

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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<p>1. COUNTRY: MEXICO</p> <p>2. SUBJECT: (U) Army Participation in Student Situation, Mexico City</p> <p>3. ISC NUMBER:</p> <p>4. DATE OF INFORMATION: 24 September - 18 October 1968</p> <p>5. PLACE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>6. [REDACTED]</p> <p>7. [REDACTED]</p>	<p>8. REPORT NUMBER: [REDACTED]</p> <p>9. DATE OF REPORT: 18 October 1968</p> <p>10. NO. OF PAGES: 9</p> <p>11. [REDACTED]</p> <p>12. ORIGINATOR: [REDACTED]</p> <p>13. PREPARED BY: [REDACTED]</p> <p>14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: [REDACTED]</p>
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15. SUMMARY:

(U) Stressing military participation, this report outlines the situation concerning student disorders in Mexico City during the period 24 September 1968 to 18 October 1968. Information is furnished in chronological order.

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1. (U) On 24 September 1968, the bulk of Mexican Army troops withdrew from the buildings of the Instituto Polytechnico Nacional (IPN) in the Casco de Santo Tomas and Tacatenco areas of Mexico City. Soldiers had moved into the buildings in the early morning hours of the same day. Army patrols also remained in the vicinity. After troops had dislodged students from the Casco de Santo Tomas buildings (about 300 were detained), an "arsenal" of 40 pistols, small-calibre rifles, shotguns, knives, bicycle chains, pipe-lengths and over 1,000 Molotov cocktails, was found and removed. Also found was a quantity of propaganda and several police uniforms which, it was opined, were for student use to permit them to move freely to gather information. Reportedly, four persons died, three were seriously injured and many others slightly injured in the hours-long battle between students and police in the Casco de Santo Tomas area, prior to use of Army troops. Also on 24 September,

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troops of the 35th Military Zone, accompanied by Judicial Police, cordoned off the Autonomous University of Guerrero in Chilpancingo as a "precautionary measure". Students there held meetings to determine if they would go on strike to support the Mexico City students. Similar action was taken at the Normal School in Iguala, Guerrero, where soldiers also were stopping cars at the city's edge to check passengers.

2. (U) In scattered outbursts of violence on 25 September, students in different areas of Mexico City burned buses, streetcars and other vehicles (total of 15). It was reported that one person was killed and two wounded by gunfire and many others slightly injured in other ways. About 700 soldiers and 25 vehicles, including armored cars, were used in the afternoon to break up a group of students on the Paseo de la Reforma near the Museum of Anthropology where they were trying to organize a march. The governing body of the National Autonomous University (UNAM) voted unanimously not to accept the "irrevocable" resignation of Rector Javier Carras Sierra. The Rector had announced his resignation on 22 September because of verbal attacks on him by members of the Revolutionary Party (PRI).

3. (U) On 26 September, violence in the city decreased, with only seven vehicles reported burned. Troops found the body of a student in an IPN building at Crecer de Santo Tomas; apparently he had been killed the night of 23 September. Military and police patrols were continued in the sensitive areas. Rector Carras Sierra agreed to continue in his post at UNAM, calling for withdrawal of federal forces from all university properties and reestablishment of order. One Mexico City Spanish-language newspaper published the following statistics, which were said to represent total losses since the beginning of the student disorders on 26 July (no mention was made of deaths or injuries):

- a. Total monetary losses: 100,273,000 pesos (about US \$8,022,240)
- b. 863 public transit units (primarily buses) damaged; small percent completely destroyed. (This large figure probably included buses on which students painted slogans)
- c. Thirty million pesos (about US \$2,400,000) business losses, including broken windows and looted property)
- d. Ten streetcars burned and partially destroyed
- e. Four ambulances burned
- f. 12 trucks belonging to Federal District partially destroyed
- g. Eight police panel trucks burned
- h. 16 motorcycles of traffic police burned
- i. Nine jeeps belonging to Federal District damaged.
- j. Six police radio patrol cars burned
- k. Damages to many street signs and traffic signals

4. (U) On 27 September the Mexican Government announced that Army troops would be withdrawn from the UNAM campus at University City as soon as competent university authorities requested such action. Troops had been occupying the campus and buildings since the 13 September takeover. Student reaction was mixed, with the militants of the National Strike Council (CNE) declaring the fight would continue. The Mexican Youth Confederation called for a truce and cooling-off period to last at least through the Olympics. Mexico City was quiet. About 3,000 students held an orderly rally at the Plaza of Three Cultures in the Tlatelolco-Manaolco area, where

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several speakers addressed the group from a balcony of one of the surrounding apartment buildings. The general tone of the speeches called for a continuation of the student strike.

