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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Intelligence
Note - 520

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To : The Secretary
 Thru : S/S
 From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *tlh*

Subject: Brazilian Student Protesters Gain Popular Support

Support for anti-government student demonstrators has moved churchmen, teachers, intellectuals, and some labor leaders toward an open clash with the Costa e Silva government. The regime's stability is not immediately threatened, but the mass demonstrations and frequent violence have brought popular discontent with the administration to the surface. The possibility now exists that support for protesting students will become a powerful force to unite disparate and discontented elements. Unless the President takes prompt and effective action toward meaningful reforms of the university system, a showdown with the administration may become unavoidable, with a resultant trend toward increased authoritarianism.

Police violence unites students. Protest demonstrations against the government's educational policies occurred in various Brazilian cities throughout the month of June but broad-based student support for them did not arise until Rio police brutally repressed student protesters on June 19, 20, and 21. Pitched battles between police and students ensued and the exaggerated and indiscriminate police violence in suppressing the students has clearly turned public opinion against the authorities. As a result of these demonstrations and of their extensive press coverage, there has been a wider public awareness of the degree to which the government has been unresponsive to popular needs and aspirations. Thus, it was easy to shift from purely educational issues to an outright

condemnation of the regime, and on June 26 some 10,000-12,000 protesters joined a

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