UNCLASSIFIED

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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4710
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[redacted] STATE 132608

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OLLOWING REPEAT RIO DE JANEIRO 2160 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
AO PAULO 18 MAY 79, QTE:
[redacted] RIO DE JANEIRO 2160

.O. 12065: GDS 5/18/85 (DEXTER, JOHN B.) OR-M
AGS: SHUM, BR
UBJECT: (U) HABEGGER CASE

. (U) JORNAL DO BRASIL (JB) OF MAY 8 REPORTED RIO
ARDINAL EUGENIO SALES' COMPLAINT REGARDING PUBLICATION
Y THE MAGAZINE ISTO E OF THE CONTENTS OF FIRST OF
HREE LETTERS HE HAD SENT TO THE WIFE OF ARGENTINE
OURNALIST NORBERTO HABBEGER, WHO DISAPPEARED IN RIO
N EARLY AUGUST 1978.

. (U) MRS. HABBEGER CONTACTED CARDINAL SALES AT
ECET LATIN AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE IN
UEBLA, FOLLOWING WHICH HE WROTE TO HER ASKING THAT SHE
DVISE HIM OF ANY PLANS SHE MIGHT HAVE TO VISITING
RAZIL SO THAT HE COULD HAVE A CLERIC MEET HER AT THE
IRPORT AND ESCORT HER TO A LOCAL CONVENT. HIS CONCERN
OR HER SAFETY WAS BECAUSE OF "ARGENTINE POLICE"
OCATED IN RIO. THE LETTER WAS FIRST DIVULGED IN MEXICO.

. (U) ACCORING TO JB ARTICLE (APPARENTLY QUOTING
STO E) HABBEGER ARRIVED RIO JULY 31, 1978, FROM
EXICO USING ALIAS HECTOR ESTEBAN CUELLO. IMMEDIATELY
FTER ARRIVAL HE PHONED HIS WIFE: LAST TIME SHE HEARD
ROM HIM WAS ON AUGUST 3. SHE BELIEVES HE WAS KIDNAPPED
Y ARGENTINE POLICE, "POSSIBLY WITH TH HELP OF
RAZILIAN POLICE." BRAZILIAN JUSTICE MINISTRY, IN
ESPONSE TO HER INQUIRY, HAS VERIFIED THAT HE ENTERED
RAZIL JULY 3, BUT HAS NO RECORD OF HIS DEPARTURE,
N EITHER NAME. MRS. HABBEGER ACKNOWLEDGED HER HUSBAND
S SECRETARY OF THE POLITICAL BRANCH OF THE PERONIST
ONTONERO MOVEMENT.

. [redacted] UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE SAYS HE HAS NO INFORMATION
N THIS CASE, HABBEGER NOT BEING A MANDATED
EFUGEE AND NEITHER HE NOR MRS. HABBEGER HAVING EVER
PPROACHED THE UNHCR IN RIO.

. [redacted] COMMENT: THOUGH IT HAS NOT YET GENERATED MUCH
UBLICITY, THIS CASE COULD CONCEIVABLY DEVELOP INTO ANOTHER
AUSE CELEBRN LIKE THE LILIAN CELIBERTI/UNIVERSINDO
IAZ KIDNAPPING CASE IN PORTO ALEGRE. THE CARDINAL
AS LONG BEEN ACTIVE IN ASSISTANCE TO ARGENTINE REFUGEES,
SUBJECT THAT HE HAS MENTIONED IN SEVERAL CONERSATIONS
ITH ME. IN AT LEAST ONE CONVERSATION, ON JANUARY 25,
978, HE BROUGHT THE SUBJECT UP AND EXPRESSED CONCERN
VER OPERATIONS AGAINST REFUGEES IN RIO BY ARGENTINE
OLICE ACTING, HE SURMISED, OUT OF THE ARGENTINE
ONSULATE.

. EMBASSY CONCURS.
DEXTER
NQTE CHRISTOPHER
T
2608

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

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