5. (U) On 28 September, Doctor Barros Sierra issued a statement asking troops to leave UNAM grounds and buildings in University City. The University Council met to discuss a date for classes to resume. President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz appeared at the annual military graduation ceremony which was held in Military Camp #1 instead of the usual Campo Marte, which is located just off the Paseo de la Reforma. (NOTE: This switch of location for the ceremony very possibly was due to the fact that Campo Marte has been prepared for use of equestrian events during the Olympics.) The situation in the city was quiet and it began to look as though progress was being made for a settlement of the student problem.

6. 29 September was another quiet day. Troops remained at UNAM and, according to a statement from a representative of the Secretary of Defense, were engaged in cleaning the buildings and grounds preparatory to turning them over as soon as proper university authorities came forward to accept them. Troops also remained at the IPN campus at Casco de Santo Tomas. Faculty members and representatives of the Board of governors of UNAM met to discuss ways and means of returning the university to normalcy.

a. The students' National Strike Council (CNS) announced plans for a silent "mothers' march" on 1 October to be staged from the mothers' monument at Sullivan Park just off Paseo de la Reforma to the Chamber of Deputies. The march was to be made up of "mothers" to protest the detention by authorities of their children. According to CNS plans, this was to be followed on 2 October by a meeting of students at the Plaza of Three Cultures in the Tlatelolco area.

b. In Poza Rica, Veracruz, a preparatory student died of gunshot wounds in a skirmish with police.

c. Police authorities continued apprehending leaders of the student movement for whom warrants were outstanding. Press accounts said that charges were placed against 67 arrested in connection with the violence at Casco de Santo Tomas.

7. At about 1230, 30 September, the 1,300 soldiers (including the Paratroop Battalion) and 25 military vehicles left UNAM and officially turned the campus and grounds over to university authorities. The military contingent was under the command of Brig Gen Jose Fernandez Toledo. Troops had been at UNAM since they occupied University City on 18 September. With the withdrawal of troops from UNAM, federal forces remained at IPN installations in Casco de Santo Tomas and Vocational Schools 5 and 7. Within hours of the military evacuation of UNAM, CNS leaders moved in, declaring that students not only would continue their strike, but would step up the pace of the fight and increase their demands on the government. CNS leaders said at a press conference, attended by representatives of the foreign press, that no talks would be held with the Mexican Government until all school buildings had been evacuated by police and troops, all students released who had been detained since the disorders began in July and all "repression" of students by authorities stopped. They declared they would insist not only on their original demands, but would fight to end "all crisis and poverty" suffered by the people. Regarding the 2 October demonstration, the leaders said students would gather at the Plaza of the Three Cultures and march to Casco de Santo Tomas to demand withdrawal of authorities from IPN installations there.

a. Meanwhile, also on 30 September, the pre-announced "mothers' march" was held as scheduled, with about one thousand women, mostly dressed in black, proceeding from the Monument to Motherhood at Sullivan Park, just off the Paseo de la Reforma, to the Chamber of Deputies. Several thousand other persons joined in the march. The Chamber doors were shut tight when they arrived. Granaderos (riot police) were stationed along the route of march, but there was no disorder.

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2. It was learned that the Secretariat of National Defense had issued instructions giving authority to all Military Zone Commanders to move against student disturbances throughout Mexico without awaiting instructions from Mexico City.

3. (U) On 1 October, the CNH held two rallies at UNAM, each with several thousand participants and not leaving the university grounds. Speakers urged the students to attend the 2 October rally at the Plaza of Three Cultures to march to the Santo Tomas IPN campus.

a. UNAM officials said classes and examinations would begin in November after the Olympics, but CNH representatives declared nothing would return to normal until the government gives satisfaction to the six original student demands, plus the three new ones.

b. In Poza Rica, several thousand students marched in the second day of protests against the killing of a student by a policeman. Students at the University of Sonora and the University of Monterrey announced a stoppage of classes to support Mexico City students. Students at the University of Morelos, however, voted to return to classes.

c. Four youths, reportedly two Guatemalans, one Mexican and one Canadian, were arrested by police in Mexico City for having in their apartment one sub-machinegun, rifles and grenades.

d. The approaching Olympics began to push student affairs off the front pages of Mexico City newspapers.

