



POL 23-8 Mex

# Department of State TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 CU-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-08 NSAE-00 P-03  
RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 NIC-01 PM-05 NSC-10 SS-20 OPR-02  
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R 261645Z MAY 71  
FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000  
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTERREY 060/1

SUBJECT: STUDENT VIOLENCE IN MONTERREY

MEXICO CITY FOR POLITICAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNSELOR

1. SINCE LATE LAST YEAR THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF NUEVO LEON HAS BEEN IN AN ALMOST CONSTANT STATE OF TURMOIL. BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT WING STUDENT AND FACULTY GROUPS HAVE BEEN VYING FOR CONTROL OF THE UNIVERSITY. BY MARCH OF THIS YEAR IT APPEARED CERTAIN THAT THE RIGHTIST INTERESTS WERE SUCCEEDING IN THEIR EFFORTS TO OUST INCUMBENT LEFTIST OFFICIALS AND PROFESSORS FROM THEIR POSTS AND TO OBTAIN A PUBLIC AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S FISCAL OPERATIONS AND ACADEMIC PRACTICES. THE RECTOR RESIGNED AND THE GOVERNING BODY (UNDER THE THEN EXISTING STATUTES) ELECTED A NEW RECTOR. AT THIS POINT STATE GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED THAT INSTITUTION'S SUBSIDY WOULD HAVE TO BE CUT AND TUITION FEES RAISED. THE RECTOR HELD HEATED DEBATE WITH GOVERNOR ON TELEVISION ABOUT UNIVERSITY POLICY. NEXT DAY STATE CONGRESS PASSED NEW "ORGANIC LAW" FOR UNIVERSITY. THE LAW ALLOWED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEMBERS FROM OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TO HAVE DOMINANT VOTING ROLE IN DETERMINING POLICY. THESE FACTORS LED TO THE REPLACEMENT OF THE RECTOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS. THE RIGHT WAS IN CONTROL BUT THE GENERAL SITUATION DETERIORATED AS "ORGANIC LAW" ITSELF PROVED TO BE MORE CONTROVERSIAL THAN ALL PRIOR ISSUES.

2. IN RECENT WEEKS LEFTIST AS WELL AS A WIDE RANGE OF OTHER DIS-

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SIDENT ELEMENTS UTILIZED THE LAW AS A RALLYING POINT. THEY CHARGE THAT IT EFFECTIVELY ENDS THE UNIVERSITY'S AUTONOMY - A NEAR SACRED CONCEPT IN LATIN AMERICA AND DEMAND THAT THE ACT BE REVOKED. UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS WERE OCCUPIED BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS PROTESTING THE LAW. CLASSES WERE GENERALLY STOPPED. FINALLY, THE RECTOR, NEWLY APPOINTED UNDER THE ORGANIC LAW, WAS DENIED ENTRY TO HIS OFFICES BY STRIKING STUDENTS. THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD THE LOCAL STATE GOVERNMENT HAS CARRIED ON A RATHER EXTENSIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN. ITS GOAL HAS BEEN TO ORGANIZE SUPPORT FOR THE ORGANIC ACT, AMONG THE GENERAL POPULACE AND ALL POLITICALLY IMPORTANT GROUPS AND SECTORS. ITS EFFORTS HAVE BEEN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL. DURING THIS TIME THE GOVERNMENT ABSTAINED FROM USING FORCE TO DISLodge DISSIDENT STUDENTS. LOCAL PRESS MAINTAINED A CALM POSTURE IN REPORTING, WHILE STRONGLY SUPPORTING POSITION OF AUTHORITIES THAT UNIVERSITY SHOULD BE REOPENED AND CLASSES RESUMED. ON MAY 17 AND 18 MEETINGS WERE HELD IN SEVERAL OF THE "SEMI" INDEPENDENT FACULTIES IN WHICH BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AGREED TO RETURN TO CLASSES. ON THE 18TH NUMEROUS FIGHTS ERUPTED BETWEEN LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST STUDENTS. THEN DISSIDENT STUDENTS BROADENED THE CONFLICT ARENA BY STAGING STREET DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH BLOCKED TRANSIT ON MAJOR DOWNTOWN ARTERIES. THE GOVERNOR RESPONDED ON THE 19TH BY UNEQUIVOCALLY STATING THAT HE WOULD ORDER PUBLIC FORCE TO BE USED SHOULD THE DISSIDENTS RENEW THEIR RESORT TO VIOLENCE. SMALL SCALE, CONTROLLED CONFRONTATIONS TOOK PLACE ON THURSDAY THE 20TH AND FRIDAY THE 21ST. LATE FRIDAY THE NEW RECTOR ANNOUNCED THAT ALL STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND WORKERS AT THE UNIVERSITY WERE TO RETURN TO WORK ON MONDAY MORNING, MAY 24, OR BE SUBJECT TO DISMISSAL. AT THAT TIME, IT APPEARED THAT A VAST MAJORITY, FOR A MIXTURE OF IDEOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL REASONS, FAVORED A RETURN TO CLASS. PUBLIC OPINION STRONGLY SUPPORTED THIS VIEW.

