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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

April 26, 1967

SUBJECTS : Education Minister Tarso DUTRA, USAID-MEC Agreements, etc..

PLACE : La Palette Restaurant, Rio de Janeiro

PARTICIPANTS: João Carlos NEME, congressional lobbyist Brasília
Mr. & Mrs. Lewis W. Bowden, AmEmbassy Rio

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DCM POL/R (USIS) INE/RAR-2
MINECON POL-4 BRAS Amconsul Porto Alegre
USAID/HRO

During dinner, Neme made the following observations about Tarso Dutra whom he claimed to know well.

1. Dutra does not nurse any presidential ambitions, nor is he really interested in becoming Governor of his home state, Rio Grande do Sul. He regards his present post as the pinnacle of his political career and is anxious to do a good job of reforming Brazilian education so as to merit a modest niche in the country's history. Dutra has a great sense of responsibility for his job and would be the first to recognize that it is up to him to explain, and defend, the USAID agreements with the Ministry of Education. He would welcome constructive suggestions from our side as to how these could be implemented, though always with the clear understanding that we are in a very secondary support role.

2. Neme thought a small informal meeting with Dutra would be the best way to communicate our concern over developments in the student/education sector. He visualized such a meeting as a "feeling-out" session for each side to get an idea of where the other stood and perhaps glean some insight into each other's motivation. Neme did not think that any concrete suggestions should be put forth at this session. However, he strongly underscored the necessity for our side to be ready with suggestions in the event Dutra should ask what we thought could be done about the problems we see in this sector.

GROUP 4: Downgraded at 3-year intervals. Declassified after 12 years from date of origin.

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Clearances: POL/MVKrebs

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3. COMMENT: Neme's picture of Dutra is doubtless colored by the fact of their friendship and by a desire on Neme's side to perform an intermediary role. The Ministry has announced that it will revise the USAID-MEC agreement and has given the Embassy a proposed draft. The Minister and his assistants state that the revised agreement will be defended energetically. However to date the Minister has not defended his present agreement and has given an impression of vacillation.

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