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UNCLASSIFIED
Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PH-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /079 W

109650

R 102020Z JUN 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5989
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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

Release Excise Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: In Part In Full **DECONTROL**

Classify as Extend as Downgrade to
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

[REDACTED]

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, PINS, AR

DECONTROL

SUBJECT: REFUGEE RECORDS STOLEN IN ARMED BREAK-IN

1. TEN ARMED MEN BROKE INTO THE OFFICES OF THE ARGENTINE CATHOLIC COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION NIGHT OF JUNE 9 AND RANSACKED SAFES AND FILES, STEALING MOST OF THE RECORDS ON THE MANY THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS HANDLED THROUGH THE COMMISSION IN THE PAST 20 YEARS.

2. MR. PINTO, DEPUTY IN CHARTE AT UNHCR, WHICH WORKS CLOSELY WITH ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH REFUGEES AND MIGRATION, REPORTED THE ROBBERY TO THE FEDERAL POLICE AND AN INVESTIGATION IS UNDER WAY. PINTO IS PROTECTING THE NAME OF A WITNESS, WHO APPARENTLY SAW THE OPERATION IN THE UNGUARDED OFFICES. THE PERPETRATORS SMASHED THE DOOR AND LOCKED CABINETS AND HAULED AWAY ALMOST EVERYTHING IN THE OFFICES. NO POLICE ARRIVED AND NO ONE WAS HURT.

3. THE DOCUMENTS CON
ON AND PETITIONS FROM HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PERSONS, ACCORDING TO MR. PINTO, INCLUDING REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS RELOCATED IN ARGENTINA--JEWS, EASTERN EUROPEANS FOLLOWING THE WAR, DRONOMIC REFUGEES, POLITICAL EXILES AND OT DRS WHO
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HAVE AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER SOUGHT ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE COMMISSION.

4. PINTO SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THE THIEVES STOLE "WITHOUT A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEY WANTED" SINCE SOME PAPERS SIMILAR TO THOSE TAKEN WERE LEFT STREWN AROUND THE ROOM.

5. THE ARGENTINE CATHOLIC COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION WORKS CLOSELY WITH UNHCR IN ARGENTINA AS DO MANY ORGANIZATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS LOOSELY CONNECTED THROUGH THE GOA'S COORDINATING COMMISSION ON SOCIAL ACTION. IT IS THE LOCAL BRANCH OF INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION HEADQUARTERED IN GENEVA AND IS HEADED BY TWO LOCAL BISHOPS.

6. THE DOCUMENTS AMASSED DURING ITS 20-YEAR EXISTENCE CAN BE REPLICATED THROUGH THE FILES IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, SAID DR. PINTO, BUT WILL REQUIRE ENORMOUS EFFORT.

7 COMMENT: THE OFFICIAL UNHCR STATEMENT AND POLICE INVESTIGATION REFER TO THE CASE AS A SIMPLE ROBBERY, THOUGH THE IMPLICATIONS ARE ENORMOUS, PARTICULARLY FOLLOWING THE RECENT VIOLENT DEATHS OF PROMINENT POLITICAL EXILES FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. IT WILL LIKELY PROMPT A STRONG-- THOUGH PERHAPS NOT OFFICIAL--REACTION FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. UNHCR CONTACTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT DANGERS TO THOSE WHOSE NAMES FIGURED IN THE STOLEN DOCUMENTS, WHICH INCLUDE INDEX CARDS WITH NAMES AND ADDRESSES AND CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE, FOR BOTH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REASONS. LPMAPLIN

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