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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

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SUBJECT : PRINCES, PRIDE AND POWER: A Report on O Estado de S. Paulo  
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### SUMMARY

This report examines in some depth one of Brazil's great institutions, the newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo (The State of São Paulo). The paper reflects the traditions and guiding philosophies of its founders and present owners, the Mesquita family. Far from the "objective observer" school of journalism, the Estado has made powerful enemies and staunch friends. The paper caters only to an elite, informed, and demanding readership to which it makes few concessions. The financial security and independence of the newspaper is an editorial necessity, as well as in the economic interest of its owners. The Estado is today involved in continual skirmishing with the government over the issue of press censorship.

To be uncompromising, harsh as truth, and earnest were qualities William Lloyd Garrison looked for in a great newspaper. O Estado de S. Paulo qualifies on all three counts. The people who run the Estado and work for it also take it very seriously. They are convinced that the Estado is one of the pre-eminent daily papers in the world and their mission is to preserve its traditions and keep it great.

The Estado makes few concessions, even to its readers. The contents are presented in the driest manner possible. What is offered is complete, accurate coverage of daily events in Brazil and around the world

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and the presumptive wisdom of its editors in commenting on these events. It is written for serious readers who want to be well informed and are willing to make the effort to read the paper. The Estado does not try to catch a reader's eye or entice him; it has three comic strips and has never had a society page. Seldom does it attempt to be humorous. But those willing to face the long grey columns find, besides excellent coverage of the news, a very lively newspaper (often too lively for the government's taste). Its rigid independence is well known, but it is often also contentious, contradictory, and unashamed of its deeply held prejudices.

The Publishers (The Princes)

The Estado is an enterprise of the Mesquita family. Júlio Mesquita came to dominate the paper shortly after it was founded in 1875 and in 1902 became its sole proprietor. Ownership has since remained in the hands of the family, and by tradition, the eldest son has become the publisher (called in Brazil "the responsible director"). The present publisher, Júlio Mesquita Neto, is the third generation in the line. The Mesquitas, however, have always been more than just the paper's owners and publishers; they have been practicing journalists involved in the day-to-day preparation of the paper as contributors and senior editors. The original Mesquita was the Estado's most prominent writer, a James Reston of his day. His son, Júlio Mesquita Filho, publisher from 1929 to 1969, carried on this tradition. One Estado political reporter from this period told us: "The old man always had the answers on political matters. He was his own political reporter and insisted on doing reports his own way." The grandson, Júlio Mesquita Neto, is more aloof and removed than his predecessors but is still actively involved in day-to-day editorial decisions. Also, he personally writes many of the editorials, usually three or four a week. In line with family tradition, he considers himself a journalist, as well as a publisher, and the Estado itself always refers to him in reports on his activities as Júlio Mesquita Neto, "the journalist". His younger brother, Ruy, a director of the Estado, organized and launched the family's afternoon paper, Jornal da Tarde, and is its publisher and senior editor. His desk is in the center of the newsroom, where he directs the staff, writes editorials, headlines and stories, and is otherwise actively involved in getting out the newspaper. Newspapermen feel he is cleverer than his brother and regard him as one of Brazil's most brilliant journalists.

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