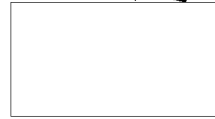


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Weekly Situation Report
on
International Terrorism

DO WSRIT 76-012

23 March 1976

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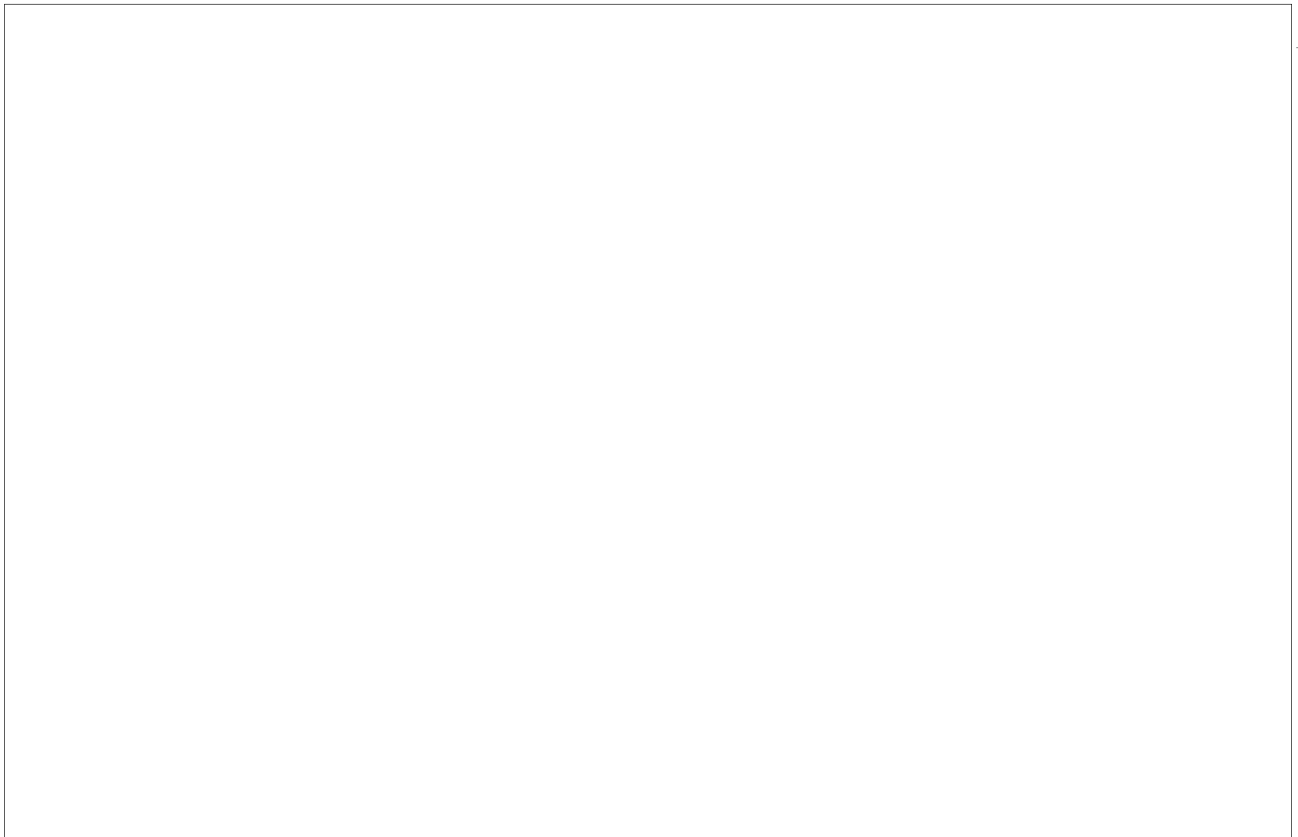
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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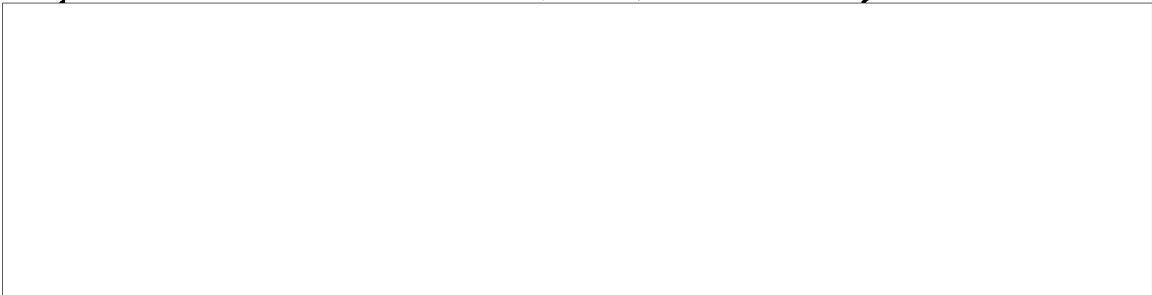
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ARTICLES

Possible Involvement of Colombian Terrorists in the Niehous Kidnapping

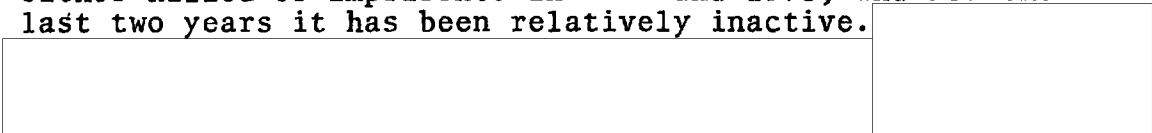
There is a possibility that the 19th of April Movement (M-19), a Colombian terrorist group composed of extreme elements of the ANAPO, may have taken part in the 27 February abduction of William E. Niehous in Caracas, Venezuela.



