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ACTION ARA 16

INFO AID 28,CCO 00,FBO 01,GPM 04,H 02,INR 07,LC 03,NIC 01,NSC 10,0 02,
OC 06,OPR 02,P 04,PER 02,SCC 01,SAH 02,SCE 02,SP 02,SS 25,SY 03.
SCE 04,CIAE 00,DODD 00,NSAE 00,NSCE 00,SSO 00,USIE 00,CU 04.
SIL 01,LAB 06,E 15,AGR 20,CSR 01/174 W

P 300049Z AUG 68
FM AMBASSADOR MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7434

CONFIDENTIAL MEXICO 6776

SUBJECT: CIVIL DISORDER - STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT GOM HAS JOINED ISSUE WITH STUDENT.
   TONE OF PRINCIPAL PAPERS HAS CHANGED RADICALLY FROM MORE OR
   LESS OBJECTIVE REPORTING STUDENT ACTIVITIES TO BANNER HEAD-
   LINE DENOUNCING THEIR EXCESSES. PUBLIC SAFETY FORCES HAVE
   APPARENTLY BEEN GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO USE FORCE TO BREAK UP
   MANIFESTATIONS. GOM IMPLICITLY ACCEPTS CONSEQUENCE THAT THIS
   WILL PRODUCE CASUALTIES. LEADERS OF STUDENT AGITATION HAVE
   BEEN AND ARE BEING TAKEN INTO CUSTODY INCLUDING HEBERTO CASTILLO.
   IN OTHER WORDS, GOM OFFENSIVE AGAINST STUDENT DISORDER HAS OPENED ON
   PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FRONTS.

2. PRIOR TO YESTERDAY IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT GOM WOULD
   WAIT UNTIL AFTER PRESIDENT'S SEPTEMBER 1 INFORME (ANNUAL REPORT)
   TO MOVE TO TERMINATE STUDENT AGITATION. VARIOUS REASONS MAY HAVE
   MOVED GOVERNMENT TO ADVANCE TIMING SUPPRESSION STUDENTS: (A) AUG. 27
   MARCH SHOVED EFFORTS GOM TO WEAKEN AND DIVIDE STUDENTS NOT
   SUCCEEDING;
   (B) EXCESSES OF STUDENTS OR PSUEDO-STUDENTS IN EXTORTING
   "CONTRIBUTIONS," INTERFERRING TRAFFIC, SEIZING BUSES AND
   HARRAUGHING WORKERS MAY HAVE CONVINCED GOM LEADERS THAT PUBLIC
   SYMPATHY HAD VEERED AWAY FROM STUDENTS. CERTAINLY VULGAR,
   ABUSIVE PERSONAL ATTACKS ON DIAZ ORDAZ PASTED OR PRINTED ON
   WALLS THROUGHOUT CITY AND EXPRESSED IN PLACARDS OF MARCHERS HAVE

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OFFENDED MANY MEXICANS, EVEN THOSE WHO DO NOT ADMIRE PRESIDENT, I.C.: TACTICAL ERROR OF STUDENTS IN RAISING BLACK AND RED FLAG IN ZOCALO AND OCCUPYING CATHEDRAL GAVE GOVERNMENT HIGHLY EXPLOITABLE EMOTIONAL ISSUES WHICH PRESS HAS BEEN PLAYING TO HILT AND, FINALLY ID: THREAT OF STRIKE LEADERS TO HOLD MASSIVE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION IN ZOCALO TO COINCIDE WITH PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY HAVE CONVINCED GOM THAT SHOWDOWN WITH STUDENTS BETTER BEFORE THAN AT TIME OF INFORME.

