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Department of State

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

PAGE 01 BUENOS 08782 01 OF 02 252120Z  
ACTION ARA-15

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BUENOS 08782 01 OF 02 252120Z

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 MCT-02 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PH-06  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AS-01 SY-05 SYE-00  
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P R 241953Z OCT 79 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2898  
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ NOFORN SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 8782

E.O. 12065 GDS 18-24-85 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND) OR-P  
TAGS PINS, SHUM, AR, PINT; ASEC  
SUBJECT (U) TERRORIST THREAT IN ARGENTINA

~~(U)~~ SUMMARY: LIMITED NUMBERS OF MONTONERO TERRORISTS ARE CAPABLE OF REPEATING SPECTACULAR ACTS LIKE THE BOMBING OF THE HOME OF WALTER KLEIN. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE GOA WILL EVENTUALLY DESTROY THE NEW MONTONERO CELLS. THERE IS A DANGER THAT TERRORIST ACTIONS WILL BE EXPLOITED BY THE MILITARY OPPONENTS OF GENERAL VIOLA AND PRESIDENT VIDELA TO JUSTIFY AND BRING ABOUT A RETURN TO WIDESPREAD REPRESSION, AN OUTCOME THE TERRORISTS ARE HOPING FOR. HOWEVER, IN AN OCTOBER 22 SPEECH GENERAL VIOLA FORESWORE SUCH TACTICS, DESCRIBING THE TERRORISTS AS REMNANTS AND GENERALLY TRYING TO REASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT THE GOA HAS THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND. IT IS IN THE USG'S INTEREST THAT VIDELA'S REASSURING VIEW BY PROVEN RIGHT OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

1. ~~(U)~~ THE ARGENTINE LEADERSHIP HAS ATTEMPTED TO SET FORTH A COHERENT PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE CURRENT TERRORIST THREAT IN ARGENTINA AND THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS IN MEETING THE THREAT. THE EXPLANATIONS CAME OCTOBER 22, WHEN ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL VIOLA RELEASED A SUMMARY REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INVESTIGATION INTO THE ATTACK ON WALTER KLEIN AND HIS FAMILY. VIOLA'S ACTION SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED BY THE CONTINUED RUMORS AND SPECULATION ABOUT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KLEIN ATTEMPT.

2. (U) THE MAIN POINTS MADE BY VIOLA WERE:  
-THE MONTONEROS ARE ENGAGED IN A "COUNTERATTACKING" CAMPAIGN DECIDED UPON BY THE MOVEMENT'S LEADERSHIP ABOUT A YEAR AGO. HOWEVER, THE SITUATION IS NOT THE SAME AS IT WAS IN 1976-1977, SINCE "TERRORISM IS NO LONGER A COMMON PRACTICE IN THE COUNTRY" AND TERRORISTS ARE NO MORE THAN "RESIDUAL ELEMENTS" AND "SMALL GROUPS".  
-MONTONERO TERRORISTS WHO HAVE RE-INFILTRATED ARGENTINA OPERATE IN TWO KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS. THE FIRST ARE "SPECIAL AGITATION TROOPS", WHOSE PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE INFILTRATION OF UNIONS AND STUDENT GROUPS- "TO PROMOTE STRIKES" AND DISSENT. VIOLA ALSO STATED THAT THE PROPAGANDA UNITS OPERATE SMALL MOBILE RADIO TRANSMITTERS WHICH THEY HAVE USED IN BUENOS AIRES, SANTA FE AND CORDOBA TO INTERRUPT TELEVISION BROADCASTS WITH MONTONERO PROPAGANDA. THE SECOND KIND OF MONTONERO GROUPING IS THAT "SPECIAL INFANTRY TROOPS", WHO CARRY OUT TERRORIST ATTACKS LIKE THAT AGAINST KLEIN.  
-THE "WAR AGAINST SUBVERSIVES... WILL BE DIRECTED EXCLUSIVELY AGAINST SUBVERSIVES AND NO... INDISCRIMINANTLY AGAINST ALL CITIZENS."  
-THE PRESS HAS SOMETIMES HANDLED QUESTIONS OF TERRORISM

AND DISAPPEARANCES IN AN IRRESPONSIBLE MANNER WHICH HAS FAVORED THE TERRORISTS.

