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ACTION SAL 01

INFO ARA 08, CU 04, ID 13, HEW 07, AID 28, UGR 03, NIC 01, NSA 02, CIAE 00,

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6894

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 5840

REF STATE 186094

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Mexico
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1. BROAD DISCUSSIONS WITHIN EMBASSY SUPPLEMENTING ONE I HELD IN REPLYING TO STATE 170648 LED TO FOLLOWING GENERAL CONCLUSIONS RE CURRENT SITUATION OF YOUTH IN MEXICO.

2. FIRST SALIENT POINT IS THAT VAST MAJORITY MEXICAN POPULATION CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS YOUTH, SINCE 71.7 PERCENT, ACCORDING TO LATEST ESTIMATES, ARE UNDER 35, AND ABOUT HALF OF THIS NUMBER ARE UNDER 15. HOWEVER ONLY SMALL MINORITY IS POLITICALLY ACTIVE. AGRARIAN YOUTH IS LARGELY INERT DESPITE PARTICIPATION IN OCCASIONAL RURAL INCIDENTS, THOUGH INFUX INTO CITIES MAY REPRESENT IMPLIED COMMENT ON THEIR LOT. POOR URBAN YOUTH IS UNORGANIZED AND PREOCCUPIED WITH DAILY VICISSITUDES THOUGH RAPIDITY OF URBAN GROWTH MAY OUTSTRIP ABILITY OF GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLY JOBS AND SERVICES AND THEREBY GENERATE ACTIVE UNREST. NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF THESE GROUPS IS EARLY AGE AT WHICH FAMILIES FORMED WHICH GENERALLY TURNS YOUNG MEN'S FANCIES TO THOUGHTS OTHER THAN POLITICS.

3. MAJOR ELEMENT OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE YOUTH IS ACTUALLY AND POTENTIALLY LOCATED WITHIN STUDENT POPULATION. EVEN WITHIN THIS POPULATION, MAJORITY PRINCIPALLY JOB-ORIENTED RATHER THAN INTERESTED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY, ALTHOUGH ACTIVIST MINORITY CAN BE VERY VOCAL.

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4. ETHOS OF MEXICAN REVOLUTION REMAINS PRINCIPAL IDEOLOGICAL GUIDE FOR MAJORITY OF MEXICAN YOUTH. AT SAME TIME, VAGUE KIND OF MARXISM, STRONG SENSE OF NATIONALISM, BOTH INVOLVING GENERALIZED OPPOSITION TO "IMPERIALISM", ARE PERHAPS MAJOR INTELLECTUAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MORE POLITICALLY ORIENTED YOUTH. ALL THESE TEND TO GENERATE ANTI-US ORIENTATION AMONG THESE GROUPS. ALTHOUGH NOTEWORTHY HOW LITTLE ACTIVE SUPPORT CAN BE MOBILIZED ON ISSUES SUCH AS VIETNAM OR DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

5. KEY FEATURE ABOUT ORGANIZATION OF YOUTH IN MEXICO IS THAT MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO ARE ORGANIZED TAKE PART WITHIN PARAMETERS OF SYSTEM: IN GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED INAM (ABOUT 120,000) AND YOUTH SECTIONS OF RULING PRI AND ITS CONSTITUENT SECTOR. THESE SUBJECT TO IDEOLOGICAL LEANINGS DISCUSSED PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH. OTHER PARTIES (PAN, PPS, PCM) ALSO HAVE YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS OF LIMITED STRENGTH. IN UNIVERSITIES STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS ABOUND, RANGING FROM SEVERAL VARIETIES OF EXTREME LEFT TO FEW SMALLER RIGHTIST ORGANIZATIONS. MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS ARE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TECHNICAL STUDENTS (FNET), WHICH MAY COMPRISE 80,000 STUDENTS, BUT IS AT LEAST AT PRESENT ALMOST A GOVERNMENT ORGAN; COMMUNIST-SPONSORED NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC STUDENTS (CNED) AND A COMMUNIST-FRONT FEDERATION (FEX) WHICH ENCOMPASSES ALMOST ALL RURAL NORMAL SCHOOLS. ALSO WORTHY OF NOTE ARE STRONGLY RIGHTIST MURD AND OTHER LESS MILITANT CATHOLIC YOUTH GROUPS. LEFTIST PREDOMINATE AMONG STUDENT GROUPS BUT GENERALLY FAIL TO GET MASS SUPPORT AND ARE SPFLAGUED BY WEAKNESS AND GENERAL FRAGMENTATION OF MEXICAN LEFT, YOUNG AND OLD. FACTIONALISM HAS CONSISTENTLY THWARTED PERIODIC ATTEMPTS, USUALLY FROM LEFT BUT OCCASIONALLY FROM GOVERNMENT, TO ORGANIZE UNAM SYSTEM.

