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Department of State

TELEGRAM

PAGE 01 BUENOS 03801 1313322 ACTION ARA-15

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INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 CODE-02 PH-05 H-01 IHR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 HA-05 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-08 COM-02 TRSE-00 IO-14 ACC-12 ARC-01 CEC-05 EOE-02 DEE-15 CED-01 SAS-02 /151 W

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R 111932Z MAY 79 FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES TO SECSTATE WASHDC 637 INFO AMEMBASSY WASHINGTON AMEMBASSY BRASILIA AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

BUENOS AIRES 3801

ARA PLS PASS SUBSTANCE TO AMB CASTRO

E.O. 12065: GDS 5/8/85 (THAYER, YVONNE) OR-P TAGS: SHUM, MNUC, AR SUBJECT: (U) ARGENTINA AIRS COMPLAINTS OF US INTERFERENCE

REF: A) BUENOS AIRES 3451, B) BUENOS AIRES 2225

SUMMARY: FROM ITS FORMER RELATIVELY PASSIVE PUBLIC REACTIONS TO USG INITIATIVES, THE REGIME HERE HAS OF LATE BEGUN TO ANSWER BACK, WITH CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT OF THE PRESS, EVEN THOSE PAPERS USUALLY PRO-US AND DEMOCRATICALLY-INCLINED. AMONG THE LIST OF GRIEVANCES WHICH HAVE ELICITED FIRM PUBLIC ARGENTINE RESPONSES AND REBUTTALS ARE: US STATEMENTS DEPLORING THE DETENTION OF ARGENTINE TRADE UNION LEADERS, US CRITICISM OF THE DELAYS IN THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM, AND US STATEMENTS REGARDING ARGENTINA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM. PRIVATELY HEARD ARE COMPLAINT OF AMBASSADOR CASTRO'S ALLEGED PREDICTION OF LABOR TROUBLES IN HIS SPEECH IN NEW YORK LAST MONTH. THESE MAY BE ONLY SQUALLS, BUT THE CHANGE IN THE WEATHER IS WORTH NOTING. END SUMMARY.

1. (U) OFFICIAL PUBLIC ARGENTINE RESPONSE TO US POLICY INITIATIVES, PARTICULARLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, HAS ON THE WHOLE BEEN MUTED AND RESIGNED. OF LATE HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASINGLY REFUSED TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK. ON MAY 2, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PROTESTED TO THE CHARGE US STATEMENTS DEPLORING THE RECENT ARREST OF ARGENTINE STRIKE LEADERS AND THEN WEIDELY PUBLICIZED THE PROTEST. EVEN PRIOR TO THE OFFICIAL PROTEST, THE PRESS BITTERLY DENOUNCED "UNINFORMED US ARROGANCE" AND "SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS" IN DEFENDING THE JAILED UNION LEADERS. THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD ON MAY 3 SOUNDLY REPUDIATED THE AFL-CIO'S "BLATANT THREATS" OF A BOYCOTT AS WRONGLY DEFENDING "PATENTLY UNDEMOCRATIC AND FASCIST UNION LEADERS" AND THE POWER AND PRIVILEGE OF A HUGE AND REACTIONARY VESTED INTEREST. ON MAY 6 THE HERALD RETURNED TO THE THEME CLAIMING THAT "BY MAKING SUCH STATEMENTS THE US UNDERMINES ITS OWN CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ARGENTINES, BECAUSE, IF ANYTHING, IT IS THE RIGHT OF GOVERNMENTS TO ARREST THOSE SEEKING TO DISRUPT PUBLIC ORDER THAT IS RECOGNIZED, AND NOT THE REVERSE... BY COMING OUT SO QUICKLY AND SO INDISCRIMINATELY ON THE SIDE OF A NAKEDELY ANTI-DEMOCRATIC GROUP IN A CONFLICT WITH A GOVERNMENT THAT, FOR ITS FAULTS, HAS DEMOCRACY AS ALONG-TERM OBJECTIVE, THE US REDUCED ITS MORAL AUTHORITY IN PRESSING FOR THE RELEASE OF THE MANY PEOPLE BEING

