

DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

5/25/76

Chron

INDICATE
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

BC641

FROM
Amembassy BUENOS AIRES

CLASSIFICATION
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RELEASE IN FULL

11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, ASEC, PINS, AR
SUBJECT: Abduction/Arrest of Fulbright Program Coordinator Elida Messina,
May 24, 1976

ACTION: Secstate WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DECONTROL

INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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1. Following information was given by subject's mother to Embassy representatives: At approximately 2240 hours on May 24, 1976, four men dressed in blue jeans appeared at the door of 5340 Paraguay Street in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The men were armed with submachine guns and other weapons. They requested and were granted entry into the home by Mrs. Gumersinda Dominica Escudero de Messina, mother of subject.

2. The four men asked for the subject, and they were informed that she did not reside at the Paraguay address. (Note: The house is a rooming house for Argentine and Uruguyan university students, fourteen of whom normally occupy the establishment along with the mother, father and sister of the subject.) The students were gathered into a single room and placed under guard by one member of the group. The mother and

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DRAFTED BY: SY:GSBeckett:sc
DRAFTING DATE: 5/25/76
TEL. EXT.: 148
CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED: ~~RCM:MS/lin~~

DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret F. Grafeld, Director
() Release (X) Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): BO
Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Stephen Worrel, Senior Reviewer
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sister were conducted to the kitchen with the remaining three intruders. The subject's father remained asleep during this portion of the incident. After a period of time, the mother was questioned concerning the address of the subject. She advised them that her daughter's apartment was located at 5046 Santa Fe Street, fifth floor, apartment D which was several blocks away from the parent's house.

3. Three members of the group departed leaving everyone in the custody of a single guard. They returned to the parent's house about 0030 hours, May 25, 1976, advised the mother that the subject's son (approximately 10 years old) was alone in the apartment on Santa Fe Street. In addition, they stated that the subject was in their custody and she would be returned later on May 25. The intruders had informed subject's mother they were members of the GOA army.

4. It was the mother's opinion that her daughter had been taken into custody because of her friendship with Beatriz Casoy, who is a student in England. Casoy had a brother, according to the mother, who was killed as an extremist approximately two weeks ago. Mother stated that after informing this Embassy of her daughter's abduction, she proceeded to the subject's apartment on Santa Fe Street and returned to her home with subject's son. She stated that the apartment on Santa Fe was in total disarray reflecting

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that the intruders had conducted an extensive search of the quarters. The mother also contacted the GOA Federal Police. She did not see her daughter, therefore, could not give any information as to her physical condition.

5. At 0230 hours on May 25 the RSO called police contacts seeking information on subject's possible arrest, and at 0600 hours also called office of Min of Interior and of security services to express Embassy's concern and seek assistance ⁱⁿ establishing whether subject was formally arrested and in determining her whereabouts. Subsequently, our monitoring of police radio net established that headquarters has inquired of precinct offices if they have subject in custody, and Ministry of Interior states that similar inquiries are being made of the various intelligence services. Employees of Embassy's own security services are checking with the appropriate prosecuting attorneys to see if charges have been made against her. We believe several hours will elapse before we can reasonably expect a reply to these inquiries.

6. Diplomatic Corps gathered at ~~Foreign Office~~ ^{Casa Bonada} at 0945 to greet ~~Ford~~ ^{Foster} and proceed to Mass celebrating May 25.

Ambassador used occasion of ~~his meeting with Ford~~ ^{to Chief of Protocol} to present President Ford's National Day message and to express Embassy's intense concern over what appears to have been ~~a regular~~ ^{an irregular} arrest of an employee of a binational commission.

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7. COMMENT: We believe this arrest or abduction was carried out by either regular or irregular Argentine security forces possibly but not necessarily the army.

we will report soonest any developments in this case



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