

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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7. SOURCE: Numerous 1st Army officers known to RO for periods varying from one to eight years	

15. SUMMARY:

(C) IR deals with the latest speculation among I Army assigned officers regarding who might be named to replace GEN Orlando GEISEL as Army Minister. The active list generals - three of them to be exact - are favored over the retired group of possibles. The rationale is contained in the IR, and reveals the "home-stretch druthers" of the politically-minded officers of the always important I Army area.

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1. (C) During December 1973, while convalescing at his quarters, RO was visited by several I Army officers, known to RO for periods ranging from one year to eight years. Their favorite topic of discussion during the visits - next to talking about RO's recent surgical experience - was to speculate on who might succeed GEN Orlando GEISEL as Army Minister in the next Administration. What the sources said - and their current duty assignments run the gamut from serving with troop units at the Vila Militar, the liqs

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staff of the I Army, the staff and elements of the 1st Military Region, the ECEME, the ESG, and on through to the Training Department's activities located in the Guanabara area - follows below.

2. (C) The majority felt convinced that the next Army Minister would most likely be chosen from the active ranks of the Army's four-star generals. Their choices in order of "best chance" were:

- a. GEN Vicente de Paulo DALE COUTINHO, Army Chief of Staff
- b. GEN SYLVIO Couto Coelho da FROTA, CG of the I Army
- c. GEN OSCAR LUIZ da Silva, CG of the III Army

The rationale associated with the generals listed above was as follows.

3. (C) Of all the four-star generals on active duty, GEN DALE COUTINHO is easily Ernesto GEISEL's best and trusted friend. This General's self-effacing manner, his dedication to the Army and proven loyalty to the 1964 Revolution are all factors working strongly in his favor. The fact that he was selected as Army Chief of Staff over three more senior generals appears to the sources to be part of additional grooming for the ministerial post. The single drawback is continuing speculation that GEN DALE COUTINHO's health will not permit him to serve a full term (until 1979), possibly causing GEN Ernesto GEISEL to select another officer.

4. (C) GEN SYLVIO FROTA's "pluses" are his excellent health, his reputation for being close-mouthed (à la Ernesto GEISEL) and tough, his lack of concern about what others think of him (again, like Ernesto GEISEL), and his demonstrated loyalty to the Revolutionary goals, as well as to GEISEL (he did not "rock the boat" when the pro-active-duty-general-for-president clique was looking for a "strong man" to act as its "candidate"), and his record of successes in coping with political subversion/subversives while commanding the I Army. Sources added that if Ernesto GEISEL wants a minister much like Orlando GEISEL, namely, one that will command the Army and keep it in line, then FROTA will be named to replace Orlando GEISEL.

5. (C) As for GEN OSCAR LUIZ, he is credited with being knowledgeable in the workings of the government at its highest levels. He is also said to enjoy good health and to have demonstrated his leadership qualities as commander of the strategically important and numerically strong III Army. The sources were less certain about this General's prospects than they were of the first two. However, they felt he should be included as one of the possibles because he shares much the same qualities and characteristics that FROTA has, but is less close-mouthed (but not a gossip nor necessarily talkative) and more outgoing than the near-anchorite GEN FROTA.

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6. (C) Next, with regard to the minority view that Ernesto GEISEL might select a retired officer for Army Minister, the names most mentioned were those of Marshal (Ret) Adhemar de Queiroz, GEN (Ret) Antônio Carlos da Silva MURICY, and GEN (Ret) Alfredo Souto MALAN. All three were credited with being long-time associates and confidants of Ernesto GEISEL, and closely identified with the CASTELLO BRANCO era. However, the same sources were skeptical that their favorites would accept the ministerial job either for reasons of health (e.g., MALAN), or business reasons (the other two), leaving the field pretty much to the three active-list generals (in para 2 above).

COMMENT: (C) It is interesting that most of the sources felt that GEN DALE COUTINHO stood a better chance than the I Army's "hero," GEN FROTA. It is perhaps the sources' belief that it is Ernesto GEISEL's close friendship with fellow artilleryman GEN DALE COUTINHO that will result in this general's selection. As for GEN OSCAR LUIZ, note that the sources view him as a "sort of FROTA," but smoother in style and not as tough on subversives. Regardless of what was learned, this month should reveal the name of Orlando GEISEL's replacement, following the formal election of Ernesto GEISEL as the next President of BRAZIL, that is, thus putting an end to the current speculation. Whether or not the I Army sources (ranging in grade from colonel down to captain) were correct in their prognostications, the fact is that the Army will accept the new President's choice and follow the new Administration's wishes regarding the Army's role in seeing the 1964 Revolution come closer to realizing its goals during the remaining years of the 1970s.

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