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TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA 16

INFO CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPM 03, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10, P 04,

RSC 01, SC 01, SP 02, SS 20, USIA 12, NSA 02, RSR 01, MM 01, AID 28,

PC 15, /128 W

Brasilia 1847

2/2/68

P R 022016Z FEB 68
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 673
INFO AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO 815
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 295
AMCONSUL RECIFE 124

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SUBJ: ARENA CHIEFS MEET: CONGRESS CONTINUES DISCUSS TROOP ALERT

I. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF GOVT
PARTY ARENA MET BRASILIA JAN 31 AND ISSUED
NOTE ANNOUNCING IT HAD DECIDED HOLD PARTY'S
NATIONAL CONVENTION MAY 29-30 AT BRASILIA; TAKE
MEASURES FOR PARTY MOBILIZATION, INCLUDING DISPATCH
OF EMISSARIES TO STATES TO MAKE REGIONAL CONTACTS

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AND PARTICIPATE IN RADIO-TV PROGRAMS; EXAMINE
MUNICIPAL ELECTION PROBLEMS; HOLD BIWEEKLY MEETINGS
FOR MORE CONSTANT CONSIDERATION OF PARTY PROBLEMS;
AND EMPOWER ARENA PRESIDENT DANIEL KRIEGER TAKE ANY
NECESSARY ACTION RE THESE OBJECTIVES.

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2. MEETING HAD BEEN CALLED HURRIEDLY--AMIDST TENSIONS PRODUCED BY WEEKEND'S TROOP ALERTS--IN APPARENT EFFORT BY PRESIDENT COSTA E SILVA RALLY ARENA MORE EFFECTIVELY BEHIND HIM. KRIEGER DID NOT BRING TO MEETING SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE--WHICH SOME PARTY LEADERS HAD EXPECTED--OFFERING ARENA GREATER VOICE IN GOVT AS STIMULUS TO PARTY. THOUGH THIS EFFECTIVELY DAMPENED ARENA'S EARLY, ANTICIPATORY EUPHORIA, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NONETHELESS ADDRESSED SELF SERIOUSLY TO PARTY PROBLEMS. ARENA LEADERS AT MEETING EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR PARTY PROGRAM REFLECTING INTERESTS OF PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY YOUTH AND LABOR.

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3. MEANWHILE, WEEKEND'S MILITARY ALERT CONTINUED AS SUBJECT OF SPEECHES IN CONGRESS. DEPUTY RUY SANTOS SPEAKING FOR GOVT JAN 31 ACCUSED OPPOSITION OF SEEKING DIVIDE ARMED FORCES, AFTER HAVING SOUGHT UNSUCCESSFULLY CREATE BREACH IN ADMINISTRATION BETWEEN "CASTELISTAS" AND "ANTI-CASTELISTAS." SPEECH WAS REPLY TO ALLEGATION BY MDB SECRETARY-GENERAL MARTINS RODRIGUEZ THAT ALERTS WERE "PRACTICE FOR COUP." MOST CONGRESSMEN OF BOTH PARTIES CONTINUE VIEW TROOP ALERT WITH PUZZLEMENT, WHILE VAGUE DISQUIET HAS LESSENED BUT STILL PERSISTS (BRASILIA 1835, PARA 5).

4. COMMENT: DECISION BY ARENA LEADERSHIP SEEK DEVELOP GRASS-ROOTS SUPPORT COULD, IF CARRIED OUT, MARK IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD DEVELOPING REAL PARTY ORGANIZATION. ARENA INITIATIVE NOT ONLY REQUIREMENT, HOWEVER. IT ALSO IMPORTANT THAT PRESIDENT ACCORD ARENA GREATER RECOGNITION IN PRACTICAL SENSE (VOICE IN GOVERNMENT, PATRONAGE,

PAGE 4 RUESUZ 1847 C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ETC.) AND THERE STILL NO EVIDENCE PRESIDENT

PREPARED MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION. TUTHILL

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