5. [REDACTED] A new high in violence in the student disorders was struck on 2 October when the student meeting at the Plaza of the Three Cultures, Tlatelolco, degenerated into a shooting match between student snipers and police and Army troops. Early "official" figures indicated 22 dead and 87 wounded, but other figures published indicated 40 dead and 120 wounded. Among the wounded were several representatives of the foreign press, including an Italian woman correspondent. Also wounded seriously was Brig Gen Jose Fernandez Toledo, CO of the Paratroop Battalion, who had been in charge of troops occupying UNAM.

a. The student meeting at the plaza, with 3-5,000 in attendance and many others (including curious residents) watching from windows and balconies of the apartment buildings surrounding the plaza, started at about 1730. At about 1815, as student leaders were making speeches from a balcony of one of the buildings, Army troops and police moved in. Reportedly, the students were to be informed they would not be allowed to march to IPN buildings at Casco de Santo Tomas. Other reports indicated that students already had decided not to try the march in view of the presence of police and Army troops. An accurate account of what happened for the next few minutes after troops started to move in probably will never be known. Most accounts say a shot was heard, source unknown, shortly after which a flare (some sources reported several) appeared in the sky. Some observers thought the flare came from a helicopter circling overhead; others thought it came from a location on the ground. At any rate, the battle was on.

b. Most accounts indicate that Army personnel first fired into the air and that snipers in and on the surrounding modernistic apartment buildings fired on troops and police and, apparently, at least occasionally, indiscriminately into the crowd, members of which were frantically trying to leave the plaza, but were harpered (and some were trampled) by encircling foot soldiers and recon vehicles. Troops and police fired into the three or four apartment buildings from which fire was directed at them. Some police representatives, in plain clothes, were inside the buildings with the objective of arresting CNH leaders. Several fires were

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started in the apartment buildings, apparently caused by tracers from automatic weapons fired from the recon vehicles. There were reports of a group (probably police), identified by white gloves on the left hand, moving in the buildings and in the plaza with the apparent purpose of apprehending GUE leaders.

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c. Troops cordoned off the Tlatelolco housing development while others advanced with fired weapons through a 23 square-block area around the development. Student bands roared surrounding areas, burning buses and trolleys.

d. The fire fight, which started about 1815 hours, was intense for over an hour, died down and then started up again at about 2255. By midnight, the military was in control. By 0040 hours, troops had searched (apparently not too well) the buildings from which snipers had fired. Large quantities of small arms and ammunition were found in the apartment building "Chimahuu". It was reported that, besides Army elements, riot police, Federal Security Police, Federal and District Judicial Police, Secret Service, Special Services Police and even cadets of the Police Academy were involved in the operation.

e. One of the first wounded (and the first to reach the Central Military Hospital) was Eric Gen. Fernando Toledo, who apparently entered the plaza at the head of the troops.

f. Estimates of the number of persons detained went as high as several thousand. A number of the detainees had been arrested in previous disorders and released. Among the captured were a number of the GUE leaders including Soctrates Carnos Lerus, described as a Trotskyite.

g. Secretary of Defense Lt. Gen. Marcelino Garcia Barragan held a press conference after the situation had quieted and declared that student snipers had fired first and used submachineguns. He urged parents to control their children to prevent more violence. He declared the Army would permit no repetition of the disorders.

h. The wounded were taken to a number of civilian hospitals in Mexico City and some civilians were taken to the Military Hospital, along with wounded soldiers. A large percentage of the detainees were taken to Military Camp #1, probably as a matter of convenience and because of lack of room in civilian jails.

