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RECIFE REPORT No. 106

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

November 14, 1968

SUBJECT: Church-Military Relations; Dom Hélder's Non-Violence Campaign;
and Military Civic Action Programs

PARTICIPANTS: General Alfredo Souto Malan, Fourth Army Commander
Donor M. Lion, Consul General and USAID Associate Director
Richard H. Melton, Political Officer

PLACE: Fourth Army Headquarters, Recife

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During a courtesy call by Consul General Lion, General Malan made the following comments of interest:

SUMMARY

The Brazilian Catholic Church is divided and weakened by internal dissension over the proper role it should play in the modern world. The Church throughout its long history has undergone many similar periods of testing and emerged strengthened with its basic precepts still intact; there is no reason to believe that it will not similarly survive its current troubles. While there is undoubtedly some communist infiltration in Church ranks, this penetration is by no means so extensive as to present any immediate danger to the State. Although the Military and the Church share many common objectives, it has been difficult to convert this shared interest into cooperative endeavors. The Fourth Army is following with interest the slower-than-expected progress of Dom Hélder's "Non-violence Campaign." While it does not appear that the Army could play any useful role in the campaign at the present time, it would not hesitate to participate if it believed its collaboration would prove useful. The Military recognizes the need to improve its image by presenting the true facts of its role in national life. In this connection, traditional civic action programs are also being broadened to give them greater "social content."

THE CHURCH AND COMMUNISM: The Brazilian Catholic Church is torn by internal disagreement over the proper role it should play in the modern world. While one faction tenaciously clings to the past, a vocal, mis-named "progressive" minority clamors for more rapid adjustment to its own interpretation of the advanced social positions taken at Vatican II. This internal dissension weakens the Church as an institution. The Church has often throughout

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