

AIRGRAM

(Departmental and Foreign Service)

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AIR POUCH

TO : Department of State

1964 JAN 19 PM 3 17

RM/AN
ANALYSIS & DISTRIBUTION
BRANCH

JAN 18 1964

FROM : Amembassy BRASILIA Office

DATE: January 14, 1964

SUBJECT: Biographic Views of Lt. Colonel Jose Lemos de Avelar, Chief Brazilian Federal Police, on Goulart, Brizola, Brazil-U.S. Relations, etc.

REF: A-62

Enclosed is a memorandum of conversation with Lt. Colonel Jose Lemos de Avelar, Chief of Brazil's Federal Police, which contains some biographical information and the Colonel's views on certain Brazilian personalities and problems.

Although a career Army man of conservative origins, it is evident that Avelar's thinking is strongly influenced by leftist, ultra-nationalist currents. He is a Goulart man, a supporter of Military Household Chief Assis Brasil and an apologist for Leonel Brizola. He is disposed to defend the Goulart regime against any move from the right and by implication would support a strengthening of government powers under Goulart or even Brizola. Despite the foregoing, Avelar is friendly and cooperative in his contacts with Americans in Brasilia and like his predecessor, Colonel Cairol, seems to be much interested in continued cooperation with our USAID Public Safety team here. To Americans, at least, he professes to be anti-Communist and to support close relations between Brazil and the U.S., but says his country does not want alms. Both he and his wife express great concern over Brazil's social problems and strongly support reforms. Colonel Avelar does not appear to be a strong personality of any great

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11-61

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Contents and Classification Approved by:

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Clearances:

INR/CS/BR Info noted

RM/R File

GPO 9 26563

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intellectual depth, but mixes concern for his country's problems with opportunism in parroting ideas obtain from Brazil's ultra-nationalist left.

For the Ambassador:

Robert W. Dean

Robert W. Dean
Counselor of Embassy

Enclosure: *att*
Memorandum of Conversation

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Lt. Colonel Jose Lemos de Avelar,
Chief of Brazilian Federal Police
(Departamento Federal de Segurança Publica)

Robert W. Dean, Counselor of Embassy

PLACE: Residence of Mr. Morris Grodsky (AID-Brasilia)

DATE: January 6, 1964

SUBJECT: Biographic Information and Colonel Avelar's Views
on Goulart, Brizola, Brazil-U.S. Relations, etc.

In the course of a conversation held between the reporting officer and Colonel Avelar during a cocktail party in the Colonel's honor, offered by the Brasilia AID Public Safety Team, the following information was developed concerning Colonel Avelar and his views.

Biographic Information

Colonel Avelar appears around 50 years of age, is of medium build with dark gray hair and somewhat baleful eyes which tend to brighten up when he discourses on a subject of special interest to him. He has a narrow hour-glass face with loving cup ears and a generous mustache. He was born in the State of Minas Gerais where his father still resides. Although Avelar is a Goulart man, he states his father is a strong PSD conservative who considers land reform to be communist talk. Avelar has six children and his wife is from Rio Grande do Sul, President Goulart's home state. She appears to be in her early 40's and although not pretty, is pleasant and neat. She is politically alert and on Brazil's social problems and need for reforms seems to be more definite than her husband. Avelar spent 30 years in the Brazilian Army,

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some six years in Rio Grande do Sul. The last few were spent as CO of the Army's cavalry unit in São Borja, Goulart's home town, where he got to know the President well.

President Goulart

Avelar states that Goulart is not a Communist but a great patriot, sincerely interested in the plight of the common people. He said Goulart is really a man of the center who acts as the tongue of the balance in the present left-right polarization. Avelar said Goulart had told him once that he could not answer fully the beckonings from either the left or the right because he must be President of all Brazilians. For this reason Avelar concluded, Goulart tends to swing back and forth. Goulart is politically very capable but his moves are intuitive without any evident plan or program. Avelar said Goulart must provide reforms within the next two years or he will lose the confidence of the people and his very political base. His current difficulties with President Kubitschek and the PSD reflect in part Goulart's efforts to force them to define themselves, particularly on reforms. Avelar said Kubitschek is very hard to pin down and he too vacillates between left and right.

