERTHROW OCCASIONS. AS OF THIS MOMENT, IT APPEARS THAT OUR LONG-RANGE INTERESTS MIGHT BE BETTER

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SERVED IF WE WERE TO AVOID SUCH OVERT ACTIONS. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER, WITHOUT ANY ANNOUNCEMENT, FOR THE MOMENT QUIETLY WITHHOLD ANY PENDING ACTIONS ON DISBURSEMENTS OR COMMITMENTS.

7. THERE ARE GOING TO BE PLENTY OF OCCASIONS IN THE FUTURE WHEN DIVERGENT GOB AND USG POLICIES AND ATTITUDES WILL CREATE FRICTION BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS, SO WE WILL DO WELL TO AVOID NOW ANY THAT CAN BE AVOIDED.

A PUBLIC STATEMENT AT A HIGH US GOVERNMENT LEVEL DEPLORING THE SETBACK IN DEVELOPMENT OF BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY IS CALLED FOR, AND IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE FRIENDS OF DEMOCRACY IN

BRAZIL, BUT IT SHOULD NOT POINT THE FINGER TOO ACCURATELY AT THE PERSONS OR GROUPS RESPONSIBLE. THESE PEOPLE, WHILE NATIONALISTIC AND NARROW, ARE FUNDAMENTALLY FAVORABLE TO THE US AND CAN BE COUNTED ON TO SIDE WITH US EITHER SENTIMENTALLY OR OVERTLY IN ANY EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION. IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THEY WILL CONTINUE IN CONTROL OF BRAZIL FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS TO COME. IT IS FROM THEM WE MUST OBTAIN COOPERATION IN ENTERPRISES OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND THROUGH THEM THAT WE MUST WORK TO HELP BRAZIL EMERGE FROM THE UNDERDEVELOPMENT OF WHICH THEIR OWN ATTITUDES ARE IGGNE#MANIFESTATION. BELTON

NOTE: #AS RECEIVED.

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