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ACTION ARA 16

INFO AID 28,CCO 00,FBO 01,GPM 04,H 02,INR 07,L 03,NIC 01,NSC 10,0 02,  
OC 06,OPR 02,P 04,PER 02,RSC 01,SAH 02,SCA 02,SP 02,SS 25,SY 03,  
SCS 04,CIAE 00,DODE 00,NSAE 00,NSCE 00,SSD 00,USIE 00,CU 04,  
SIL 01,LAB 06,E 15,AGR 20,FSR 01, /174 W

Mexico 6776  
8/30/68

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

C O N F I D E N T I A L 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 HEADLINE DENOUNCING THEIR EXCESSES. PUBLIC SAFETY FORCES HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO USE FORCE TO BREAK UP MANIFESTATIONS. GOM IMPLICITY 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 SHOWED EFFORTS GOM TO WEAKEN AND DIVIDE STUDENTS NOT SUCCEEDING,

(B) EXCESSES OF STUDENTS OR PSUEDO-STUDENTS IN EXTORTING "CONTRIBUTIONS," INTERFERRING TRAFFIC, SEIZING BUSES AND HARANGUING 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,  
(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  
(D) 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:  
12:40 PM WORKERS (MOSTLY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES) GATHER IN ZOCALO TO  
HEAR 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 LOUDSPEAKERS 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 BURST "IN THE AIR" TO  
"REESTABLISH ORDER." 2:55 POLICE SURROUND BUILDING, CAPTURE THREE  
PERSONS, ONE DRESSED TOTALLY IN RED AND CARRYING MACHINE GUN.  
3:30 IN FORTY MINUTE ACTION POLICE, ARMY CLEAR ZOCALO. EMBASSY  
REPORTS INDICATE CONSIDERABLE VIOLENCE, GUNSHOTS, BUT NO CONFIRMED  
DEATHS. 4:10 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. 6:40 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 IMPEDE  
TRAFFIC. BROKEN UP BY POLICE. 8:00 PM ANOTHER GROUP STUDENTS SEEK  
BLOCK TRAFFIC DOWNTOWN STREET, BROKEN UP BY POLICE WHO USED GRENADE.  
8:50 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.  
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