

POL-6 Albuquerque Lima

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Department of State

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

AUG 28 1970

BELEM, PARA, BRAZIL

Ambassy RIO DE JANEIRO

July 17, 1970

Albuquerque Lima Speaks on Economic Development

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After months of relative silence from General Afonso de Albuquerque Lima, he returned to the spotlight on July 14 with a speech before the Grande Oriente do Brasil Masonic Order and its invited guests on the subject of Brazil's "regional economic development as a factor of national integration". Speaking in Rio to an audience of about 450 persons, including diplomats and some civilian-aid military, Albuquerque Lima spoke of the need that the Revolution remain strong to correct the wrongs in all sectors of Brazilian society. To be strong three measures are required: (1) the strengthening of Revolutionary bases; (2) democratic freedom; and (3) capacity to follow the example of the European countries.

The two principal regions of underdevelopment in Brazil -- the São Francisco Valley and Amazonia -- were forgotten by pre-Revolutionary governments, according to Albuquerque Lima. Development in those regions requires not only economic solutions but also favorable social conditions. To prevent national unity from being threatened, it is important to keep the rich areas from becoming richer while the poor ones become poorer. This can only be accomplished by a carefully designed plan of national integration. As example, the Tennessee Valley in the United States was developed without prejudice to other areas, thanks to good land distribution and scientific irrigation. Such a solution should be adopted in the São Francisco Valley, which has 2,500,000 hectares and where development has only just begun.

On the subject of developing the Amazon region, Albuquerque Lima said there are powerful interests and pressures, both foreign and

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FCI: DPMatthews
ARMA: WJDial, Jr. (draft)

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domestic, which oppose Amazonian development. No plan for integrating it into the rest of the country can be successful without the effective participation of the Armed Forces, not only in military terms but also economically and socially.

It is necessary to have a balanced national economy, he said, but there are many things which must be corrected for this to take place, for example, the difference in prices between Rio and Belém. Only when the economic disequilibrium between the different sections of the country has been eliminated can their national development proceed at an equal pace. To promote economic growth in regions having different stages of development, Albuquerque Lima defended his precept of having various regional development agencies, and he enumerated the economic development measures along this line taken during his service as Minister of Interior.

Comment: Despite a well-written speech, Albuquerque Lima's monotonous voice and lengthy delivery did not appear to hold the attention of a number of persons in the mixed audience who probably were there out of curiosity. After having stayed out of the public eye since losing in his unofficial bid for the Presidency last fall, he may be setting about to try to rebuild his image and to show that he has imaginative but responsible ideas. Albuquerque Lima probably also feels compelled now to remind Brazilians of his own early role as an advocate of Amazonian development to prevent the Médici government from diminishing his public image through its recently announced Amazonian highway and development schemes. We do not know what inspired the Masons to offer Albuquerque Lima its podium and at the same time to present him with its medal of recognition, but judging from the laudatory introduction of Albuquerque by the Order's Grand Master, presumably he and other Masons are among the General's supporters.

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