3. NEWSPAPER CHRONOLOGY OF STUDENT-POLICE CLASHES OF AUG. 28,
WHICH CONCURS GENERALLY WITH OTHER EMBASSY SOURCES, AS FOLLOWS:
11:40 PM WORKERS (MOSTLY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES) GATHER IN ZOCALO TO FEAR SPEECHES, REMOVE RED BLACK FLAG AND RESTORE MEXICAN FLAG. 2:15 WORKERS START DEPART. 2:35 STUDENT GROUPS ARRIVE "TO DISTURB PUBLIC ORDER". OTHER ACCOUNTS ALLEGE STUDENTS SOUGHT RETRIEVE RED BLACK FLAG. 2:40 POLICE LOUD SPEAKERS ASK EVERYONE LEAVE ZOCALO. WORKERS LEAVE BUT STUDENTS CONFRONT POLICE. 2:50 MACHINE GUN FIRE FROM UPPER STORY BUILDING BORDERING ZOCALO DIRECTED AT ARMY AND POLICE. "ONE" POLICEMAN FIRES MACHINE GUN BUST "IN THE AIR" TO "REESTABLISH ORDER." 2:55 POLICE SURROUND BUILDING, CAPTURE THREE PERSONS, ONE DRESSED TOTALLY IN RED AND CARRYING MACHINE GUN. 3:15 IN FORTY MINUTE ACTION POLICE, ARMY CLEAR ZOCALO. EMBASSY REPORTS INDICATE CONSIDERABLE VIOLENCE, GUNSHOTS, BUT NO CONFIRMED DEATHS. 4:15 STUDENTS REPORTEDLY ENTERED TV STATION, DEMANDED TRANSMISSION PICTURES WOUNDED STUDENTS BROKEN UP 30 MINUTES LATER BY POLICE. 4:40 GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS CAPTURE BUSES AND STUDENT LEADER ASK GROUPS TO PROCEED TO UNIVERSITY WHERE ARMS BE PASSED OUT TO PERMIT CONFRONTATION WITH POLICE AND ARMY. GATHERING BROKEN UP BY POLICE. 5:00 PM TRAFFIC THROUGH ZOCALO AGAIN NORMAL.
6:00 GROUP STUDENTS APPROACH NEWSMEN TO INFORM THEM OF SIX STUDENTS WOUNDED BY ARMY VEHICLES. STUDENTS REPORTEDLY AVOID TREATMENT AT PUBLIC HEALTH STATIONS DUE FEAR OF ARREST. GO INSTEAD TO FACULTY OF MEDICINE. 6:45 ABOUT 500 STUDENTS BLOCK OFF DOWNTOWN STREET, PROHIBIT PASSAGE PERSONS AND VEHICLES. BROKEN UP BY POLICE. 7:00 ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND STUDENTS GATHER DOWNTOWN STREET TO MARCH ON JAIL, DEMAND IMMEDIATE RELEASE DEMETRIO VALLEJO. HEAVY RAIN BROKE IT UP EXCEPT FOR SOME 500 WHO STAYED AND STARTED DETAIN BUSES TO IMPED TRAFFIC. BROKEN UP BY POLICE. 8:00 PM ANOTHER GROUP STUDENTS SEEK BLOCK TRAFFIC DOWNTOWN STREET, BROKEN UP BY POLICE WHO USED GRENADE. 8:15 POLICE ANNOUNCED ORDER RESTORED THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN AREA.

4. NO REPORTS ANY CLASHES STUDENTS SECURITY FORCES AUG. 29
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AS OF TIME THIS REPORT 6:00 PM.

5. REPORTS TO EMBASSY INDICATE STUDENT GROUPS MEETING VARIOUS PLACES TO PLAN STRATEGY AND ORGANIZE SUNDAY DEMONSTRATION.

6. RUMOR RIFE IN CITY. GASOLINE STATIONS RUMORED SHORT SUPPLY CAUSING LONG LINES CARS AT STATIONS. UNCONFIRMED RUMOR CIRCULATING BREAD STORES PLANNING CLOSURE. SOME NERVOUSNESS AND UNCERTAINTY NOTED BUT CITY ACTIVITIES NORMAL.

FREEMAN