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ACTION ARA-10

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PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 CIAE-00 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5562

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
 Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part In Full
() Classify as _____ () Extend as _____ () Downgrade to _____
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3047

E. O. 11652: GDS EXEMPT 5B2
TAGS: ASEC, AR, PINS
SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING ARGENTINE AIR FORCE OFFICER

1. SUMMARY: ARGENTINE AIR FORCE COMMODORE KIDNAPPED BY MEMBERS OF ERP. PURPOSE OF KIDNAPPING TO CAUSE RELEASE OF MEMBER OF CHILEAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MIR). IT IS BELIEVED THAT MIR MEMBER IS DEAD. IT IS ALLEGED THAT SHOULD COMMODORE NOT BE RELEASED ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST FIVE ERP MEMBERS IN GOA CUSTODY. RSO SOURCE ADVISED COMMODORE WAS "SET UP" BY GIRL. ALSO THAT COMMODORE HAD REPUTATION AS "GIRL CHASER". JOINT ACTIONS BETWEEN ERP AND TERRORISTS NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO ARGENTINA HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN REPORTED. GOA POLICE INTERRUPTED MEETING OF TERRORIST REPRESENTATIVES OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES ON MARCH 29. CHILEAN INTELLIGENCE REPORTED 4 MAY MEETING WAS HELD IN PANAMA BETWEEN S. A. LEFTIST UNITS AND THAT A SOVIET AND CUBAN REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDED. MONTONEROS AND ERP HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO HOLD HOSTAGES FOR RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN THE PAST. HOWEVER, THIS IS THE FIRST INCIDENT REPORTED IN WHICH A HOSTAGE HAS BEEN HELD FOR RELEASE OF TERRORIST WHO WAS MEMBER OF AN ORGANIZATION FOR AN ADJACENT COUNTRY. IT IS ALSO THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL YEARS THAT A MILITARY OFFICER HAS BEEN HELD AS A HOSTAGE FOR RELEASE OF A PRISONER. AIR ATTACHE OFFICE CONFIRMED KIDNAPPING.

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POLICE ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BROKEN UP A MEETING (MARCH 29, 1976) IN ARGENTINA IN WHICH 50 OR 60 HIGH RANKING MEMBERS OF THE VARIOUS TERRORIST GROUPS WERE TAKING PART. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, POLICE UNWITTINGLY, BASED ON A NEBULOUS COMPLAINT, WALKED INTO THE MEETING AND WERE GREETED BY A HAIL OF BULLETS. THE POLICE SUMMONED REINFORCEMENTS AND 14 OF THE TERRORISTS WERE KILLED.

3. ON 4 MAY THE CHILEAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE REPORTED TO THE LEGAL ATTACHE, THIS EMBASSY, THAT A SECRET MEETING WAS HELD NEAR DAVID, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, IN WHICH VARIOUS LATIN AMERICAN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS TOOK PART. THE CHILEAN SERVICE ADVISED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE FUTURE OBJECTIVES, STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE VARIOUS TERRORIST ELEMENTS REPRESENTED BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. ALLEGEDLY GENEROUS FINANCING WAS TO BE PROVIDED BY THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE.

4. MONTONEROS AND ERP HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO USE THE HOSTAGE SYSTEM IN ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS. ONE EXAMPLE WAS WHEN CONSULAR AGENT EGAN WAS KIDNAPPED (SUBSEQUENTLY MURDERED) AND PRISONERS BEING HELD BY THE GOA WERE REQUESTED TO BE RELEASED. THE PRISONERS WHO HAD BEEN REQUESTED WERE DECEASED. A SECOND CASE WAS THE KIDNAPPING OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE PROVINCIAL SUPREME COURT OF BUENOS AIRES FOR THE RELEASE OF SERGIO SCHNEIDER, MEMBER OF ARMED FORCES OF LIBERATION (FAL) WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY MERGED WITH THE MONTONEROS. SCHNEIDER WAS RELEASED BY THE GOA AND THE JUDGE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY FREED BY THE FAL. SCHNEIDER WAS LATER KILLED DURING A TERRORIST OPERATION IN NORTHERN ARGENTINA.

THIS IS THE FIRST INCIDENT THAT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO THE RSO IN WHICH A LOCAL TERRORIST GROUP HAS CONDUCTED A KIDNAPPING IN AN ATTEMPT TO RANSOM A TERRORIST REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ELEMENT FOREIGN TO ARGENTINA.

5. AIR ATTACHE'S COMMENTS: A GENERAL OFFICER OF THE [REDACTED]

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