

Unrest in Brazil: Political-Military Crises 1955-1964

John W. F. Dulles



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... I offer my life in a holocaust ... This people whose slave I was will no longer be slave to anyone. My sacrifice will remain forever in their souls and my blood will be the price of their ransom.

President Getulio Vargas' testament—written shortly before his suicide on August 24, 1954—was prophetic, for the Vargas legacy was to cast a shadow on political-military events of the next decade.

With news of Vargas' suicide, opponents of the late President, who were usually out of power, tried to organize. The military itself was split, but those favoring Kubitschek, apparent winner of the 1955 presidential election on a ticket of Vargas-created parties, gained control. To assure Kubitschek's inauguration Army leaders deposed two acting Presidents in 1955.

During Kubitschek's presidency (1956–1961) there were manifestations of discontent by military and political groups who ascribed numerous evils to Vargas and his followers.

In 1961, when Kubitschek's successor, Jânio Quadros, resigned after six months in office, the unrest intensified. Vice President Jango Goulart assumed the presidency and sought unsuccessfully to conciliate contending forces; his battle for reform seemed to make him an ally of "far leftists." Feeling that discipline was being undermined by men close to the President and that only military action could save Brazil from following the path favored by influential Communist labor leaders, a majority of the Army officers agreed to overthrow Goulart's administration in 1964.

Unrest in Brazil describes in exciting detail the government crises and resulting military interventions that punctuated the power struggle between supporters and opponents of Vargas in the decade following his death.

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