SECRET
STATE 173352

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINS, AR, BL, CI, PA, UY, BR

SUBJECT: SOUTH AMERICA: SOUTHERN CONE SECURITY PRACTICES

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS/NOT RELEASABLE TO CONTRACTORS OR CONTRACTOR-CONSULTANTS/WARNING NOTICE--SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND MFSYDS INVOLVED


2. RECENT ATTACKS ON LEFTIST EXILES IN ARGENTINA RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SECURITY PRACTICES OF THE SOUTHERN CONE NATIONS: ARGENTINA, BOLIVIA, BRAZIL, CHILE, PARAGUAY, AND URUGUAY. 

GOKA)--WHAT DEGREE OF COOPERATION EXISTS AMONG SOUTHERN CONE SECURITY FORCES?

(B)--DO THESE SECURITY FORCES ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE OR PASSIVELY ACCOMMICE IN A PROGRAM TO EXECUTE POLITICAL EXILES WHO OPPOSE ANY OF THE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED?

3. THE FACT THAT SOUTHERN CONE GOVERNMENTS ARE ALL CONSERVATIVE MILITARY REGIMES, NONE OF WHICH HAS AN EXEMPLARY RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS, INVITES SPECULATION CONCERNING THE EXISTENCE OF AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ASSASSINATION PLOT. THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING SUCH SPECULATION IS SCANTY, HOWEVER, AND IT IS EQUALLY POSSIBLE THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THE EXILES' PROBLEMS ARE TRACEABLE TO EXCLUSIVELY ARGENTINE FACTORS.
ARGENTINE SETTING. IN RECENT MONTHS, ARGENTINA HAS
BECOME A LESS ATTRACTIVE HAVEN FOR LEFTIST EXILES THAN IT
WAS BEFORE THE MARCH 24 MILITARY COUP, WHICH ELEVATED
GENERAL VIDELA TO THE PRESIDENCY. AFTER THE PERONISTS
RESUMED POWER IN MAY 1973, OPPONENTS OF THE CONSERVATIVE
MILITARY GOVERNMENTS ON ARGENTINA'S BORDERS, AND ESPE-
циально PRO-ALLENE CHILEANS, SWELLED THE REFUGEES' ROLES
IN ARGENTINA. SINCE THE COUP, HOWEVER, ARGENTINA HAS BEEN
GOVERNED BY CONSERVATIVE OFFICERS BENT UPON ERADICATING
THE SUBVERSIVE THREAT, AND EXILES HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED BY
A TRI-CORNERED BATTLE AMONG SECURITY PERSONNEL, LEFTISTS,
AND RIGHT-WING ASSASSINS. IN THE MOST PUBLICIZED
INCIDENTS:

(A) -- ON MAY 21, ZELMAR MICHELINI AND LUIS HECTOR GUTIERREZ
RUZI, EX-PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM URUGUAY, WERE FOUND
MURDERED.

(B) -- ON JUNE 4, THE SLAIN BODY OF EX-BOLIVIAN PRESIDENT
JUAN JOSE TORRES WAS DISCOVERED.

(C) -- ON JUNE 11, 24 CHILEAN AND URUGUAYAN REFUGEES WERE
KIDNAPPED EN MASSE AND LATER RELEASED AFTER INTER-
ROGATIONS ACCOMPANIED BY BEATINGS AND THREATS.

5. FEAR APPROACHING PANIC SWEP T THE EXILE COMMUNITY IN THE
WAKE OF THESE INCIDENTS, AND ONE UNHCR (UNITED NATIONS HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES) SOURCE ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT
1,000 CHILEANS AND PERHAPS 400 OTHER EXILES WERE IN
IMMEDIATE DANGER EITHER FROM ARGENTINE SECURITY FORCES OR
FROM RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS IN ARGENTINA OR IN THEIR HOME
COUNTRIES.

6. VICTIMS OF ARGENTINE CIRCUMSTANCES. THE FACT THAT
THESE EVENTS ARE OCCURRING IN ARGENTINA AND NOT ELSEWHERE
IN THE SOUTHERN CONE LENDS CREDENCE TO THE IDEA THAT THEIR
ORIGINS LIE IN A UNIQUELY ARGENTINE SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES
RATHER THAN IN AN ELABORATE INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY.
GIVEN THE TENSE AND VOLATILE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT THAT HAS
EXISTED SINCE THE COUP, EXILES CAN BECOME VICTIMS FOR A
NUMBER OF REASONS:

(A) -- OPERATIONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH ONE OF ARGENTINA'S
TERRORIST GROUPS;

(B) -- PAST ASSOCIATION WITH FOREIGN AND/OR ARGENTINE LEFT-
IST GROUPS, A FACT THAT IN AND OF ITSELF IS SUFFICIENT
CAUSE FOR DEATH IN THE EYES OF FANATICAL ARGENTINE RIGHT-
WINGERS; THIS MAY HAVE BEEN THE "CRIME" OF MICHELINI,
GUTIERREZ RUZI, AND TORRES;
(C)--EFFORTS BY RIGHTIST EXTREMISTS TO FRIGHTEN LEFTIST EXILES INTO FLEEING ARGENTINA, WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN THE INTENT BEHIND THE MASS KIDNAPPING ON JUNE 11; AND

(D)--ATTEMPTS BY SO-CALLED HARDLINERS TO INTENSIFY THE ANTI-SUBVERSIVE CAMPAIGN, WHICH THEY BELIEVE THE VIDELA GOVERNMENT IS NOT PURSUING VIGOROUSLY ENOUGH. FOR THOSE WHO HOLD THIS VIEW, THE ASSASSINATION OF EXILES WOULD SERVE A DUAL PURPOSE--ELIMINATING ALLEGED SECURITY THREATS AND UNDERMINING THE VIDELA GOVERNMENT BY EXPOSING IT TO PRESSURE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE.