HELD IN PRISON OR UNDER HOUSE ARREST WITHOUT ANY CONVINCING CAUSE." CONVICTION ALSO DEPLETED THE US STATEMENT AS "ANOTHER SIGN OF ARROGANCE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE," ARGUING THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAD NOTED WITHIN THE LAST YEAR AFFECTING THE LIFE LEADER. LA NACION BRANDED THE US ACTION IMPERFECT, UNFAIR AND SPITEFUL, LEADING TO THE CONCLUSION THAT "WASHINGTON HAS MOVED FAR AWAY FROM HARMONIOUS BILATERAL RELATIONS."

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2. (U) THE PRESS WIDELY NOTED THAT ON MAY 2 THE ARGENTINE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON PUBLICLY REBUTTED THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S APRIL 24 CHARGE THAT THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM WAS NOT WORKING. THE EMBASSY PLACED THE BLAME FOR DELAYS IN PROCESSING RIGHT OF OPTION CASES ON BUREAUCRATIC SNAGS RESULTING FROM US LEGISLATION. THE STATEMENT DECLARED THAT OF 141 PRISONERS PERMITTED VISITS FROM US CONSULAR OFFICIALS, 40 HAVE BEGUN MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR TRAVEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED DEADLINES AND TWO HAVE ALREADY TRAVELED; WHILE 213 PER DETAINEEES HAD ALREADY TRAVELED ELSEWHERE ABROAD UP TO DECEMBER 1978.

3. (U) IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD, THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US AND ARGENTINE POSITIONS ARE MORE FREQUENTLY AIRD. ARGENTINE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION PRESIDENT CASTRO MADERO RARELY LETS A WEEK GO BY NOW WITHOUT REITERATING HIS COUNTRY'S INTENTION TO OBTAIN AN INDEPENDENT FUEL CYCLE CAPABILITY, AS WELL AS ITS OPPOSITION TO THE NPT AS DISCRIMINATORY. IN MARCH, CASTRO MADERO AND THE PRESS EXPRESSED CHAGRIN AND OUTRAGE AT US STATEMENTS AND PERCEIVED EFFORTS TO HINDER ARGENTINA'S ACQUISITION OF ADVANCED REACTOR AND HEAVY WATER TECHNOLOGY FROM THIRD COUNTRIES. MORE RECENTLY ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL IN WASHINGTON ECHOED THE COMPLAINT, WHICH WAS CITED HERE BY THE PRESS. (COMMENT: SUBSEQUENTLY CASTRO MADERO HAS MODERATED SOMEWHAT HIS OWN REFERENCES TO THE US, ADMITTING THAT US POLICY DOES NOT OPPOSE THE SALE OF NUCLEAR REACTORS TO ARGENTINA AS LONG AS THEY ARE UNDER ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS.)

4. AMONG ANGRY RUMBLINGS AGAINST US INTERFERENCE IN ARGENTINE INTERNAL AFFAIRS IS HEARD CRITICISM OF AMBASSADOR CASTRO'S REMARKS IN NEW YORK IN LATE APRIL ANTICIPATING LABOR TROUBLE IN ARGENTINA. ALTHOUGH THE PRESS QUOTED AJA ESPIL'S CONGRATULATORY REPLY TO CASTRO ON HIS CLEAR EXPOSITION OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, THERE ARE INDICATIONS GOA AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS WERE UPSET WITH THE LABOR TROUBLE COMMENTS IN HIS TALK.

5. COMMENT: GOA'S OFFICIAL REBUKES ONLY BRING TO THE SURFACE LONG FELT RESENTMENT AT US PUBLIC CRITICISM OF ARGENTINA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. SUPPORT OF GOA BY LIBERAL PRESS ALSO POINTS UP LOCAL SENSITIVITIES TOWARD US "MEDDLING" EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO STRONGLY SUPPORT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE. WE CANNOT SPEAK OF A "CHANGE OF CLIMATE" HERE BUT WE SHOULD NOTE THE STORM WARNINGS. END COMMENT. CHAPLIN

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044) U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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