

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
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USIA STATE GRNC
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INR C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 511

SUBJ: ARENA CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS' ATTITUDES ON CURRENT TOPICS

1. DURING INFORMAL LUNCHTIME CONVERSATION MARCH 23, ARENA LEADER IN CHAMBER DEPUTIES ERNANI SATIRO, VICE LEADER RUI SANTOS AND DEPUTY EZEQUIAS COSTA HAD FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO MAKE ON TOPICS OF GREATEST INTEREST FOR THEM AS THEY PREPARE FOR RENEWED CONGRESSIONAL SESSION NEXT WEEK:

2. "RED GUARD" MOVEMENT WITHIN ARENA: EXCEPT FOR THREE OR FOUR NAMES, SATIRGPN SANTOS AND COSTA STILL DID NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHO BELONGED TO "RED GUARD." SATIRO SAID HE HAD TOLD RED GUARD SPOKESMAN THAT HE WOULD

BE HAPPY LET RED GUARD NAME ONE OF VICE LEADERS IN NEW LEGISLATURE, AS LONG AS HE BE INFORMED WHICH DEPUTIES THIS VICE LEADER WOULD REPRESNET. TOLD EMBOFFS HAD NOT YET GOTTEN ANSWER TO OFFER.

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SATIRO SAW SHIFTING IDEOLOGICAL BASE FOR RED GUARD: AT FIRST WAS ANTI-MILITARY BUT NOW SEEMED TO COTTONING UP TO THEM. NOTING THAT RED GUARD SPOKESMAN HAD PUBLICLY CALLED FOR "ADOPTION NEW WORKING PROCEDURES, IN CHAMBER, SATIRO WRYLY COMMENTED THAT NO WORKING PROCEDURES HAD YET EVEN BEEN ADOPTED. (COMMENT: IMPLICATION OF REMARKS WAS THAT LEADERS SAW RED GUARD AS ANNOYING GADFLY BUT NOT WIDELY SUPPORTED MOVEMENT.

3. FATE OF THE "BROAD FRONT": THE THREE DEPUTIES AGREED THAT NVENTE AMPLA MOVEMENT APPEARED TO BE LOSING STEAM. EZEQUIAS COSTA, WHO ACKNOWLEDGED HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN FOLLOWER CARLOS LACERDA, COMMENTED THAT LACERDA SIMPLY LEADING REFORM MOVEMENT; AS LONG AS COSTA E SILVA GOVERNMENT ITSELF ADOPTED REFORMIST ATTITUDE, LACERDA WOULD HAVE NO BASES OF SUPPORT. OTHERS AGREED.

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4. WHO PRESIDES OVER CONGRESS?: ARENA LEADERS CONFIRMED THAT SOLUTION WORKED OUT BY KRIEGER WAS "ADAPTION OF RULES OF CONGRESS TO NEW CONSTITUTION" WHICH WOULD CLARIFY PEDRO ALEIXO'S RIGHT TO CONGRESSIONAL PRESIDENCY. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT SENATE PRESIDENT MOUFA ANDRADE HAD SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT WITHIN SENATE, RUI SANTOS-- WHO FAMOUS AS VOTE-COUNTER-- WAS CERTAIN THAT SUFFICIENT PRO-ADMINISTRATION VOTES AVAILABLE WITHIN SENATE, ESPECIALLY FROM NEWLY ELECTED SENATORS.

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5. REVISION OF CASTELLO BRANCO DECREES: SATIRO

STATED FLATLY THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RATIFICATION BY CONGRESS OF MAJOR LAWS PROMULGATED BY CASTELLO BRANCO ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT COSTA E SILVA'S APPROVAL, AND THAT SUCH APPROVAL SEEMED MOST UNLIKELY. ON QUESTION NATIONAL SECURITY LAW, BOTH SANTOS AND COSTA READILY ADMITTED IT HAD BAD POINTS; MDB'S FRONTAL ASSAULT ON LAW HAD, HOWEVER, PREVENTED SENTIMENT AGAINST LAW WITHIN ARENA FROM COMING TO FORE. SATIRO AND SANTOS SAID TIME WAS NEEDED TO SEE HOW JUDICIARY INTERPRETED LAW. EXPECTED THAT THROUGH JUDICIAL PROCESS, ASPECTS OF LAW WHICH ARE OUT OF PHASE WITH CONSTITUTION WOULD BE SET ASIDE. SATIRO ALSO COMMENTED THAT, SINCE LAW WAS PRODUCT OF SUPERIOR WAR COLLEGE DOCTRINE, NEW MINISTER OF WAR LYRA TAVARES (WHO CAME FROM POST POST AS HEAD OF WAR COLLEGE) COULD CERTAINLY BE EXPECTED VETO ANY REFORM MOVEMENT.

6. COMMENT: AS ABOVE COMMENTS SHOW, ARENA CONGRESIONAL LEADERS HAVE NO MAJOR WORRIES AS LOOK FORWARD TO REAL BEGINNING OF CONGRESSIONAL WORK NEXT WEEK. MOST SERIOUS PREOCCUPATION WAS SIMPLY QUESTION ORGANIZATION OF WORK OF COMMITTEES WHICH MEET NEXT WEEK TO ELECT OFFICERS. CALM BASED ON CONFIDENCE, WHICH SO FAR SEEMS, WELL FOUNDED, THAT HEAVY ARENA MAJORITY IN CONGRESS COHESIVE IN SUPPORT OF NEW ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP.

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