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15. SUMMARY:

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(C) This IR reproduces the uniformly favorable views of a representative group of military men with respect to the acceptance speech which General Ernesto GEISEL delivered to the ARENA Party convention. The two major impressions left on sources were: (1) Continuity of current programs, and (2) Continuing attention to national security.

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1. (U) Speaking to the ARENA Party convention in Brasilia and a nation-wide television audience on Saturday night, 15 September 1973, General Ernesto GEISEL delivered his acceptance speech. He had arrived in Brasilia on the 14th to receive the vote of nearly 700 ARENA representatives from all over BRAZIL. According to sources who were in close contact with him during those two days, he projected an image of warmth and cordiality in his dealings with politicians. A large number of political leaders had gone to the Brasilia Air Base to receive him and he insisted on shaking hands with everyone present. He repeated the performance in every other contact, displaying patience and what was interpreted to be genuine relaxation and a willingness to listen to political judgments.

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2. (C) Presidential candidate Geisel's speech was received with enthusiasm by the hard-lining commander of the II Army, General HUMBERTO de Souza Mello. When I discussed the speech with him in Sao Paulo on 17 September, he stressed the fact that General Ernesto had given special emphasis to the need "to avoid a return to the condemned past." General HUMBERTO also praised the statement that the regime "cannot abdicate the prerogatives or powers given to it so long as they are necessary for the achievement of concrete and specific goals which it must pursue." In General HUMBERTO's view, the foregoing means that "all the talk about 'democratic openings' was pure speculation by the enemies of the Revolution who are going to have to contend with Institutional Act No. 5 for many years."

3. (C) On 18 September I met General (Ret) GOLIBERY do Couto e Silva, the closest adviser to General Ernesto GEISEL, in Sao Paulo. Our meeting was unplanned and brief, but I asked him about his role in writing the speech. He said that it was "95% Ernesto and a modest 5% mine." When I asked about the main message which they wished to convey through the speech, he replied: "It was necessary to address those things that people expected to be mentioned, without getting too specific about any single aspect of the future. Our major desire was to keep our options open. We also took care not to weaken MEDICI's authority or his programs."

4. (C) Colonel IVAN de Souza Mendes, who was General Ernesto GEISEL's senior aide for nearly two years at PETROBRAS, and who now serves on the personal staff of Army Minister Orlando GEISEL, said that General Ernesto really did not wish to make a speech at all. He said that the General deplored the idea of having to give premature insights into his future courses of action. Colonel IVAN said on 21 and 23 September, in Brasilia, that General Ernesto had written the speech himself, with minimum inputs by General GOLIBERY. In IVAN's view, the speech was highly positive, particularly with respect to its firm announcement that the new President "has no commitments of a personal nature with anyone." IVAN also applauded GEISEL's assertion that the politician is as important to the objectives of the Revolution as is the technocrat.

5. (C) A soldier-politician, General (Ret) Italo CONTE, a member of the Chamber of Deputies from the State of Parana, told me on 25 September that his colleagues in the Congress and his many military contacts were in a state of euphoria over the speech. He pointed out that the politicians were delighted with the few but meaningful indicators of a more influential involvement during the Ernesto GEISEL Government. He said that politicians were worried about only one aspect of the speech and that was GEISEL's somewhat vague reference to "large multinational enterprises --- whose potential for good or perhaps for harm we have not yet had occasion to evaluate." According to CONTE, the opposition MDB is making a great issue of this portion of the speech and the ARENA Party is confused as to just how it is to reply to the MDB's statements, because ARENA politicians simply don't know exactly what General GEISEL's true views are on the matter of the multinationals. With respect to his conversations with at least a score of active duty military men, CONTE said that they all had applauded the speech, stressing its emphasis on development and security.

6. (C) General Augusto FRAGOSO, Minister of the Superior Military Tribunal and former Commandant of the Superior War School, was delighted over the speech's form as well as its substance. He described General GEISEL's first political pronouncement as "a perfect Superior War School lecture." He pointed out that both GEISEL and GOLIBERY had been distinguished members of that school's faculty and that they had been among the principal architects of the school's doctrine. In General FRAGOSO's view, the GEISEL address revealed the new President's utter freedom to think and act as he pleases, as well as his well known characteristic of not saying more than he has to at any given time.

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7. (C) The themes of "security and development," "calculated and reasonable political relaxation," "continuity of programs," and "austerity, authority, and integrity," were highlighted by the following officers who commented to me about their reactions to the speech:

Maj. Gen. Moacyr Barcellos POTYGUARA, Chief of Cabinet to the Army Minister
Brig. Gen. Antonio BANDEIRA, Chief of the Federal Police Department
Col. Darcy TAVARES, Personal Staff of Army Minister GEISEL
Col. OSMANY Maciel Pillar, Executive Officer to Gen. HUMBERTO de Souza e Silva
Col. Romero LEPESQUEUR Sobrinho, Commander, 2nd Artillery Regiment at ITU
Col. Danilo VENTURINI, Executive Officer to the Army Minister
Col. José MATTOS, Central Agency, National Intelligence Service
Col. NELSON Souto Jorge, Superintendent of the Brasília Telephone Company
Col. Carlos XAVIER de Miranda, Office of the Vice Chief of the Army Gen. Staff
Col. LAYETTE Jacques de Moraes Passos, G-8 Section, Army General Staff
Col. JOBERTO Ferreira Dias, Armed Forces General Staff
Col. José Guimaraes BARRETO, G-2 of the Army General Staff

COMMENT: (C) Strangely enough, not a single active duty officer expressed any view on General GEISEL's statement concerning multinational corporations. Perhaps they already suspected or knew that General GEISEL might have some reservation in this connection. On the other hand, it is also likely that officers considered some of the other things he said (or left unsaid) to be more important. While some officers have expressed what appears to be genuine concern over multinational corporations and their activities in BRAZIL, the issue does not seem to occupy great prominence on the list of things that bother Brazilian military men.

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General
Geisel's Speech

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