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ACTION ARA 16

INFO CIAE 00, DODE 00, GPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10, P 04,

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7167

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 6328

SUBJ: ANALYSIS OF STUDENT DISTURBANCES

1. EMBASSY HAS REVIEWED RECENT STUDENT RIOTS AND REACHED FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

2. IMMEDIATE ORIGIN OF TROUBLE WAS JULY 23 GANG FIGHT BETWEEN TWO SCHOOLS WHICH TRIGGERED SUCCESSIVE PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST POLICE ON JULY 26 AND 29 WITH ESCALATING VIOLENCE WHICH NECESSITATED USE OF ARMY. GOVT GRANTED PERMISSION FOR JULY 26 AND 29 RALLIES PRESUMABLY AS OUTLET FOR STUDENT DISGRUNTLEMENT BUT OBVIOUSLY UNDERESTIMATED RESULTANT LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND OVERESTIMATED DEGREE OF ITS CONTROL. MAJOR RALLY JULY 26 WAS IN HANDS OF NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC ORGANIZATION (FNET) HITHERTO CONSIDERED UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL. STUDENTS' LACK OF ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION MAY HAVE PERSUADED GOVERNMENT THAT JULY 29 RALLY WOULD BE RAGTAG AFFAIR EASILY CONTROLLED, ALTHOUGH ALERTING OF ARMY DURING THAT AFTERNOON INDICATED SOME WORRY. ABOUT 2500 TO 3000 STUDENTS INVOLVED IN JULY 26 FRACAS, UNKNOWN NUMBER ON JULY 29 THOUGH ESTIMATES RUN INTO SEVERAL THOUSANDS. CASUALTIES ON JULY 29 NOT YET REVEALED. POLICE SOURCE CONFIDENTIALLY STATED FOUR DIED, ABOUT 200 WOUNDED (THOUGH RUMORS AROUND TOWN NAME LARGER FIGURES.)

3. GOVERNMENT FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS STRESSING COMMUNIST AND FOREIGN CULPABILITY BUT DEGREE TO WHICH THIS IS CASE NOT ENTIRELY CERTAIN. COMMUNIST ROLE IN CHANGING PEACEFUL TO VIOLENT RALLY MOST CLEAR ON JULY 26 WHEN MERGER OF SMALL TOTALLY COMMUNIST PRO-CUBA RALLY

WITH LARGER FNET RALLY SPARKED FIRST SERIOUS OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE. COMMUNISTS AWARE AHEAD OF TIME OF FNET RALLY AND MIGHT WELL HAVE

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TO STIR UP STUDENT-POLICE CLASH DESPITE VIRTUAL CERTAINTY OF GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN AGAINST COMMUNISTS. PRO-SOVIET GROUPS COULD THEREBY DEMONSTRATE THEIR MILITANCY; MORE EXTREMIST ELEMENTS SUCH AS TROTSKYITES AND CASTRISTAS ALWAYS ON LOOKOUT FOR SUCH OPPORTUNITY. HOWEVER, FACT THAT MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS BEYOND CONTROL OF COMMUNISTS OR ANYONE ELSE OBSCURES DEGREE OF COMMUNIST INVOLVEMENT.

4. ONE DISTURBING CONSEQUENCE OF RIOTS, WHOEVER THE INSTIGATORS, HAS BEEN EVIDENT PREDISPOSITION OF LARGE NUMBER OF YOUNG MEXICANS INCLUDING MANY OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE, TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE. WINDOW BREAKING, LOOTING, USE OF MOLOTOV COCKTAILS, ATTEMPTED SEIZURE OF ARMS, REPRESENT NEW DIMENSIONS IN MEXICAN STUDENT AGITATION. EXTENSION OF DISRUPTION BEYOND UNIVERSITY WHICH HAD POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGING NATIONAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS OLYMPICS AND TOURISM ANOTHER NEW DIMENSION WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED TO GIVE NEW HEART TO EXTREME LEFTIST GROUPS. TWO HIGHLY EXPLOITABLE ISSUES--POLICE BRUTALITY, UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY-- AND PROSPECT OF MARTYRS MUST ALSO BE ENCOURAGING TO THESE GROUPS.