When called by the President to Brasilia several months ago and offered the job of Chief of the Federal Police, Avelar tried to turn it down flatly. Goulart refused to accept his refusal. According to Avelar, Goulart told him that although he had permitted him in January 1963 to refuse an offer of a military attache job in Buenos Aires or one other Latin American country, he would not accept Avelar's refusal this time.

Golpe and Reforms

Avelar professed to be a "catolico, Romano apostolico who confesses and receives communion and who hates communism", but who also has great concern for the plight of the downtrodden. He said the social conditions in Brazil are bad; equality of opportunity does not exist. The poor people don't have a chance and their children will grow up to be thieves and prostitutes. He said social reform is a must. He was against a golpe (coup) but said Brazilian democracy was weak and might need and eventually get "strong government". He said freedom of the press in Brazil was not freedom but license. It was evident that Avelar was thinking of a right-wing golpe when he expressed opposition to it. He said the opposition would not dare try anything against Goulart because they know that if Goulart is killed, not one Lee Oswald, but 10,000

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of them will also be killed. By implication his idea of a strong government was a Vargas-type government under Goulart or Brizola.

Relations with the U.S.

He said the U.S. and Brazil are traditional friends and cannot be separated. He recognized the role of foreign capital in the development of Brazil but added that Brazil did not want alms. He admitted that excessive nationalism was a danger to the relations between the two countries. He lamented the death of President Kennedy; and clearly implied his belief that the late President had been killed through the incompetence and collusion of the FBI. He said he was much encouraged by President Johnson's recent letter to President Goulart because it followed the lines of the Kennedy program favoring necessary reforms.

Brizola

Avelar also found Brizola to be a much maligned Brazilian patriot. He stated flatly his belief that Brizola is not a communist but is a practicing Catholic interested in shocking the Brazilian people and Congress, as well as the Americans, into a realization of the real nature of Brazil's problems and the plight of the common man in this country. He said Brizola is the solution to progress in Brazil in a manner which will frustrate the communists. To support this he said the communists distrust Brizola intensely. He did admit that Brizola had gotten into some very extreme left company but he trusted in President Goulart to extract him from such entanglements when they became too dangerous.

Avelar said he met Brizola in 1961 when the latter was Governor of Rio Grande do Sul. At that time Avelar wrote Brizola to request a school for illiterates in his cavalry unit at São Borja. Brizola responded promptly; within one month an engineer was sent and within another month the school was finished and inaugurated with Brizola present. Concerning the recent spat between Brizola and David Nasser, Avelar stated flatly his belief that Brizola did not hit Nasser from behind. He said this was a press distortion, and added that Brizola is a courageous man incapable of a cowardly act. He

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allowed that David Nasser was also a sincere Brazilian but misguided.

Assis Brasil.

To complete his picture of faith in key men around President Goulart, Avelar stated his conviction that Military Household Chief General Assis Brasil is also no commie, despite press statements to the contrary. He said Assis Brasil is a hard-working military man deeply interested in the welfare of the Brazilian people. He added that anyone interested in social reform in Brazil is listed as a communist by the conservative press. He had known Assis Brasil since the latter had been a major. Avelar's wife, who had joined the conversation at this point, agreed with Avelar's assessment of Assis Brasil, as well as his views on social problems in Brazil.

Brasilia Bus Strike

Avelar left the function at about 1110 to go to a meeting of private bus owners and their striking bus drivers in an effort to mediate this strike. He said he had agreed to make this unofficial effort without accepting responsibility. He was convinced that the problem could be resolved through discussion, out of which must come increased salaries with no increase in bus fares. He said he had told the bus owners that if they raised the fares he could not guarantee order or the protection of their property. (It was an increase in bus fares some months ago which led to student burning of busses, police reprisals with one bystander killed, and the eventual ouster of Colonel Cairolí, Avelar's predecessor).

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