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 Niehous was kidnapped by members of the Bandera R6ja and Punto Cero (Point Zero), who formed an ad hoc group led by Carlos Efrain Betancourt, a Bandera R6ja leader, and that this group is convinced that Niehous is in some way involved with American intelligence. On 15 March, the local Venezuelan press carried reports that Betancourt had been expelled from the Bandera Roja for his unauthorized participation in Niehous' abduction. The Punto Cero is a small Venezuelan group composed of individuals who were sent to Cuba for training by the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) in 1970. This group takes its name from the area in Cuba where the membership was trained. Most of the group were either killed or imprisoned in 1972 and 1973, and for the last two years it has been relatively inactive.

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Communications with the kidnapers have been sporadic and have proceeded rather slowly. On St. Patrick's Day, Mrs. Niehous made a public appeal asking the Archbishop of Caracas to intercede to get a message to the kidnapers. On 18 March a package was found behind a Caracas church. The

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package contained notes in Spanish, written on two of Niehous' calling cards, which were signed by Niehous and addressed to his wife and to the American ambassador. The cards have been turned over to the police, who are analyzing them. American observers on the scene feel that the notes are genuine.

As it stands now, the kidnapers are sticking to their original demand that their manifesto be published in the press at the Owens-Illinois company's expense. Thus far they have not demanded a ransom. Owens-Illinois had previously maintained the position that they would not take action on the kidnapers' demand until they had proof that Niehous was alive. The situation has been further complicated by the fact that President Perez will not permit the publication of the manifesto in Venezuela under any circumstances. Thus the prospects for an early release of Niehous remain dim.

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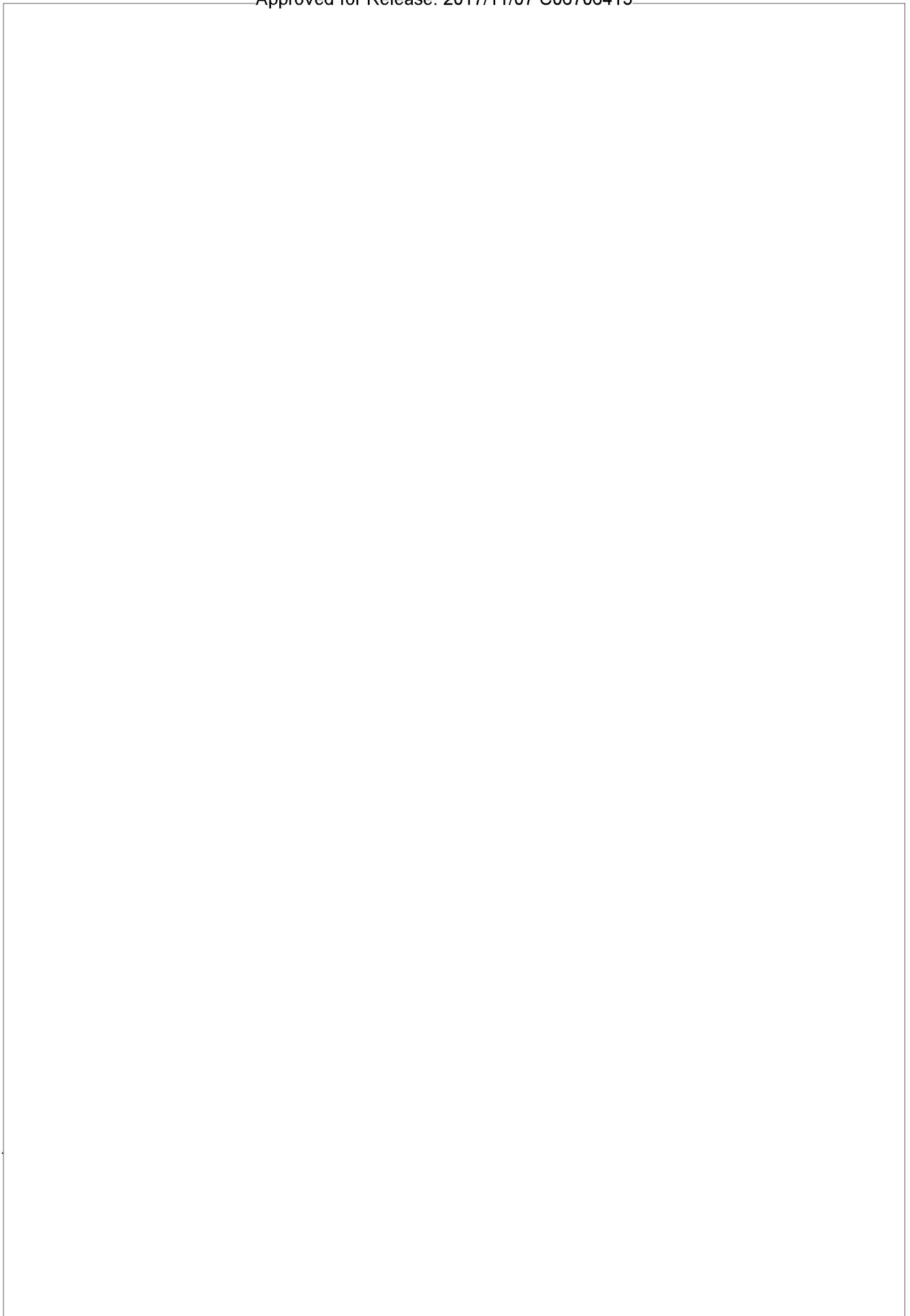
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