

RELEASE IN  
PART 25X1,25X6

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SY-05 SYE-00  
DCT-02 USSS-00 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00  
INR-10 NSAE-00 /058 W  
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O 141508Z MAY 80  
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2064  
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 1 OF 2 LA PAZ 4072

E.O. 12065: GDS 5/13/86 (WATSON, A.F.) OR-M  
TAGS: PINS, MILI, BL, AR  
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE COMPLICITY IN BOLIVIAN COUP PLOTTING

REF: (A) STATE 125740, (B) BUENOS AIRES 250, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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1. (~~S~~ ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. OVER RECENT WEEKS WE HAVE HEARD INCREASING REPORTS OF ALLEGED COMPLICITY BY ARGENTINE MILITARY OFFICERS IN BOLIVIAN COUP PLOTTING, FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR'S ASSERTIONS TO THE CONTRARY (REF B) NOTWITHSTANDING. REFS C AND D CONVEY THE MOST CONCRETE OF SUCH REPORTS. IN ADDITION, HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS OF THE GUEILER ADMINISTRATION HAVE TOLD US THEY ARE QUITE SURE THE ARGENTINES ARE INVOLVED AND THERE IS A GENERAL BELIEF TO THE SAME EFFECT AMONG KNOWLEDGEABLE ELEMENTS IN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. FOR INSTANCE, IN A RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND HIS FRENCH COUNTERPART, THE LATTER, ALTHOUGH CHOOSING HIS WORDS CAREFULLY

LEFT LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE

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BELIEVED ELEMENTS IN THE ARGENTINE REPRESENTATION IN LA PAZ WERE SUPPORTING COUP-INCLINED BOLIVIAN OFFICERS.

3. BY IMPLICATION, THE BRAZILIAN AMBASSADOR HERE HAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT HE IS AT LEAST AWARE THAT SOME OF BOLIVIA'S NON-ANDEAN NEIGHBORS ARE SUSPECT. ON TWO OCCASIONS, THE BRAZILIAN ENVOY HAS EMPHASIZED TO AMBASSADOR THAT HE IS SENSITIVE TO ANY ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION THAT BRAZIL MAY BE CAUGHT UP IN SUCH A GAME. ON MAY 6 HE TOLD AMBASSADOR SPECIFICALLY THAT IN RESPONSE TO UNSPECIFIED

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Stephen Worrel, Senior Reviewer

LOCAL "REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT" HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO THOSE WHO HAVE APPROACHED HIM THAT BRAZIL HAS CHOSEN A "DEMOCRATIC COURSE" FOR ITS OWN FUTURE, SO NO HELP SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED BY ELEMENTS IN BOLIVIA PROPOSING OTHER COURSES. HE WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT BRAZIL WOULD NO DOUBT EVENTUALLY CONTINUE RELATIONS WITH ANY GOVERNMENT IN BOLIVIA WHICH SHOWED ITSELF TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE SITUATION, HOWEVER IT CAME TO POWER.

4. ARGENTINA HAS A SIGNIFICANT MILITARY PRESENCE IN BOLIVIA. IN ADDITION TO THREE ATTACHES AND ONE ASSISTANT ATTACHE, THEY HAVE A MILITARY MISSION WHICH NUMBERS ABOUT 30. THE BULK ARE NAVAL OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO THE NAVAL ACADEMY IN LA PAZ. BUT THERE ARE ALSO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER TWO SERVICES IN SANTA CRUZ AND COCHABAMBA, AS WELL AS IN LA PAZ. FOR INSTANCE, THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO ARMY OFFICERS AT ARMY'S COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF SCHOOL IN COCHABAMBA AND SEVERAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS IN SANTA CRUZ WITH THE F-86 DETACHMENT, AS WELL AS THE AIR FORCE ACADEMY.

5. MOST DISTURBING ACCORDING TO OUR BEST INFORMATION, IS THE PRESENCE OF ARGENTINE ARMY OFFICER LT. COL. JULIO CESAR DURAN, AN ADVISER TO THE BOLIVIAN ARMED FORCES INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL IN THE ARMY HEADQUARTERS (MIRAFLORES GARRISON) IN LA PAZ. DURAN, WHO IS ACCOMPANIED ON OCCASION BY

