INTRODUCTION  The purpose of this report is to summarize and assess the Echeverria administration during its first year in office—the period ending December 1, 1971. Insofar as the airgram draws conclusions and makes comments, the entire year is covered. For a detailed discussion of the early portion of the year, however, the reader is referred to Mexico A-115, "The First Hundred Days of the Echeverria Administration." END INTRODUCTION

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I. The Echeverria Style. Speaking to the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Mexico on December 11, soon after the anniversary of his inauguration, President Luis ECHEVERRIA asked rhetorically, "What is it, essentially, that the new government has done?"

His response, he said, would be that his government "has tried to preserve liberties-economic liberty, religious liberty, liberty of expression." He continued: "We have chosen the road of liberty because this is the point of departure for development..."

In the remainder of this rather philosophical address, Echeverria went on to cite the various initiatives
that his job was on the line. The PRI, however, nominated a popular candidate for governor who won handily and, we believe, quite legitimately, and the PRI swept all other offices at stake, although the PAN claimed that it had won two or more of the state deputy seats. Several other states held elections for state and municipal office during the year and some of the races generated customary protests from PAN or from the Partido Popular Socialista.

12. June 10 An unexpected and unpleasant crisis for the new administration was the dispute over the governance of the University of Nuevo Leon, which simmered along over the spring and led ultimately to an Echeverría decision essentially favoring the students in their autonomy demands and to the resignation of the State Governor.

Despite the evidently satisfactory resolution of the dispute in Monterrey, students in Mexico City went ahead on June 10 with a planned sympathy demonstration (by then broadened to include other demands). The unarmed demonstrators were set upon by an organized paramilitary force, the so-called halcones (falcons), many of them on the Federal District payroll, who were apparently ordered into action by Federal District Regent Martínez Domínguez. Uniformed Federal District police stood by and did nothing. One foreign correspondent was briefly abducted, several were injured, and many saw the halcones in action, factors which assured that the incident would be widely reported outside of Mexico and that it could therefore hardly be minimized domestically.

Many aspects of the incident are obscure or controversial or both and will undoubtedly remain so. Among them are the actual number of casualties, which by some estimates exceeded 100 persons killed or "vanished"; whether Echeverría personally knew of or approved the employment of the halcones against the demonstrators; and whether he planned the entire incident so as to create a pretext for the removal of Martínez Domínguez. (For a detailed study of these events, see A-456, July 27.)

Echeverría in any event moved rapidly to make amends and to indicate his condemnation of the event. On June 12
Martínez Domínguez and the Federal District Police Chief resigned, officially in order to facilitate the investigation which Echeverría had ordered the Attorney General to make.

By July, however, Attorney General Sánchez Vargas announced that he had been unable to find any evidence of official complicity in the suppression of the demonstration. Echeverría removed him in August and in the Informe on September 1 promised that the investigation would be re-intensified under the new Attorney General, Pedro OJEDA Paullada. Through the end of Echeverría's first year and down to the present, however, no report on the events of June 10 has been issued. There is reason to believe that any candid report would be highly embarrassing to GOM officials, present as well as past, and possibly including the President himself; yet the absence of any report has damaged Echeverría's credibility. This remains true despite the GOM's apparent attempt to divert attention from June 10 to a universally-popular campaign against the porras, the gangs which in recent years have terrorized a number of campuses (A-453, August 20).

13. Internal Security Echeverría's first year was marked by a number of spectacular developments under this broad heading. He began by releasing piece-meal some of the less doctrinaire participants in the 1968 student demonstrations (A-52, February 15). In March, the GOM announced the arrest of 20 members of the Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria (MAR—Action) and charged that, apart from robberies already carried out, this group was plotting the overthrow of the government. Several of the MAR—Action members arrested had gone from studies at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow to guerrilla training in North Korea, and Echeverría retaliated by expelling the Soviet chargé and four other embassy officers, all known or suspected KGB agents (Embtel 1964 of April 8). As the arrests of a few other MAR—Action members followed (about 25 still remain at large), other guerrilla/terrorist groups began to surface or to increase the level of their activities.