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ARMY CARRIES OUT MANEUVERS ALONG BORDER AREAS

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[Text] Rio de Janeiro, 7 Nov--The military maneuvers along 1,330 km of the Brazilian border with Bolivia and Paraguay began today with the mobilization of 5,000 men.

The maneuvers began in the region of Porto Murtinho on the banks of the Paraguay River. The troops carried out various types of maneuvers, particularly those dealing with defense of the border areas. The maneuvers will end at the beginning of next week.

The second annual maneuvers of the Second Mixed Brigade, under the command of Gen Lauro Rocca Dieguez, are being carried out by the Second Border Company of Porto Murtinho, the First Coast Command of Forte Coimbra, the 17th Infantry Battalion of Corumba and the Second Border Battalion of Caceres. Gen Eduardo Davila Mello, commander of the Second Army with headquarters in Sao Paulo, and Gen Gentil Marcondes Filho, Ninth Military Region commander, are also taking part in the maneuvers.

MDB SENATOR EMPHASIZES ECONOMY AS TOP ISSUE

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Around the World

Brazil General Removed

RIO DE JANEIRO—President Ernesto Geisel has removed one of Brazil's most outspoken and hardline generals from his Sao Paulo command following the death of a political prisoner in an army prison—the second such death in that city in four months.

The replacement of Gen. Ednardo d'Avila Melo as 2d Army commander in Sao Paulo was announced by presidential decree within minutes of an army announcement that a metal worker had been found dead in his cell over the weekend.

Observers here saw the removal as an attempt to impose a new code on the country's security forces, which have been accused by political prisoners and lawyers of torturing hundreds of prisoners.

After the death of journalist Vladimir Herzog in a Sao Paulo army prison cell in October, described by the army as suicide, Geisel was quoted by newspapers as saying he would not allow such an incident to happen again.

Street Battle

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in El Auténtico, the official paper of the Partido Auténtico, and both have been threatened with death by the Triple-A.

Adolfo Tortolo, bishop of Paraná (Entre Ríos), as vicar-general of the army and president of the national bishops' conference, heads the ranks of the ultra-right. He supported the now notorious sermon of Victorio Bonamín, the chaplain of the army (see Vol. IX, No. 39), and has consistently opposed the post-conciliar trends within the Church. He was also a supporter of the *cursillos de cristianidad*, a spiritual movement which has a number of adherents among Latin American armed forces and was important in the original military government of Onganía.

A staunch ally of Tortolo is Guillermo Bolatti, archbishop of Rosario, who was a particular scourge of the *tercermundistas* and now writes a regular column of ultra-right propaganda for *Gente*, a magazine which has increasingly become a popular sounding board for the army. The archbishop of Buenos Aires, Juan Carlos Aramburu, is a more sophisticated exponent of the same line of thinking. A lay spokesman of their position is Mariano Grondona, who wrote recently that 'in Latin American countries the sword and the cross watch over the system'. He added: 'The Argentine Church is an essential part of the Argentine nation, like the army.'

These hardliners have, for the time being, established a certain ascendancy within the hierarchy. The progressives occupy outlying provincial sees, and the third group of 'rhetorical progressives' carry little real weight as they are extremely cautious. This third group comprises Vicente Zaspé of Santa Fé, Antonio Cuarracino of Avellaneda, Cardinal Raúl Primatesta of Córdoba, and Eduardo Pironio, formerly bishop of Mar del Plata but now transferred to a high post in the Roman Curia. However, these 'rhetorical progressives' are important as they could hold the balance of power in the Argentine Church.

The first gesture from Rome was to not make Tortolo a cardinal. Red hats went instead to Aramburu and Pironio. The latter is tipped by some observers as the next Pope. The next step is likely to be the removal of Tortolo from the presidency of the bishops' conference, probably early this year.

The statement of Pironio during his recent visit to Argentina was far more moderate than the stated positions of Tortolo, and it is significant that during the past month the progressive voices of Nevares and Devoto have been heard more clearly. At the same time strenuous efforts are being made to rebuild the shattered movement of *Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo*. This movement has not met as a movement since 1973, when the Buenos Aires contingent withdrew in a body. A number of different factors led to this decom-

position. The constant harassment by the highest ecclesiastical authorities was perhaps the principal factor, but the disintegrating impact of strictly ecclesiastical disputes over matters such as clerical celibacy was also important. The progressive wing of the Church lost one of its most powerful voices when Jerónimo Podestá, bishop of Avellaneda, decided to marry.

Finally, the peronist wing of the movement was affected by the deep ideological disputes which split the peronist movement itself between 1972 and 1974. The best known of these disputes was between those who remained 'loyal' to Perón and those who accepted the political leadership of the Montoneros. Carlos Mugica, one of the best known *tercermundistas*, even went to work in the ministry of social welfare under José López Rega. He broke with López Rega, but continued to urge a more moderate line on the *tendencia revolucionaria*. His reward was to be one of the first victims of López Rega's Triple-A gunmen (see Vol. VIII, No. 19). This crime was initially blamed on the Montoneros to the further confusion of many Catholics. However, the true identity of Mugica's assassin has now been established beyond reasonable doubt. It was the same man who later killed Rodolfo Ortega Peña.

