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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5234
INFO RUESUA/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 6884
RUESUP/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 6890
RUEHBRP/AMCONSUL PORTO ALEGRE 4761
RUEHBRC/AMCONSUL RECIFE 6710
ZEN/AMCONSUL SALVADOR DA BAHIA POUCH
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 07031

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, ECON, BR, OVIP (TRIBLE, PAUL)
SUBJ: MEETING OF SENATOR TRIBLE WITH PRESIDENT
- FIGUEIREDO

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO BRASILIA ON JULY 10 SENATOR PAUL TRIBLE (R-VA) CALLED ON PRESIDENT FIGUEIREDO. THE CONVERSATION DID NOT PRODUCE ANY NEW INFORMATION, BUT IT DID CONFIRM THE GROWING PUBLIC IMAGE OF PRESIDENT FIGUEIREDO AS A MAN WHO DOES NOT LIKE POLITICS, DISTRUSTS POLITICIANS AND LOOKS FORWARD WITH PLEASURE TO THE END OF HIS TERM. CHARGE O'DONNELL AND AN FSN INTERPRETER ACCOMPANIED TRIBLE ON THE CALL. A DETAILED MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION IS BEING POUCHED TO ARA/BR FERRER AND INR/IAA GALLUCCI.

3. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONVERSATION:

-- PRESIDENT FIGUEIREDO SAID THAT HIS FATHER ADVISED HIM NEVER TO GET INTO POLITICS, BUT THAT HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES, BY CHOOSING HIM PRESIDENT IN 1979, MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO FOLLOW THAT ADVICE. HE SAID THAT HIS EXPERIENCE IN THE PRESIDENCY HAS BEEN VERY PAINFUL.

-- THE PRESIDENT SAID HE LOST FAITH A LONG TIME AGO IN MEN, PARTICULARLY BRAZILIAN POLITICIANS. "I HAVE TO CONFESS THAT I HAVE NEVER LEARNED HOW TO LIVE WITH BRAZILIAN POLITICIANS BECAUSE, AS A GENERAL RULE, ALL THEY DO IS THINK ABOUT THEMSELVES AND HOW TO GET OR STAY IN POWER. THEY NEVER CARE ABOUT THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY." PRESIDENT FIGUEIREDO ADDED THAT POLITICIANS SOMETIMES TELL HIM THAT ONE MUST GIVE UP ONE'S CONVICTIONS IN ORDER TO SATISFY THE DESIRES OF THE PEOPLE. HE SAID HE USUALLY ANSWERS THAT A STATESMAN MUST HAVE THE COURAGE TO STAND UP TO THE PEOPLE AND TELL THEM THEY ARE WRONG WHEN HE IS CONVINCED THAT IN FACT THE PEOPLE ARE WRONG.

-- FIGUEIREDO DESCRIBED HIGH INTEREST RATES AND THE COST

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OF PETROLEUM AS THE TWO MOST SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS NOW FACING BRAZIL. HE SAID THAT MOST OF THE MONEY WHICH BRAZIL BORROWED ABROAD HAS BEEN WELL SPENT. HE CITED THE ITAIPU POWER PLANT AS AN EXAMPLE. HE SAID THAT THE DECISION TO GREATLY EXPAND STEEL PRODUCTION CERTAINLY SEEMED A GOOD IDEA WHEN IT WAS MADE. BUT HE NOTED THAT THE WORLD RECESSION HAD HURT BRAZILIAN STEEL EXPORTS.

-- FIGUEIREDO SAID THAT THE PROBLEM OF LARGE LAND AREAS OWNED BY A FEW (LATIFUNDIOS) MUST BE RESOLVED BY DEMOCRATIC MEANS, NOT ALONG MARXIST LINES. HE CLAIMED THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS BEEN A SERIOUS BARRIER TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR DEMOCRATIC LAND REFORM. HE SAID THE CHURCH WAS INFILTRATED BY MARXISTS AND CITED FOREIGN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AS BEING PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN SPREADING THEIR BRAND OF MARXISM AMONG THE FAITHFUL, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTHEAST.

-- FAMILY PLANNING IS ANOTHER AREA IN WHICH THE CHURCH HAS PLAYED A NEGATIVE ROLE, FIGUEIREDO SAID. HE SAID THAT NOT ONLY DO COUPLES HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE THE SIZE OF THEIR FAMILIES, BUT IT IS ALSO THE STATE'S DUTY TO PROVIDE THE POOR WITH THE INFORMATION AND THE MEANS FOR THEM TO EXERCISE THAT RIGHT. HE SAID THAT MARXISTS ALSO OPPOSE POPULATION CONTROL BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT THE LARGER THE POPULATION AND THE GREATER THE POVERTY, THE BETTER THEIR CHANCES OF SPREADING THEIR PHILOSOPHY.

-- FIGUEIREDO RECALLED WITH PLEASURE PRESIDENT REAGAN'S VISIT. HE SAID THAT "WE DISAGREED ON SOME POINTS, BUT THEY WERE THE MOST PLEASANT DISAGREEMENTS I HAVE HAD IN MY LIFE." PRESIDENT REAGAN "CONQUERED US ALL", HE SAID.

4. COMMENT: PRESIDENT FIGUEIREDO APPEARED TENSE, IRASCIBLE AND BITTER WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT BRAZILIAN POLITICS AND POLITICIANS, THOUGH AS THE CONVERSATION PROGRESSED HE BECAME MORE RELAXED. THIS CONVERSATION LENDS SUPPORT TO THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF AN HONEST, UNCOMPLICATED MILITARY OFFICER WHO IS OUT OF HIS MILIEU IN THE FRUSTRATING BUSINESS OF POLITICS.
WATSON
END OF MESSAGE

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