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10				DATE: August 14, 1969			
				SUBJECT: Ex post facto evaluation of recent professorial purge on Brazilian scientific and technological community.			
AGR	COM	PRB	INT	FROM: Amembassy RIO DE JANEIRO			
LAB	TAR	TR	XMB	REF:			
AIR	ARMY	NAVY	OSD	1. This airgram seeks to evaluate briefly for the record the effects of the recent professorial purge on the Brazilian scientific and technological community. It is to be emphasized that the evaluative judgments in this airgram are intended to apply solely in the area of science and technology. To claim more would be beyond the competence of the reporting officer. By way of background, the enclosure to this airgram lists the principal airgrams and telegrams from Embassy Rio which bear specifically on the subject of the purge in relation to the scientific and technological community. Approximately four months hindsight would appear to confirm the Embassy's early assessment (see Rio 3250) that the "implications for (the) future health (of the) Brazilian scientific and technological community can fairly be characterized as ominous; (that the) damage inflicted by (the) purge (has been) significant but (is) not at this stage irreparable."			
3	5		34	2. Conditions within the scientific and technological community related to the purge and its aftermath may be summarized as follows:			
USIA	NSA	CIA		A) There is a slowly spreading knowledge of what appears to be the real reasons why certain individuals were purged. This in turn is resulting in a gradually spreading malaise especially within the university and institute segments of the community. (As is to be expected, a reaction of similar intensity is not discernible in the governmental or industrial sectors of the community.) The apparent absurdity of some of the official charges (see Rio A-329) and the increasing knowledge of the personal vendettas involved, no matter how explainable on human or political			
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grounds, is fundamentally repugnant to the majority of individuals who have received professional training in science or technology. As a consequence, the reporting officer has observed among his many sources in the community a predictable reaction which explains in large measure the spreading malaise. Among the good men, many of whom were and continue to be loyal to the principles of the 1964 revolution, the near panic of the days immediately following the Rio and São Paulo purge has been replaced by a surface optimism which has beneath it a deeply pessimistic concern, not so much for the immediate future as for the long-term future of good science and technology in Brazil.

B) The surface optimism of the community is largely based on the fact that there has been no further purge in the nerve centers of good Brazilian science and technology. After all only about twenty people who could claim membership in the community were purged and of these less than a half dozen had international reputations. (According to several reliable sources, ultra-nationalistic elements have prepared and presented to the Government at least two, and possibly more, new purge lists containing significant numbers of names of leading figures in the scientific and technological community. According to one reliable source, action on these lists has at least temporarily halted for a combination of the following reasons:

- (1) The Government's surprise at the extent of the reaction both within and outside Brazil to the Rio and São Paulo purges;
- (2) A sincere recognition by some figures in the present Government that Brazil cannot afford to cavalierly dispense with the services of leading figures in the scientific and technological community even if their political views are not completely "orthodox"; and
- (3) The desire of the Minister of Education, aspiring to the governorship of Rio Grande do Sul, not to become too intimately associated with the so-called "hard line."

One architect of the new purge lists feels confident he will be able to surmount these difficulties and renew the "cleansing process" in the near future. On the other hand, there is also a wide-spread belief within the scientific community, which cannot be adequately confirmed from other sources, that a number of leading military officials have urged caution concerning further purges, within the Presidential household itself (e.g., see Rio A-268).

C) The underlying pessimism is based on several factors. The more important of these appear to be the following:

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- (1) The purge in São Paulo and Rio and the spreading knowledge that a degree of purging has been going on within the community since immediately after the events of December 13, particularly in the Northeast, are facts which predispose some to pessimism for the future.
- (2) The knowledge that individual ultra-nationalists are continuing to press for additional purges has a definitely unsettling effect and leads to endless speculation on potential victims and the real influence of the purgers.
- (3) The failure of the Brazilian National Research Council to secure effective remedial action, while more or less anticipated by a majority of the community, does nothing to buoy spirits.
- (4) Budgetary difficulties, particularly in the higher educational field have faced university rectors with the problem of increasing difficulty in financing existing activities and long-planned expansions. (The community rightly or wrongly relates this state of affairs to conditions which brought on the purge. One influential rector stated "flat out" to the reporting officer: "Education is not a priority objective of this Government, no matter what they say.")
- D) Within the principal educational institutions in Rio and São Paulo, which set the pace and standard for Brazilian higher education, it may be fairly said that on the whole the scientific and technological departments continue to do more talking than work. This condition has persisted since the April purge. Circumstances differ from institution to institution and within institutions. For example, the Physics, Chemistry and Medical Faculties at the University of São Paulo are still demoralized and almost non-functional in a technical sense, a condition which cannot long continue without the onset of real academic atrophy. To cite another example, however, in the Biophysics Institute at the University of Rio the post-purge effects are hardly discernible. Other groups fall in between these two conditions. Consequently, there appears to have been at least some deterioration of the already low academic standards (by comparison with North-American or good European universities). Two senior professors who had previously gone through some of their post-graduate courses in detail with the Scientific Attaché and frankly admitted that they were already being presented on a level which could only compare with undergraduate work in the United States, have since specifically indicated that they and their students simply were not even getting the job done which the professors originally planned.
- E) Although the information has been held rather tightly within a select group in Rio, the fact that the Government apparently rejected all candidates on a recent university proposed list of individuals to replace

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Moniz de Aragão, voluntarily (?) retired Rector of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, it is now beginning to spread. (See Rio 5713, 6188 and A-300.) A head-on confrontation has so far been avoided on the technicality that Dr. Fraga refused his nomination and a substitute name was placed on the list without a full reconsideration of all names. Nevertheless, the handwriting is on the wall for all rectors who care to see. A replacement may eventually be selected amicably, but no rector in Brazil can feel secure henceforth, nor can any faculty delude itself that a future rector may be nominated on purely academic merit. Politics have always played a larger role in Latin American universities than Americans customarily consider conducive to good academic standards. Nevertheless, the existing state of affairs has, perhaps, a more unsettling effect on scientific and technological faculties than on other faculties. Academic excellence in history may, for example, be a matter of considerable difference of opinion even among a man's peers. A qualified surgeon or a qualified engineer, however, is perhaps more readily identifiable, and he is therefore normally accorded a deference by his peers which is much less influenced by political considerations.

F) A final factor which must be mentioned is that word is gradually seeping back into the community concerning what has happened to those scientists and technologists who chose to leave Brazil at the time of, or shortly after, the purge rather than "stick it out." To the best of the reporting officer's knowledge, all of these people seem to have done quite well. Although the majority appear to be planning for an eventual return to Brazil when conditions improve, a few appear to be settling into their new jobs for a permanent stay. The attitude of the "community in exile," although the community is small at the moment, cannot be discounted for the long-term future of Brazilian science and technology. So far that attitude has indicated that favorable personal and professional conditions exist outside of Brazil for competent individuals and by the very virtue of that, it constitutes a danger to the long-term future.

3. In conclusion, therefore, the reporting officer's evaluation would be that:

a) As a result of the purge and other possibly related Government actions, such as budget restrictions, the Brazilian scientific and technological community has faltered and lost a step. In a more developed country, such an event would be regrettable but by no means serious. In a developing country like Brazil it assumes tragic connotations. With the scientific and technological gap between developed and developing countries widening despite significant achievements in the developing countries, a country like Brazil simply cannot afford to miss even one step.

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- b) Assuming no further purges and at least a reasonable level of financial support, the scientific and technological community should be able to pull itself back together and recommence genuinely productive work within the next few months and certainly by the next academic year.
- c) Additional purging or an increase in financial difficulties will have a naturally unhappy effect on the future of the community.
- d) Whatever happens in the ensuing months, the purge has left some real scars on Brazil's scientific and technological community. In the order of human affairs, it is not unreasonable to assume that some day under changed circumstances these scars may be avenged. If so, the Brazilian author Mario Henrique Simonsen's thesis may be vindicated. In his book "Brazil 2001," a reply to Herman Kahn's "The Year 2000," he basically says that if Brazil does not act rationally by the year 2001 conditions will be worse than those predicted by Herman Kahn. If Brazil does act rationally, it has a chance to realize its enormous potential. "Vamos Ver!"

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Enclosure:
List of telegrams and airgrams

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