3. OVER THE WEEK END, IN EARLY MORNING SURPRISE SORTIES THE POLICE TOOK PHYSICAL CONTROL OF A NUMBER OF PREPARATORY SCHOOLS IN THE SYSTEM AND PARTS OF THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF. THE MORE DISSIDENT ELEMENTS, SEEING THEIR SUPPORT EVAPORATING RAPIDLY IN THE FACE OF THE FIRM STAND TAKEN BY STATE AND UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES OBVIOUSLY DECIDED THAT A RESORT TO VIOLENCE WAS ALL THAT REMAINED TO THEM IF THEY WERE TO CONTINUE THEIR STRIKE. OVER THE WEEKEND, RUMORED CONFRONTATIONS WITH POLICE AND MASS PROTESTS IN DOWNTOWN MONTERREY DID NOT MATERIALIZE. CALM PREVAILED UNTIL MONDAY, MAY 24.

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THIS WAS THE MORNING SIGNALLED BY THE RECTOR FOR ALL TO RETURN TO CLASSES OR BE DISMISSED. WITH THE AID OF THE POLICE ANTI-STRIKE STUDENTS TOOK CONTROL OF THE RECTORY AND ESCORTED THE RECTOR TO HIS OFFICE. LATER, A LARGE GROUP OF DISSIDENT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO STORM THE RECTORY. THIS DEGENERATED INTO STONE THROWING BATTLE WITH DEFENDING STUDENTS. ONE DEFENDING STUDENT SUFFERED A BROKEN LEG FROM A THROWN MISSILE, AND NUMEROUS PARTICIPANTS ON BOTH SIDES WERE SLIGHTLY INJURED. ONE NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT LOCAL MILITARY HEADQUARTERS (LOCATED NEXT TO UNIVERSITY) OFFERED SEND SOLDIERS TO INTERVENE. PAPER MAINTAINED THAT GOVERNOR REFUSED THEIR ASSISTANCE AS HE FELT STATE AND LOCAL POLICE WERE SUFFICIENT. ON WEDNESDAY, GOVERNOR DENIED THAT ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN EITHER OFFERED BY THE MILITARY OR REFUSED BY HIM. HE REITERATED THAT LOCAL SECURITY FORCES WERE SUFFICIENT. HE SAID HE WOULD ACCEPT ARMY AID IN CLEANING UP CAMPUS AND REPAIRING 100,000 PESO PHYSICAL DAMAGES. LATER IN THE AFTERNOON, ABOUT 800-900 STUDENTS MASSES IN THE DOWNTOWN PLAZA (COLEGIO CIVIL) IN WHICH THE MOST IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY PREP SCHOOLS ARE LOCATED. THEY ATTEMPTED TO PROVOKE AN OVER REACTION ON THE PART OF POLICE TO GAIN SYMPATHY. THAT EVENING AROUND 1000 STUDENTS REGROUPED IN SAME AREA WITH SAME GOAL. LOCAL POLICE SHOWED RESTRAINT IN PROFESSIONALLY DISPERSING MOB THROUGH USE OF CLUBS AND TEAR GAS. 200 BELIEVED HIT-NONE HOSPITALIZED. AROUND 50-80 DETAINED BY POLICE ON THE 24TH. AS OF 26 MAY ONLY 6 LOCALS ARE STILL IN CUSTODY. THEY MAY FACE WEAPONS, RIOT, AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY CHARGES.

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INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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4 ON THE 25TH GENERAL CALM RETURNED TO MONTERREY AS ALL PONDERED EVENTS OF PAST FEW DAYS. THERE IS SOME EXPECTATION THAT SITUATION MAY CHANGE TODAY, WEDNESDAY, AS STUDENTS ARE AWAITING ARRIVAL OF DEMETRIO VALLEJO, EX RAILROAD UNION PRESIDENT WHO RECENTLY RELEASED FROM PRISON WHERE HE SERVED TERM FOR ROLE IN DIFFICULTIES OF DECADE AGO BETWEEN UNION AND GOVERNMENT.

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LOCAL PUBLIC OPINION, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF CONTINUED RESTRAINT OF POLICE AND LACK OF MARTYRS, CONTINUES TO BE STRONGLY FAVORABLE TO REOPENING OF UNIVERSITY AND RETURN TO CLASS OF THE STUDENTS. FUTURE EVENTS SEEM TO DEPEND ON THE DETERMINATION OF THE DISSIDENT ELEMENTS AND THE SUPPORT THEY MAY RECEIVE FROM OTHER PARTS OF MEXICO. THEY HOPE THAT STRONG SUPPORT WILL COME FROM THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN MEXICO CITY WHEN ITS STUDENT BODY RETURNS FROM SPRING VACATION JUNE 2. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THIS SUPPORT IS FORTHCOMING AND WHAT FORM IT MIGHT TAKE.

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