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# ALGRAM

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TO : Department of State

E.O. 12065: GDS 1/10/85 (HARRIS, F. Allen) OR-P  
TAGS: SHUM AR

FROM : Amembassy Buenos Aires

DATE: January 10, 1979

SUBJECT : Maggio Letter on Argentine Navy Mechanics School  
Detention Facility

REF : (A) Buenos Aires 3244 dtd 4/27/78;  
(B) Buenos Aires 3489 dtd 5/5/78

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: New evidence that Horacio Maggio was a trusty at the Navy Mechanics School has led us to review the allegations he made in letters (see attachments) sent last April that Ambassador Hidalgo Sola, the French nuns, Dagmar Hagelin and other notable prisoners had been held and tortured there. If this could be established then at least a few of Argentina's disappearance mysteries could be resolved. But we cannot rule out the possibility that Maggio used his knowledge of the school and its activities to concoct a dramatic tale about his former captors. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

In April 1978, this Embassy, a number of other foreign missions and international news agencies received handwritten letters and detailed drawings from a Horacio Maggio reporting that the Officer's Club at the Argentine Navy's Mechanics School was being used as a clandestine detention and interrogation facility. We believe letters were also sent to Church authorities. (See reffel A.) Maggio met with a foreign correspondent in late April and personally provided more details of the Mechanics School's interrogation facility, in an attempt to substantiate his assertions.

Summaries of the Maggio report were published in Paris in "Le Monde" and in late 1978 in the Spanish news magazine, "Gambio-16."

Three explanations were put forward regarding the Maggio letter: first, that it was an Army "black propaganda"

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FAGRC/DA/WC

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Contents and Classification Approved by: POLCOUNS:WHHallman

Clearances: DCM:MChaplin

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part (X) In Full

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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effort (this was the Navy explanation); second, that it was a Montonero invention to discredit the Navy; and third, that the document was in fact genuine.

We treated the document at arm's length because of Maggio's weak story of how he escaped from the Navy. (He said he jumped out of the back of a truck while being moved.) We recently learned however that Mr. Maggio was in fact a trusty who had limited visiting rights with his family, and escaped during a visit at his family's home. We also heard from a source at another embassy that Mr. Maggio had been recaptured and killed by Navy Intelligence. We received in October a letter from Mrs. Maggio requesting our help in locating her husband who had disappeared for a second time--which supports the report of Maggio's demise.

Embassy Comment: The Maggio drawings and description of the operations within the Mechanics School Officer's Club appear to reflect inside knowledge. Many of the procedural details regarding the operations in his report are corroborated by other sources. We have not however been able to confirm that the individuals named by Maggio were in fact prisoners at the Mechanics School. We are seeking to do so, since this would clear up at least a few of Argentina's extant mysteries. At the same time we cannot rule out Maggio's having used his intimate knowledge of the Navy's interrogation facility as a frame upon which to build a lurid case against his former captors.

CASTRO *M. Kento*

Attachments:

1. Copy Maggio Letter
2. Informal English translation

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