10. [REDACTED] On 3 October, recon vehicles, foot troops and police patrolled the Tlatelolco area of the previous night's fighting. Official figures went up to 32 soldiers and civilians killed, over 100 wounded (some figures indicate up to 500 were wounded), and "hundreds" detained. Soldiers and police continued searching the apartment buildings surrounding the Plaza of Three Cultures looking for weapons and students, some of whom reportedly were aided by residents in hiding from authorities. Police claimed that a group of "guerrillas" had participated in the shooting of the previous night to "create chaos".

a. Mexico City newspapers headlined a statement by Avery Brundage, President of the International Olympics Committee, that, despite the violence, the Olympics would go on as scheduled. Brundage said he had been assured by the Mexican Government that nothing would interfere with the peaceful entrance of the Olympic flame into the stadium nor with the games to follow.

b. Small demonstrations were staged by students in Guanajuato, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Aguascalientes and Pozos Rica in protest against the Mexico City events of 2 October. Students in Monterrey took over the rectory of the university there.

11. (U) At about 1215 on 4 October, a sniper began firing on troops and police at the Tlatelolco subdivision. The firing came from about the 10th floor of the ISSTE building. Troops and police answered the fire. One passerby was killed and another wounded, bringing the official death toll up to 34 during and subsequent

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to the 2 October affray. The fate of the lone sniper was never announced. Several students were arrested by police after they set off a bomb near the Viaducto Aleman with the apparent intent of sabotaging an aqueduct. Only minimum damage caused.

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12. On 5 October, authorities continued their interrogation of these detained during and after the 2 October fight. Newspaper accounts indicated a total of 755 had been released after questioning. Several statements made by student leaders were released to the press and made headlines. In his statement, CNE leader Socrates Amado Campos Lemus implicated several former political leaders in the student situation. He said that he and several other students had met writer Elena Garro and were told by her that the student movement was gaining popular support and needed a leader of national prominence, for which job she suggested Carlos Madrazo (former president of the PRI and former governor of Tabasco), apparently also indicating his availability to assist the movement through his former secretary, Angel Veraza. Campos Lemus said the offer was turned down because it was believed the movement should be led by students. He also said that paper and stencils (for student propaganda) had been supplied by Braulio Maldonado, ex-governor of Baja California, and that Humberto Romero, private secretary to former President Lopez Mateos, had been mentioned as providing money and material help to the students. Campos Lemus, who said he had visited Cuba in 1966 on a "training trip", revealed that the student strike leadership (CNE) was divided into a moderate element which favored seeking settlement with the government, and an ultra-hard element which wanted to overturn the government. He said that the hard element had formed five armed "security columns" for the 2 October meeting at the Plaza of Three Cultures, purpose of which was to protect strike leaders and to fire on police and Army elements when they arrived.

a. The CNE (less those arrested) met with the press on 5 October and issued a call for students to renounce violence and cease street demonstrations. The leadership said that no violence was planned during the Olympic games, but the students would not renounce their constitutional rights, Olympics or no Olympics. It was also claimed that students did not start the violence on 2 October, but an armed group whose members identified themselves by a gloved left hand started firing, thus providing a pretext for Army elements to start firing.

b. Ex-President General Lazaro Cardenas issued a public statement urging Mexicans to preserve their "national integrity". He declared he was convinced that there existed "anti-national and foreign elements" who had entered the Mexican scene and, employing arms and terror, were taking advantage of internal conflicts "which only Mexicans could solve".

13. On 6 October, the persons named by Campos Lemus in his statement as being involved in the student situation issued vigorous public denials. The interrogation of the detainees continued. Those detained included 14 foreigners, including one American. One IPN professor, Ajax Segura Garrido, corroborated the statement by Campos Lemus of there existing in the student movement leadership two sectors: a moderate one which wanted only satisfaction of the six original demands; and a hard-line one which wanted to change the Mexican Government for one along communist lines. He said that the hard-liners planned violence and had formed "action columns" which had confronted the Army and police on 2 October. He said they also planned other violence, including the bombing of the newspaper El Sol, which was not a popular newspaper with the students. (This newspaper actually was bombed during the night of 13 October.)

a. News photographers were permitted to photograph the "arsenal" of weapons and ammunition found in the "Chihuahua" apartment building after the 2 October shooting match. Included were three submachineguns, 14 rifles, several with telescopic sights, five shotguns, four carbines, 31 pistols of various calibers, 5,000 cartridges, and also equipment for refilling cartridges and a radio.

b. Newspapers announced that five Mexicans captured in the State of Veracruz had planned to carry out guerrilla warfare in Tabasco. Considerable publicity also was given to Argentine woman Silvia Olivares who hijacked a Mexican commercial

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aircraft to take her to Cuba, reportedly telling the pilot she was fleeing Mexico to escape prosecution for involvement in the 2 October fighting.

