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1. COUNTRY: BRAZIL

2. SUBJECT: (U) Army Minister's Cabinet Chief Speaks on Presidential Succession

3. ISC NUMBER:

4. DATE OF INFORMATION: August 1969

5. PLACE AND DATE OF ACQ: Brasilia 4 Aug 69

6. EVALUATION: SOURCE B INFORMATION 2
Chief of Cabinet to Army

7. SOURCE: Minister in Brasilia. Close to Minister and reliable ARMA source for many years.

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15. SUMMARY: (C) Source discusses the possibilities of various potential presidential candidates. In the end it is obvious that his Minister, Gen LYRA TAVARES, is the logical choice.

1. (C) The other day Col CELSO dos Santos MEYER, Chief of the Minister of the Army's Cabinet in Brasilia, discussed with me the forthcoming presidential succession. Despite constant rumors that Army Minister General (Ret) Aurelio de LYRA TAVARES is about to step down or be moved out as Army Minister, source went to considerable effort to construct a rationale that, quite to the contrary, LYRA is the only truly logical next choice for president. He never came out and said as much but the unspoken conclusion was there. Source's impressions are particularly useful because they are formed by a person who has access to most of the important information the Minister receives and who enjoys the Minister's unreserved confidence.

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2. (C) Following is the essence of the remarks source made on the various major presidential contenders:

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a. General LYRA ~~LYRA~~. He is President COSTA E SILVA's choice to succeed him. One can feel this in the way the President trusts and confides in him. Also LYRA is the only potential candidate who presents no problem to the military hierarchy. However, (source kept repeating) LYRA does not want the job. He would be content with something like the Supreme Military Tribunal.

b. Colonel (Ret) Mario David ANDREAZZA, Minister of Transportation. His problem is with the 4-star generals. They will not accept orders from a colonel. The President knows this.

c. Colonel (Ret) Jarbas PASSARINHO, Minister of Labor. He suffers some of the same problem as ANDREAZZA but his prospects are much better. He is more intelligent, has more political experience and has the sort of dynamism needed to be an effective president. These factors offer a counter to his lack of seniority in the eyes of senior officers.

d. General Emilio Garrastazu MEDICI, CG Third Army. It is doubtful he has possibilities. His experience and service in the Army has been mostly limited to the South of Brazil. He has not been very successful in his military assignments. His reputation throughout the Army is not good. It would be difficult for him to gain Army support.

e. Major General AFTONSO Augusto de Albuquerque Lima, Director of Department of Production and Works. He has strong ambition to be president and would have been General LYRA's choice for the position. However, he lost his chance when he spoke out intemperately at the time of his return to the Army from service as Minister of the Interior. Despite all the noise in his behalf, he does not have any appreciable following now. (COMMENT: The President's Aide once told me that the President, too, had regarded AFTONSO highly as a possible successor but decided he was unfit after his intemperate burst.)

f. Major General Jayme PORTELLA de Mello, Chief of President's Military Cabinet. He is not a presidential contender. He wants to be the next Governor of Paraiba. His problem is that he is too high now to be able ever to step down into a regular Army job, such as a division commander. His present job has been very demanding and he will be happy to move into a fittingly prestigious but less arduous role.

g. Dep. Jose MAGALHAES PINTO, Foreign Minister. He is a banker and has a bankers mentality. He would not have military support. (COMMENT: I have heard officers in the Presidencia speak pejoratively of the banker's influence in MAGALHAES PINTO. Interestingly, this same sort of thought now comes from another military source, this one close to the Army Minister. These observations suggest an image of MAGALHAES among the military as a money grubbing banker. If he seriously pushes his widely reported presidential ambitions, he apparently will have to alter that impression before gaining the essential military support.)

h. Governor Paulo Cruz PIMENTEL of Parana was mentioned by source as a possible candidate but without comment.

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COMMENT: (C) Source's insistence that Army Minister LYRA TAVARES does not want the presidency had a hollow ring to it. Instead, his remarks left an image of LYRA sitting above the squabble, not ambitious, but there, the best qualified and available -- if necessary -- to meet the service of his country. I believe source was thoroughly sincere in his analysis. However, one must take into account how closely linked is his own future to that of his Minister. It is possible he wants the job for his boss more than his boss does. Perhaps the best indication that the Presidential game is still wide open is the number of convincing arguments one hears advanced by people whose futures are linked to one or another of the possible candidates. Somehow their man's weaknesses are negated and he comes out on top. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that among these various supporters General LYRA TAVARES is generally regarded as a strong contender, especially in the critical military support area.

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