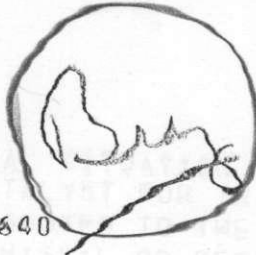


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C O N F I D E N T I A L 0688 FM ARMA SEP 68.

1. (U) I CALLED ON ARMY MINISTER GEN. LYRA TAVARES AT MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT TO DELIVER MEDICINE FOR CRITICALLY ILL RELATIVE WHICH HAD BEEN BROUGHT AT MY REQUEST ABOARD GEN. PORTER'S AIRCRAFT. MRS. MOURA AND MAJ. BRINTNALL, J-2 DIVISION, USSOUTHCOM, ACCOMPANIED ME. MINISTER AND MRS. LYRA TAVARES WERE ALONE AND DESPITE LATE DINNER PARTY PREVIOUS EVENING AND TRIP TO SAO PAULO YESTERDAY, MINISTER WAS RELAXED.

2. (C) DESPITE HIS NORMAL RELUCTANCE TO DISCUSS DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION, GEN. LYRA ON THIS OCCASION WAS IN FORTHCOMING MOOD WHICH CHARACTERIZED BY CONCERN. HE SAID THAT BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE (FAB) WAS IN A STATE OF CRISIS BECAUSE OF ATTEMPTS BY RADICAL ELEMENTS TO UTILIZE SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) PARATROOPERS IN 'ELIMINATION' MISSIONS AGAINST OPPOSITION POLITICIANS AND STUDENTS, AND THE RESULTANT REFUSAL OF SOME SAR OFFICERS TO COMPLY. MORE- OVER, ALLEGED FRUSTRATED ATTEMPT BY AIR INTELLIGENCE CHIEF BRIGADIER BOURNIER TO ORDER SAR TROOPERS INTO SANTAREM, PARA STATE, TO DEFEND HONOR OF CONGRESSMAN (RETIRED BRIGADIER) VELLOSO, WHO WOUNDED IN LOCAL GUN FIGHT, HAS ADDED FUEL TO FAB FIRES OF DISSENSION. AS RESULT OF BOURNIER ACTION, (HE ALSO SAID INVOLVED IN PLANNED POLITICAL UTILIZATION OF SAR), WHICH BY- PASSED BRIGADIER ITAMAR ROCHA, DIRECTOR OF AIR ROUTES AND TITULAR HEAD OF SAR ELEMENTS, ITAMAR HAS RESIGNED (SOME QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE WAS FIRED OR RESIGNED) AND AT LEAST TWO POPULAR SAR OFFICERS REASSIGNED.

3. (C) ACCORDING TO ARMY MINISTER, BRIGADIERS IN RIO WERE CIRCULAT- ING A MANIFESTO YESTERDAY IN EFFORT TO GAIN SOLIDARITY SUPPORT FOR BRIGADIER ITAMAR. MINISTER LYRA TAVARES HAD HEARD THAT ITMAR HIMSELF HAD URGED THAT MANIFESTO NOT BE PURSUED IN ORDER TO AVOID FURTHER TENSIONS. OVERALL, HOWEVER, GEN. LYRA NOT OPTI-

José Paulo Moreira

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MISTIC OVER GENERAL SITUATION IN FAB AND DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT IT MIGHT SERVE AS CATALYST FOR TRANSFERRAL OF TROUBLE TO NATIONAL SCENE. WHEN I SUGGESTED TO THE MINISTER THAT CURRENT FAB CRISIS MIGHT LEAD TO DISMISSAL OR RESIGNATION OF AIR MINISTER MARCIO, HE INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT THINK SO.

V4. (C) MINISTER LYRA TAVARES SOUNDED QUITE GLOOMY IN REFERRING TO NATIONAL SITUATION. HE SAID THAT THE NATIONAL PICTURE WAS NOT GOOD, ('O QUADRO GERAL DA NACAO NAO E BOM.'). IN REPLY TO MY PROBE FOR MORE INFORMATION HE WENT INTO A LONG DEFINITION OF THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF ENVIRONMENT WITHIN WHICH A DEMOCRACY CAN EXIST. HE SAID THAT HIS RECENT STIMULATING QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION AT THE U.S. NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT AMERICANS DID NOT PERCEIVE THE PRECISE SITUATION IN BRAZIL. WHILE PRAISING THE LATE PRESIDENT CASTELLO BRANCO'S EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF DEMOCRACY IN BRAZIL, HE SAID THAT CASTELLO HAD FAILED TO PROVIDE THE TOOLS WITH WHICH DEMOCRACY COULD DEFEND ITSELF. THE MINISTER WENT ON TO QUOTE THE 5 SEPTEMBER SPEECH IN THE FEDERAL CHAMBER OF DEPUTY MARCIO ALVES WHO BLASTED THE MILITARY INSTITUTION AND URGED THE PEOPLE NOT TO ATTEND THE 7 SEPTEMBER INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE. THE DEPUTY ALSO IMploRED THE PEOPLE NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH MILITARY MEN AND URGED YOUNG WOMEN NOT TO DATE OR MARRY OFFICERS OF THE ARMED FORCES. GEN. LYRA SAID THAT HE HAD REMAINED AWAKE THE ENTIRE NIGHT OF 5-6 SEPTEMBER (HE WAS IN BRASILIA FOR THE 5 SEPTEMBER RECEPTION FOR CHILEAN PRESIDENT FREI) AND THAT HE HAD WRITTEN A STERN, THOUGH RESPECTFUL, PLEA FOR ACTION ON THE PART OF PRESIDENT COSTA E SILVA. THE MINISTER SAID THAT ON 7 SEPTEMBER, HE HAD SPENT MOST OF THE TIME DURING THE 3-HOUR PARADE IMploRING THE PRESIDENTS OF THE SENATE AND CHAMBER TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE OFFENDING DEPUTY. 'I WENT TO THE US ON 8 SEPTEMBER AND RETURNED ON 21 SEPTEMBER TO DISCOVER THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN DONE.'

