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ACTION ARA 16

INFO AID 28, PC 04, NSA 02, CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03

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R 231607Z NOV 68
FM AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO
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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION RIO DE JANEIRO, INFO BRASILIA 22 NOV 68,
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION:

QUOTE
RECIFE 1524

SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

REF: MELTON-SHIELDS TELECON NOV 21;
RECIFE A-79; RECIFE REPORT NO. 101

1. MDB MADE SURPRISINGLY STRONG SHOWING ON NOV 15 IN
SEVERAL KEY RACES IN STATES OF PERNAMBUCO AND PARAIBA WHILE,
AS EXPECTED, RUNNING FAR BEHIND ARENA IN MARANHAO, RIO
GRANDE DO NORTE, AND ALAGOAS. STATE BY STATE RUNDOWN FOLLOWS:

2. PERNAMBUCO: 96 OF 164 MUNICIPALITIES AT STAKE. MDB
SERIOUSLY CONTESTED RACES ONLY IN RECIFE (WHERE ONLY
COUNCILMAN ELECTED) AND FEW OTHER MUNICIPALITIES WITH
SIGNIFICANT URBAN POPULATIONS. MDB HAS APPARENTLY ELECTED
7 OF 21 COUNCILMEN IN RECIFE WHERE PARTY HAD PREVIOUSLY
HELD ONLY FIVE SEATS ON 25-MEMBER COUNCIL. MDB WOULD
PROBABLY HAVE ELECTED SEVERAL ADDITIONAL COUNCILMEN IF IT
HAD NOT BEEN FOR STRONG SHOWING OF POPULAR AUGUSTO LUCENA
(ALMOST 25,000 VOTES) WHO HAD TEMPORARILY STEPPED DOWN AS
RECIFE MAYOR TO RUN FOR COUNCILMAN ON ARENA TICKET. MDB ALSO
APPEARS TO HAVE ELECTED MAYORS IN HALF A DOZEN OTHER MUNICIPAL-
ITIES. IN NEARBY OLINDA, SINGLE MDB CANDIDATE OUTDREW

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COMBINED VOTE OF TWO WELL KNOWN ARENA CANDIDATES, ONE BACKED STRONGLY BY EX-GOVERNOR PAULO GUERRA AND OTHER BY EX-GOVERNOR CID SAMPAIO. IN CARUVERB, PRINCIPAL POPULATION CENTER IN INTERIOR, MDB CANDIDATE DEFEATED HAND-PICKED CANDIDATE OF INCUMBENT MAYOR DRAYTON NAJAIM, STRONG SUPPORTER OF FEDERAL MINES AND ENERGY MINISTER COSTA CAVALCANTI.

3. PARAIBA: 106 OF 174 MUNICIPALITIES AT STAKE. WHILE ARENA ELECTED CANDIDATES IN VAST MAJORITY OF CONTESTS, OPPOSITION RAN WELL IN JOAO PESSOA (WHERE ONLY COUNCILMEN ELECTED) AND CAMPINA GRANDE. KEY RACE IN CAMPINA GRANDE, SECOND CITY OF STATE, WON BY MDB. ALTHOUGH ARENA CANDIDATE SEVERINO CABRAL (WHO STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY GOVERNOR AGRIPINO) TOP VOTE GETTER, COMBINED TOTAL OF MDB CANDIDATES RONALD CUNHA AND VITAL DO REGO SUFFICIENT TO GUARANTEE CUNHA'S VICTORY. ARENA, IN EFFORT TO OVERTURN RESULT, HAS PROTESTED CANDIDACY OF VITAL DO REGO, ARENA FEDERAL DEPUTY WHO RECENTLY DEFECTED TO MDB.

4. RIO GRANDE DO NORTE: 88 OF 150 MUNICIPALITIES AT STAKE. MDB DID NOT PRESENT CANDIDATES IN MAJORITY OF CONTESTS. WITH LIBERAL RESORT TO SUBLENDAS, ARENA REPORTEDLY FIELDIED ALMOST 1300 CANDIDATES AGAINST ONLY 55 FROM MDB. REAL CONTEST BETWEEN ARENA FACTIONS. POLITICAL MACHINE OF EX-GOVERNOR ALUISIO ALVES HAS APPARENTLY SCORED IMPRESSIVE VICTORY OVER CHIEF POLITICAL RIVAL SENATOR DINARTE MARIZ. IN KEY ELECTION IN MOSSORO, ALVES HAND-PICKED CANDIDATE HAS TRIUMPHED AGAINST DETERMINED OPPOSITION OF COMBINED FORCES OF SENATOR MARIZ AND POLITICALLY POTENT ROSADA MAIA FAMILY. AS RESULT, ALUISIO'S CANDIDACY FOR GOVERNORSHIP IN 1970 HAS RECEIVED STRONG BOOST.

5. ALAGOAS: (22 OF 94 MUNICIPALITIES AT STAKE) AND MARANHAO: (35 OF 122 MUNICIPALITIES AT STAKE): AS EXPECTED, ARENA HAS APPARENTLY SCORED OVERWHELMING VICTORIES IN BOTH STATES. ELECTIONS IN NEITHER STATE EVOKED MUCH INTEREST SINCE ONLY ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF VOTERS AFFECTED IN EACH STATE.

6. LEADING ELEMENTS OF REGIONAL POWER STRUCTURE APPEAR TO HAVE SHOWN ONLY PERIPHERAL INTEREST IN ELECTIONS. NO EVIDENCE OF DIRECT MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, THOUGH MILITARY POLICE CALLED UPON IN SEVERAL INSTANCES DURING CAMPAIGN.

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TO GUARANTEE ORDER. CHURCH HAS CONFINED SELF TO EXHORTATIONS TO CIVIC AND ELECTORAL RESPONSIBILITIES. ORGANIZED LABOR PLAYED NO SIGNIFICANT ROLE. ELECTION EVE CAVED BY LEFTIST STUDENTS ENCOURAGING BLANK VOTES AS PROTEST PROVED INEFFECTIVE. TURNOUT THROUGHOUT REGION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN REASONABLY GOOD, ALTHOUGH ABSENTEEISM OF OVER 30 PERCENT REPORTED IN RECIFE.

7. AS FOREGOING INDICATES, ARENA HAS, AS PREDICTED, SCORED VICTORIES IN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF CONTESTS. HOWEVER, STRONG SHOWING OF MDB CANDIDATES IN KEY RAVHS IN PERNAMBUCO AND PARAIBA LIKELY TO GIVE ARENA STRATEGISTS IN BOTH STATES CAUSE FOR CONCERN. RESULTS ALSO LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE MDB TO MAKE STRONG STATEWIDE BID IN BOTH STATES IN 1970. SIGNED LION UNQUOTE TUTHILL

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