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Weekly Situation Report
on
International Terrorism

DO WSRIT 76-014

6 April 1976

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WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

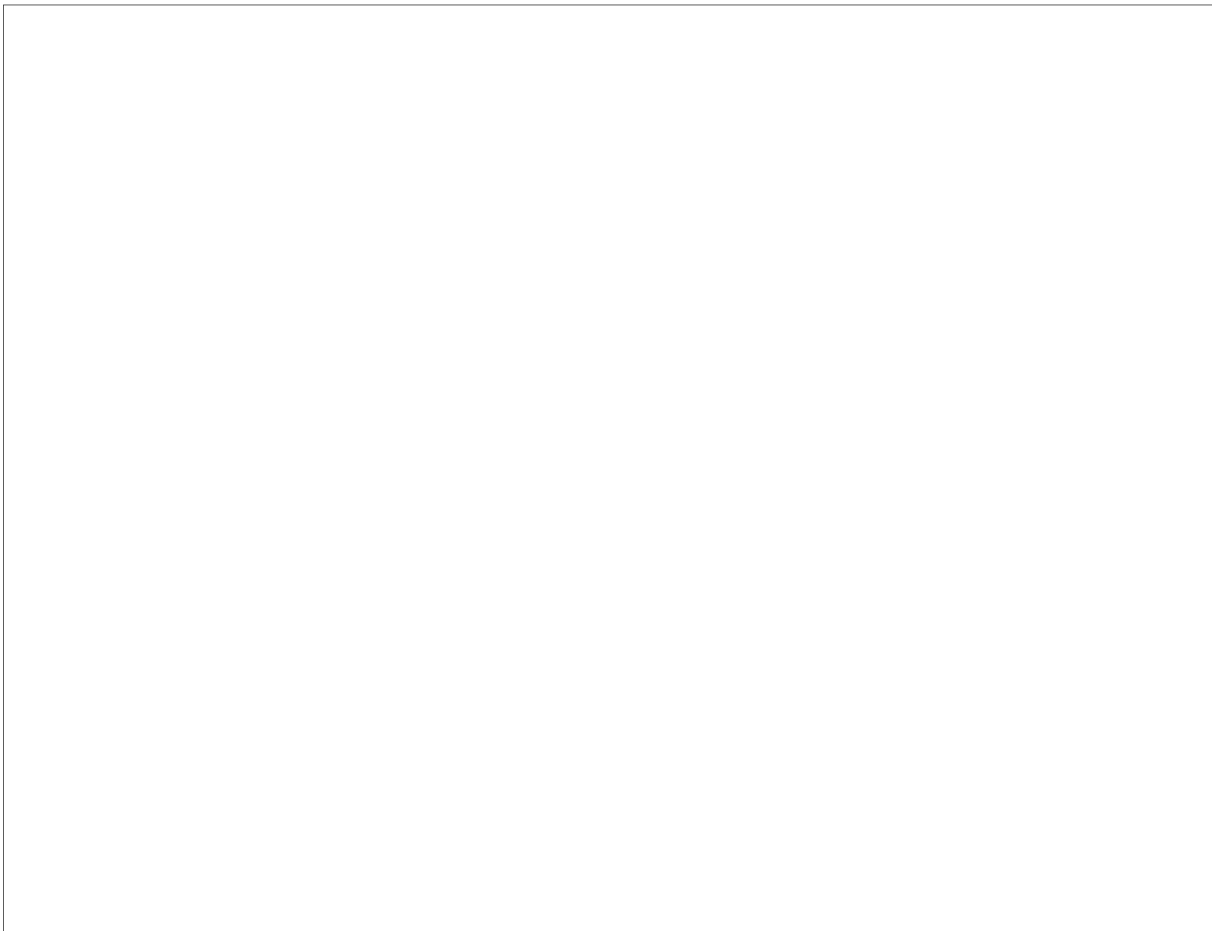
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Niehous Still Captive

It has been approximately six weeks since William E. Niehous was abducted from his home in Caracas, and Venezuelan authorities have made little progress in breaking the case. Working on the theory that the kidnapping might have been an inside job, Owens-Illinois flew in a polygraph expert from the United States at the request of the Venezuelan government. Tests were conducted on nine Owens-Illinois employees selected by the police, but eight tests proved to be negative and one was inconclusive. The police are also investigating the Chilean exile community in Caracas, but they have not turned up any leads.

On 31 March a spokesman for Owens-Illinois stated that the demands of the kidnapers boiled down to three, that the terrorists' manifesto be published, that food be distributed to the poor, and that Owens-Illinois employees be given a bonus. He further commented that the company is locked in on two of the demands. First, the government will not allow the publication of the manifesto, and second, the unions at the Owens-Illinois factories voted not to accept the bonus. The spokesman was hopeful that the kidnapers would come around to demanding a ransom so that the company could negotiate with more flexibility.

The kidnapers have sent several communiques to Mrs. Niehous, company executives and the press. One local television station was shut down for three days because it reported a contact between one of its executives and a self-styled spokesman for the kidnapers who claimed that Niehous would be executed. Because of the way in which this contact was made, it is now believed to be a hoax.

As it now stands, Niehous, his family, and Owens-Illinois are caught in the middle of a battle of wills between a frustrated and unyielding government on one hand and a clever and thus far anonymous group of kidnapers on the other. Unless one side backs down from its hardened position, Niehous could remain a captive for some time to come.

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