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FROM : Amembassy, BRASILIA Office

DATE: November 4, 1963

SUBJECT : THE ATTEMPT ON LACERDA: PADRE GODINHO'S TESTIMONY

REF : A-49

Supplemental to A-49 on "The Attempt on Lacerda" there is attached a translation of the testimony presented on October 30 by Padre Godinho (UDN-São Paulo) to the Chamber Committee established to investigate the alleged attempt. The testimony is an account of plans made and actions taken within the Paratroop Division related to the pursuit of Lacerda. If this account is exact, the attempt on Lacerda was much more than the simple problem of military discipline which the Army and government claim it is. Among those responsible for the plot the report implicates former Chief of the President's Military Household João Sarmento, present Military Household Chief Assis Brasil, War Minister Jair Dantas, and First Army Commander General Ancora. By tracing the decision to take Lacerda to a ministerial meeting, the report also implicates President Goulart and his Ministers.

An Embassy officer was told by UDN President Bilac Pinto on October 30 that the Godinho testimony was gathered by interviewing pro-Lacerda Army officers involved in the attempt. Ambassador Gordon was told on October 31 by Clemente Mariani, whose son is married to Lacerda's daughter, that Lt. Col. Boaventura Cavalcanti made the report and passed it on to his brother, a federal Deputy from Pernambuco (presumably Costa Cavalcanti, UDN-Pernambuco). Padre Godinho probably received

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Contents and Classification Approved by:
R. W. Dean/John Keppel

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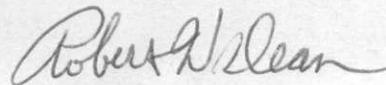
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the report from Deputy Cavalcanti. Lt. Col. Boaventura Cavalcanti is reported in the Godinho testimony as one of the officers who refused to carry out the order to take Lacerda because General Alfredo Pinheiro would not put it in writing.

The testimony was submitted at a brief first meeting of the committee on October 30, but it was disallowed at the second meeting on October 31. Although Committee President Bias Fortes (PSD-Minas Gerais) was counted as the fourth member of the seven-man committee at the October 30 meeting, he later claimed he had not attended that meeting and ruled that a quorum had not existed and that the first meeting had not occurred. UDN members said they would appeal the Committee President's decision to the Presidency of the Chamber, but meanwhile, they are using the testimony as the basis of attacks against the government in the Chamber plenary.

For the Ambassador:



Robert W. Dean
Counselor of Embassy

Encl att m. m.

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Testimony of Padre Godinho (UDN-São Paulo) submitted October 30 to Chamber Investigating Committee on the attempt on Lacerda.

Mr. President, I, Padre Godinho, exercising my legislative mandate ^{and} in full enjoyment of the prerogatives of article 44 of the Federal Constitution, appear before the Parliamentary Investigating Committee, created by legislative resolution no. 37/63, with the object of offering support for its investigation, render the following testimony:

The following facts, which I have the honor to transmit to this Committee, have come to my attention in relation to the subject of this committee's investigation, that is, the attempt to kidnap, imprison, or physically eliminate the person of Carlos Lacerda, Governor of the state of Guanabara, on the night of October 3 and 4, by units of NUDAET (Nucleo da Divisao Aereo Terrestre--Paratroop Division Cadre).

1. About two o'clock in the morning of the fourth, Major Carlos Eugenio Rodrigues Lima Soares Moncao, chief of the 3rd Section of NUDAET (operation officer), overnighing at Division Headquarters, was advised by Capt. Rodovalho Alves dos Reis, Officer of the Day, that Col. Euripides Santos Jr., of the War Minister's Cabinet, had asked him by telephone to send to Gen. Soares Pinheiro, Commander of the Division, the following message from the Office of the President: "The man was not there." He further requested that Gen. Pinheiro urgently telephone Col. João Sarmento. The message was transmitted to Gen. Pinheiro in his residence.

