6-27-1989

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Brazilian President Disposed To Step Down Early

by John Neagle

Category/Department: General
Published: Tuesday, June 27, 1989

On June 26, ruling party chairperson in the Chamber of Deputies, Luis Roberto Ponte, told reporters that President Jose Sarney had agreed to step down early if such action would help resolve the country's economic crisis. Under the new constitution which sent into effect last year, Sarney is scheduled to leave office on March 15, 1990. Discussion of an early departure came in response to a proposal made on June 22 by Paulo Maluf, presidential candidate for the Social Democrat Party. Maluf suggested that Sarney follow the example of Argentine President Raul Alfonsin. Sarney reportedly said he is willing to make "any sacrifice" to conclude the transition to democracy in a peaceful fashion. According to Ponte, the president is convinced that the economy will be brought under control before the end of his mandated term, but that he is willing to step down if called to do so by the government, politicians and "the people." (Basic data from Xinhua, 06/26/89)

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