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TO : Department of State

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FROM : AmEmbassy Office BRASILIA

DATE: December 8, 1967

SUBJECT : Attitudes of the Military in Sao Paulo

REF : Porto Alegre's A-8 of August 15, 1967

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1. The enclosed memorandum prepared by the Consulate General in Sao Paulo is hereby transmitted to the Department. It should be read in conjunction with the referenced airgram which discusses the attitudes of the military in Rio Grande do Sul.

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Drafted by: S. Paulo:EXEC:WLWight:mjm:12-5-67

Contents and Classification Approved by: Robert H. Shields *RHS*

Clearances:

Action : ARA (BR - NAN - 746)

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TO: Amembassy BRASILIA: POL
FROM: Amconsul São Paulo
SUBJECT: Attitudes of the Military in São Paulo
REF: Porto Alegre's A-8

SUMMARY

Many of the political attitudes reflected in Porto Alegre's airgram apply to the military forces throughout Brazil, including São Paulo. In this consular district attitudes of the three military services generally reveal (1) an uncompromising opposition to Communism; (2) a determination not to permit a return to "chaos" nor the return of discredited "cassated" politicians; (3) a firm position against corruption and dishonesty in Government; (4) friendship towards the U. S. and a desire to cooperate with us both bilaterally and internationally; (5) full support to President Costa e Silva and his policies; (6) a general desire to maintain and increase professionalism and discipline in the armed forces; and (7) a wish to become disengaged from politics "when the situation permits." Although as a group the three military services are especially friendly to the U. S., the F-5 controversy has hurt us with the Brazilian Air Force, which feels considerably aggrieved and upset by U. S. policies and actions. Nationalism within the armed forces is a factor which must be considered. U.S. policies should take into consideration the fact that the Brazilian military will play a continuing and dominant role in the next five years or more.

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Attitude Towards President Costa e Silva

So far as the Consulate General is aware, there is no significant opposition, overt or covert, to President Costa e Silva, or to the policies of his Government. It is believed that 80 to 90% of the military in São Paulo in the Second Army, Fourth Air Zone and Naval District, approve of the President personally and are favorable towards what they consider a "strong" government which will follow the Revolutionary line. The military commanders of all three services here and most of the high-ranking

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officers might be called "hard-liners," depending on how you define the term. However, the extreme right wing "hard-line" elements which opposed President Castelo Branco as well as President Costa e Silva never made up more than a small percentage, between 5 and 10% of officer personnel. In recent months there has been no known activity within this group, which is evidently being extremely discreet. On the other side of the spectrum, there has been no known leftist activity. At the present moment, the Consulate General cannot think of any situation or any action which President Costa e Silva might conceivably take which would lose to him a significant part of the military support he now enjoys.

Attitude Towards Communism

All high-ranking officers and the vast majority of military personnel appear sincerely and firmly anti-Communist, and most of them are bitter against ex-Presidents Quadros and Goulart. They constantly urge alertness against plots fostered by Goulart, or leftist or Communist groups to organize subversive and guerrilla activities within Brazil. In recent months, the Army and Air Force here have stressed anti-guerrilla training, and are planning additional anti-guerrilla exercises in the near future. The vast majority of military personnel of officer rank would oppose any lifting of cassations of former Presidents, including Janio Quadros, who is blamed for much of Brazil's difficulties. Attitudes against ex-President Kubitschek appear less firm, although his name is usually linked with "corruption, inflation and incompetent government."

Concern Over Cost of Living and Economic Policies

Owing to the rise in the cost of living and the Government's policies to hold down inflation, many members of the military are chafing at their low pay, and the low increases granted by the Costa e Silva and Castelo Branco governments. In recent months there has been grumbling, especially by some of the younger officers. However, discipline within the military is strong and their salary complaints are not likely to result in open pressure or propaganda, or in withdrawal of support for the President. In fact, Costa e Silva can undoubtedly get away with smaller salary increases than a civilian president might.

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As indicated in Porto Alegre's airgram, it is generally true that most military officers do not understand the intricacies of economic policies; most have not been exposed to economic courses in their universities or staff colleges. They generally tend to over-simplify the issues, and to believe that discipline, order, or "a get-tough-attitude" will solve most economic problems. Officers accustomed to command feel that meat production can be requisitioned, that companies can be ordered to reduce prices, etc., whereas the effect of such actions is in fact just the opposite of that desired. In general, most officers do not wish to get involved in economic matters, and their feeling is that Brazil needs only an honest, "stable" government to move ahead.

