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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM
DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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

Subject: Mexican Student Demonstrations Continue Despite Government Efforts

Large student demonstrations in Mexico City are continuing despite government efforts to calm the student community. The demonstrations, which grew out of the bloody riots on 26 and 29 July, have had no major political repercussions as yet and have focused almost exclusively on grievances against police and other government officials. Time is a key factor in government responses to the situation because of the nearness of the October Olympic games.

Demonstrations continue. Radical student leaders and some communist youth members have successfully mounted three large student marches in downtown Mexico within the past three weeks. Upwards of 80,000 students participated in two of the demonstrations, the last of which was held on August 14. Student leaders working through various organizations have been able to sustain a high level of unrest in the community and have seemingly blunted government efforts to pacify the situation. The government has continued to work discreetly behind-the-scenes with sympathetic student leaders and the rector of the National Autonomous University, hoping to dissipate student fervor. However the tactic does not appear to be working and there are indications that responsible student leaders may be losing influence.

There has been no major violence since the government used military force to put down the July 29 riot. The peaceful character of the massive demonstrations is undoubtedly due largely to government manipulations of sympathetic student leaders. On the other hand, the violence risk factor in allowing large numbers of students to

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gather is extremely high and an incident could be precipitated without warning. The government's decisions to authorize each demonstration were probably taken in the belief that student energy would soon wear down, but the August 14 demonstration indicated that student enthusiasm remains high.

Students demands. So far student grievances have focused on local issues, but national issues could emerge if unrest continues. The students have charged the police with brutality, and are demanding the release of all imprisoned students and the recognition of university autonomy, which was violated by the military on 29 July. Radical student elements have made broader demands, including a bid for a 40-hour work week and better housing, hoping to enlist labor support, but most students do not as yet appear to be sympathetic to this approach.

The government has not shown any inclination to accede to student demands. It has offered to appoint a committee composed of students, educators, and government officials to study grievances and charges of police brutality, but the students have seemingly rejected the proposal. President Diaz Ordaz has made only one public speech concerning the demonstrations and has not seen fit to take a public stand on any proposed settlement of student problems. And for the first time student banners showed some animus against the president in the August 14 march. Heretofore the students have directed their anger at the chief of police and the mayor of Mexico City and called for their dismissal.

Time a key factor. Because of the nearness of the October Olympic games, the government may have to make some concessions to the students. However, the government will not wish to seem weak in the face of student intransigence, and the massive demonstration on August 14 will complicate efforts to work out a reconciliation. Student

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leaders will not be inclined to settle on terms favorable to the government so long as they are convinced that they can sustain unrest. As the time factor grows more important, President Diaz Ordaz may decide to appeal to student patriotism while offering to accede to some student demands. But he will retain the capability and willingness to deal harshly and effectively with new disorders.

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