

(U) Biographic Data - Brazil

30 JAN 1964

(U) NAME: Brig Gen Argemiro de ASSIS BRASIL (ah-SEES brah-ZEEL)

(U) POSITION: Chief of the President's Military Household, since 18 October 1963.

(U) BIRTH: 4 May 1909, in Sao Gabriel, Rio Grande de Sul, Brazil, son of a landowner and nephew of Rio Grande de Sul politician Jose Francisco de Assis Brasil.

(C) FAMILY: Wife, Alba (reputed a militant Communist; described by her ultraleftist husband as "much more political than he" and disliking the U.S.; occasionally has had too much to drink). Children: Two, one son being an Army officer.

(U) TRAVEL: Resided in Portugal about 1932-1933, in Argentina in exile about 1934-1935 and as Military Attache in Jul-Oct 1963.

(U) LANGUAGES: Native Portuguese, speaks Spanish and French.

(U) RELIGION: None.

(S/NFD) CAREER:

1927-1930	- Cadet in Porto Alegre Military Preparatory School (Colegio Militar) and Brazilian Military Academy, graduating with appointment 21 Jan 1930 as <u>Aspirante</u> (Probationary 2d Lt) in Infantry.
1930-1932	- Promoted to 1st Lt 24 Jul 1930. Supported Government against successful Vargas revolution of 1930, imprisoned for a short time in Santa Cruz Fortress, at Rio de Janeiro. Promoted to 1st Lt in 1931. Participated in unsuccessful 1932 Sao Paulo Revolution against Vargas.
1932-1935?	- Exiled in Lisbon, Portugal, for a time, then in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
1935?-1951	- Reinstated in Army, promoted to Capt in 1937, Maj in 1945, Lt Col (for merit) in 1951. Reportedly taught 3 years in Army Command and General Staff School about 1948-1950.
? -1952	- Member of Military Training Mission in Paraguay.
1955-1956	- 7th Inf Regt. Promoted to Col 25 Mar 1955 (for merit).
1956-1958	- 19th Inf Regt.
1962	- Chief of Staff, 3d Mil Region
1962-1963	- 3d Army Hq, Porto Alegre, as Chief of Staff (presumably Acting, until arrival of Gen Genaro Bontempo), then as G-4 (to May 1963).
1963	- G-3, 1st Mil Region
1963	- Military Attache to Argentina (Jul-Oct). Promoted to Brig Gen 25 July.
1963-Present	- Chief of Presidential Military Household.

Biographic Data - Brazil (cont'd)

(U) DECORATIONS: Paraguayan Order of National Merit (Commander); Brazilian Order of Military Merit (Officer), Military Medal (Gold Clasp), Marshal Hermes Medal (Gold with 2 Crowns).

(U) PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: An outstanding officer, intellectually brilliant and reportedly extremely courageous, he is greatly respected in military circles even among officers who oppose his political views. He graduated first in his class at the Military Academy and at the Advanced Officers' Course. He is an extrovert, an animated conversationalist with an excellent sense of humor, and can laugh at himself. He is easy, poised, and apparently sure of himself. Of average build (5'8", 170 lbs), he is clean-shaven and has a shock of white hair.

(S/NFD) POLITICS: Untraleftist, very possibly Communist or crypto-Communist. He claims not to be Communist or Castroist, but virtually all moderates believe him to be a member of the Communist Party of Brazil and responsive to Party control. His ultranationalism and strong anti-Americanism could explain the reputation, though he has stated privately that he likes Americans. For at least 20 years, he has been regarded as the intellectual leader of Communist thought in the Army, jokingly called "The Pope of Communism in the Army." One long-time associate states that he was a Communist, but has evolved to a position on social justice close to that of President Goulart.

Upon release from his 1930 imprisonment, he immediately began plotting against the Vargas regime. With failure of the 1932 revolution and exile to Portugal, he shifted toward political leftism, coming increasingly under the influence of Capt Agildo Barata da Gama Ribeiro Filho, a Communist who later led the 1935 Communist uprising against Vargas, and many fellow officers believe that he became a Communist during this period. He was sent to Buenos Aires by the revolutionaries to contact anti-Vargas elements, reportedly was expelled by Argentina for labor-union activities, and made several clandestine visits into Brazil before he was amnestied. He reportedly removed all derogatory information from his file before promotion to Col.

He is a close personal friend of President Goulart, and is a friend of Leonel Brizola, Goulart's ultraleftist brother-in-law. He won the support of Lt Gen Jair Dantas Ribeiro, now Minister of War, while serving under him in Rio Grande do Sul.

Extremely persuasive in his political views, he reputedly brought Marshal Osmino Ferreira Alves to the political convictions that made him the most sinister influence in the Army until his retirement 12 Jul 1963. He reportedly was assigned as Military Attache to Argentina in 1963 as a financial reward and to permit President Goulart to maintain contact with Peronist activities, and Argentina initially refused to accept him.

Biographic Data - Brazil (cont'd)

(C) GENERAL COMMENT: Gen Assis Brasil occupies a position of extensive but vaguely defined responsibilities and has been increasingly active in officer assignments and promotions. He is believed to have the full support of Gen Jair Dantas Ribeiro, the Minister of War, who holds the most powerful position in the Armed Forces.

Just before his present appointment, Assis Brasil reportedly stated: "It is nothing to be a general. It is a great thing to be a general who thinks with the people." He reportedly asserted that Brazil must eliminate the few "bad Brazilians who serve foreign interests," and that necessary changes will be effected without the "bloodshed of our brothers."

