

Department of State

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Ambassy RIO DE JANEIRO

May 9, 1969

Government Suspends Three Municipal Councils, Retires
Twelve Judiciary Officials

President Costa e Silva on May 8 signed a complementary edict based on Institutional Act No. 5 declaring in recess the municipal councils of Santos (Sao Paulo), Nova Iguaçu (Rio de Janeiro) and Santarem (Pará). The decree gave no reason for this action. Santos and Nova Iguaçu already were under federal intervention, and the press reports that Santarem also was in this situation, although the Embassy has no information to confirm this.

Santarem?

On the same day, the President decreed the compulsory retirement under IA-5 of two state judges, six judges of the labor court, two federal attorneys, a public defender and a court clerk. The persons affected are unknown to the Embassy.

BELEM



5/15/69

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AIRGRAM

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Date: September 24, 1968

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TO : Ambassador, RIO DE JANEIRO (P)
FROM : AmConsul, BELEM
SUBJECT: Trouble erupts in Santarem
REF : Belém's Telegrams 426 of September 23, 1968

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Department of State

The state of Para, outside of its modern capital of Belém, is still very much
back INFO: RIO DE JANEIRO. Land barons still hold sway in rural areas
and Indians still attack and kill settlers who penetrate their territory. The
difficulties which erupted in Santarem last week are more of the same.

AmConsul, BELEM

February 20, 1969

PREFEITO OF SANTAREM, PARA MURDERED

Our Airgram N° 3 dtd Sept 24, 1968 to Rio

The state of Para is decidedly MDB, but Santarem, the second largest city
in the state and a former MDB stronghold, went UP in the last elections to
Pinto, ARENA, was elected prefeito. He was elected with the ARENA
Governor, Alacid Nunes, and the state rejoicing when the President
de Gama found considerable support in the state of Santarem.
and Elias Pinto, who was suspended from office in
December, 1967. Pinto, however, is very popular in the Santarem area and
has been considerable feeling generated throughout the state concerning his
suspension. Matters became complicated when

Santarem, the second largest city in Para and the scene of the
comic-opera but bloody attempt of Federal Deputy Haroldo Veloso
and friends to forcibly replace ousted MDB prefeito Elias Pinto
in office last September, was once again the scene of blood-
letting. On February 15, 1969 the acting prefeito, ARENA Eli-
naldo Barbosa dos Santos, was shot to death by Severino Frazão,
a former municipal employee, who was in turn killed by pursuing
policemen.

According to eyewitnesses the killing was motivated by the
mayor's refusal to pay Frazão back pay apparently still due him.
However, the state government sent its best police investigator
from Belém the same day and he has yet to return from Santarem
and yet to issue any report on the incident. There is some talk
that this killing may be related to previous events, but this
seems unlikely in view of the eyewitnesses' statements.

Because of the turmoil that has resulted from the various incidents,
the majority opinion in Belém is that a federal interventor, prefer-
ably an active army officer, should be appointed by the President
to straighten out the municipal government of Santarem. It is
reported, however, that the Minister of Labor, Jarbas Passarinho,
is against federal intervention and has lined up Governor Alacid
Nunes on his side. Their thinking is that ARENA could probably
win the municipal elections scheduled for Santarem in March of
this year, but that if a federal interventor is appointed and
elections postponed, the MDB would probably be able to regroup
and again take hold of the area, one of the few MDB strongholds
in the state of Para.

GOELZ

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cc: ARA/LA/BR, Wash., D.C.

LPGoelz:rrt

02/20/69

LPGoelz

TO : Embassy, RIO DE JANEIRO (POL)

Date: September 24, 1968

FROM : AmConsul, BELEM

SUBJECT: Trouble erupts in Santarém

REF : Belém's Telegram 428 of September 23, 1968

The state of Pará, outside of its modern capital of Belém, is still very much back in the days of the frontier. Land barons still hold sway in rural areas and Indians still attack and kill settlers who penetrate their territory. The difficulties which erupted in Santarém last week are more of the same.

The state of Pará is decidedly ARENA, but Santarém, the second largest city in the state and its surrounding area went MDB in the last elections and Elias Pinto, MDB, was elected prefeito. This has always rankled with the ARENA Governor, Alacid Nunes, and there was ill-concealed rejoicing when the Tribunal de Contas found considerable irregularities in the handling of Santarém municipal funds and Elias Pinto and his vice-prefeito were suspended from office in December, 1967. Pinto, however, is very popular in the Santarém area and there has been considerable feeling generated throughout the state concerning his suspension. Matters became complicated when a local judge in Obidos ruled that Pinto could be restored to office and the state hurriedly appealed to the judiciary to overrule this decision.