2. Gen. Soares Pinheiro, on receiving it, gave the following orders: a) alert the duty company, the GUD (Grupamento de Unidades Divisionarias-Division Troops); b) alert the duty company of the Santos Dumont Regiment; c) prepare the maps of the Rio-Petropolis and Rio-Sao Paulo roads; d) do not telephone outside the Division, but continue to keep him informed. He said he would proceed immediately to his General Headquarters accompanied by Lt. Col. Mafra, his Chief of Staff.

3. About 3:30 in the morning, Gen. Soares Pinheiro, driving his Volkswagon and accompanied by Lt. Col. Mafra, arrived at the Division Headquarters. Officers and sergeants

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were waiting for him in the lobby.

4. Col. Mafra requested a map from the Vila Militar (a military camp in Rio) and noting various points on it, said that he would locate the Howitzer Group between Deodoro and Marechal Hermes [streets in Rio de Janeiro], the Division Troops on the road which goes from Campo dos Afonsos to Marechal Hermes, and there he would arrest the state authorities.

5. Reminded that Col. Santos Jr. had asked him to telephone Col. João Sarmento urgently, Gen Pinheiro made the connection with Col. Sarmento. In that telephone conversation, the General listened more than he spoke. At one point, however, he said, "one seizes Lacerda and Adhemar and the business is finished". And he asked, "Is Assis there? [presumably Assis Brasil, now chief of the President's Military Household]". The answer was affirmative. Then covering the phone with his hand, he said to Col. Mafra, "They are at Larangeiras [The President's residence in Rio]". The conversation ended with the words, "in the morning, then".

6. They then requested the map on which the Hospital Miguel Couto was located. They looked in vain in the telephone book for the address of the Hospital. Capt. João Vieira, aide-decamp, affirmed that he knew the area and later said he could serve as guide. A tourist map of the city was given to them. It was not possible to locate the Hospital.

7. Gen. Soares Pinheiro withdrew to his office. Lt. Col. Mafra put on his uniform and went to visit the Units. He left in a jeep. It was about 3:30-4:00 in the morning.

8. After he had withdrawn, Gen. Pinheiro was called to the telephone twice.

9. In the uncertain atmosphere reigning in the General Headquarters, a veterinary officer, Capt. Magalhães, got a transistor radio and was able to catch the end of a broadcast that went as follows: "These were the declarations of Minister Oliveira Brito about decreeing a state of siege. The President of the Republic went (is going or will go) to the Military Airport (sic) of Santos Dumont, taking the message to Congress to solicit approval of the act. The message, which we have just finished transmitting, was

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brought to us by an official, who is at our side". In the minds of those present, the news signified that the state of siege had been decreed ad referendum of the Congress.

10. Between 5:00 and 5:30 in the morning, Lt. Col. Mafra and Lt. Dr. Samuel went to the Airborne Howitzer Group. Demonstrating surprise at the presence of Commander Lt. Col. Boaventura Cavalcanti Junior at the Unit at that hour, Col. Mafra returned to his vehicle, leaving Lt. Samuel there.

11. A little later, Lt. Col. Boaventura was called on the telephone by Col. Mafra, who told him the state of siege had been decreed and that Gen. Pinheiro had a mission for the Howitzer Group. He ordered that vehicles be made ready with officers and sergeants only, well armed with sub-machine guns and hand grenades, for the purpose of surrounding the Hospital Miguel Couto.

12. On being asked for a clarification of why the Hospital Miguel Couto, Lt. Col. Mafra replied that it was to seize Governor Carlos Lacerda. On being told that he did not have officers or sergeants available at that hour in the barracks and that such a mission was not of the nature to be communicated by telephone, Col. Mafra agreed that the Commander of the Howitzer Group could come to Division Headquarters.

