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Ambassy RIO DE JANEIRO

June 3, 1969

Lecture by Army Minister on "The Brazilian Army and the Present National Situation"

On May 15, 1969, Army Minister General (retired) Igyra Tavares delivered to officers attending the Naval War School a lengthy lecture on "The Brazilian Army and the Present National Situation." The Minister's speech received considerable press play and was reprinted in its entirety in the May 16 Folha de Sao Paulo. While his remarks were couched in familiar language and represented no new departures in Army outlook, they did serve to highlight once again the attitudes of Brazil's military leadership and they also provided some insights into Igyra Tavares' assessment of current conditions in Brazil.

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The Minister identified the mission of the Brazilian Army as maintaining national security and working for national development. For the Army to adapt itself to its mission and properly orient its program planning, Igyra Tavares said that it must consider four principal aspects of present-day conditions in Brazil. (1) According to the Army Minister, the process of Revolutionary War in Brazil is still being developed. That it has been apparently only interrupted by the force of the legal weapons with which Institutional Act No. 5 provided the Government is demonstrated by "activities still underway, above all by those which have their base abroad." (2) The phenomena of demographic explosion and progress in Brazil, especially in the interior, are problems which require rapid amplification of the national system of transport, tele-communications and hydroelectric systems with which the Government is substantially modifying the face of the country. (3) Brazilian internal security is still vulnerable, especially as regards ideological warfare and subversive activities, because legal recourses are still inoperable and inadequate

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for present reality. (4) The re-equipment and adaptation of the Army must be promoted by developing and establishing prototypes, especially in the field of technological research in cooperation with civilian industry, and by producing needed materiel. In addition to the appreciation of the four above considerations, Iyza Tavares also stressed that, to develop a successful action program, the Army must keep in mind the limitations on its budget imposed by the Government's inflation control policy.

The framework within which the Army Minister developed his description of the Army's mission and program was the Army's doctrine of national security, to which he directly alluded. As he enunciated it, the nation's military services are dedicated to preserve Brazil from external and internal security threats, of which the internal is now by far the more immediate and urgent because of subversion still underway in the country with support from abroad. He said the strategy of the subversive forces engaging in Revolutionary War in Brazil is to exploit and aggravate existing vulnerabilities in Brazil's social structure. Thus, in his view, internal security and national development are "inseparably interconnected" so that national security can be maintained successfully only if there is real progress toward national development. Therefore, to combat threats to national security, the Minister declared that the Brazilian Army must engage in far-reaching civic action programs such as roadbuilding, railroad expansion, public health, construction of housing in remote areas, settlement programs, disaster relief and education.

According to Iyza Tavares, given present conditions in the world, a "truly democratic Army" like Brazil's cannot ignore the role it must play in the ideological struggle which is underway--a struggle which has serious reflections on internal security and which, in a nation "characterized by great vulnerabilities, social contrasts and other chronic problems, including the results of its own very rapid and disordered growth," involves more than arms alone. He believes that Institutional Act No. 5 has been of great assistance because it has "facilitated repressive measures, now carried on also in the legal field, against agents of agitation, formerly strongly supported by the unpatriotic stimulus of information media and by political groups against the Revolution or unfaithful to their obligations to defend it." He stated that, whereas some TV channels formerly "incited disorder, the degradation of traditional values and the weakening of authority," now information is spreading about the Government's great efforts to transform the nation and the lie is thus being given to charges by communist propaganda that democracy is responsible for low standards of living and for social injustices "which still really exist because it is not possible to eliminate them completely in a short time."

The Minister, however, made clear to his naval audience that to carry on the struggle against subversion and assure national security, the Armed Forces must also grapple directly with the great problems facing the nation: the settlement and exploitation of its vast empty territory, the improvement of the condition of the population, economic progress, the implantation and expansion of the nation's basic infrastructure and the ordering and acceleration of national growth. At some length he discussed Army efforts in colonization and expanding infrastructure, especially in transportation and communications, in the Amazon area, in the North and on the central plateau where military posts have traditionally served as centers for economic and social (including human) development. In his opinion, small Army units in border areas constitute not only an "affirmation of national sovereignty" but also "a curtain of vigilance" against subversive infiltration and a "means of establishing social nuclei" which are born and progress under the impulse of the stimuli of help from Army units and military colonies. Such Army activity on behalf of national development is vital to national security, which is so important that even "legal norms must be adjusted" to the interests of national security "in view of the threats to which it is being subjected at present."

In his discourse Igra Faveres denounced the distortion of the image of the Brazilian military at home and abroad by enemies of democracy and the Revolution who have been attempting to portray Brazilian military men as militarists who have placed themselves above ordinary citizens and have established a special caste. He complained that this picture of the military has obscured the important role the Army has been playing in national development. He concluded by asserting that the three military services know that their "concerns are identical to and are primarily the problems of internal security, because there are still those who do not believe in the determination and the unity of spirit with which the Navy, the Air Force and the Army are united in faithful and intrepid defense of the ideals of the March Revolution, both because of its effective work on behalf of the progress of a new Brazil...and because of the action of the sister services under the Supreme Command of the President of the Republic."

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