

UNCLASSIFIED

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

TO: Department of State (ARA/EX)

FROM: AmConGen, RECIFE *cal*

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATION (ARA): Request for copy of Operations
Memorandum Addressed to Amembassy,
Rio de Janeiro.

REF: Dept's OM dated January 15, 1963.

DATE: January 23, 1963

In compliance with the request contained in the Department's
Operations Memorandum under reference, the Consulate General is forwarding
herewith copies of the subject Operations Memorandum.

In the interest of improving morale at the post the Consulate
General will appreciate the Department's prompt and favorable consideration
of its request.

encl: as stated.

CACariddi/mrf.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

COPY

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

TO: Amembassy, Rio de Janeiro
FROM: AmConGen, Recife
SUBJECT: PERSONNEL: Reclassification of Post for Hardship Differential
REF: - - -

DATE: August 22, 1962

The Embassy detailed a Personnel Assistant to perform the groundwork on the reclassification of the American Consulate General, Recife, for the purpose of determining the applicability of salary differential based on environmental conditions other than cost of living.

The Consulate General wishes to provide the following information in order to complement the Embassy findings and to facilitate completion of form DSP-36 by the Embassy.

Isolation:

Recife is isolated. Personnel stationed here, especially those lacking a good command of the Portuguese language, feel that they are completely cut off from the rest of the world. Available English-language publications are limited to week-old issues of TIME and infrequently-appearing editions of the Brazil Herald. Local news media give scant attention to developments outside of Recife and Brasilia.

For a change of scenery and relief from the climate which is oppressive eight months of the year, there is no place to go without taking annual leave and spending hundreds of dollars. Climatic relief can be obtained at the town of Garanhuns, but Garanhuns offers only the climatic advantage; for recreational facilities it has only a bar.

Recreational and Entertainment:

For most families, public recreational and entertainment facilities are limited to the beach. Recife has no first-rate movies, only four satisfactory restaurants, no night clubs, and only an occasional ballet or musical performance. Club entertainment consists almost solely of dinner-dances.

Housing/

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

COPY

- 2 -

Housing:

The housing situation is a critical one. Houses are increasingly more difficult to find because of the short supply and the increasing demand created by the large influx of personnel into the area. What is left is often mediocre housing in undesirable districts. Most personnel who have located housing are on unpaved streets which during the rainy season (April to October) are flooded and muddy due to the lack of a drainage system.

Communications and Transportation:

Recife lacks an adequate communications system. The telephone system is so poor in quality and the telephones so few in number (only two U.S. officials in Recife have personal telephones) that communication by telephone is simply not possible. A new telephone system is about to be installed, but the prohibitive price of subscription (approximately Cr\$150,000,00) will continue to keep telephones out of American homes. Thus, to communicate in Recife, even on the most routine matters, one must make a personal visit at a great expense of time. In a medical emergency requiring the services of a physician, the lack of an adequate telephone system is not only an inconvenience and a hazard but a potential danger.

The absence of a safe public transportation system - Recife buses and trucks are notorious for their mechanical defects - only compounds communication difficulties in Recife.

Education:

Education is a very grave problem for personnel assigned to Recife. (The American School of Recife (grades 1 through 8 only) is staffed by well-meaning housewives who lack professional training and experience, it is inadequately equipped, and the rented house in which it is located is much too small. No high school facilities exist.) The increasing number of American families who would like to have their children receive an American education are faced with the unpleasant alternatives of separation from their children, the use of extension (correspondence) courses, which naturally provide none of the companionship or the competitive spirit which is so important in the formative years of a child, or a mediocre education at a make-do school. This situation has been the cause of several resignations and refusals of assignment to the post by employees. This deprives the service of the benefit of the employee's experience and qualifications.

Sanitation and Health Controls:

Recife is noted for the epidemic and endemic diseases prevailing within its confines, and for the inadequacy of its medical facilities. To a large extent,

the/

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

COPY

- 3 -

the diseases are the result of a lack of a proper sewage system and water drainage system and to the absence of a regular food inspection program.

Most Americans here suffer from recurrent diarrhea which is probably the result of intestinal infections caused by unsanitary food. Many children are treated regularly for stomach worms. Malaria is widespread in the Recife area, and within the last year and a half four Americans have contracted malaria (The last case, the only one to involve a U.S. Government employee's dependent, was diagnosed and treated for the first four days as a common cold). At least two Americans have been treated for rabies within the past six months, and at least four within the past four years. (The American boy suffering from what was diagnosed as probable rabies died while being evacuated to Puerto Rico.) Other diseases which are prevalent widely enough in Recife to have a psychological effect on Americans are filariasis (elephantiasis), tuberculosis, and infectious hepatitis.

The problem of inadequate medical facilities and incompetent medical assistance here is serious and continuing. The several hospitals that are satisfactory for most minor illnesses are too poorly equipped and staffed to provide safe treatment of major medical problems. Within the past three months, two Americans - the boy mentioned earlier and an Air Force sergeant who had been shot in the lung - were evacuated to Puerto Rico in desperate attempts to save their lives. (In the first case, the attempt failed, possibly because it took over two hours for the ambulance service to act on the physician's request to pick up the boy immediately).

Some local doctors are competent, some are not; as a class they have not earned the confidence of the American community. The most common failing of physicians here in the eyes of lay Americans is in the field of diagnosis. Another is in the heavy over-use of antibiotics - this is so common that some Americans have adopted the local practice of prescribing for themselves in the belief that they know which antibiotic their doctor prefers.

Trained nurses are in under-supply in Recife. Many girls who work as nurses in local hospitals are suspected not to have undergone any serious professional training. Because of this, a patient committed to a local hospital is generally required to bring along a member of the family if he wishes to have reasonable care and attention.

In view of the poor facilities described above it is not unusual for Americans to travel to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Panama or the United States for treatment.

The above are some of the trying conditions which affect morale at the post because of isolation and difficult living conditions. As a basis for comparison, Brasilia is classified a 15% differential post. Recife is

certainly/

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

COPY

- 4 -

certainly at least 20%.

The Consulate General will appreciate the Embassy's prompt action on a matter of paramount importance to the successful operation of this post.

cc: Dept. ARA/EX

GACERIDD I/blm.

UNCLASSIFIED