13. On arriving at the Division Headquarters, Col. Boaventura Cavaleante found Lt. Col. Mafra with telephone in hand, examining a map of the Leblon sector of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Questioned again by the former, Lt. Col. Mafra repeated the mission, stating that the Santos Dumont Regiment would also participate in it. Warned of the gravity of the matter, Col. Mafra replied that he was carrying out orders. He had received them and would carry them out.

14. While driving to his barracks, Lt. Col. Boaventura passed by the Santos Dumont Regiment where he found the Unit Commander Lt. Col. Aragao, who had received a telephone call from Lt. Col. Mafra telling him that the country was in a state of siege and the mission of the Division was to arrest the state authorities. For this, Col. Aragao was to organize groups in trucks, surround the Hospital Miguel Couto, and sieze at all cost the authorities who appeared there. Reflecting on the order, Col. Aragao judged it to be illegal and unconstitutional, and decided to go and speak directly with the Commanding General.

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Lt. Col. Boaventura then told him he had received an identical mission and that he had decided to request the order in writing and to have his officers, by technical artifices, delay to the maximum extent, the preparation of vehicles and ammunition.

15. Back in his barracks, Lt. Col. Boaventura related the decision taken, under his complete responsibility, to the officers gathered there, receiving general agreement. He requested that they remain in his office so that they could testify to the conversation he was going to have with Lt. Col. Mafra. He then transmitted his decision to the Chief of the General Staff and the agreement of his officers to it. Asked if the vehicles were ready, he replied negatively and asserted that they would not be made ready. Lt. Col. Mafra suggested that he might come over to Division Headquarters and let General Pinheiro know directly.

16. On arriving at the Division Headquarters, Col. Scherer, Adjutant General, was notified by Major Monção that strange things were going on in the Division and that an action was being prepared against the state authorities of Guanabara. And that this, in his understanding, was happening without the knowledge of the Minister's Cabinet and the Command of the First Army.

17. About 7:30 Major Monção came across Col. Scherer, who was leaving the office of General Pinheiro. Directing himself to Major Monção, Col. Scherer told him that the Minister's Cabinet was apprised of everything, since Gen. Pinheiro had just spoken personally with Gen. Jair, who had ordered the carrying out of the operation.

18. Based on his decision, Col. Boaventura went to the Division Headquarters accompanied by Subcommander Major Bento and Major Costa Ferreira, S3 Officer. In the lobby of the Command Office, there were various officers and sergeants and, in a state of visible agitation, Major Escossia, Commander

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of the GUD (Division Troops), who told him that Lt. Col. Mafra had assumed, without his knowledge, the command of his Engineering Company to carry out a mission, and that he, Major Escossia, had come there to request an explanation from the Division Commanding General.

19. Admitted into the Office of the General in company of Subcommander Major Bento, Lt. Col. Boaventura repeated to him what he had already said to Lt. Col. Mafra. General Pinheiro retorted that he wanted to save him from the responsibility and take it on himself. He had received the mission and had not asked for it in writing. It was a question of trust and that the attitude of the Commander of the Howitzer Group did not please him and therefore, he could leave.

20. In light of this, Lt. Col. Boaventura returned to his General Headquarters, met with his officers and sergeants, related to them what until then had occurred and told them that since he had not received the mission in the form which he considered correct, he was considering it as not received, and that while he remained in command of that unit, it would not be carried out. None of this was objected to.

21. In view of the refusal of Coronels Aragao and Boaventura to carry out the mission, Col. Mafra personally assumed command of the Engineering Company, commanded by Capt. Zangerolame and resolved to direct the operation. He obtained, in addition, the cooperation of three officers of the Staff of the Paratroop Division: Majors Virgilio Marones Gusmao, Nelício dos Santos and Capt. Jorge da Costa Medeiros.

