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By SAJ Date 3/21/02

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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23-8

July 31, 1968

O.T.O.

TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S 3R
FROM: ARA - Covey T. Oliver
SUBJECT: Student Disturbances in Mexico - INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

After five days, the worst student disturbances in Mexico City in 20 years appeared to be abating on July 31 as federal troops were withdrawn from the city. The demonstrations and rioting primarily involved secondary students, protesting police brutality and grievances against the bus companies, who were subsequently incited by communist and pro-Castro groups. Police sources have reported four students dead, and over 200 persons injured.

When student demonstrators overwhelmed riot police in the center of the city on July 29, army troops had to be called in to restore order and to expel students from the secondary schools they had occupied.

Following the initial disorders July 26 the Government arrested Communist Party (PCM) leaders and raided a communist paper. The press continues to stress communist and foreign involvement and the Government has indicated its intention to deport large numbers of foreigners including known communists even if they were not involved in the disorders. The daughter of U.S. folksinger Pete Seeger and one other American are among those who were arrested.

Embassy Mexico reports that while there is broad sympathy among students for the demonstrators and against police,

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there is little popular support, and even some resentment of the disruption caused.

The GOM may have used the disorders as a pretext to remove from circulation those communist leaders who it suspected might have led disturbances during the Olympics in October.

President Diaz Ordaz has not cut short a trip in the provinces in an apparent effort to minimize the importance of the riots. Protection of our Embassy has been excellent, and the American School, closed July 30 because of a bomb scare, reopened July 31, as did the National University.

The student grievances about police brutality, bus company failure to indemnify injured students and Government violation of university "autonomy" remain. When news of the four student deaths (currently suppressed) becomes public, further disorders are likely, though current estimates are that the worst of the violence has run its course.

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