14. (U) On 7 October, quiet prevailed in Mexico City. The interrogation of students and others detained continued by federal and District officials at Military Camp #1. CNI leaders said they were turning the student movement into a "constitutional struggle" which could last a long time, and large meetings and clashes with authorities would be avoided. It was stated that, in the future, all CNI members would be screened to keep out those inclined to violence.

15. [REDACTED] On 3 October, a small contingent of Army personnel remained at the Tlatelolco area. A small student disturbance in Puebla was brought under control by police and troops of the 25th Military Zone, with one student being injured. It was learned from a representative of the Secretariat of National Defense that Brig Gen Hernandez Toledo, injured in the 2 October fighting, was recovering satisfactorily at the Central Military Hospital.

16. (U) Army troops continued on 9 October with a reduced guard at the Tlatelolco area. Statements of two CNI leaders detained at Military Camp #1 were released. Carlos Martin del Campo Bonce de Leon and Servando Jose Davila Jimenez both said in their statements that the Army troops did not fire first in the 2 October clash and that dynamite was taken to the Plaza of Three Cultures on 2 October to use against Army tanks. It was not used for fear of a "massacre" in the crowd, but some was subsequently used in the bombing near the Viaducto Loran. Martin del Campo said that in 1967 Socrates Anado Campos Lemus invited him to take guerrilla training in the State of Puebla under Army Captain Lorenzo Cardenas Barajas. The group (he mentioned six persons) took training in weapons firing and mountain climbing with the idea of forming a guerrilla group to operate in the Puebla mountains. He said he dropped out of the group after a brief interval because he couldn't get along with the Army captain.

a. In Zacatecas, troops of the 11th Military Zone were reported to be checking autos searching for weapons after reports were received indicating students were attempting to converge on the state capital for a meeting.

17. [REDACTED] On 10 October, it was learned from a representative of the Secretariat of National Defense that Army elements in the Mexico City area were no longer on full alert, but were in a ~~high~~ alert status under which they had to check with their parent unit or office at intervals during non-duty hours. Press accounts indicated that the Commanding General of the 25th Military Zone in Puebla had announced the arrest by soldiers in the area of Huauchinango of ten persons (including one American) on charges of agitation. The ten were sent to Mexico City. The Zone Commander said demonstrations would not be permitted in Puebla. He also denied that there existed in the State of Puebla a school for guerrillas as student Martin del Campo declared in his Mexico City statement.

a. CNI leaders said at a meeting in Casa del Lago that a dialogue had commenced between students and representatives of the Mexican Government and that the representatives had offered to stop the apprehension of students if they continued their movement in a legal manner, the removal of Army and police from student buildings and minimum penalties for students arrested and found guilty of crimes. The leaders still blamed the Mexican Government for the situation, and said that their three demands must be met (cessation of all police and Army "repression", the withdrawal of police and troops from all school buildings, and the freeing of all persons arrested in connection with the student disorders) before a public dialogue with government representatives would be opened.

b. A total of 128 persons arrested on and after 2 October were formally charged; the charges included inciting to rebellion, sedition, property damage, homicide, resisting authorities, robbery, illicit carrying of arms and criminal association.

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18. (U) On 11 October, students held a number of meetings in various locations throughout Mexico City in which they claimed progress was being made in talks with government representatives. They said that when their three added demands were met, they would engage in a public dialogue with the government over their six original demands. Mexico City remained quiet, except for an unconfirmed report of the attempted burning of a bus used for transporting of Olympic athletes, all of whom left the bus without incident.

19. [REDACTED] On 12 October, despite a few rumors of possible trouble, the ceremony officially opening the 1968 Olympics was held in Olympic Stadium in Mexico City without incident. Some foreign press accounts indicated the military was very much in evidence around the stadium, but [REDACTED] Embassy personnel who attended the ceremonies said most of the military personnel observed apparently were members of the Olympic Battalion, formed by the Mexican Army to assist in security and other matters in the conduct of the games. Unarmed, uniformed National Military Service (SMN) 18-year-olds also were used to keep back crowds along the route used by runners to take the Olympic flame to the stadium. According to newspaper accounts, committees at UNAM and IPN (including some CNI members) stated that all student actions would be avoided which would hinder the Olympics. Press accounts also reported that all persons who had been held in Military Camp #1 had either been released or arraigned.

