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INFO CCO 00,550 00,NSCE 00,USIE 00,CIAE 00,DODE 00,GPM 04,H 02,INR 02

L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10, P 04, RSC 01, SP 02, SS 25, AID 28, PC 04,0 02,

OPR 02,00 06,5Y 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

CONFIDENTIAL 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

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 BRAZILITOWARD GOALS OF DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL STABILITY THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MEANS. FAILURE OF EFFORT 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-RIGHTEDUSNESS NOT EASILY PERMEATED BY OPPOSING VIEWS, ESPECIALLY WHEN ADVOCATED BY PERSONS OR GROUPS WHOSE ORIENTATION IS DIFFERENT FROM AND PERHAPS: SUSPECT TO

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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 MOREIR ALVES. IMMUNITY, MILITARY

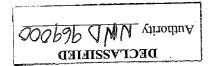
FELT THEY COULD ONLY RECOUP BY EXTRA-LEGAL ACTION CLOTHED IN PSEUDO-LEGALITY OF ANDNSTITUTIONAL ACT.

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 HADHELD 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 AREIGNE#MANIFESTA.

NOTE: #AS RECEIVED.

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