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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S *plw*
FROM: ARA - Covey T. Oliver *etc*
SUBJECT: Mexico - Student Protests Continue - INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

August 28, 1968
1. PF
2. MEX
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Another large peaceful student demonstration occurred in Mexico City during the night of August 27. Police and military forces had to be called in this morning after most of the demonstrators had left the area to evict a number of youths who were determined to camp out indefinitely in the central plaza. The use of force (even though there apparently were no injuries) will probably increase pressures for new demonstrations.

The demonstration was marked by vitriolic personal attacks on the President. The demonstrators, who were not opposed by security forces, even smeared the Presidential Palace with paint. The size and intensity of the protest is remarkable, particularly in view of the GOM's offer, last week, to negotiate with the students on their grievances.

Attention is now focused on September 1 when President Diaz Ordaz will make his annual "State of the Union" speech and is expected to deal with the student problem. The evidence thus far is that Diaz Ordaz has not distinguished himself in handling the student crisis. He apparently has: 1) underestimated the depth of student hostility toward the GOM; 2) overestimated the role played by alleged "Communist" agitators; and 3) failed to follow up on possible opportunities to settle the problem.

In conclusion, the GOM's tactic of letting the discontent run its course does not appear to be working and has left the initiative with the students. The prospects for an early settlement have diminished.

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