Another division, perhaps more profound, was caused by the involvement of many peronist priests in the tendency known as *peronismo de base*. This latter tendency is little understood outside Argentina. It is sometimes described as peronist anarchism, with popular insurrection as its model of revolution. Raimundo Ongaro, the print workers' leader, was perhaps the most influential member of the *basista* tendency, together with Ortega Peña. The Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas (FAP) was the *basista* guerrilla movement. During 1974 *peronismo de base* began to dissolve, and was less able than the Montoneros to cope with escalating repression and right-wing terrorism. It is still difficult for most priests to accept the Montoneros' discipline where it clashes with that of the Church.

Brazil: Geisel recovers

President Geisel has gained ground within the military establishment, and is attempting to consolidate his political position through a series of vote-catching measures.

President Ernesto Geisel acted with more confidence and decision last week than he has for many months, and it became clear that he was again in charge of the situation. The break seems

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have come with the death of Vladimir Herzog in the second army barracks in São Paulo last October (see Vol. IX, No. 43). The episode seems to have pushed a number of generals, who had been sitting on the fence, into Geisel's camp aligned against the *linha dura*. The President was able to transfer Colonel José Barros Paes, chief of the Segunda Seção in São Paulo and directly responsible for Herzog's death, to Mato Grosso (equivalent to Siberia in Brazilian military postings).

Colonel Paes was a powerful influence on the second army commander, General Ednardo D'Avila Melo, who was well advanced in his conspiracy to overthrow the government at the time of Herzog's death. The conspiracy (see Vol. IX, No. 38) was viewed with some sympathy by the army minister, General Silvio Coelho Frota, and General Oscar Luís da Silva. The major obstacle to Geisel's removal remained General Reinaldo Melo de Almeida in Rio de Janeiro. According to military sources, the conspiracy aborted as a result of the outcry following Herzog's death. When ambassador Antônio Delfim Neto, another important conspirator, arrived from Paris just before Christmas, he was forbidden to make any comment to the press.

Delfim Neto was hoping to find the generals in revolt. Instead, they were lined up like so many choir boys on Christmas eve, with General Coelho Frota telling Geisel: 'Your excellency is today the great interpreter and executor of the revolution, and can count on our loyalty and total support . . . For this reason, we will not permit intrigues or pessimism . . .' Coelho Frota is not known as 'an honourable man' by his fellow generals and is best described as a weather vane, shifting his stance according to the prevailing wind. On this occasion he was probably hoping to ingratiate himself sufficiently with Geisel to remain as army minister when he retires from active service within a few months. From the ministry he would remain an important factor in the struggle for the presidential succession, which is already taking shape.

Geisel's other main preoccupation is this year's municipal elections due to be held in November. With these in mind, he has revived the famous Assessoria de Relações Públicas da Presidência da República (ARPPR), which was in great measure responsible for ex-President Emílio Garrastazú Médici's remarkably effective personal propaganda. Directed by the intelligent Colonel (now General) Otávio Costa, the unit produced hundreds of television films and glossy publications which were freely distributed and broadcast throughout the country. Geisel has appointed Costa's deputy, Colonel José Maria Camargo, to head the revived ARPPR. Geisel originally disbanded it on the grounds that such techniques

were not worthy of the austere image he wished to project.

In political terms it is a gesture towards sectors of the armed forces identified with Médici, a move which would have been extremely unlikely before Christmas. Secondly, it may be seen as a setback for the President's press officer, Humberto Esmeraldo Barreto, who will in future deal only with routine matters. The latter burned his fingers recently by disclosing, without permission, General Golbery do Couto e Silva's ambitions to become governor of the enlarged state of Rio de Janeiro.

The President's next steps are likely to include: a more generous system of compensation for sacked workers; a favourable increase in the minimum wage, due to be announced in May; hefty rebates on payments of houses bought through the Banco Nacional de Habitação; and an additional month's salary equivalent to the minimum wage for all workers registered for more than five years and earning less than five times the minimum wage. This covers a majority of all workers.

The plan is not merely to catch votes in a narrow sense, but also to head off the growing social and political unrest. This is evident from another recent decision to form a working party within the national security council, a strictly military institution controlled directly by the President, to help the President remain in closer touch with internal security problems. The ministers of the three services will participate; so will General João Batista Figueiredo, the head of the powerful Serviço Nacional de Informações; General Hugo de Abreu, head of the President's military household; General Antônio Jorge Correa, chief of combined general staff; and Armando Falcão, the minister of justice. This move is considered to be Geisel's attempt to take the repressive machinery of the state into his own hands.

Despite the President's enhanced personal position, he still faces major problems in his quest for institutionalisation. These were highlighted last week when Colonel Erasmo Dias and Major Ismael Armond, hardliners from the DOPS in São Paulo, travelled to Brasília to ask for the heads of three important opposition politicians, accusing them of links with the Communist Party. A few days later President Geisel suspended the political rights of two of the politicians involved, federal deputy Marcelo Gatto (see Vol. IX, No. 39) and São Paulo state deputy Nelson Fabiano, both of the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB), making them the first *cassações* of this administration. The DOPS had also asked for sanctions against Alberto Goldman, leader of the MDB in the São Paulo state assembly. The hardliners were apparently incensed by the trio's public statements to the effect that the evidence linking them to the Communist Party had been obtained under torture.

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