3. (U) IN ESSENCE THE COMMUNIQUE VIOLA RELEASED STATES THAT THE KLEIN ATTACK WAS CARRIED OUT BY A MONTONERO "SPECIAL INFANTRY" UNIT LED BY RAUL CLEMENTE YAGUER. IN THIS CONNECTION A LONG CURRICULUM VITAE ON YAGUER WAS RELEASED DEMONSTRATING PARTICULARLY HIS UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATIONS AS STUDENT AND TEACHER AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF ALLEGATIONS OF SAVAGE ATTACKS ON THE SOCIETY.

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4. (C) COMMENT: VIOLA'S REMARKS COINCIDE GENERALLY WITH REPORTS WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING THROUGH (BEGIN NOFORN) EMBASSY [REDACTED] AND (LEGAL ATTACHE (END NOFORN) SOURCES FOR SOME TIME. THESE REPORTS SKETCH THE GOA'S VIEW OF AN EFFORT BY MONTONEROS TO CONDUCT SUSTAINED OPERATIONS IN ARGENTINA THROUGH THE USE OF TERRORIST AND AGITATION SQUADS, AS DESCRIBED BY VIOLA. THESE REPORTS GENERALLY SUGGEST A GOA BELIEF THAT BETWEEN 200 AND 300 MONTONEROS MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR THESE OPERATIONS, AFTER TRAINING IN WHAT THE GOA BELIEVES TO BE PLO TRAINING CAMPOS IN LEBANON AND AFRICA.

5. ~~(U)~~ WE ORIGINALLY RECEIVED THE GOA INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATIONS WITH SOME SKEPTICISM. HOWEVER, ACCUMULATING DETAILS TOGETHER WITH THE ATTACK ON THE KLEIN RESIDENCE HAVE CAUSED US TO REAPPRAISE OUR POSITION. WE NOW ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT THE GENERAL LINES OF THE GOA'S ANALYSIS: THAT THE MONTONEROS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KLEIN BOMBING; THAT THE BOMBING WAS PART OF A GENERAL "COUNTERATTACK" PLANNED AND DIRECTED BY THE MONTONEROS; THAT ALTHOUGH THE MONTONEROS' MEANS ARE LIMITED THEY ARE CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING PERIODIC ATTACKS; AND THAT THEY WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE THEIR ACTIONS UNLESS AND UNTIL STOPPED BY GOA SECURITY FORCES.

6. ~~(U)~~ IF THE MONTONEROS ARE INDEED ENGAGED IN A NEW CAMPAIGN OF TERRORISM IT CAN HAVE BUT ONE PURPOSE, THE CLASSIC ONE OF TERRORISTS: TO BRING ON A WAVE OF REPRESSION THAT WILL TURN THE POPULATION AGAINST THE GOA AND TOWARDS THE MONTONEROS. THE MONTONEROS CANNOT REASONABLY ASPIRE TO POPULAR SUPPORT. MOREOVER, WE THINK THAT THE ODDS FAVOR THE SECURITY FORCES' EVENTUALLY TERMINATING THIS LATEST TERRORIST OUTBREAK. INDEED, THEY HAVE HAD GOOD SUCCESS AGAINST THE PROPAGANDA GROUPS, THOUGH NOT YET AGAINST THE ACTUAL TERRORISTS. THE CHIEF DANGER IS THAT IF THE TERRORISTS ARE ABLE TO SCORE "VICTORIES" LIKE THE KLEIN BOMBING OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS-A TIME OF CRITICAL MILITARY COMMAND CHANGES- THEY COULD SUCCEED IN THEIR NEAR TERM OBJECTIVE OF CAUSING

PAGE 01 BUENOS 08782 02 OF 02 242212Z  
ACTION ARA-15

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THE SECURITY FORCES TO OPT FOR THE KIND OF WIDESPREAD  
REPRESSION THAT VIOLA EXPLICITLY FORESWORE IN HIS SPEECH.

7. ~~(S)~~ VIOLA AND VIDELA HAVE A MUCH DIFFERENT GAME PLAN:  
TO SUCCEED THEY MUST BOTH CONVINCING THE PUBLIC THAT THE  
TERRORIST THREAT IS LIMITED AND UNDER CONTROL AND THE  
MILITARY THAT THERE IS NO TERRORIST CAPABILITY WHICH CAN  
JUSTIFY A MASSIVE CRACKDOWN. THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CON-  
TINUE TO DOWNPLAY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERRORISTS.  
HOPEFULLY, THE TERRORISTS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MOUNT MORE  
THAN SPORADIC ATTACKS AND THE PRESIDENT AND VIOLA WILL  
CONVINCE ALL THAT THE TERRORISTS ARE NO MORE THAN A  
RELIC OF THE PAST WHICH INEVITABLY WILL BE ELIMINATED.  
CASTRO