

# AIRGRAM

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FROM : AmEmbassy MEXICO

SUBJECT : Provincial School Support of Capital Students

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### SUMMARY

As a supplement to A-1422, October 20, reviewing the student conflict in Mexico City, this airgram deals with the repercussions of that conflict in institutions outside the capital. Highlights are covered with no attempt to give details or full ramifications of each manifestation.

### END SUMMARY

1. Almost from the beginning of the student movement in Mexico City, the National Strike Council (CNH) sought support from provincial schools to bolster the cause in the capital. Students, including many from outside the Federal District studying in the capital, were sent to explain what was occurring in Mexico City and to plead for sympathy strikes. There were also indications of students, especially from nearby cities such as Toluca or Cuernavaca, coming to the capital to take part in marches and demonstrations.

2. One or another form of protest took place in almost every province and major public university outside Mexico City and there is no doubt that there was widespread indignation among students throughout the country following army seizure of UNAM and the October 2 events. Sympathy strikes, of varying duration, took place in a few. But, perhaps more important, no provincial incidents reached the degree of intensity or involved a threat to social peace comparable to the events in Mexico City. There were several reasons for this:

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(a) Provincial universities are much smaller than those in Mexico City giving the students correspondingly less leverage and easing the problem of control. Moreover, little evidence appeared that secondary level students, whose participation in the Mexico City disturbances was a striking addition to the picture of student unrest, were a prominent feature of any activity in the provinces.

(b) The government made conscious efforts to keep contacts between capital and provincial student groups to a minimum. As early as August 7, students were complaining that the government had violated Article 11 of the Constitution by preventing students from the provinces from coming to the capital, and those from the capital from fanning out to the provinces.

(c) Provincial universities, much less prestigious as a rule than the national universities, seem more vulnerable to pressures such as that applied by the Governor of Sinaloa who cut off funds to the striking state university.

(d) Pro-government forces are much better organized in many provincial universities. Active support for the President was thus manifested in Guadalajara, Colima and Oaxaca.

(e) Only where local grievances became involved, as in Sonora and Sinaloa, or where students are already disaffected for other reasons, as in Puebla, did protests gather any force. However, the linkage to events in Mexico City is tenuous. Except for Puebla and Morelos, students even in schools where sympathy for Mexico City has been actively demonstrated have gone back to their studies.

FIVE STATES HAVING MOST SERIOUS DISTURBANCES

3. NUEVO LEON. Sympathy for the cause of the capital students was promulgated in Monterrey by street corner meetings to inform the public about events in the capital. Twelve schools of the University of Nuevo Leon and the Superior Normal School went on strike September 25. One of the immediate demands of the students was that the government produce two UNL students who had disappeared on September 21. A silent march was held on September 26 in memory of students killed in Mexico City. The UNL student Federation occupied the Rectory and other buildings on October 3 promising to relinquish them when the whereabouts of the two missing students was explained. The following day the university workers and teachers union met and voted to support the striking students in the capital. The two students were finally produced and the UNL and related schools adopted a

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general pattern of return to classes on October 14 and 15 while maintaining support for the student strike committee's demands in the capital, although the Normal Superior School remained on strike. One new feature was the involvement in public meetings of students from the elite private school, Monterrey Tech which has been very strict about any political activity on the part of the students. The individuals involved appear to have been severely disciplined.

4. PUEBLA. Various marches and demonstrations at the University of Puebla preceded a strike on September 24 which was prompted by occupation of UNAM. A march planned by students in mid-October to protest the Tlatelolco clash was cancelled when the local army garrison threatened to break it up. On November 4 the students ignored government calls for a return to classes and the two month old strike continued. Reminiscences of earlier violence (see A-1216 of July 68) were evoked when minor violence occurred on November 11 as striking students held a "lightning meeting" in downtown Puebla and then marched on nearby newspaper offices and tried to force entry. Granaderos dispersed the students who retreated to the University where a half hour battle ensued causing minor injuries but no deaths.