20. (U) The period 13-18 October has been without known incident involving students. The Olympic Games have almost completely pushed the student situation out of the Mexico City news columns. In a press interview on 15 October, Secretary of Defense Lt Gen Garcia Barragan said that the Army was not increasing its vigilance during the Olympic Games. He also said that troops would remain at IPN installations at Casco de Santo Tomas and Zacatenco until their withdrawal was ordered by competent authority.

COMMENTS:

1. [REDACTED] All Mexicans, military and otherwise, with whom [REDACTED] have discussed the student situation, feel that there will be no student disorders of any consequence for the duration of the Olympics. (Most do not rule out the possibility, however, of isolated incidents involving a few of the most radical of the student leaders. The situation has not been resolved by any means, however, and it is generally felt that the students will reactivate their campaign after the Olympics. The "cooling-off" period may help, however and, hopefully, post-Olympic actions will not take the violent course of pre-Olympic actions.

2. [REDACTED] There has been an intense concern among almost all Mexicans that the student situation would either prevent or hamper the Olympics. It is believed that this feeling has had an effect on government and Army actions, which on several occasions could possibly be called "over-reactions", caused primarily by the desire to settle or at least arrest the problem, by force if necessary, to avoid effects on the Olympics. After the Olympics, this pressure factor will not be present.

3. [REDACTED] The question of who fired first--Army or students--at the 2 October battle of the Plaza of Three Cultures probably will never be definitely answered. Several eye-witness accounts, received second and third-handed [REDACTED] indicate that the students were the first to fire to kill. Other evidence tends to corroborate this, primarily the wounding of Brig Gen Hernandez Toledo at the very beginning of the shooting. Certainly at least some of the student extremists went to the meeting prepared to shoot, as is witnessed by the number of weapons found later, and the fact that these persons located themselves strategically at windows of apartment buildings surrounding the plaza. It is possible they planned an ambush of security forces. They reportedly forced their way into some of these apartments, ordering the occupants to leave. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] there was considerable disorganization among Army elements present after the wounding of General Hernandez and there was some indiscriminate

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firing by soldiers who fired wildly at the apartment buildings, rather than trying to locate the exact sources of the sniper fire. No indiscriminate firing by soldiers into the crowd in the plaza was reported, however. These same sources did say that soldiers were observed looting shops in the ground floors of several of the buildings, a situation which indicates they were not very well controlled by their officers and NCO's.

4. [REDACTED] As is typical in Mexico, accurate statistics concerning the number of casualties in the 2 October battle cannot be found. Reports have been received of as high as 350 killed. The best Embassy estimate is that this figure is between 150 and 200. [REDACTED] the Secretariat of National Defense [REDACTED] that two soldiers were killed and 13 injured. [REDACTED] indicate that eight soldiers were killed.

5. [REDACTED] The Paratroop Battalion and the 44th Infantry Battalion made up the bulk of the troops used on 2 October. Over-all commander was Maj Gen Crisoforo Mazon Pineda, CG of the Infantry Brigade.

6. [REDACTED] The immediate aftermath of the 2 October battle was to quiet and subdue the students. It is not known if this was due to the extent of the violence, or that the most militant of the student leaders were captured. It is generally believed that many of the most militant leaders were arrested and that their subsequent interrogation has resulted in the identification of others.

7. [REDACTED] There have been no anti-US aspects to the student disorders. Despite the occasional violence (notably on 2 October), the student disorders have had very little effect on Mexico City as a whole, with the impact being felt almost exclusively in the immediate areas of the demonstrations. The average citizen of the city has felt the disorders mostly through occasional disruption of traffic and public transportation.

8. [REDACTED] On order of the Secretariat of Defense, the public sale of weapons has been halted throughout Mexico for the duration of the Olympics. It will be interesting to see if gunshops are allowed to reopen after the Olympics.

[REDACTED]

10. (U) A selection of news photographs showing Army personnel and equipment used in various actions described in this report is attached.