

AIRGRAM

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

SEP 21 1964

TO : Department of State

INFO : AmCon BELEM
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AmCon PORTO ALEGRE
AmCon BELO HORIZONTE
AmConGen RECIFE
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USCINCSO for POLAD

FROM : AmEmbassy RIO DE JANEIRO

DATE: September 15, 1964

SUBJECT : San Tiago Dantas' Political Testament.

RMR FILES
OCT 6, 1964

Almost up to the moment of his death on September 6, 1964, Francisco Clementino San Tiago DANTAS was involved in political maneuvers aimed at reforming the Brazilian political structure. The deputy had great talent for finding compromise solutions. His ability to see all sides of a problem and his willingness from time to time to champion widely divergent political points of view made San Tiago Dantas one of the more unpredictable individuals on the Brazilian political scene. He was often accused of having no political principles, and indeed the most marked aspect of his apparent political philosophy could perhaps be best summed up by stating that he was driven by an ambition for power which often overrode ideology.

At the time of his death, San Tiago Dantas was at work on one more scheme aimed at bringing about some sort of broad political unity within the country. His posthumously published "political testament" warned of that institutional crisis which might erupt when the problem of succession faces the present government. To avoid such dangers, he called for the reformulation of existing party structures. However, the simple foundation of a new party was not, he thought, the solution. According to Dantas' reasoning, "the most logical solution seems to be the creation of a union of political forces in which not parties, but public figures acting independently from the parties to which they belong join together..." Such a "front"--reminiscent of the Nationalist Parliamentary Front (FPN) at least in its initial stages--

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would eventually grow into a new party encompassing reformist elements of existing parties.

The "union" or "alliance" formed would have basically three objectives according to Dantas' scheme: (1) to realize a broad program of reforms, although a wide variation of opinions on the mechanics to be used would be expected; (2) to bring about a change in the system of government to provide for a middle ground between parliamentarianism and presidentialism; (3) to institute an electoral reform, the basic element of which would be a formula which would combine the present system of proportional representation with a system of district representation.

Because San Tiago's "political testament" might well serve as a basis for future political debate on governmental reform, a free translation of the document is attached as enclosure (1) to this airgram.

Comment: San Tiago's "testament" articulates some existing uneasiness over the role which the military might play in selecting a government to succeed that of Castello Branco. This preoccupation would be met, if San Tiago's formula were followed, by investing greater authority in the Congress and thus redressing the existing imbalance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government.

As noted in Embassy's A-143 and other reporting, the Congress has not yet determined its post-revolutionary limits of authority with any precision. To a large extent it does remain in the shadow of the executive. At the same time, we believe that the surest guarantee against the usurption of autocratic or even dictatorial powers by members of the military rests with the achievement of a reasonable degree of success in effecting the moderate and constructive programs being advocated by the Castello Branco administration. Such success is dependent, in turn, on a legislative program closely related to Castello Branco's ability to put pressure on Congress.

There is little reason to believe that a shift in the power balance to give greater weight to the legislative branch would result, at this point in Brazilian history, in the sort of progressive program which San Tiago dreamed. Rather, given their own predilections, the Chamber and Senate might well revert to a pattern

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of legislative stasis brought about by an inability to reconcile widely divergent political viewpoints.

For the Ambassador:

John Keppel
John Keppel
Counselor for Political Affairs

Enclosure: *[initials]*
As stated.

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San Tiago Dantas' "Political Testament"

The following is a free translation of the text of a document which has been referred to as San Tiago Dantas' "political testament". Reportedly the ex-deputy had been carrying out a series of political "soundings" which resulted in the document, a copy of which was given to Jornal do Brasil editor, Celso de Sousa e Silva. The text of the document was published in its entirety in the September 11, 1964 edition of Jornal do Brasil.

"Preliminary Note About Regrouping
of Brazilian Political Forces in 1964"

"1. The present political situation in the country may evolve in the direction of re-establishing democratic legality in all its forms or towards a strengthening of military authority with the reduction of the characteristics of the democratic regime preserved by the Ato Institucional. The personal tendencies of the President of the Republic and of his cabinet seem to favor the first alternative, but nothing precludes the possibility that circumstances might come to bear in favor of the second and that even those responsible for the government could change their attitudes.