5. SINALOA. The Autonomous University of Sinaloa (AUS) went on strike in support of UNAM in early September when classes convened after the summer vacation. Soon after the strike commenced Governor Sánchez Celis announced that he would withhold all state aid for the University until such time as students and teachers would return to the classrooms. During the strike demonstrations Pres. Diaz Ordaz and Gov. Sánchez Celis were the principal targets, while Che Guevara banners were very much in evidence.

6. On October 5 the Governor announced that the normal state aid, as well as funds derived from the 10 percent special tax previously turned over to the University, would in the near future be used to grant scholarships to deserving full-time students, that recipients of scholarships must obtain and maintain a scholastic average of 7 or better, and further that a scholarship commission would be formed to grant the scholarships. The commission, he said, would be part of the University.

7. The Governor explained that he had already requested the state legislature to change the organic law of the University to conform with the new procedures of disbursing state University funds. He did not elaborate any as to who will appoint the commission members. Although it is generally believed that the governor intends to have some control over the university through the disbursement of state funds.

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8. The teachers' salaries and maintenance of building, etc. will be paid from tuition, Federal funds and other fees. The building program underway, it is understood, will not in any way be affected by this change. The new procedure of disbursing state funds will be put into effect as soon as the state legislature amends the organic law of the University. The AUS resumed classes on October 26 but the problem in Sinaloa seems to be more serious than in other states due to the emergence of a significant local issue produced by the strong action of the Governor. Agitation and disgruntled feeling with the new organic law can be expected on the part of the students and faculty. In addition, there seems to be some support among businessmen for the student cause although this is probably based more on general delight at seeing the center suffer with its own problems rather than sympathy for the political programs of the students.

9. SONORA. Early attempts by capital students to gain support of Sonora students was unsuccessful but by the end of September a more radical minority had created significant agitation for a student strike. The issue of support for capital students was complicated by coincident student discontent over an increase in tuition designed to go into effect in the fall. On October 3 the University Council accepted the resignations of Rector Roberto Reynoso Davila and Dr. Abel Hernandez Director of the School of Nursing. The resignations were believed to have been engineered by Governor Felix Serna to placate the students. The situation is calm for the moment but sympathy remains for the capital students. With the new Rector Dr. Federico Sotelo and his promise to run the school without an increase in fees, the students achieved their principal objectives.

10. VERACRUZ. Teachers and workers at the University of Veracruz in Jalapa voted on August 29 to go on an indefinite strike in support of the capital students. In Jalapa there was a demonstration by about 500 students in support of capital students on September 26. The demonstration was broken up by riot police and more than 32 persons were arrested.

11. On September 29 a student was shot and killed in Poza Rica, Veracruz when he tried to rescue a friend held by police for distributing student flyers. As a result of the student's death, a protest march was held and the mayor ordered an investigation to find out who was responsible. In Cordoba, Veracruz several students from Jalapa were detained for agitating in favor of the student cause. After an on again off again situation among the various faculties at the University of Veracruz (some of which are in Jalapa others in Veracruz), the government took a hard line on November 4 when it suspended five faculty members who supposedly were leading the strike, at the same time they invited the students to return and take exams or lose the year.

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OTHER STATES HAVING MINOR DISTURBANCES

