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July 31, 1970

TO: The Files (CF)
FROM: POL - William G. Walker
SUBJECT: Nancy MANGABEIRA UNGER, American Citizen Arrested for Terrorist Activities in Recife

The mother of Nancy Mangabeira Unger, Edyla Mangabeira de Unger, visited me in my office on July 27. She had just returned from Recife. Since I was her original contact here in the Embassy (beginning about three months ago when she approached us to learn where her daughter might have been held by the police), she wanted to inform me of all that took place while she was in Recife. The following is a brief summary:

- (A) Mrs. Unger said that Donor Lion has been extremely kind and helpful to her and her daughter. She said she is somewhat embarrassed by the knowledge that her daughter reported to be planning his kidnapping at the time of her arrest. She evidenced no doubt that he was the actual target and made several remarks which indicate that this is who Nancy thought they were after;
- (B) The daughter is in a panic of fright, and showing symptoms of a mental state for which she was treated by a New York psychiatrist after her father died eight years ago. The girl apparently trusts no one, not even Mr. Clear (our vice-consul who has visited her). Nancy apparently feels that her intended target would preclude true assistance from the American Consulate;
- (C) The mother has enlisted the following support: she wrote a letter to Senator Edward Kennedy; she has the word of the Governor of Bahia, a political protege of Nancy's grandfather Octavio Mangabeira, that he will do everything he can to help the girl; she has approached three government ministers, and addressed the President himself by letter. Mrs. Unger feels she and her father's friends can bring enormous pressure on the girl's behalf;
- (D) Mrs. Unger said she heard that her daughter had been wounded in Recife by a commercial cable informing her only that she should travel to Recife where her daughter "has been injured". This was on the afternoon of the shooting. Unable to get space on a commercial airliner, Mrs. Unger chartered an aero-taxi, which cost her CR\$ 8,000 and flew to Recife. On arrival in Recife, not knowing what else to do, Mrs. Unger went to see Dom Helder Câmara. Dom Helder said he had heard of a terrorist shootout that morning. He said his sources mentioned a girl being wounded by a bullet in the brain. He suggested Mrs. Unger contact the American Consulate.

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- (E) After learning that her daughter was a prisoner, Mrs. Unger demanded to see the State Secretary of Security. She told me she adopted the attitude of a superior talking to an inferior-- that to "reveal weakness or beg assistance of such officials only encourages them to walk all over you". She demanded to see her daughter. She bluntly threatened reprisals if the daughter were to be tortured. The Secretary of Security denied that torture is practiced in Brazilian jails. Mrs. Unger repeated her threat. At this point the Secretary telephoned and ordered the second girl terrorist brought in. The girl was escorted by four security officers, two of whom had machine guns. Mrs. Unger described the girl as "completely terrified". The Secretary did not introduce Mrs. Unger. He told the girl "tell this lady you're being well treated". She stammered that she was. He then said "show this lady your fingers and that you still have your fingernails". Mrs. Unger said the girl's hands were shaking so badly that she could not actually see that all the nails were there. After similar commands, to all of which the girl responded immediately, the Secretary dismissed the girl. Mrs. Unger then said "I'm Nancy's mother, how is she". The Secretary yelled "don't answer that. Take her back to her cell."
- (F) After threatening the State Security Secretary with her potential political power, Mrs. Unger was permitted to see Nancy on two conditions:
- (a) the interview would be for 10 minutes, and (b) no English would be spoken. Mrs. Unger was only able to ask her daughter a few simple questions. The daughter, in the state described in para B above, was in tears and was only able to express the hopelessness of her position.

Mrs. Unger returned to speak to me on July 28. During that interview I told her that we had received word from Recife that her daughter had suffered a setback. Mrs. Unger said she was leaving immediately for Recife to be near her daughter. She also stated the following:

- (A) Mrs. Unger had contacted Joe Novitski of The New York Times. Joe is "very interested in doing an article" on Nancy. He asked Mrs. Unger for the names of people who know Nancy from childhood, from school, church, etc., so that he might get statements from them.
- (B) Mrs. Unger said the Secretary of State Security had told her that Nancy's fate has already been decided. She will be tried shortly, convicted, and sentenced to 10-12 years. She will spend her sentence in a penal colony for women outside of Recife. An irony is that Nancy's grandfather's sister, as a mother superior, founded and ran this penal colony for many years. It is still run by the same sisters and Mrs. Unger is

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sure Nancy will receive good treatment from them. Mrs. Unger is already thinking of asking the Governor of Bahia, who has offered his help, to ask the Governor of Pernambuco to let the daughter serve the sentence in a Bahia prison.

- (C) Mrs. Unger said she is attempting to have Heleno Fragosa defend Nancy. Fragosa has promised to look into the matter when he is in Recife this week.
- (D) Mrs. Unger asked if the Consulate General in Recife would request that an outside doctor examine Nancy in light of her setback (Donor Lion responded to this suggestion negatively. He said the Consulate General has already told the local authorities that it has confidence in the attending doctor. The doctor has studied in the States.).
- (E) Mrs. Unger told me she has enlisted the support of Father Basilio, a Benedictine with a very good reputation in Recife. Father Basilio will try to visit Nancy.
- (F) Mrs. Unger said she was leaving for Recife as soon as possible, but she promised to call before she left. She did not do so, however, and I assume she is presently in Recife.

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