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BUREAU OF
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FROM : Amconsul BELO HORIZONTE

DATE: September 22, 1965

SUBJECT: Gubernatorial Election: Current and Future Trends

REF : --

The Minas Gerais gubernatorial election campaign has been underway since July and now is in its final two weeks. Since the campaign began, candidates have been nominated, some have renounced their candidacies, and one has been declared ineligible by the courts. Up until the first week in September, confusion was the only word that could be applied to the Minas election picture. Since that time, however, the confusion has cleared up to the extent that certain facts and conclusions can be drawn from the campaign. The purpose of this airgram is to bring into focus the current state of the election campaign and attempts to make a prediction on its outcome based on the information at our disposal.

The Candidates and the Parties

As the Minas gubernatorial election moves into its final stages, the field of candidates has now been reduced to three, with one of the three (Pedro Gomes de OLIVEIRA) conceded absolutely no chance of winning. The number of candidates was reduced to three on September 17, when the State PTB formally requested the withdrawal of its candidates Milton REIS and João HERCULINO and threw its support to the PSD. On the same day, the Regional Electoral Tribunal (TRE) registered the candidacy of Israel PINHEIRO for the PSD and ordered the printing of the ballots for the October 3 election. The order of the candidates on the ballot was determined by drawing lots, with the

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exception that the TRE determined that Pinheiro, a substitute, could not occupy the first or last position on the ballot. Therefore, the names will appear on the ballot as follows:

Pedro Gomes de Oliveira (MTR)
Israel Pinheiro (PSD-PTB-PSP-PRP)
Roberto RESENDE (UDN-PR-PDC)

It is the theory among local political observers that the most advantageous positions on the ballot are the first or last places. However, with only three names on the ballot, it is unlikely that position will have much effect in this election.

The Campaign

Thus far, both the UDN and PSD have concentrated their campaigns in the interior of the state. Roberto Resende has crisscrossed the state in an intensive campaign and will have visited over 300 cities and towns by election day. Resende has restricted his activities to the rural areas in the state where he has built up great strength. He has held only one meeting in Belo Horizonte, but will return to the city for a giant rally on September 23. Resende's wife, a teacher and former social-worker, has been very active, however, in the working class and slum areas of Belo Horizonte in drumming up support for her husband. So far, Resende has hammered away on three main themes: (1) a continuation of the programs of Governor MAGALHÃES PINTO, (2) increased emphasis on programs of health and education, and (3) technical and financial aid to agriculture.

The PSD has conducted its campaign much along the same lines. Both candidate Pinheiro and ex-candidate Sebastião PAES DE ALMEIDA have concentrated their efforts outside of Belo Horizonte in the smaller cities and towns. In content, the PSD campaign is almost a carbon copy of Resende's and promises the voters more schools, hospitals, roads, and industry. The PSD is picturing Pinheiro as the man who built Brasilia; the man who gets things done.

To the credit of both parties, there has been little personal invective in the campaign. Both of the candidates have gone about their business almost as if a rival did not exist. So far, the most serious charge leveled in the campaign has been from the PSD who claim that Resende is Magalhães Pinto's nephew (Resende is a nephew to Magalhães Pinto by marriage to a niece of the Governor), but Consulate officers have heard of few people who are voting against Resende for this reason.

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Governor Magalhães Pinto has not taken a personal part in the campaign thus far, and it now appears that he will not do so. Local UDN leaders believe his decision to stay aloof from the campaign stems from the Governor's belief that Resende will win without his direct participation in the campaign. Magalhães Pinto's indirect contributions, however, have been substantial. He has put the full power of his administration at the disposal of Resende and in recent weeks has stepped up the pace of inaugurating new schools and opening roads, in an effort to impress the electorate with the accomplishments of his administration.

The Electorate

The election of October 3 finds 2,726,140 persons eligible to vote in Minas Gerais. This is an increase of approximately 25% over the total eligible to vote in 1960. The biggest gain in eligible voters has come in the cities. Belo Horizonte has 304,303 voters or just over 10% of the total for the state, and an increase of 19% over its 1962 voters. The overwhelming percentage of the votes remains, however, in the over 400 small cities and towns scattered throughout the state. The cities with over 14,000 voters, including Belo Horizonte contain less than 25% of the total vote in the state.

Thus far, however, the campaign has not roused great enthusiasm among the voters. This is mainly due to the fact that there are few burning issues in the campaign and neither of the candidates has the personality or the oratorical ability to galvanize the attention of the voters. This does not mean, however, that the turnout of voters on election day will be light. The election law makes voting mandatory and the turnout in the past has been around 80% and predictions are that this percentage will be maintained on October 3.

Comment. Unless there is a sudden shift in voter sentiment during the last ten days of the campaign or some other unforeseen event occurs, the Consulate believes that Roberto Resende will win the election on October 3. This prediction is based on conversations by Consulate officers with representatives of all the political parties, journalists, businessmen, students, and the man-in-the-street.

All of these conversations have tended to confirm some basic premises. Resende and the UDN are running very strongly in the rural and interior areas of the state and have made inroads into usual PSD strongholds. On the other hand, Pinheiro and PSD will carry most of the larger cities, but the size of their victories will not be enough to offset the UDN strength in the interior. The Consulate has been reliably informed that the latest poll shows Pinheiro winning in Belo Horizonte with 55% of the vote. The PSD had previously predicted they would get between 70-75% in Belo Horizonte. The race, however, will be a close one and the final results will probably not be known for

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at least ten days after the election. From what we have been able to piece together, it appears that the winning margin would be somewhere in the vicinity of 20,000 to 50,000 votes. One of the great imponderables at the moment is the number of ballots that will be cast in blank. The Consulate has talked with several people who had planned to vote for Resende, but since the cancellation of Paes de Almeida's candidacy at the instigation of the UDN, they now plan to vote in blank as a sign of protest against the UDN action. We have no way of knowing if this trend is widespread or not, but if it is it could seriously damage Resende's chances for victory.

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