12. BAJA CALIFORNIA. Students and teachers from the School of Economics at the University of Baja California in Tijuana went on a protest strike October 4 with the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Baja California State Student Federation. This was followed by a march of between 500 and 1000 students on October 11 and ended with a meeting in downtown Tijuana. Seven speakers extolled the just demands of their compatriots in Mexico City and condemned the local press for not reporting the truth about the CNH program. On November 6 the students reiterated their support for their comrades in the capital and continued with the strike.
13. CHIHUAHUA. Two marches were held on September 26 in Chihuahua City, one was led by the more moderate medical students who wanted a silent march, the other was led by Law and Agronomy students who wanted a more traditional demonstration with speeches, etc. Both marches attracted about 750 students each. Besides being demonstrations in sympathy with the capital students the marches were in response to a military "provocation" six days earlier when the Zone Commander said no public demonstrations would be permitted. He reversed himself one day before the marches were to take place, probably on orders from the center. The students returned to classes on October 28 after some brief strikes and "stops" before the Olympics but kept their eyes open for developments in the capital.
14. COAHUILA. On September 23 the students at the University of Coahuila in Torreon went on strike as a protest against the occupation of UNAM. The Faculty of Commerce and Administration did not immediately join the strike but offered their school as a site for the public dialogue between the CNH and the government, observing that the climate of tension in the capital was not propitious for such talks. After the Olympics, the majority of the students returned to classes but a minority were still carrying on a boycott as of mid-November.
15. COLIMA. On September 24 a meeting of about 200 students was held on the athletic field at the University of Colima. The majority voted to support the President, while a vocal minority promised to demonstrate publicly in favor of the CNH.
16. DURANGO. The students at the University of Juarez in Durango, Durango went on strike for 24 hours on August 13 in solidarity with the capital students. Police detained what the press called professional agitators but what were probably students from Mexico City. The UJ students were reluctant to go on a permanent strike because of closeness to the end of the school year. Students at the Technological Institute of Durango went on strike September 25 in support of capital students. After the Olympics the majority of students returned to classes but a minority were carrying on a boycott as of mid-November.

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17. GUERRERO. On September 24 elements of the 35th Military Zone took possession of the University of Guerrero in Chilpancingo. The Governor said it was a preventive action necessary to maintain social peace. The occupation caused indignation among students and teachers; the Rector protested to the Governor that the action was unnecessary since the students had been giving moral support to the capital students but had never proposed to commit disturbances. The troops were then withdrawn but continued to patrol the area. Three days later a twelve hour strike took place at the Rural Normal School in Ayotzinapa.

18. JALISCO. The Guadalajara Student Federation (FEG) has enunciated public support for the President on the student issue. However, the FEG is seriously divided and on October 7 the students in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters announced a three day strike in support of the capital students.

19. STATE OF MEXICO. A silent march was held by 200 students from the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico in Toluca on September 28. The march started at the rectory and ended at city's center. The students carried placards condemning "funcionarios venales", etc. and a moment of silence was observed for fallen students but there were no incidents of violence. The students returned to classes without incident on November 18 when their vacation ended.

20. MICHOACAN. There was considerable agitation at the University of Michoacan in Morelia against government actions toward the students in the capital and against the outgoing administration of Governor Arriaga Rivera.

21. MORELOS. At the University of Morelos in Cuernavaca there were meetings and a march which preceded a strike on September 24. However, one day before the Tlatelolco incident of October 2, the students voted to return to classes and the strike was ended. After Tlatelolco the students again voted to go on strike and then renewed their stand on November 5 when they refused to return to class after the Olympics.

22. OAXACA. On August 7 the Rector of the University of Oaxaca led a peaceful march in support of the capital students. There has been continued agitation and threats of strike since that time. On November 6 the Oaxacan students expressed support for the capital students and went on strike.

23. TABASCO. On July 26 unpopular Governor Manuel Mora returned to the state after a two month absence due officially to bad health but probably prolonged by previous demonstrations against him in May. Almost immediately upon his return student anti-Mora demonstrations broke out which included a march on the Governor's Palace and an attack on the local PRI headquarters causing 100 thousand pesos damage. Except for some

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weak attempts to tie the demonstrations in some way with the unrest in the capital there seemed no reason to believe that it was anything but a locally based issue. Nevertheless a good deal of anti-Mora sentiment exists and the situation is ripe for outside agitation.

24. TAMAULIPAS. An orderly demonstration in sympathy with the capital students was held by Tamaulipas students on October 8. About 400 students marched from the Institute Tecnologico Regional de Ciudad Madero to the Palacio Municipal in Tampico where speakers were heard. No attempt was made by local authorities to interfere.

25. YUCATAN. There was little apparent interest among students in Yucatan for supporting the capital students because the six demands were political and had little to do with the university. Nevertheless sentiment grew to do something in sympathy with their comrades in Mexico City so a march was held on September 26. The march was peaceful and was led by the Rector in order to keep it under control.

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