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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01
SY-05 DHA-02 AID-05 OPR-02 IO-13 ORM-02 /087 W
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P R 022055Z NOV 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7767
INFO AEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4265

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
 Release Excise Deny

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 7203

Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: In Part In Full
 Classify as ___ Extend as ___ Downgrade to ___
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, AR, UY
SUBJECT: GOA SILENT ON URUGUAY REVELATION OF TERRORIST PLOT

REF: (A) STATE 267364; (B) MONTEVIDEO 4161; (C) BUENOS AIRES 6884

1. THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT'S REVELATION OF A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION WHOSE MEMBERS ALLEGEDLY INFILTRATED BACK INTO THE COUNTRY AFTER FEIGNING KIDNAPPINGS IN ARGENTINA HAS RECEIVED NO OFFICIAL COMMENT AND LITTLE PRESS COVERAGE IN ARGENTINA. LA OPINION SATURDAY (OCTOBER 30) AND LA NACION SUNDAY (OCTOBER 31) SUMMARILY REPORTED THE GOU COMMUNIQUES WITHOUT COMMENT, INCLUDING THE ACCUSATION THAT SEVERAL OF THOSE ARRESTED HAD SIMULATED THEIR KIDNAPPING IN ARGENTINA TO DISCREDIT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. THE PRESS DID NOT RUN THE NAMES OF THE 14 ACCUSED.

2. EMBASSY SOURCES DISPUTE GOU'S VERSION OF THE DISAPPEARANCES. A UNHCR OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF TODAY (NOVEMBER 2) THAT 12 OF THE 14 NAMES WERE ON ITS LIST OF URUGUAYAN REFUGEES KIDNAPPED IN JULY AND SEPTEMBER AND THAT WRITS OF HABEAS CORPUS HAD BEEN FILED IN ARGENTINA BY THE FAMILIES OF NINE OF THEM. HE ALSO SAID THAT AT LEAST 24 URUGUAYANS DISAPPEARED IN JULY AND ANOTHER 28 IN SEPTEMBER, WHICH INDICATES THAT NOT ALL OF THEM HAVE BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR (REFTEL B). THE OFFICIAL CLAIMED THAT

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THERE WERE ARGENTINE EYE WITNESSES TO THE KIDNAPPINGS, BUT SAID THAT NO LEGAL TESTIMONY HAD BEEN SWORN IN AT THE TIME AND IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO FIND ARGENTINES WILLING TO TESTIFY AGAINST THE GOU VERSION NOW.

3. COMMENT. OUR EVALUATION OF THE EVIDENCE AND REPORTS WE HAVE CONVINCED US THAT THE KIDNAPPINGS OF URUGUAYAN REFUGEES IN JULY AND SEPTEMBER WERE CARRIED OUT BY ARGENTINE AND URUGUAYAN SECURITY FORCES, ACTING CLANDESTINELY AND IN COOPERATION. AND WHILE IT IS APPARENT THAT URUGUAYAN AUTHORITIES HAVE PREPARED EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEIR VERSION, IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT IT WILL BE FULLY BELIEVED, EITHER IN ARGENTINE OR ABROAD. ALONG WITH LAST MONTH'S RUMORS THAT THE DISAPPEARED REFUGEES WERE ALIVE AND IN URUGUAY (REFTEL C), THERE WAS SOME INDICATION THAT ARGENTINE SECURITY FORCES WERE CONCERNED THAT THEIR COOPERATION WITH URUGUAYAN AGENTS IN FORCING THE REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES WOULD BE REVEALED AND SO DESTROY THEIR CLAIMS THAT NO REFUGEE WOULD BE RETURNED TO HIS COUNTRY AGAINST HIS WILL. NEVERTHELESS, SINCE THE GOU ANNOUNCEMENTS WERE PROBABLY COORDINATED WITH GOA BEFOREHAND, IT MAY HAVE BEEN DECIDED THAT THE PUBLIC RELATIONS BENEFIT OF EXPOSING A TERRORIST PLOT AND ADVERTISING GOU'S FAIR AND DECENT TREATMENT OF PRISONERS WOULD OUTWEIGHT ANY ADVERSE SPECULATION. THE POINTED SILENCE FROM GOA AND THE PRESS CAUTION IN REPORTING ON SUBJECT SO FAR SUGGEST THAT GOA CONSIDERS IT URUGUAY'S BABY AND PREFERS TO DIMINISH ITS ROLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
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