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By *S* NARA Date *6/18/08*

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Note - 290

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

April 19, 1968

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *tlh*

Subject: Brazilian Opposition to NPT Draft Likely to Continue

Brazilian position has hardened.* Brazilian opposition to restrictions upon research for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy--including nuclear explosions--has hardened to the extent that it now seems unlikely that Brazil will sign the present draft of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). On April 16, Foreign Minister Magalhaes Pinto told Ambassador Tuthill that he is willing to discuss the issue with Secretary Rusk, but he reiterated that the Brazilian position is now firm and said, "We will not sign". He also expressed his intention to attend the forthcoming UN General Assembly session in order to oppose the treaty and said that Brazil could not "face future generations if it is obliged by treaty to impede its development for 25 years while nuclear powers can proliferate nuclear weapons without limitation". Confident of domestic support on this highly nationalistic issue and anticipating considerable international support, the Foreign Minister is clearly determined to maintain his position. We do not expect President Costa e Silva, who will make the final decision, to overrule the Foreign Minister, even though he undoubtedly regrets opposing the US on so significant an issue.

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Domestic support assured. Some observers view Brazilian opposition to the NPT draft as largely the result of demagoguery by the politically ambitious Foreign Minister

* See Research Memorandum RAR-28, "Brazil's Independent Nuclear Policy," September 14, 1967 (SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM), which discusses the bases and motivations for Brazil's nuclear policy.

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It is true that Mzgalhaes Pinto has tried to exploit the issue for personal advantage but it is equally true that many Brazilians--even those who oppose the Foreign Minister's methods--sincerely view the NPT draft as an affront to Brazilian sovereignty. Special interest groups such as the Brazilian Nuclear Energy Commission and certain influential Army officers are in the forefront of support for the GOB policy, but opposition to the treaty draft also comes from the press and from politicians of both political parties. The general public has little appreciation of the NPT issue beyond the simplistic view that it represents a Soviet-American attempt to deny to Brazil and other nations that which they themselves already have. There appear to be no significant forces at work in Brazil to change present opposition to the NPT. Indeed, the government's stance on nuclear research is so popular domestically that any alteration of it would have to be carefully worded so as not to create the impression of a "sell-out" to the United States.

Brazil confident of international support. Bolstering the Brazilian position is the apparent confidence of the Foreign Ministry that it now has the support of enough UN members either to block passage of the NPT or to make approval of the treaty meaningless. A number of countries--West Germany in particular--have reportedly told the Brazilians that they are both pleased and relieved by the Brazilian lead in opposing the NPT draft. Encouraged by these indications of support, the Brazilians believe that it is probable that the UN General Assembly will postpone action on the NPT because of the serious reservations of many nations, especially the Afro-Asians. Should the US and the Soviets force the issue, the Brazilians think that the treaty would be passed with such a small margin of votes as to make it relatively meaningless because of insufficiently broad support.

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Final decision will be Costa e Silva's. Ultimately, it is President Costa e Silva who will determine the Brazilian position in the UN General Assembly session, but domestic political considerations and the need for preserving Brazil's international prestige do not encourage optimism. Although there were some early indications that the President's attitude toward the NPT was less negative than that of his Foreign Minister, we have no reason to believe that Costa e Silva will attempt to modify the Brazilian position. He probably does not have a clear understanding of the intricacies of the NPT problem and consequently relies heavily upon Magalhaes Pinto and his military advisors who, on this subject at least, find themselves in agreement.

So far, the only flexibility noted in the Brazilian position has been the Foreign Minister's willingness to meet with the Secretary. Despite the tenacity of the Brazilians' current view, the Costa e Silva government undoubtedly regrets finding itself in opposition to the United States on so important an issue. Mixed with this regret, however, is resentment of US "lack of understanding" of the Brazilian position. The Brazilians seem to desire an eventual agreement with the US on this issue, but they are apparently convinced that such an agreement cannot be reached at this time.

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