Attitudes Towards the United States

A. General. The reporting officer has never met a member of the local military who appeared unfriendly to the U.S. In fact, the first remark of a high-ranking officer of any of the three services is usually to recall with pleasure his friendship with some American military colleague, or to speak glowingly of a visit to the United States. It is difficult to find a senior officer who has not travelled in the U.S. or had courses at one of our military staff schools. They tend to identify with us because of their training, equipment, history of close collaboration in World War II and Santo Domingo, the Military Assistance Program and other U.S.G. programs. The same attitudes apply to a lesser degree amongst enlisted ranks; although most of them have not visited the U.S. they enjoy American films, and like what they know of U.S. civilization and democracy.

There appears little difference in attitudes amongst the three services; all three are accustomed to collaborate, and to exchange information with the U.S. In São Paulo, the Commander of the Second Army, General Syseno Sarmiento, appears somewhat more reserved and less open with U.S. officials than the Air Force and Navy Commanders, and this is probably true of the Army as a whole. General Syseno has been cordial and cooperative on all occasions, however. The friendship of the Air Force Commander has been especially marked, and the cooperation of the Brazilian Air Force to AST-10 during their stay in São Paulo could not have been improved on. The Naval Commander, Captain Joaquim Coutinho Netto, never fails to recall his training at a submarine station in the U.S., and likewise is especially friendly. The Army, of course, is far more important than the other two services combined and it is in the Army that some nationalistic feeling exists which might also become anti-American.

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B. Since the F-5 Controversy. The F-5 controversy has damaged the U. S. image and caused considerable resentment within the Brazilian Air Force here, which feels hurt and aggrieved at what it considers shabby treatment by a close friend. Nevertheless, it has not affected personal friendships between Consulate General officers and high-ranking FAB officials, who continue to be close and cordial. They do not hide their chagrin at what they consider a blow to their pride in the heavy-handed way in which the F-5 matter was handled, and there is some feeling that Brazil should buy the Mirages, "even though it's not the best plane for us," just to show Brazil's independence. Hopefully, in the end the FAB will purchase F-5's and lingering resentment will die down as our collaboration continues. The Army and Navy do not appear seriously concerned or adversely affected by the F-5 problem. However, it is well to bear in mind that even before he became President, Costa e Silva complained over difficulties and delays in obtaining military equipment from the U. S.

Nationalism: Healthy and Unhealthy

There is a considerable amount of nationalism in the armed services which is healthy and can be equated with patriotism -- pride in their service and professionalism, desire to promote a greater Brazil, more involved and influential in world affairs; a pride in their civic action program and rescue-health civilian-type activities, and a determination to bring about greater honesty and efficiency in the government. Recently a Brazilian Air Force Major was jailed in São Paulo and is apparently to be severely punished for bringing in contraband articles on his airplane-- the first such instance local observers can recall.

In a small percentage of the military a different type of nationalism exists -- one which is negative, suspicious and anti-foreign. This type opposes foreign capital and refuses to recognize its benefits to Brazil, favors government control of communications and in some cases, production, is overly-security conscious and chauvinistic, and is quick to adopt slogans opposing foreign development of natural resources. This thinking, in military as well as civilian sectors, represents a danger to future collaboration between the U. S. and Brazil and should be combated by USIS and in personal contacts between Brazilians and U. S. officials. Fortunately this anti-foreign nationalism in the services is not yet wide-spread enough to represent a serious problem.

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Implications for the United States

We must keep in mind that the military are firmly in control of Brazil and will remain in a key position of influence for the next five years or more. As a group they are relatively well-educated, honest, dedicated, and pro-American. We should be alert to their sensitivities and seek to retain our present close ties by continued training and exchange programs. Their influence, if properly channeled, can be a powerful force for good government, and not necessarily an undemocratic one. Many in the military, especially the Brazilian Army, come from humble or middle-class homes, and continue close to the people. As much or more than any other segment of the population, they are aware of the problems of their country and anxious to do something about them. If we can retain our influence with them, we can hopefully avoid Brazil's return to excesses of nationalism, neutralism, or other "isms" inimical to our interests.

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