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Info: Rio and Brasilia

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AmConsul, Porto Alegre

April 13, 1970

Attempted of Kidnapping of Consul in Porto Alegre

SUMMARY

DEAN
INR/CS/BR
INR/RAR/LA
ARA/LA/BR
BRAS 2
BELEM
PALEGRE 2
RECIFE
SPAULO
SALVADOR
CF

On April 4 the American Consul in Porto Alegre and his wife accompanied by a visiting banker from California were intercepted by a vehicle which forced them to the side of the road. A number of armed individuals emerged and advanced toward the car. The Consul accelerated and knocked the Volkswagen out of the way and also ran down one of the terrorists. While leaving the scene one of the terrorists shot wounding the Consul in the right shoulder. However it was possible to continue to the Residence where the Guarda Militar mounts a 24 hour a day guard.

On April 4, 1970, I, Reporting Officer, my wife Christiane and an American banker and an Foreign Service Officer, from San Francisco, California, Hovey C. Clark, dined in the apartment of Dr. Marcelo Tostes (also present at the dinner were Mr. and Mrs. Gustavo Augusto Pedersen, Superintendent of Metalurgica Vallig S.A.). The party ended at about 11.45. Clark, my wife and I entered our station wagon which was parked at Avenida Independencia at the corner of Pinheiro Machado. We then began returning to the Consular Residence by way of rua Vasco da Gama.

Upon crossing rua Felipe Camarão a blue Volkswagen attempted to pass us traveling at rather high speed. It swung in front of the station wagon grazing the front left fender and came to a halt. I stopped as I thought the other car was stopping because of the accident. Immediately a number of men emerged from the Volkswagen, at least 4 and possibly 5. They appeared to have women's stockings covering their faces, were wearing what seemed to be black berets and some sort of khaki uniform. Several were carrying machine guns and at least one had a pistol in his hand. They began to advance toward the car making menacing gestures with their weapons. The entire scene had an unreal nightmarish quality. At this

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point I accelerated the station wagon directly toward the approaching men and the Volks. In knocking the Volkswagen aside it appeared that one of the terrorists was trapped between the door of the Volkswagen and the front of our car. He clung to the front of the car for approximately 20 to 30 meters and then disappeared from sight. (I assume he fell under the car). At the moment that the station wagon accelerated both my wife and Mr. Clark, using good sense, dropped to the floor. While the car was leaving the scene one of the terrorists fired a shot which entered the back window of the station wagon and hit me at the right upper shoulder passing through the front pectoral area. I decided that the nearest assistance in case the terrorists decided to pursue us was at the Residence where two members of the Guarda Militar are on 24 hour day duty. I arrived at the house and Mr. Clark and my wife immediately tried to summon the guards. (One appeared after a slight delay the other appeared later slightly red-eyed with sleep).

From the house I was taken to the Pronto Socorro Municipal where a team of surgeons headed by Dr. Luiz Alberto Garcia do Prado and Dr. Percio Hens removed the bullet from my chest, performing excellent plastic surgery, and closed the wound on my back. A number of other physicians who were personal friends also appeared at the hospital to render whatever assistance they could.

Police, returning to the scene of the incident, found the blue Volkswagen abandoned. It was identified as an automobile which had been stolen on the 25th of March, and inside the car was found a bottle of ether and a mask to apply it, a clip for a 45 calibre sub-machine gun, a knife, a women's purse and a number of other minor objects. These objects left no doubt in the mind of the police that the purpose of the assault was kidnapping and not assassination.

SECURITY PROVISIONS

Upon arrival in Porto Alegre I discussed the matter of security with the staff of the consulate and with local police officials. Col. Joao Marinho, Secretary of Security for Rio Grande do Sul, told me he felt the situation in the state was well under control and they did not think it was necessary to invoke extreme security measures. The security guards which the Governor had assigned to the previous Consul after the kidnapping of Ambassador Ellbrick were not assigned to me. However, three days after our arrival we received a bomb threat at the house and a 24-hour a day guard with 2 members of the Guarda Militar was immediately instituted. This guard has continued up to the present. At the same time two plain clothes policemen in an unmarked car were assigned to follow me to work or to any other regularly scheduled event. They were not assigned to me during evening hours, although they were available upon request to accompany

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us to social events and did so on one occasion. As time passed the police informed me they were reducing the number of days they would accompany me to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. After several more weeks I noticed that the security had ceased to function at all.

After the kidnapping of the Japanese Consul General in Sao Paulo on March 11, 1970, 2 members of DOPS (Departamento de Ordem Politico Social) appeared in my office and asked a number of questions about my movements and that of my family and informed me that this was to provide me with adequate protection. I never heard from DOPS again until two days after the attempted kidnapping. However I talked to Major Pedro Paulo Farrapos of the Brigada Militar about increasing the security and I also talked with LT Wilson of the Intelligence Service of Brigada Militar. LT Wilson warned me that there might be especial activities by the terrorists during the period from March 31 to April 3 because of the celebrations of the 1964 Revolution. In the light of this warning we agreed on certain special security measures for the staff of the consulate and for my immediate family. I requested LT Wilson to assign a member of his command to the Vice Consul, Mr. Lane who is well known in Porto Alegre. I asked him to assign a second guard to be stationed in the outer lobby of the consulate during office hours and we reinstituted the surveillance of my person by two agents of the Brigada Militar on all regularly scheduled trips. I also asked that one of the guards assigned to the house accompany the children in the car when they were being taken to and from school. No special arrangements were made to cover our movements during the evening hours.

After the kidnapping, LT Wilson informed that he had at no time received any instructions from the Secretary of Security to take special measures for me and my family, but had only acted on the personal recommendation of Major Farrapos (who also is my Portuguese language teacher). It therefore appears that we have only received any security protection due to the personal relationship between Major Farrapos and myself. LT Wilson then said that he had now received orders from Col. Mariath to give us full protection. Before entering the operating room I requested Col. Mariath who was present, to provide full protection to both of my vice consuls, to the Cultural Attaché, Ciro Witel and to the Chief of the AID Mission, Lincoln Engelbert. This request was at first met sporadically. I have since spoken to Major Farrapos and it appears that this situation has now been corrected and my staff is receiving full time protection.

It should be mentioned that while many people including the consular staff performed magnificently during the days following the kidnapping attempt, one person stands out. Major Pedro Paulo Farrapos has always been extremely cooperative, providing the consulate with police protection and support. However he has gone beyond the requirements of his job, frequently coming by the residence late at night, checking the performance of the guards and providing many other services which would not normally be his responsibility. During the days that followed the kidnapping attempt, Major Farrapos seemed to have been working 24 hours a day. He was everywhere, supplying personnel, checking on security provisions and doing innumerable other services for the

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consulate and its staff.

PRESS COVERAGE:

Immediately following my visit with Ambassador Elbrick whose trip to Rio Grande do Sul was greatly appreciated not only by myself but by the gauchos who saw it as a sign of solidarity, I granted an interview to the press. A number of versions of what I said during this interview have come out in various newspapers and magazines. Only one is reasonably correct that of Correio do Povo and I attach a copy of that interview. One magazine (Manchete) quoted me as saying " the cold blood (sangue frio) with which I acted was due to my experience in Korea. I have always acted in this way in such situations". The quote is particularly humorous as the only shot I heard fired in anger in Korea was while I was pheasant hunting. My actual quote when asked if my experiences in Korea had helped me was that those days were long ago and that I didn't think one thing had much to do with the other,

One other incident with regard to the press revolved around the question of whether or not I had dispensed my guards the night of the attack. This question was resolved by a statement to the press by the Secretary of Security, a copy of which is enclosed.

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