

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT*File*
*Dunham**Bundy* September 5, 1962TO: Mr. McGeorge Bundy
The White HouseFROM: William H. Brubeck
Executive Secretary*W. A. Henderson*
for

Attached for your information and files is a copy of Embassy Rio de Janeiro Airgram A-220 dated August 22, 1962 regarding Brazilian Military Commands as Political Factor.

Enclosure:

As stated.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)

*Dept. of State NLK-76-76*By *mfo* NARS, Date *6-18-76*~~CONFIDENTIAL (Enclosure)~~

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OSD	USIA	NSA

AIRGRAM

FOR RM USE ONLY

A-220
NO.

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

FILE

FROM : Amembassy Rio de Janeiro

DATE: August 22, 1962

SUBJECT: Brazilian Military Commands as Political Factor

REF : Department's A-5

The Embassy's reply to the referenced Airgram has been delayed by serious understaffing in the Rio Political Section as well as by the swiftness of developments on the politico-military scene. Drafts previously prepared have become outdated before they could be typed and despatched.

In the light of recent events there can be little doubt that President Goulart regards his power to make or influence military assignments as a prime political weapon. General Penha Brasil's transfer from the sensitive III Army command was a case in point. However, Goulart must be disappointed in Jair Dantas, who is reportedly proving to be less malleable than perhaps he (or the Embassy) expected (Attache Report R-161-62) and is acting more effectively than Penha Brasil did to combat Communist influence among the troops under his command.

Peri Bevilacqua has been rumored not for the command of the IV Army but of the perhaps even more crucial II Army located in the Sao Paulo area. The Army Attache has been told, however, that former incumbent War Minister Nelson de Mello wishes to keep the post open in order to return to it when the present Cabinet ends its tenure, which can be no later than March 15, 1963. The post has not been filled.

FORM
4-62 DS-323

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Drafted by: POL:FMicelotta:AMB:LGordon:rpc

Contents and Classification Approved by:

Clearances:

DECLASSIFIED

8552 (NLK-76-76)

E.O. 11652, Sec. 1) or (E)
By MFO NARS, Date 6/18/76

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Another rumored assignment which caused concern has failed to come off: that of Colonel Argemiro Assis Brasil to become Chief of Staff of the Armored Division of the I Army. Considered a Communist, Assis Brasil as Division Chief of Staff would have strengthened the hand of far-left ultra-nationalist I Army Commander Osvaldo Ferreira Alves. The office of the Army Attache has been unable to obtain any explanation for Assis Brasil's reported refusal of the post and speculates, therefore, whether the assignment may have been vetoed by conservative elements in the Army, perhaps by Nelson de Mello himself.

One unequivocally ominous, key command change has been made. Communist-sympathizing Brigadier Francisco Teixeira has been named Chief of the III Air Zone, at Rio de Janeiro.

In past weeks, in the volatile political climate created by Goulart's attempts to force a plebiscite and pressure the Congress into granting special powers to Brochado da Rocha's Cabinet, rumors of impending military coup filled the air. According to one version, Goulart himself planned the coup, once the necessary command changes had been made. His ostentatious courting of the military in early August did little to assuage such fears. Neither did the pronouncements of the military ministers in favor of a prompt plebiscite which he managed to obtain (Week 31). Another version predicted a coup of the right--in order to forestall Goulart's, said one variation.

At least for the next few weeks, until the Congressional Session scheduled for September 10-15, a military take-over of any variety seems highly unlikely. Goulart simply does not have the strength. Only Osvaldo Ferreira Alves and Francisco Teixeira could even be suspected of willingness to make the attempt. Nelson de Mello has now clarified his statement in favor of a plebiscite, satisfying almost everybody that he harbored no conspiratorial intentions or a desire unduly to influence the Congress. (This is not to say, of course, that Goulart was not willing to let Congress worry whether what the War Minister said was in fact a threat--or conversely, to let it be construed as a sign of the respected Army's endorsement of his objectives, thus extracting a profit one way or the other.) Since there is now little apparent likelihood of a Goulart-inspired, or leftist attempt, the possibility of a moderate or rightist coup diminishes to the vanishing point.

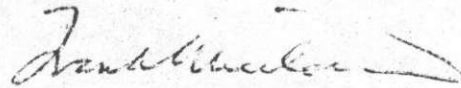
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If the September session fails to muster the large quorum in both Houses of Congress required for a constitutional amendment, however, or if the amendment (including commitment on a plebiscite) is not voted in terms satisfactory to Goulart, the danger that he may then attempt to engineer a coup is substantial. How the military commands will react may depend heavily on the public image of the Congress which prevails at that time and the extent to which resistance to Goulart is effectively portrayed as defense of democratic legality rather than reactionary obstructionism.

For the Ambassador:



Frank Micelotta
Third Secretary of Embassy

APPROVED:



Robert Eakens
Acting Deputy Chief of Mission

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Charles Johnson

I agree with
State's memo —
OK to send telegram.

Am

White Doc. notated
11:10 AM 8/24 org

Mr. Schlenger

Any views?

John

This is OK

A.S. Jr.