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RM/R	REP	AF
1		
ARA	EUR	FE
NEA	CU	INR
E	P	IO
L	FBO	AID
S/P		S/S
AGR	COM	FRB
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR
ARMY	CIA	NAVY
5	10	5
OSD	USIA	NSA
15	8	3

A-76

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NO.

TO : Department of State

FROM : Amembassy RIO DE JANEIRO

DATE: July 16, 1963

SUBJECT: Brazilian Reaction to July 1 Meeting Between Presidents Kennedy and Goulart

REF : Embtel 17, July 2, 1963

SUMMARY

Although local comment on and interest in the Presidential meeting has not been widespread, the disapproving and suspicious tone of the initial press reaction has continued; and the matter has, of course, developed into a subject of polemics between the opposing political forces in Brazil. The chief complaint on the part of the sector of the press that has concerned itself with the matter is that the public has not been informed of what took place in Rome. Rumblings have been heard too, in the Brazilian Congress. Whether the matter will grow into something out of proportion to its inherent significance will depend on whether something else comes upon the scene that is more attractive to the Brazilian predilection for the melodramatic.

From its sensational treatment of the early rumors of the possibility of a meeting between the two Presidents at Rome, it seemed that Rio's daily Jornal do Brasil was pushing hardest in favor of such a meeting. Appearances were deceiving, however, as revealed in the paper's critical editorial of July 2 (partially quoted in the reference telegram). On July 10 the Jornal returns to the subject with an even more bitter editorial as follows :

"President Goulart met in Rome with President Kennedy and nobody, as yet, knows what the two statesmen discussed. Serious problems exist in Brazil-US relations. Consider the case of the public utility concessions and that of Brazilian foreign debts. But public opinion has not been provided with any information whatsoever concerning the talks held at the American Embassy..."

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FORM 4-62 DS-323

Drafted by:

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Contents and Classification Approved by:

DCM - Minister Mein

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UNCLASSIFIED

A- 76 7, 13/68
Page 2 of 3
Rio de Janeiro

Nothing remains of the Kennedy-Goulart encounter by a few photographs and speculation published in the Brazilian press. The news was hardly even mentioned in the US press. The latter did note that the meeting occurred, but the item was lost among news and pictures of Kennedy's meeting with the Pope, his conversations with Adenauer and Macmillan, his trip to Ireland, etc. Was it only a courtesy call that our President made on the US President? Did any political or economic negotiations take place? If so, has our country begun to resort to secret diplomacy? There has been no reaction whatever in Brazilian political circles. The negative left, ever eager heroically to seize the microphones in the Federal Chamber and go before the television cameras whenever the national sovereignty seems threatened (and this, according to the negative left, is a continuous threat so far as the American are concerned), has kept silent. It would seem that everyone agrees with a conversation the tenor of which remains unrevealed. Brazilian-US relations are in a far too critical stage to permit a continued silence that gives the impression nothing constructive took place in the presidential conversation. The only interpretation that can be given such silence is that it signifies the failure of efforts to reach an understanding."

A humorous feature column in the Rio daily O Jornal of July 5 dealt with the meeting through the medium of characteristic Brazilian satire, ascribing fictitious monologues to the two Presidents as follows:

GOULART speaks : "Now see here, Mr. Kennedy, we find ourselves in Rome eyeing one another--a little embarrassed for having upset the bishops who feel that we have shown a lack of courtesy to Pope Paul VI in taking advantage of his coronation in order to take up a few items of business between our two countries.

"But the High Pontiff, intelligent Prince of the Church that he is, will surely bless this meeting. We have a great many things to talk about. Brazil is a young nation but it is as full of problems as any old one. It is like a young man with arteriosclerosis. We are not yet overpopulated, but we have enacted some social legislation that would frighten Sweden and Norway. The trouble is that our workers have not reached the cultural level of the Scandinavians. They demand far more than they have won by right of conquest; and they do not take seriously the light responsibilities they have.

"I was elected by a Labor Party which holds in its fist a veritable Holy Grail of proletarian demands. No matter how hard I try to keep my government along a liberal democratic line, I find myself constantly being forced to give in to radical promises made to the masses by my predecessors who were prone to go about handing out, here and there, a great deal more than had even been asked of them. For example, the National Democratic Union (a conservative party) is responsible for the so-called state monopoly of Petrobras and some other refinements that are much more socialistic than the irons which our Labor group have in the fire.

UNCLASSIFIED

A- 75 7/16/63

Page 3

Rio de Janeiro

"I realize that it is difficult for an American such as yourself to understand our way of running a government. At school we always get a grade of 100 in Brazilian History; we always get a grade of 100 on Political Science; but on Comportment as it relates to the United States, we never get anything higher than a Zero.

