

DE STATE

TELEGRAM

INDICATE
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, ASEC, AR
SUBJECT: Air Force Revolt: Recapitulation and Aftermath
ACTION: SecState WASHDC PRIORITY

Info: DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
AmEmbassy ASUNCION
" BRASILIA
" LA PAZ
" MONTEVIDEO
" SANTIAGO



Hold

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8104

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

Ref: A) BA 8277,
POL-3 B) BA 8294
POL/R C) BA 8351
ECOM D) Smith-Felder telecon of December 24
USIS

USDAO
MILGP-2
LEGAT
SCIAT
RF
CHRON

1. Summary: Some of the apparent inconsistencies in the recent Air Force revolt can now be seen in better perspective. At a given moment, Mrs. Peron could only have crushed it by calling on the Army, which would not have responded. She was, therefore, very much in a box. Videla, too, however, saw his own position threatened by the revolt. He therefore had Agosti isolate the ultra-right leaders and put them down. This was successful but could have a high price further down the road. With Fautario out of the way, the Armed Forces emerged better coordinated and

DRAFTED BY: POL: WSSmith:mg *WSS* DRAFTING DATE: 12/29/75 TEL. EXT.: 128 CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED: *X* AMBASSADOR ROBERT C. HILL

REFERENCES: DAO: ColPACoughlin (in draft) *WSS*
POL/R: DLSmock (in draft) *WSS*

A/DCM: WBeal *WB*

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more united than before--at least for the moment. Videla emerged as the defender of constitutionalism, and the Army's subsequent victory over the terrorists at Monte Chingolo and Videla's impressive Christmas Eve speech further strengthened his hand--at least for the moment. In the long run, both Armed Forces unity and Videla's own position depend upon whether or not a political solution is soon produced. Hardliners, both civilian and military, were irritated by Videla's refusal to throw in with Capellini and topple Mrs. Peron straight away. There is no doubt that Videla promised quick political solutions (most importantly, that Mrs. Peron would be levered aside) in order to hold them at bay. If such solutions are not forthcoming within the next few weeks, Videla will face new challenges and splits within the Armed Forces. End Summary.

2. Why was Fautario Released? DAO sources have cleared up the mystery of why Fautario was released. The government named Agosti the new AF CINC at 2 p.m. on December 18 and so notified Capellini. The latter had no further interest in Fautario and released him. Fautario, however, unaware that a new CINC had been named, returned to AF headquarters and announced that he was resuming his duties. When Defense Minister Vottero informed Fautario that he was no longer the CINC, Fautario refused to step down. It was not until about 9 p.m. that he conceded. It was for this reason that the decree naming Agosti the new AF CINC was not published until 10:30 p.m. and that he was not

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sworn in until after midnight. Meanwhile, Capellini had continued his revolt, even though Fautario was no longer a factor. Capellini was now demanding nothing less than the ouster of the government and its replacement by a military regime.

3. Why Videla Did Not Support Capellini. As indicated earlier in Embassy sitreps, Capellini represented the far right-wing and wanted to bring into power an out-and-out military government. Videla is a moderate, a professional ~~statesman~~ ^{soldier} in every sense of the word, a constitutionalist, and while understanding that Mrs. Peron must be moved aside, wants to leave power in civilian hands if at all possible. Had Videla joined in Capellini's revolt, or had he moved to oust Mrs. Peron while it was still going on, he would have then had to contend with a strengthened right wing within the Armed Forces. He might even have appeared beholden to them and it would have been far more difficult to hold out for a civilian government. Further, the Army never likes to hitch its own fortunes to an Air Force (or Navy) initiative. Videla had his own plans and stuck to them despite Capellini's interference. It was logical that he did so.

4. Why Did Videla and Agosti Simply Not Sit Back and Watch? At a given moment, it appeared that most major AF bases had gone over to the rebels. As indicated in ref A, Mrs Peron could not have put down the rebellion without calling on the Army. It seemed at the time, then, that Videla was in an excellent

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position simply to sit back and observe. If she called on the Army, Videla could ignore her call, and when she could not put down the revolt, she would have fallen without any overt move against her on Videla's part. It is still a debatable point as to whether or not it might not have been wiser for Videla to have followed this tactic. Be that as it may, Videla himself chose not to do so. Apparently, he feared that if the revolt went on for long, other hardline leaders, including some of his own corps commanders, would join in. This would have threatened his own position and might have left the hardliners in the driver's seat. It would also have been damaging to military discipline. Hence, Videla urged Agosti to go ahead and suppress the core of the rebellion. Agosti talked fast to the other senior AF officers and won most of them over to him (see ref B). Clearly, he gave assurances that Mrs. Peron would be out soon anyway; therefore, there was no point in continuing the revolt. By the afternoon of December 21, Agosti had reduced the revolt to Capellini and his followers at Moron and Aeroparque. He moved against them with prudence and a display of firepower designed more to intimidate than to kill. Without shedding any blood (a most important point for future unity), he forced Capellini to surrender.

