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TO : Department of State

INFO: RIO DE JANEIRO, BRASILIA AND RECIFE,
SAO PAULO, PORTO ALEGRE, BELO HORIZONTE.

FROM : American Consulate, SALVADOR DATE: April 8, 1970

SUBJECT : Headquarters of Coastal Command Installed in
Salvador

REF : Salvador's SLV-4 of April 8, 1970

1. The headquarters of the Coastal Command (Comando Costeiro) was inaugurated in Salvador on March 23 in the presence of Air Minister Márcio Souza Melo, other high ranking Air force officers and a horde of local military and civilian worthies, including Governor Luiz Viana Fº and Mayor Antônio Carlos Magalhães. At the same ceremonies Major-Brigadeiro Ney Gomes da Silva assumed command of the Comando Costeiro.

2. The Comando Costeiro is one of three Grandes Comandos Aéreos responsible directly to the Comando Geral do Ar in the Ministério da Aeronáutica. (The other two are the Comando de Transportes Aeronáutico and the Comando Aéreo de Defesa.) The Comando Costeiro is responsible for providing aerial reconaissance over the entire Brazilian coast and adjacent territorial waters and for participating in search and rescue missions. Salvador was chosen as the site of Comando Costeiro headquarters because of its central location. The Comando Costeiro has air bases in Recife and Salvador and is completing another in Florianopolis (Santa Catarina). The aircraft to be deployed at Florianopolis are presently in São Paulo. Comando Costeiro Commander Ney told the reporting officer that another base will be constructed at São Luiz (Maranhão). The headquarters is completely separate from the Salvador air base and is situated on a lovely bluff overlooking the sea.

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3. In addition to its patrolling functions, the Comando Costeiro will coordinate Air Force activities in Bahia with those of the other military and security services. For example, although actual intelligence operations and information gathering will be performed by personnel at the Salvador air base commanded by Colonel Hélio Louzada, intelligence will be channeled through Brigadeiro Ney and a member of his staff will represent the Air Force on the Comando de Defesa Interna (CODI) which presently is being established in Salvador.

4. During the reporting officer's call on Brigadeiro Ney today, the Brigadeiro complained that the Comando Costeiro had insufficient personnel and aircraft to perform its functions satisfactorily. He feels a greater need for more patrol planes than for helicopters. When asked whether the extension of Brazil's territorial waters to 200 miles from shore would make the Comando Costeiro's task more difficult, he replied that it would not, since its aircraft would have to patrol even further from the coast irrespective of the territorial waters claimed. (See referenced memorandum of conversation).

Comment: Major-Brigadeiro Ney, the Commander of the Comando Costeiro, is the highest ranking military officer in Bahia inasmuch as he has been in grade longer than Vice Admiral Henning, the Commander of the Second Naval District. The Brigadeiro is a very short man who is not impressive at first sight, but the initial impression is reversed when he speaks. He has a forceful, self-confident but pleasant manner and gives the appearance of considerable shrewdness. He is politically conservative and seems rather nationalistic. Ney has served in the US several times and speaks English very well. He enjoys playing golf.

It remains to be seen what position in the Bahian political-military pecking order Brigadier Ney will assume. However, with his small staff and the Air Force's subordination to the Army on CODI, it is unlikely that Ney will unseat General Abdon Senna, the Commander of the Army's Sixth Military Region, as the most powerful figure in the state.

WATSON
[Signature]

ct Enclosure: List of key personnel at Comando Costeiro Headquarters