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SUBJECT: Student Unrest

1. Brief period of relative quiet on student front which followed inauguration of Costa e Silva is now clearly over. In line with general policy of trying to achieve support from all quarters, Costa e Silva had even before election announced his intention of establishing long-sought-after "dialogue" with students and giving serious attention to their problems. After inauguration, one of most successful aspects his attempt to demonstrate "humanizing" policy was in personal attention he gave to problems of "excedentes," calling on university rectors to bring about their admission and providing GOB financial support for this. Even First Lady Dona Yolanda managed to achieve Madrinha image as sponsor ("Madrinha") of students.
2. Although Costa e Silva administration achieved some student popularity by these means (at very least with excedentes) they served at same time to alienate other groups. Notable among these were students already admitted to universities who resented admission of additional students without any concurrent improvement in facilities, and of course "hardline" elements who do not favor coddling of unruly students (even Costa e Silva himself privately betrayed some personal sentiments along these lines). Dissatisfaction also arose among students who had scored below 50 percent on entrance examinations, "excedentes" generally being considered those who scored over 50 percent but for whom no vacancies available. Naturally, actions of GCP in no way satisfied small but active hard core of dedicated agitators, principally associated with radical-leftist Ação Popular (AP):
Nevertheless, small remaining active contingent has been able to attract enough followers from student body to mount demonstrations in Rio, Brasilia, Sao Paulo and elsewhere in Brazil.

4. Ostensible issues in student demonstrations have to some extent been traditional ones - tuition, academic facilities, admission or non-admission of excedentes (depending on whether demonstrating group is in or out). Some steam has been taken out of anti-GOBI issues because Costa e Silva administration on the whole still more popular than previous one, and because of conciliatory moves of President. Result has been somewhat more emphasis on anti-American subjects, notably criticism of MinEducation-USAID agreement and Viet-Man. In some recent cases where Ambassador was making visit, this has also offered occasion for use of anti-American themes.

Publicity given to anti-American aspects of student protest has also provided focus for other elements with anti-American axes to grind, for example, poison pen article by Davi Messer in current "O Cruzeiro" (see Rio 2736), reflecting Chateaubriand's Diarios Associados fight against O Globo-Time-Life contact.

5. GOBI has shown generally ambivalent attitude in relation to new student disturbances, most government figures probably viewing students as hostile group, but at same time not wishing...
wishing to spoil "honeymoon" they feel they have achieved.

With exception of April 20 incident in Brasilia (which involved special circumstances -- see Brasilia 728), police have by and large maintained hands-off attitude toward demonstrations, at least by comparison to practices during Castello Branco administration.

6. In present circumstances student agitators can be expected to press their advantage. They undoubtedly feel they have won some victories (for example, announcement by MinEd April 26 that MED-USAID agreement would be reviewed) and at same time may well want to create fuel for fire by provoking more serious clashes with police.

GP-3.

TUTTILL