6. STUDENT UNREST, WHICH AS NOTED MEXICO 5481 IS ENDEMIC IN MEXICO, HAS ALMOST ALWAYS FOCUSED ON LOCAL ISSUES: BAD CONDITIONS IN GIVEN UNIVERSITY, ANGER AT STATE GOVERNOR, UNPOPULARITY OF SPECIFIC TEACHERS OR RECTORS. SUCCESS IN SECURING OUSTER OF ONE GOVERNOR IN 1966 (DURANGO) HAS BEEN BALANCED BY FAILURE IN MORE RECENT EFFORT (TABASCO IN 1968) AND BY GOVERNMENT FIRMNESS WHICH HAS EXTENDED TO POINT OF SENDING TROOPS ONTO CAMPUSES IN MORELIA AND HERMOSILLO IN 1966 AND 1967. EXTREME LEFTISTS SOMETIMES INVOLVED AND OFTEN SEEK TO EXPLOIT INCIDENTS OF UNREST BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT ARE NOT INITIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM. HOWEVER, WHILE THE LEFT CONSTANTLY SEEKS TO LINK STUDENTS WITH

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LABOR AND/OR AGRARIAN AGITATION. THERE HAS BEEN NO SUCH LINKAGE OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE.

7. KEY STABILIZING ELEMENT HERE IS THAT AMBITIOUS AND PRACTICAL IDEALISTS AMONG YOUTH STILL SEE OUTLET WITHIN THE SYSTEM -- THROUGH PRI GOVERNMENT SERVICE, PROFESSIONS (USUALLY ALLIED TO GOVERNMENT) AND TO LESSER DEGREE IN PRIVATE SECTOR. COMMON LIFE CYCLE IS FOR YOUNG MAN TO GO THROUGH MARXIST PHASE (OFTEN EXTREME) IN UNIVERSITY AND TO BE ABSORBED BY ESTABLISHMENT SHORTLY THEREAFTER. SOME ARE SIMPLY CAREERISTS WHO REALIZE THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE, BUT SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER ALSO BELIEVE THAT REVOLUTIONARY ETHOS GUIDING RULERS RETAINS VALIDITY AND VITALITY. OPPORTUNITIES EXIST NOT ONLY FOR PERSONAL BETTERMENT BUT FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND FOR SOCIAL SERVICE. 1964 USIS STUDY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENT ATTITUDES -- WHICH IS STILL ESSENTIALLY VALID -- SHOWED THAT 90 PERCENT FELT MEXICO HAS BEEN PROGRESSING FAIRLY WELL OR BETTER.

8. THE ESTABLISHMENT IN TURN SEEKS ASSIDUOUSLY TO KEEP IN TUNE WITH VIEWS AND DEMANDS OF YOUTH. THUS ACTIVIZING IMPACT OF YOUTHFUL OUTBURSTS IN OTHER PARTS OF WORLD ON MEXICAN YOUTH IS USUALLY BALANCED BY INCREASED SELF-EXAMINATION BY GOVERNMENT. AT PRESENT, FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS KNOWN THAT GOM HAS IN FACT SET IN MOTION STUDIES ALONG LINES OF REFTEL ON SITUATION OF YOUTH IN MEXICO.

9. AT SAME TIME, AS NOTED MEXICO 5481, THERE ARE NUMBER OF LONG-RANGE FACTORS WHICH COULD CHANGE SITUATION IN MEXICO, ALL OF WHICH WOULD VITALLY AFFECT YOUTH: GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT, EXPANDING URBAN POVERTY, LIMITS ON ARABLE LAND, SLOWING RATES OF INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION.

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10. FAILURE OF EDUCATION TO KEEP PACE WITH DEMANDS IS ALSO CONTINUOUS PROBLEM. ACCORDING TO RECENT STUDY, ONLY ONE PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO ENTER PRIMARY SCHOOL WILL REACH UNIVERSITY LEVEL AND INORDINATE NUMBER WHO REACH THIS LEVEL DROP OUT FOR BOTH SCHOLASTIC AND ECONOMIC REASONS. RURAL EDUCATION IS WOEFULLY INADEQUATE. TEACHERS' SALARIES ARE GREAT PROBLEM. TECHNICAL EDUCATION IS INSUFFICIENT IN SCOPE AND IN RELEVANCE TO LATER UTILIZATION. HIGHER EDUCATION SUFFERS FROM DEFICIENCIES OF QUALITY, EXCESSIVE CONCENTRATION IN MEXICO CITY. THERE IS DEARTH OF POST GRADUATE FACILITIES, CAUSING MANY TO GO TO US OR EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES FOR WHICH MEXICAN STUDENTS ARE OFTEN INSUFFICIENTLY PREPARED. NEVERTHELESS MEXICAN REVOLUTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN EDUCATION-CONSCIOUS, 25 PERCENT OF GOVERNMENT BUDGET GOING TO THAT PURPOSE, AND ACTIVE EFFORTS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO SEEK EVEN MORE FUNDS.

11. OUR CONCLUSIONS REMAIN AS STATED IN MEXICO 5481 THAT SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH IN MEXICO IS UNLIKELY TO REACH CRITICAL PROPORTIONS AT LEAST IN NEXT FEW YEARS ALTHOUGH EXTREMELY SERIOUS AND DIFFICULT LONG-TERM PROBLEMS CAUTION AGAINST ANY COMPLACENCY.
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