7. ARGENTINE SECURITY FORCES IMPlicated. OFFICIAL ARGENTINE SECURITY PERSONNEL ARE CLEARLY INVOLVED IN THE ANTI-EXILE ACTIVITIES, ALTHOUGH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSESS IN WHAT NUMBERS OR AT WHAT LEVEL OF COMMAND. AN OPERATION LIKE THE MASS KIDNAPPING OF REFUGEES COULD NOT HAVE BEEN EXECUTED WITHOUT POLICE AND/OR MILITARY CONNIVANCE. PRESIDENT VIDEALA DOES NOT CONDONE OR ENCOURAGE THESE ACTIONS, BUT NEITHER DOES HE APPEAR CAPABLE OF HALTING THEM.

8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION. SOUTHERN CONE SECURITY FORCES UNDOUBTEDLY COORDINATE THEIR COUNTERTERRORIST EFFORTS SO FAR AS INFORMATION EXCHANGES ARE CONCERNED, AND ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL MAY PROVIDE LIMITED TRAINING AND ADVISORY SERVICE TO THEIR SMALLER NEIGHBORS. OVER TWO YEARS AGO, SECURITY OFFICIALS FROM ALL THE SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES EXCEPT BRAZIL MET IN BUENOS AIRES AND REPORTEDLY FORALIZED ARRANGEMENTS TO FACILITATE INFORMATION EXCHANGES AND THE MOVEMENT OF SECURITY OFFICIALS ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

9. COOPERATION OF THIS NATURE IS LOGICAL:

(A)--ALL THE SOUTHERN CONE GOVERNMENTS CONSIDER THEMSELVES TARGETS OF INTERNATIONAL LEFTIST SUBVERSION;

(B)--IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT TERRORISTS MOVE BACK AND FORTH ACROSS SOUTHERN CONE BORDERS; AND

(C)--TERRORISTS BASED IN BOLIVIA (ELN), URUGUAY (TUPAMAROS), CHILE (MIR), AND ARGENTINA (ERP) ARE FORMALLY, IF SOMEWHAT INEFFECTUALLY, ORGANIZED IN THE REVOLUTIONARY COORDINATING JUNTA (JCR). THE JCR IS PRIMARILY A CREATURE OF THE ERP; AND ACCORDING TO AVAILABLE INFORMATION, IT HAS NOT SPONSORED ANY MAJOR SOUTHERN CONE OPERATIONS. JCR REPRESENTATIVES IN WESTERN EUROPE PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO COHORTS TEMPORARILY RESIDING THERE AND PUBLISH PROPAGANDA AGAINST SOUTHERN CONE GOVERNMENTS.
10. In early June of this year, representatives of the intelligence services of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay met again in Santiago, with Brazilian observers present, to further organize long-range cooperation among the participating countries. The following decisions were made:

(A) AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMPUTERIZED DATA BANK OF INFORMATION ON KNOWN AND SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN SANTIAGO;

(B) BRAZIL WILL BECOME A FULL-Fledged MEMBER OF THE GROUP; AND

(C) ARGENTINA, CHILE, AND URUGUAY WILL COOPERATE COVERTLY AGAINST THE ACTIVITIES OF THE JOR IN PARIS.

11. EVIDENCE THAT COOPERATION AMONG THE SECURITY FORCES EXTENDS TO SOME SORT OF "TERROR, INC." IS, HOWEVER, INCONCLUSIVE AT BEST.

(A) THE 24 EXILES KIDNAPPED ON JUNE 11 INSIST THAT THEY RECOGNIZED CLEAN AND URUGUAYAN NATIONALS AMONG THEIR INTERROGATORS.

(B) EDGARDO ENRIQUEZ, A HIGH-LEVEL LEADER OF THE CHILEAN MIR WHO REPORTEDLY WAS CAPTURED IN ARGENTINA IN LATE MARCH OR EARLY APRIL, MAY HAVE BEEN TURNED OVER TO AND SUBSEQUENTLY KILLED BY CHILEANS.

(C) A RELIABLE BRAZILIAN SOURCE HAS DESCRIBED A BRAZIL-ARGENTINA AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH THE TWO COUNTRIES HUNT AND ELIMINATE TERRORISTS ATTEMPTING TO FLEE ARGENTINA FOR BRAZIL. BRAZILIAN AND ARGENTINE MILITARY UNITS REPORTEDLY HAVE OPERATED JOINTLY AND INSIDE EACH OTHER'S BORDER WHEN NECESSARY.

(D) DESPITE POINTED GOA DENIALS, PUBLISHED CHARGES PERSIST TO THE EFFECT THAT ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES ARE FORCIBLY REPATRIATING POLITICAL EXILES.

12. ON BALANCE, THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT CONCLUSIVELY ESTABLISH THE EXISTENCE OF FORMAL, HIGH-LEVEL COORDINATION AMONG SOUTHERN CONE SECURITY FORCES FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF ELIMINATING EXILES. IT STRONGLY SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT COOPERATION DOES OCCUR ON AT LEAST A LOCALIZED AND OPPORTUNISTIC BASIS, PARTICULARLY IN BORDER AREAS AND IN INSTANCES INVOLVING THE CAPTURE OF TERRORIST LEADERS.

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