The detachment, composed of 1 jeep, 1 large jeep, five trucks and a dump truck, about 100 men heavily armed with machineguns, handgrenades, and a great quantity of ammunition, left the Division and drove along Avenida Niemeyer to the region where the Hospital Miguel Couto is located, and where as they were informed, they should meet Carlos Lacerda on a visit accompanied by the state authorities. Col. Mafra and the officers cited in this paragraph were traveling in the jeep. On arriving at the region of the Hospital, they blocked the

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access routes and awaited the departure of the authorities. When Col. Mafra found out that the Governor had left the hospital, he went to a private phone that was nearby and when he returned, ordered the withdrawal of the troops..

22. Later, through Capt. João Vieira, Gen. Pinheiro convoked the unit commanders and their most senior officers for a meeting in his Office. At this meeting the commanders of the Howitzer Group, Santos Dumont Regiment, Division Troops, the Director of the Instruction Center, and officers of the General Staff of the Paratroops Division, among others, attended.

23. On that occasion, the General related that he had been at a ministerial meeting where the decreeing of a state of siege and the prison of Governor Carlos Lacerda of Guanabara had been decided and that this mission had been charged to the Paratroop Division. In addition, he said that when the mission had been communicated to him, the use of groups from the Division with the Special Operations Course had been suggested, which he had objected to as not being possible, since the officers and sergeants of the Special Operations Course were on a mission in Xingú. Interrupted by one of those present, who stated that nothing was known positively about the decreeing of the state of siege and, at any rate, such a mission would be illegal and unconstitutional on the basis of the known facts, Gen. Pinheiro responded that the siege had been decreed ad referendum of the Congress and that he, Gen. Pinheiro, would not discuss the order to imprison the state authorities and that he had not requested it in writing like some officers there present, who desired to absolve themselves of any responsibility. He had received it in trust and would carry it out. He would not discuss orders of the Minister. He was supported by his Cabinet /The War Minister's/ and by the First Army. Someone suggested that support from the First Army might be requested through Adjutant General Costa Misto, who was situated near the Hospital Miguel Couto. This suggestion was accepted by the General, Major Escossia and Capt. Vital, his Subcommander when /they/ showed themselves indignant over the use of their troops, the General answered them: "orders are orders".

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At one point, consulting his watch, Gen. Pinheiro asserted that if the mission had not been carried out by that time, it would no longer be carried out, and he was waiting for a telephone call about this. He then asked the officers to keep in strictest secrecy the events that had passed there in order to avoid press exploitation. He was told that such facts had already been communicated to the officers and sergeants of the units solicited for the mission.

24. About 11:30 in the morning Gen. Pinheiro again recommended by telephone to commanders that they have their subordinates maintain in strictest secrecy the events of that night and morning, always with a view to avoid press exploitation.

Thus I request that the following witness be heard by this Committee:

1. Major Charles Eugenio Rodrigues Lima Soares Monção, Chief of the 3rd Section of NUDAET--On Duty.
2. Capt. Rodvalho Alves dos Reis--Officer of the Day.
3. Col. Augusto Scherer Ferreira de Abreu--Adjutant General.
4. Lt. Col. Francisco Boaventura Cavalcanti Junior--Commander of the Howitzer Group.
5. Lt. Col. Jose Aragão Cavalcanti--Commander of the Santos Dumont Regiment.
6. Major Escossia--Commander of the Division Troops Group.
7. Capt. Francisco Zangerolame--Commander of the Engineering Company.
8. Major Giacomo Januzi Neto--Duty Officer of the Santos Dumont Regiment
9. Lt. Col. Alysio Borges--Commander of the Instruction Center.
10. Maj. (Staff) Virgilio Marones Gusmao
Maj. (Staff) Nelício dos Santos
Capt. (Staff) Jorge da Costa Medeiros
11. Col. Abelardo Mafra--Division Chief of Staff
12. Gen. Alfredo Pinheiro Soares Filho--Division Commander
13. Col. João Sarmiento--Chief of the Military Household (ex-Chief)
14. Gen. Assis Brasil--Present Chief of the Military Household
15. Gen. Oromar Osorio--Commander of the Vila Militar
16. Gen. Armando Moraes Ancora--Commander of the First Army.

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