"If we are sometimes recalcitrant on Pan-Americanism it is because you--that is, certain of your business men who are closely involved with the Department of State--play mischief with our countrymen.

"It is, therefore, imperative that we come to an understanding. To do this, Mr. Kennedy, with all your God-given intelligence, it will be necessary for you to clothe yourself for a few months in the skin of a pure Brazilian (this is not to say whether this means a wolf's skin--you can take your choice) in order to feel the drama of our Brazilian setting.

"We must have another chat soon--but next time not in Rome with its sanctified atmosphere which inhibits frankness. It would be a good idea to get together in some slum of Rio de Janeiro or in some city of the southern United States where the Negroes are having such a trying time at the moment."

KENNEDY speaks : "My dear Jango, I know very well that you are a good soldier. But you are making things terribly difficult for me in the United States where I am fighting, just as hard as you are, against the reactionary asses of the Republican Party.

"I am as much a socialist as you are--and maybe a little more so. To tell the truth, I am a socialist by doctrinaire conviction. I saw to it that my father (whose political ideas are quite antiquated in comparison with my own) agreed to keep out of the Administration in the event that I became President of the United States. And, as you have doubtless noted, the old man has not so much as given out a peep in my government. I believe in renovation, in democratization of capital, in socialization of wealth and in political and economic freedoms for all.

"But I, too, have serious problems in my government. I am fighting from a disadvantageous position since the United States is the rich cousin of the Americas. Any rich cousin is maligned, criticized and called a shark.

"Meanwhile, we are becoming impoverished through the granting of financial assistance to some one hundred poor countries whose people, in their misery, have become centers for the development of communism.

"The bums in the Republican Party even call me a communist. That is a curious thing, because over in your country I am thought of as the head

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

A- 76 7/10/63
Page 4 of 5
Rio de Janeiro

of a plundering nation. Where is the truth in all this? You know very well, Jango, that we will find the truth if we both develop the best government possible. Throughout the centuries political doctrines have been debated without the leaders on either side ever being able to arrive at any useful conclusion that was decisively helpful to the world. Action, alone, is what counts. To govern is to act. Let us, then, act in the sense of facilitating production and of easing the work of those who work so that the wealth of the nations may increase and become so immense that it may, later on, be divided--or socialized--or, to use the modern term, democratized.

"Sterile discussions over whether to take this or that road (and the ones recommended are usually extreme ones), do not fill anybody's belly. In every country--in yours as in mine--there always exists a gang of politicians who never think of anything except the game of playing politics and, as you know, Jango, to play politics does not mean to provide for the common welfare or to make the country rich, but it means the provision of personal wealth to a few men.

"Many of your extremist politicians would like to intimidate me (just as some of my own domestic adversaries do) so that I will negotiate out of fear that Brazil will become another Cuba. That is not the right approach. You know that, Jango. I am not afraid to negotiate; but I will not negotiate because of fear. We are going to be friends."

Despite the Jornal do Brazil's remarks about a lack of political repercussions, the Kennedy-Goulart meeting became a matter of discussion in the Federal Chamber at Brasilia in the following manner: On July 9, Deputy Aliomar Baleeiro (UDN-Guanabara) in the course of a speech defending Guanabara's Governor Carlos Lacerda in his current dispute with Darci Ribeiro (see Embassy's A- 55 of July 10, 1963), made observations to the effect that the United States Government could "close down" Brazil at any moment it chose to do so and that Goulart would not last a month if U.S. credits were cut off. This brought angry protests from various quarters, and particularly from Deputy Joao Doria (PDC-Bahia) who proceeded to put the words used by Deputy Baleeiro in President Kennedy's mouth. Doria, on July 10, tabled a motion requesting "clarification" of the matter by the National Security Council and the Foreign Office. His request was addressed to the questions of whether (1) President Kennedy had "scolded, silenced and humiliated" Goulart by saying that Kennedy could "close down" Brazil and (2) whether it is a fact that the USG has resorted to "the restriction or withholding of credits to Brazil for the purpose of interfering in our political affairs."

Thus, President Kennedy's and President Goulart's twenty-five minutes together in Rome have fallen into the Brazilian political

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

A- 76 7/16/63
Page 5 of 5
Rio de Janeiro

whirlwinds of self-interest. The issue may subside as quietly as it began. It may reach cyclonic proportions. The outcome depends on whether a larger issue makes a timely appearance.

For the Ambassador:

John Keppel

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