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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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ACTION

DISTR CJCS DJS SJCS(03) J3(12) J5(02)

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3495

INFO RUESEI/AMCONSUL RECIFE 1011

RUESUA/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 7065

RUESUP/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 1275

RULPALJ/USCINCSO

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 0963

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE "HARDLINERS" RETIRED

REF: BRASILIA 1850

1. LAST WEEK AIR FORCE BRIGADIERS JOAO PAULO MOREIRA BURNIER (EX-COMMANDER 3RD AIR ZONE - RIO), MARCIO CESAR LEAL COQUEIRO (EX-COMMANDANT 4TH AIR ZONE - SAO PAULO), CARLOS AFFONSO DELLAMORA (EX-CHIEF OF AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY), AND ROBERTO HIPPOLYTO DA COSTA (EX-COMMANDER OF FIRST AEROTACTICAL FORCE) WERE FORMALLY RETIRED FROM ACTIVE DUTY BY PRESIDENT MEDICI.

2. WHILE THE PRESIDENT USED PROVISION OF LAW WHICH ENTITLES HIM TO RETIRE CERTAIN NUMBER OF OFFICERS TO

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PROVIDE VACANCIES FOR PROMOTIONS, REAL REASON FOR HIS ACTION WAS DESIRE TO REMOVE FROM ACTIVE DUTY A GROUP OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS AIR FORCE "HARDLINERS" WHO WERE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH FORMER AIR MINISTER MARCIO SOUSA E MELO. THESE OFFICERS HAVE UNSUCCESSFULLY FOUGHT RETIREMENT ACTION AND POINTED OUT THEY ARE HEALTHY AND YOUNG BRIGADIERS. INTENT OF LAW, THEY CLAIMED, WAS DIRECTED AT RETIRING OLDER OFFICERS AND SPIRIT OF THE LAW HAD BEEN VIOLATED. AS THEY ARE NOW RETIRED, THEY WILL HAVE RECOURSE TO CIVILIAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM, BUT IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT SUPREME COURT (STF) WILL REVERSE PRESIDENT'S ACTION.

3. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RUMORS TO EFFECT THAT BURNIER-AND COMPANY ARE PREPARING "POCKET REBELLION". ALTHOUGH THESE RETIRED OFFICERS WOULD PROBABLY HOPE TO STRIKE BACK, THEIR DISMISSAL FROM ACTIVE SERVICE LESSENS CONSIDERABLY THEIR POTENTIAL FOR MISCHIEF-MAKING. FURTHERMORE, ANY ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW PRESIDENT MEDICI WOULD HARDLY GENERATE RECEPTIVITY AMONG ARMED FORCES AND WOULD BE IN VAIN. GP-3
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