5. (C) GENERAL LYRA SAID THAT 'A GROUP AROUND THE PRESIDENT ALWAYS SEEKS TO UNDO (DESFAZER) THE TRUTH.' IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID THAT HE AND GEN. SYSENO AND TWO OTHERS (NOT IDENTIFIED, BUT ONE OF THEM PROBABLY IS GEN. MURICY, ARMY PERSONNEL CHIEF) WHO ARE CLOSE FRIENDS OF THE PRESIDENT TAKE IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO HIM ON A REPETITIVE BASIS IN ORDER TO PREVAIL OVER THOSE WHO DISTORT REALITIES. 'THIS IS NECESSARY WITH THE PRESIDENT,' HE SAID. GEN LYRA SAID THAT HE OPED THAT MRS. COSTA E SILVA HAD INVITED GEN. SYSENO TO DINE WITH THE PRESIDENT TODAY (THE PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY) BECAUSE LYRA WANTED SYSENO TO DELIVER AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO COSTA E SILVA. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT HE WASN'T AWARE OF SUCH AN INVITATION BECAUSE AS FAR AS HE KNEW, ONLY THE CABINET WAS TO DINE WITH COSTA E SILVA, ON THE OTHER

Antonio Carlos de Silva

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HAND, HE ADMITTED THAT MRS. COSTA E SILVA WAS FOREVER MAKING ARRANGEMENTS WITHOUT THE PRESIDENT'S KNOWLEDGE AND THAT SHE WAS CLOSE TO GEN. SYSENO AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING FOR SYSENO TO HAVE BEEN INVITED.

6. (C) THE ARMY MINISTER SAAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS ALREADY RESPONDED TO HIS 5 SEPTEMBER WRITTEN ASSESSMENT BY SUBMITTING TO THE FEDERAL COURTS A REQUEST FOR THE SUSPENSION FOR A PERIOD OF 10 YEARS OF THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF DEPULA MARCIO ALVES. IN GEN. LYRA'S VIEW, THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES CLEARLY FOR SUCH ACTION AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD DEMORALIZE THE INSTITUTION CHARGED WITH GUARANTEEING SUCH OTHER DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AS THE CONGRESS ITSELF. A MEMBER OF CONGRESS CAN CALL A GENERAL A CROOK OR A SUBVERSIVE, BUT HE CANNOT INCITE THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE INSTITUTION TO WHICH THAT GENERAL BELONGS. MINISTER LYRA SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE SUPREME COURT'S REACTION WOULD BE TO THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST. BUT THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY ITS ACTION YESTERDAY IN DENYING BY A 10-5 VOTE A WRIT OF HABEUS CORPUS ON BEHALF OF EX-PRESIDENT QUADROS WHO IS RESTRICTED TO THE CITY OF CORUMBA.

COMMENT: (C) IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT GEN LYRA WOULD OPEN UP ON THESE DELICATE MATTERS. HE SOUNDED WORRIED OVER THE SITUATION AND THE PRESIDENT'S APPARENT UNWILLINGNESS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH ITS MORE PROVOCATIVE ASPECTS. I HAD BEEN TO GEN. LYRA'S HOUSE FOR DINNER THE NIGHT BEFORE AND HE GAVE NO INDICATION OF SUCH DEEP CONCERN. THIS LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT THE FLUID FAB SITUATION AND LYRA'S CONTACT WITH THE PRESIDENT IN SAO PAULO YESTERDAY MAY HAVE GIVEN RISE TO A SUDDEN FEELING OF UNEASINESS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT GEN. LYRA HAS RECEIVED INDICATIONS THAT HE WILL NOT BE RETAINED AS ARMY MINISTER WHEN HIS COMPULSORY RETIREMENT COMES UP IN DECEMBER, AND IS BEGINNING TO HOIST ARTIFICIAL 'CRISIS WARNING' FLAGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERPETUATING HIMSELF IN OFFICE. WHATEVER THE REAL REASONS, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE NEXT 90 DAYS WILL BE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT. (THIS MESSAGE COORDINATED WITH POLITICAL SECTION AND CAS), GP-3

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