"At the same time, notwithstanding the extension of the President's mandate until 1966, everything points to the risk of an institutional crisis on the occasion of his succession with the presentation of military candidates whose confrontation will materialize more in terms of political/military prestige than in popular or party support.

"2. In order to avoid these developments which could endanger the survival of the democratic representative regime, and also in order to assure, and if possible accelerate, the re-democratization of the country, the political forces should join together in a common effort of revising currently existing party structures, the majority of which attest to now archaic political episodes, most of them contemporaneous with the 'Estado Novo'.

"3. The simple foundation of a new party does not meet the objective of reformation. Most public figures of stature are joined to parties by ties of a regional nature and some of them by participation in the national leadership (of the parties). It would be very difficult for them to abandon the organs to which they are joined and for which they are responsible. The most logical

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solution seems to be the creation of a union of political forces in which not parties, but public figures acting independently from the parties to which they belong join together, with or without breaking their ties to their respective parties. In this way, it would be possible for each politician to resolve, in accordance with his own interests and position, his degree of participation in the 'Alliance' or 'Union' by either dissociating himself from his party of origin or staying within it with a sort of dual party nationality. The formula is one of transition and probably will lead to the creation of a new party under the pressure of circumstances.

"4. Concerning the objective of the 'Union' or 'Alliance', it should free itself from any present attitude of support or opposition to the present government. If it should emerge as a supporting force, those joining politicians who are today identified with independent or opposition parties could not escape the accusation of insincerity which would hamper their adherence. If it should evolve as an opposition force, it would make difficult the participation of numerous politicians currently members of the National Democratic Union (UDN) or who, even under other legends, give support to President Castello Branco.

The question of support or opposition to the government should, therefore, result from the later comportment of the 'Union' or 'Alliance' which would define and characterize itself through objectives of a different, more programatic and doctrinaire nature.

"5. The first of these objectives would seem to be a program of reforms within an historic and institutional conciliation with the democratic representative regime. Whether it be agrarian reform which bears most directly on the social structure, whether it be technical and administrative reform such as banking, tax and/or public service reforms, or whether the reforms be of a political nature such as constitutional and electoral reform, the 'Union' should set down a certain number of principles and objectives with enough latitude to permit the inclusion in its ranks of men and forces of varying doctrinal positions, but with enough precision to characterize it as a reformist, progressive group aimed at the modernization of the country and the implantation through the vote of a social democracy.

"6. The second objective might relate itself to the regime itself. Everything indicates that the option between parliamentarianism and presidentialism has lost, nowadays, the radicalism

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attributed to it by the old constitutionalists, and that the two forms of government combine together in complex ways, permitting the utilization of the positive qualities of one and the other. The creation of a Cabinet Government subject to demission through a failure on a vote of confidence and with presentation to Congress of all members of the Cabinet does not meet the need for administrative stability in the modern state. On the other hand, the maintenance of a presidential regime with nearly autocratic powers attributed to the President of the Republic seems to lead to a power struggle which intermittantly exceeds the bounds of legality and exposes the state to the danger of coups d'etat.

unclassified "An inspired compromise in German experience and the observation of the Brazilian reality could result in a regime in which the President of the Republic as well as the Chief of Government would be chosen by Congress through election; it would befit the President of the Republic to propose to Congress the name which would be considered for Chief of Government. Once having taken office, the Chief of Government would form a Cabinet with ministers of his choosing responsible to him. The substitution of the Chief of Government would depend on the prior election of his substitute on the proposal of the President of the Republic or, in determined cases, through the initiative of Congress itself.

"7. A third objective might be the reform of the existing electoral system in the country. This reform, even today considered necessary, becomes indispensable if the regime is modified so as to rest predominantly in Congress as proposed in the preceding item. It would be advisable to blend the proportional system with district representation in such a way that the Chamber would be composed of deputies elected by districts according to a majority principle and of deputies elected by identification with a larger plan, that is on a statewide basis through proportional representation.

"8. The objectives might further be expanded, by the existing situation and by the interest which the theme arouses, to include the reorganization of the legislative institution itself in such a way as to give potency to legislative efforts without, however, favoring the elaboration of hastily-drawn laws. Studies are already being made in the Chamber and the Senate of which advantage might be taken to fix the lines of a reform which fully outlines the opinions of existing political circles."

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