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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01  
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O 021400Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4410

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0833

E.O. 11652 GDS  
TAGS SHUM, PGOV, PINT, MASS, AR  
SUBJECT AMBASSADORS CALL ON MASSERA

1. AMBASSADOR PAID A HALF HOUR CALL ON  
ADMIRAL MASSERA AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 1, RESPONDING  
TO URGENT TELEPHONE CALL EARLY THE SAME  
MORNING INVITING HIM TO "STROP AROUND FOR A  
DRINK." (THAT PART OF THE INVITATION GOT  
SIDE TRACKED. NOTHING WAS SERVED DURING THE  
INTERVIEW, WHICH TOOK PLACE AT MASSERAS  
OFFICE AT NAVAL HEADQUARTERS.)

2. EQUIPMENT FOR THE NAVY. THE ADMIRAL  
EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN THAT BOTH THE  
ARGENTINE ARMY AND AIR FORCE HAD RECENTLY  
BEEN AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE SPARE PARTS AND  
MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES,  
WHILE THE NAVY HAS RECEIVED NOTHING. MASSERA  
SAID THAT HE HAD UPBRAIDED AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL  
ABOUT THIS AND GOTTEN THE ANSWER THAT THE ARGENTINE  
NAVY IS UNPOPULAR WITH THE US GOVERNMENT. "THEY SAY IN  
WASHINGTON WE HAVE THE NUNS," MASSERA SAID. "YOU KNOW  
THATS JUST NOT SO," HE CONTINUED. "WELL ITS ALRIGHT  
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FOR THE US NOT TO LIKE MASSERA," THE ADMIRAL ADDED,  
"BUT YOU SHOULD HOLD NOTHING ABAINST THE ARGENTINE NAVY."

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3. HUMAN RIGHTS CASES. THE AMBASSADOR TOOK THE OCCASION TO RAISE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS. HE RAISED SPECIFICALLY THE TIMERMAN, DEUTSCH AND VOGLER CASES. ON TIMERMAN MASSERA GAVE HIS EXPECTED RESPONSE: HE HAD TRIED FOR TIMERMANS RELEASE, HE SAID, BUT HAD BEEN OVERRULED BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMY. HE SEEMED GENUINELY UNAWARE OF THE DEUTSCH AND VOGLER MATTERS, MAKING NOTES AND ASKING PARTICULARS. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD ATTEND A JUNTA MEETING ONLY A HALF HOUR LATER, AND THAT HE WOULD RAISE THESE NAMES WHILE THERE. (COMMENT: ON BEING TOLD THAT ALEJANDRO AND LILIANA DEUTSCH WERE BEING HELD IN CORDOBA, MASSERA MUSED THAT THIS WAS REALLY TOO BAD. IF THEY WERENT IN THE HANDS OF GENERAL MENENDEZ, HE SAID, HE JUST MIGHT BE ABLE TO SNATCH THE PAIR OF THEM AWAY FOR US.)

4. THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE. MASSERA SAID THAT HE HAD READ KAREN DE YOUNGS JANUARY 27 POST ARTICLE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE AND VIDELA OFTEN DISAGREE, AND SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER TRIED TO DISGUISE THIS. HE HAD BEEN FRANK WITH MANY PEOPLE ABOUT THIS. NOW THAT THE DE YOUNG ARTICLE IS CAUSING A STIR, HE SAID, THE TIME HAS COME TO AIR HIS GRIEVANCES AND HAVE CANDID WORDS WITH HIS ARMY COLLEAGUE.

5. ATMOSPHERICS. MORE INTERESTING THAN WHAT MASSERA SAID AT THE MEETING --WHICH SEEMS ALMOST TRIVIAL WHEN COMPARED WITH URGENCY WITH WHICH THE MEETING WAS ARRANGED--WAS THE PUBLICITY GIVEN IT. FIRST NOTICE THAT THE AMBASSADOR WOULD SEE THE NAVY COMMANDER CAME.  
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DURING A 1030 RADIO NEWS BROADCAST. (THE APPOINTMENT WAS SET 0900.) AFTERNOON PAPERS CARRIED THE EVENT--AT ABOUT THE TIME IT WAS TAKING PLACE.

6. WE ACCOUNT FOR THIS BY SUGGESTING THAT MASSERA WANTED IT PUBLICIZED HE WAS MEETING WITH THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN ORDER TO THROW HIS ARMY "OPPOSITION" OFF BASE. WE WERE TOLD ON JANUARY 31 BY A RANKING CIVILIAN OFFICER OF THE PRESIDENCY THAT VIDELA WAS FED UP WITH MASSERAS POLITICKING AND APPARENT DISLOYALTY, AND WOULD USE THE DE YOUNG STORY TO "HAVE IT OUT WITH HIM" AT A JUNTA MEETING DUE TO TAKE PLACE LATE AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 1. THE MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR WAS, IN EFFECT, A MASSERA

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"HOLE CARD" FOR THE TOUGH CONVERSATION WITH VIDELA HE PROBABLY EXPECTED.

7. ON LEAVING MASSERAS OFFICE AMBASSADOR ENCOUNTERED FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES, WHICH GAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO LAY OUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS CASE CONCERNS HE HAD JUST GIVEN MASSERA. MONTES PROMISED TO GO OVER THESE AGAIN WITH HIS BOSS.

8. AMBASSADOR IS WAITING FOR GREEN LIGHT FROM FONOFF TO MEET WITH MINISTER INTERIOR HARGUINDEGUY AND GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES GENERAL ST JEAN. MEETINGS ARE EXPECTED TO OCCUR EARLY NEXT WEEK AND AGAIN DEUTSCH, TIMERMAN AND VOGLER CASES WILL BE DISCUSSED.  
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