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FROM : Amconsul, BELO HORIZONTE DATE: April 28, 1964

SUBJECT : Magalhães Pinto: Role In Revolt And Future Prospects

REF : -

SUMMARY

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Magalhães Pinto hailed as "the civilian chief of the revolution," Governor MAGALHÃES PINTO is regarded by local military and civilian leaders of the anti-GOULART revolt as a belated, somewhat reluctant, ally who is still viewed with some misgiving. At present the two ranking Army officers in Minas Gerais, Generals MOURÃO and GUEDES, are playing a prominent role in managing state affairs along with Magalhães Pinto.

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While Magalhães Pinto has been widely (and probably correctly) celebrated as the "civilian chief of the revolution," local people, civilian and military, who were actively engaged in planning the overthrow of the Goulart Government claim that Magalhães Pinto jumped on the bandwagon at the last moment ("pegou um bonde correndo") and, moreover, they allege that he did so in order to save his political skin.

This is true, but the entire story is more complex. Magalhães Pinto is a liberal politician of moderate, reform-minded inclinations. He was also one of the founders of the National Democratic Union (UDN), and it cannot be overlooked that the basic anti-VARGAS tradition of the UDN forms

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an important part of his political outlook. In the months immediately preceding the anti-Goulart revolt, Magalhães Pinto had alienated himself from the predominantly conservative political temper of Minas Gerais, by seeking left-wing backing and support for his presidential ambitions since his own party, the UDN, clearly preferred Guanabara Governor Carlos LACERDA as its standard bearer in 1965. At the end of January, however, the latent strength of local conservatism manifested itself in the demonstrations that resulted in the enforced cancellation of the CUTAL Congress meeting scheduled for Belo Horizonte (A-50, January 29, 1964). One month later, in another show of conservative strength, an extreme left-wing "reform rally" in Belo Horizonte dissolved in a riot and could not be held. These two occurrences undoubtedly worried Magalhães, and he soon sought to return to the more traditional party fold. In early March, the Governor dropped his left-wing advisor José APARECIDO de Oliveira from the cabinet where he had been serving as Secretary of Government (A-60, March 11, 1964).

It was, however, Goulart's increasing demagogism after the "reform" rally in Rio de Janeiro on March 13, and his apparent desire to perpetuate himself in the office of the presidency, as Vargas had done before him, that finally brought Magalhães Pinto in with the military men who had been conspiring to overthrow the Goulart regime. The last straw as far as Magalhães Pinto was concerned was Goulart's condoning the insubordination of Navy and Marine Corps enlisted men. On March 28, the Governor met with General Mourão and Marshal DENYS in Juiz de Fora and probably learned their final plans at that time.

When Magalhães Pinto decided definitively to cast his lot with the anti-Goulart movement cannot be determined with precision. The Secretary of Administration in Magalhães Pinto's Cabinet told the Consul that the Governor ordered him sometime in the middle of March to give priority to all requests from the State Military Police for material and money. Magalhães Pinto himself said that on March 17 he had sounded out KUBITSCHKE on his attitude toward a possible anti-Goulart movement (Contel 19, Info Rio de Janeiro 52). On the other hand, one of the charter civilian members of the anti-Goulart conspiracy in Minas Gerais, Augusto de LIMA Neto, who was in charge of telecommunications for Generals Mourão and Guedes, told the Consul that Magalhães Pinto was still hedging after Mourão's troops had left Juiz de Fora in the direction of Rio de Janeiro. Lima maintains that Magalhães Pinto's weak statement in the afternoon of March 31 was designed to keep the Governor's lines open to Goulart. (It is true that Magalhães Pinto's statement was unusually bland for a leader whose state was at that time in armed rebellion against the national Government, but it may be that Magalhães Pinto was prudently waiting for General KRUEL's decision before he took any irrevocable steps. Also, Magalhães Pinto is not given to flamboyant pronouncements.) It is the Consulate's opinion that Magalhães Pinto was wholly committed by the weekend preceding the revolt, i.e., by March 27-29.

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Be that as it may, the fact is that Magalhães Pinto linked his political fortunes to the anti-Goulart movement late in the game, after having -- in the eyes of the local military -- carried on a dubious flirtation with Goulart and the left during most of the deposed President's term of office. Thus, while he has been receiving kudos from all quarters of the nation for his leading role in the successful revolt, and while his popularity with centrist and conservative forces in Minas Gerais has soared, Magalhães Pinto is still regarded with some distrust by local revolutionary leaders.

A clear indication that Magalhães Pinto's stock with the military is not as high as it would seem on the surface was the fact that the only Federal Deputy from Minas Gerais who had his mandate cancelled when the Institutional Act was put into effect on April 10 was José Aparecido, whose political career has been made under the aegis of Magalhães Pinto. Even after he left Magalhães Pinto's cabinet, Aparecido retained the Governor's affection (A-61, March 18, 1964). While the military leaders may have taken away Aparecido's Congressional seat because of his past connection with Jânio QUADROS, whose private secretary he had been, cancelling Aparecido's mandate and depriving him of his political rights for ten years can only be regarded as an indirect slap at Magalhães Pinto -- particularly since there are other Federal Deputies from Minas Gerais much further to the left than Aparecido (Celso PASSOS, for example) who have thus far been untouched.

Since the deposition of Goulart, and more particularly since the promulgation of the Institutional Act, Magalhães Pinto has been sharing the rule of Minas Gerais with Generals Mourão and Guedes, both of whom have been playing a very prominent role in managing state affairs. This has been particularly noticeable in the incipient purge of assorted leftists (A-73, April 22, 1964), and has even led some local political observers to quip that the state is being run at present by "a two-man triumvirate."

It seems reasonably certain that Magalhães Pinto has not given up his presidential ambitions, and his current effort to restructure his State Administration by bringing the PSD into his cabinet and thus forming a coalition government under UDN leadership may be designed to impress the military with his ability to perform a similar feat on the national level in the future. But any such plan, if it exists, must necessarily be inchoate at present, for the political situation is fluid, and political decisions (both on the national and state level) are obviously no longer being made by civilians alone.

There is no doubt that the revolt improved Magalhães Pinto's presidential prospects, which were extremely slight before Goulart was deposed, but how much it improved them is another question. According to local UDN sources, Magalhães Pinto

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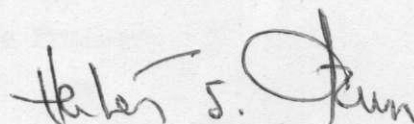
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still trails Lacerda in the party's favor, although he is closer to Lacerda now than before the revolt. Moreover, the Minas Gerais Governor will have to do some fence-mending with the military if he hopes to emerge as their candidate. Still second in his own party, with his revolutionary credentials not quite in order, Magalhães Pinto is probably most accurately seen at present as a slightly brighter dark horse entered in a race whose rules are as yet undetermined.



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