5. REQUIREMENT FOR URGENT GOVERNMENT ACTION HEIGHTENED BY NEED TO BRING STUDENTS INTO LINE BEFORE DISTURBANCES AFFECT OLYMPICS AND TOURISM IN GENERAL. GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY SHOWN ITS DISPOSITION TO USE BOTH STICK AND CARROT. NUMBER OF HARD CORE COMMUNISTS AND EXTREMIST LEADERS WILL PROBABLY REMAIN IN JAIL FOR SOME TIME. STRONG MEASURES CAN BE EXPECTED TO CIRCUMSCRIBE ACTIVITIES OF THOSE ON OUTSIDE. PATRIOTIC APPEALS SUCH AS THAT MADE BY DIAZ ORDAZ MAY INFLUENCE SOME STUDENTS. DESIRE OF MAJORITY TO RETURN TO THEIR CLASSES (ESPECIALLY SINCE EXAMS ARE NEAR,) LACK OF SYMPATHY FOR STUDENTS' CAUSE OUTSIDE THEIR RANKS ALSO STRONG GOVERNMENT ASSETS.

6. BROAD STUDENT SUPPORT WHICH AUTONOMY AND BRUTALITY ISSUES HAVE ALREADY GENERATED, EVIDENT VOLATILITY OF LARGE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS SUGGEST THAT GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO GO BEYOND TEMPORIZING CONCESSIONS MADE TO STUDENTS BY MAYOR CORONA DEL ROSAL IF IT IS NOT ONLY TO TERMINATE CURRENT SITUATION BUT SECURE STUDENT COMPLIANCE AT LEAST THROUGH OLYMPICS. SACRIFICE OF RIOT POLICE IS OUT OF QUESTION, BUT

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GOVERNMENT MIGHT ADMIT THAT POLICE ACTED TOO HARSHLY, PUBLICIZE FACT SOME HAVE BEEN DISCIPLINED AND STUDENTS INDEMNIFIED, ANNOUNCE NEW RULES ON POLICE BEHAVIOR IN STUDENT MATTERS. BUT THESE ACTIONS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH. GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE TO ACCEDE TO DEMAND THAT POLICE CHIEF AND/OR HIS DEPUTY BE SACRIFICED.

7. MULTIPLICITY OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS MEANS THAT FULL AGREEMENT WITH STUDENT BODY IS NEVER POSSIBLE AND CONCESSIONS ALWAYS CARRY WITH THEM DANGER THAT DEMANDS WILL BE STEPPED UP. MOREOVER, CURRENT AGITATION HAS NOT EVEN TOUCHED MANY GRIEVANCES OF ELEMENTS MOST ACTIVE IN RECENT RIOTS, PARTICULARLY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN PREPARATORY SCHOOLS. THESE GRIEVANCES--NOT EASILY SATISFIED--INCLUDE BADLY EQUIPPED AND CROWDED CLASSROOMS, INADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION, RESTRICTED ENTRY INTO UNAM, AND IN CASE OF TEACHERS, POOR PAY.

8. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SEVERAL GROUPS WHICH WOULD HAVE LIKED TO GIVE STUDENT DISTURBANCES MORE POLITICAL TINGE, INCLUDING IN SOME INSTANCES PUSHING THEM INTO ANTI-AMERICAN DIRECTIONS, STUDENT RANCOR ALMOST ENTIRELY CENTERED ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS OF POLICE BEHAVIOR AND UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY. REPEATED RECEIPT OF THREATS BY US AND US-IDENTIFIED INSTITUTIONS APPEARS IN MAIN TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO DISPERSE POLICE FORCES AS WELL AS TO IDENTIFY US WITH ANTI-STUDENT FORCES. RESULT WAS TO WORRY AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND IN CASE OF EMBASSY TO DEMONSTRATE BY NUMEROUS POLICE GUARD GOM'S ANXIETY TO AVOID INCIDENTS WHICH MIGHT AROUSE US OPINION.  
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