The Governor, who has postponed visiting Santarém for these many months decided he had to visit the city and went to Santarém on Tuesday, September 24th. While there he heard of the plans of Haroldo Veloso, ARENA federal deputy from Pará to assist Elias Pinto to take the prefeitura by force if necessary and thereby restore Pinto to office. The Governor sent for additional reinforcements of Military Police from Belém, which arrived in Santarém on the same plane as Veloso, got himself out of town before the trouble began, and apparently left strict orders with the local police delegado that under no circumstances were Veloso and Pinto to be allowed to take the prefeitura. Friday afternoon, September 20th, things came to a head. Pinto took to the air at about 14:30 hours inviting the people of Santarém to march with him on the prefeitura. At 16:30 Veloso and Pinto with upwards of one thousand partisans (the figure differs with each eyewitness rpt) marched on the building. The delegado called for the crowd to stop and had the assembled troops fire into the air. When the crowd did not stop he had the troops open fire on the mob, none of whom according to best information now available were armed. Three persons were killed outright and four wounded, included deputy Veloso. The remainder scattered.

Veloso, who is a retired brigadesiro in the Air Force, received immediate assistance from FAB which flew a special plane to Santarém to bring him first to Belém and then took him to Rio for specialized medical treatment. Pinto took refuge in a hospital in Santarém where his doctor said he was showing symptoms of a heart condition and could not be disturbed. Military Police then ringed the building to prevent his escape, but escape he did in the middle of night and he is now in hiding in Belém. Reportedly he moves from one friend's home to another several times a day. The Governor has caused an official inquiry to be started into the matter and begun a campaign of justifying his actions

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condemning those of Veloso and Pinto.

Although most state and ARENA leaders in Pará have come out in solidarity with the Governor, his and the military police actions in Santarém have not been as well received by the bulk of the population. They feel that the repression was overly severe. This has been strengthened by rumors (unsubstantiated) that a number of persons including Veloso besides being shot were also bayoneted.

This abortive attempt apparently just one more step in a concerted campaign by Veloso to embarrass the Governor and the make a name for himself. Long a very controversial character, Veloso's first claim to fame was his single-handed abortive (and again comic opera) attempt in 1958 to overthrow the Kubitschek regime. Later restored to the air force he rose to the rank of brigadeiro on retirement and became interested in politics, in western Pará. Although ARENA, he has always been close to Pinto and the MDB in Santarém and has been working, he reports, to try to solve the Santarém crisis and induce Pinto and/or other MDB leaders in the area to become a part of ARENA, albeit unsuccessfully. He also served as relator to the congressional committee (CPI) investigating land sales to foreigners and has been using the committee to his own advantages. It is an open secret that he would like to be Governor of the state of Pará and reportedly arrangements have been made for him to run for Governor on the MDB ticket should he be unable to obtain the ARENA nomination. In his bid for power in Pará he has, of course, run afoul of the Governor and other ARENA leaders. He had the Governor submit testimony to the CPI concerning the land in Pará held by foreigners and has since tried to use this testimony, which was favorable to the large American companies holding land here, to blacken the Governor's reputation with local nationalists and the common people of the state.

This is probably one situation which will not be allowed to die. The Governor must, if he is to come out of the crisis with a whole hide, insist that Pinto, Veloso and associates be prosecuted. It is also his one chance to break the hold of that faction on the western part of the state and people who know him say he will pursue the matter to the bitter end. On the other hand both Veloso and Pinto have large popular followings and Veloso has close personal connections in the Air Force and in Congress.

In the meantime, Santarém remains quiet under Military Police control.

GOELZ

cc: Brazil Desk
Wash., D.C.

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Embassy Political Section Comment: National ramifications of this incident were reported in Rictel 12124. Embassy will report further developments of this case as problems it poses for President Costa e Silva and the ARENA party are resolved.

Embassy, RIO DE JANEIRO (POL)

Date: September 24, 1968

FROM : AmConsul, BELEM
 SUBJECT: Trouble erupts in Santarem
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