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AN ARGENTINE MAJOR, IS SEEN OFTEN IN THE QUARTERS OF THE ARMY'S INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT (G-2) AND APPEARS TO BE VERY CLOSE TO THE DESERVEDLY NOTORIOUS G-2 CHIEF, COLONEL LUIS "LUCHO" ARCE, WHO IS A KEY MEMBER OF THE COUP-PLOTTING CABAL. WE HAVE REQUESTED INFORMATION ON DURAN FROM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES THROUGH DATT CHANNELS. WE NOTE WITH CONCERN IN THIS REGARD THE REPORT (REF C) [REDACTED]

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6. ONE OF LUCHO ARCE'S PREDECESSORS AS ARMY G-2 TOLD US DURING THE EVENING OF MAY 13 THAT HE BELIEVES THE COUP PLOTTERS IN THE BOLIVIAN ARMED FORCES HAVE CONVINCED THE ARGENTINES THAT THERE IS A GENUINE COMMUNIST MENACE IN BOLIVIA WHICH, IF NOT THWARTED, WILL THREATEN ARGENTINA AS WELL. THERFORE, HE SAID, THE GOA THROUGH THE MILITARY MISSION IN BOLIVIA IS SUPPLYING FUNDS AND ARMS TO BOLIVIAN MILITARY PLOTTERS. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN TOLD BY A POLICE SOURCE OF UNCONFIRMED CREDIBILITY THAT THE ARGENTINE EMBASSY IN LA PAZ HAS STOCKPILED WEAPONS TO BE USED IN A COUP. (SINCE THE BOLIVIAN ARMED FORCES ALREADY HAVE SUFFICIENT WEAPONS TO ATTEMPT A COUP, WE TEND TO DISCOUNT THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTS THAT THE ARGENTINES ARE SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO THE PLOTTERS.) IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL LUIZ GARCIA MEZA TEJADA HAS STRENGTHENED HIS CONTROL OVER THE ARMED FORCES AND HAS EVERYTHING IN PLACE FOR A COUP AT A STILL-TO-BE-DETERMINED TIME, WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED UNCONFIRMED REPORTS FROM TWO SOURCES WHOSE RELIABILITY WE CANNOT JUDGE THAT THE ARGENTINES WILL SUPPLY HELICOPTERS FOR THE USE OF THE POST-COUP MILITARY REGIME.

7. WINDING THROUGH THE REPORTS OF COUP PLOTTING AND ARGENTINE

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INVOLVEMENT IS THE TRAIL OF FORMER PRESIDENT GENERAL HUGO BANZER. BANZER PAID A CALL ON GARCIA MEZA NOT LONG AFTER THE LATTER'S CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS AT THE COLEGIO MILITAR, APRI L25, AND REPORTEDLY INDICATED HE WAS SYMPATHETIC TO GARCIA MEZA'S VIEWS. WHILE BANZER RECENTLY FIRMLY DENIED TO AMBASSADOR THAT HIS VISITS A FEW WEEKS AGO TO ARGENTINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES WERE RELATED IN ANY WAY TO COUP PLOTTING, THE SUSPICION LINGERS THAT HE MAY PRESENT HIMSELF TO GARCIA MEZA AND OTHERS AS A CRUCIAL LINK TO ARGENTINE MILITARY LEADERS (REF D).

8. WE BELIEVE THAT, WHILE PRESIDENT GUEILER AND OTHERS IN THE GOB FEAR ARGENTINE COMPLICITY WITH COUP PLOTTERS, THEY PROBABLY HAVE INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION OR, MORE IMPORTANTLY, STRENGTH TO ACT. IN A DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR LATE MAY 13, PRESIDENT GUEILER INDICATED AWARENESS OF THE ARGENTINE CONNECTION IN POINTING OUT THAT SHE WOULD NOT APPOINT RECENTLY-RESIGNED AIR FORCE COMMANDER NINO DE GUZMAN AS AMBASSADOR TO BUENOS AIRES, THOUGH THAT IS HIS WISH, IN VIEW OF HIS CONNECTIONS WITH ARGENTINE SYM-

PATHIZERS OF A COUP IN BOLIVIA. SHE ADDED THAT NINO DE GUZMAN HAD ASSURED HER ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION THAT SHE NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT THIS, SINCE ARGENTINE SUPPORT FOR A COUP WOULD COME ONLY IF LEFTIST EXTREMISTS THREATENED TO TAKE OVER BOLIVIA.

9. COMMENT: THE ARGENTINE MILITARY CONNECTION DEFINITELY BEARS VERY CAREFUL WATCHING HERE AND IN ARGENTINA AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY LIGHT AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES CAN SHED ON IT.  
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