

34



Pol 13-2 mep
XIPol 23-8 mep
Department of State **TELEGRAM**

mexico 6722
8/27/68

CONFIDENTIAL 650

PAGE 01 MEXICO 06722 271710Z

52
ACTION ARA 16

INFO SAL 01, CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10,
P 04, RSC 01, SP 02, SS 25, USIA 12, AID 28, CU 04, SCS 04, SCA 02,
NIC 01, IO 13, SIL 01, LAB 06, PPT 02, OPR 02, SY 03, EUR 15, RSR 01,
SAH 02, SA 01, /172 W

P 271558Z AUG 68
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7405

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 6722

SUBJ: STUDENT DISORDERS

1. SINCE VIOLENT CLASHES OF SECURITY FORCES WITH STUDENTS DURING THE LATTER DAYS OF JULY, GOVT HAS GLEARLY LEANED OVER BACKWARDS TO AVOID SITUATIONS WHICH MIGHT PRODUCE REPETITION. THUS MASSIVE STUDENT MARCH AUGUST 13 WAS CARRIED OUT WITHOUT SECURITY FORCES IN EVIDENCE AND STUDENTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FREE HAND TO HOLD MEETINGS, PUBLISH THEIR VIEWS AND PASS OUT HANDBILLS AND LEAFLETS (EVEN THOSE MOST INSULTING TO PRESIDENT AND CALLING FOR VIOLENCE.) FURTHERMORE A NUMBER OF CONFIRMED REPORTS OF EXTORTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PASSING MOTORISTS AND IN RESTAURANTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED. GOVT APPARENTLY BELIEVES THAT WITH APPROACHING VACATIONS AND INCREASING INTEREST OF STUDENTS IN MEETING WITH GOVT REPS TO DISCUSS SITUATION, HIGH EMOTIONAL PITCH OF STUDENT ACTIVITY WILL DECLINE IF NO NEW INCIDENTS OCCUR TO INFLAME STUDENT OPINION. MEANWHILE GOVT AGENTS ACTIVE BEHIND SCENES ATTEMPTING TO DIVIDE AND WEAKEN SUPPORT OF EXTREMIST STRIKE LEADERS.

(2) 2. THIS SEEMS TO BE REASONABLE COURSE FOR GOVT TO PURSUE IN VIEW MASSIVE NATURE AND HIGH EMOTIONAL PITCH STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND APPROACHING OLYMPIC GAMES. THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT STUDENT OPINION IS MODERATING IN THE FACE OF THIS ATTITUDE BY THE GOVT. DANGER IS OF COURSE THAT

CONFIDENTIAL



Department of State

TELEGRAM

27

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 06722 271710Z

AVOIDANCE OF ADDITIONAL INFLAMMATORY INCIDENTS NOT DEPENDENT ON GOVT ALONE. EXTREMIT STUDENT GROUPS, IF THEY SEE STUDENT ENTHUSIASM MELTING AWAY, CAN CREATE INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE WITH REAL OR ALLEGED MARTYRS. THIS IS UNPREDICITABLE ELEMENT IN PRESENT SITUATION.

3. IN THIS, AS IN OTHER STUDENT PROTESTS, CRITICAL POINT TO WATCH IS EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS ENLIST ACTIVE SUPPORT OF MASS SECTORS OF POPULATION (LABOR, PEASANTS OR URBAN POOR.) EMB HAS NO EVIDENCE THAT SUCH SUPPORT HAS BEEN OBTAINED IN SIGNIFICANT DEGREE BUT THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT LABOR LEADERS ARE UNEASY THAT PROLONGATION OF PRESENT SITUATION MIGHT LEAD TO SOME EROSION OF LABOR LEADERSHIP'S CONTROL OVER RANK AND FILE (SEE EMBTEL 6616.) WHILE STUDENT STRIKE PRODUCES WIDESPREAD UNEASINESS AND HOLDS POTENTIALITIES OF DANGER, IT DOES NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INTERRUPT NORMAL LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF CITY IN WAY WHICH STRIKE BY ORGANIZED LABOR OR KEY SECTORS THEREOF WOULD.

4. ALSO TO BE WATCHED IN CONNECTION WITH EVOLUTION OF STUDENT SITUATION ARE MASSIVE STUDENT MARCH PLANNED FOR AUGUST 27, WHICH MAY PROVIDE INDICATION EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVT TACTICS TO DATE, AND PRESIDENT'S REPORT (INFORME) TO CONGRESS ON SEPT 1, WHICH ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL DEAL WITH STUDENT PROBLEM. EMB HAS REPORTS THAT MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT WILL OCCUR ON SEPT 1 WHEN HE GIVES REPORT OR SHORTLY THEREAFTER. THESE ARE PLAUSIBLE IN LIGHT PAST MEXICAN POLITICAL TECHNIQUES BUT ON OTHER HAND LABOR LEADER AND SENATOR JESUS YUREN IS QUOTED IN PRESS AS STATING NO SUCH MANIFESTATIONS PLANNED.

5. WHILE STUDENT DELEGATIONS FROM EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE MEXICO CITY HAVE BEEN REPORTED PARTICIPATING IN STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS HERE, EMB HAS NO INFO SYMPATHY STRIKES HAVE SPREAD SIGNIFICANTLY BEYOND MEXICO CITY AREA.

6. IT IS TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE WITH CONFIDENCE EITHER UNDERLYING CAUSES OF STUDENT FLARE-UP OR ITS LONG-TERM EFFECTS. IN SHORT TERM, HOWEVER, PRESIDENT HAS COME IN FOR SHARP CRITICISM FROM THOSE WHO SAY HE HAS OVERREACTED TO SITUATION AS WELL AS THOSE WHO SAY HE SHOULD HAVE ACTED SOONER AND MUCH MORE HARSHLY. ALSO NOTED HAS BEEN BREAKING MEXICAN TRADITION

CONFIDENTIAL





Department of State

TELEGRAM

27

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 06722 271710Z

PRESIDENT IMMUNE FROM DIRECT, PERSONAL ATTACK. LIKEWISE, IN SHORT TERM AT LEAST, PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTS LUIS ECHEVERRIA AND ALFONSO CORONA DEL ROSAL HAVE SUFFERED. FINALLY, ATMOSPHERE OF UNCERTAINTY AND APPREHENSION WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE EVEN AFTER STRIKE SETTLED.

7. EMB HAS NO DIRECT EVIDENCE THAT INVASION CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS AFFECTED STUDENT MOVEMENT SIGNIFICANTLY BUT BELIEVES THAT EFFECT, IF ANY, WOULD BE TO WEAKEN EXTREMIST INFLUENCE AND STRENGTHEN MODERATES. FREEMAN

CONFIDENTIAL