5. Videla's Position Subsequent to Revolt. Videla emerged the victor and with an enhanced image as defender of constitutionalism and the institutions. The Armed Forces' dramatic victory

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over the terrorists at Monte Chingolo on December 23 further strengthened Videla's hand (as well as that of the Armed Forces in general), as did his Christmas Eve speech calling on the civilian politicians for definitions and solutions and that corruption and immorality be punished. Also adding to his image was the deft way in which he faced down Lorenzo Miguel and blocked the intervention of Buenos Aires Province on December 24 (see septel). Videla is, then, now in a stronger position than he enjoyed prior to the Air Force revolt. But it is a position conditioned by a definite time frame. He held off the hardliners by promising political solutions within a short time--probably by the end of January and possibly a good deal sooner. He clearly hopes the civilians even now can move Mrs. Peron aside on their own--through threat of impeachment, pressures from her own party or some other means. If they cannot, then Videla will have the choice of doing it himself, at the head of the Armed Forces, or face being ousted by men like Generals Suarez Mason, Diaz Bessone, and Menendez, who will lead an out-and-out golpe. In a difficult situation, Videla is trying to stay within the constitution. If he wins, there is a good chance that a civilian President will replace Mrs. Peron. If he loses, then constitutional rule is probably over for some time to come.

6. Unity of the Armed Forces. The ouster of Fautario has produced a greater sense of unity among the three commanders. Massera and Videla were on the same wave length to begin with.

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The sour note, Fantario, is out of the way and has been replaced by an old friend of Videla's. Agosti and Videla are from the same small town in BA Province, Mercedes. Further, as demonstrated at Monte Chingolo, there is now a much improved coordination among the services. At Monte Chingolo, the Air Force, along with the Army and Navy, responded rapidly and joined in the operations against the terrorists. As with Videla's personal position, however, this greater unity in the Armed Forces could prove short-lived unless there are drastic changes in the government soon--with Mrs. Peron's removal from the scene in one way or another topping the list.

7. Mrs. Peron Weakened. On the other side of the coin, Mrs. Peron's government emerged from the crisis further weakened, a situation her subsequent actions have done nothing to improve. Her ~~speech~~^{inane} speech of December 22 (see ref C) enraged senior military officers (with whom she refused to coordinate the text) and has become the butt of public jokes. Further, in the wake of so serious a crisis, a cabinet shake-up would have been the least one might have expected of Mrs. Peron if she wished to defuse the situation. Yet, when her entire cabinet did the expected and offered their resignations, on December 24, she almost immediately refused, indicating full confidence in all (see ref D).. Only her Press Secretary, Eloy Reborá, got the bounce. This was a must since he had run directly afoul of the three CINCS (see septel). She hardly pleased the CINCS

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with her choice to replace Reborá. Jorge O. Papaleo is a protege of Lorenzo Miguel, who has just come into direct conflict with Videla because of his insistence on intervening BA Province.

8. CGT Does Nothing. In terms of Mrs. Peron's position, moreover, it is interesting to note that while the CGT talked of mass mobilizations, etc., in fact they lifted not a finger until the issue was already clearly decided. Only on December 22 did they decide to call a sit-down strike. By then the revolt was over. If they really wished to defend Mrs. Peron, one might have expected a far more militant position.

9. Conclusions: While the Air Force revolt temporarily clouded the image of military unity, the fact that unity was restored has outweighed that negative image. Further, the positive factors--that Fautario was removed, that the Armed Forces defended the Constitution, etc.--outweigh the negative. The Armed Forces ~~defended the~~ have emerged with a greater unity of purpose among the three CINCS and with an improved image. Mrs. Peron emerged weaker than ever. If the three CINCS wish to preserve their position of strength, however, they must deliver on their promises to get rid of Mrs. Peron and produce other political solutions soon. Videla's Christmas Eve speech (text of which we assume Department has seen via FBIS) is a clear warning to the civilian politicians to resolve the problem of the power vacuum in the presidency else the Armed Forces themselves will have to act.

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1632

DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

INDICATE
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILL, AR
SUBJECT: Sitrep No. 13: Air Force Revolt

ACTION: SecState WASHDC IMMEDIATE

Info: DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
AmEmbassy ASUNCION
" BRASILIA
" LA PAZ
" MONTEVIDEO
" SANTIAGO

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8351

USCINCSO FOR POLAD
DIA DOD FOR DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3

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DL-3
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1. AF revolt now definitely over. Normal air service has been restored at Aeroparque. Brigadier Capellini has been flown to unnamed air base. Reportedly, he will be only officer to suffer disciplinary action. As expected, yesterday's strike was lifted almost as soon as it began.

2. Crowds of civilians gathered at Moron yesterday to cheer rebels and some 300-500 people demonstrated against Mrs. Peron and in favor of Capellini in downtown Buenos Aires last night. Crowd surged down Florida street until stopped by police cordon.

Police had to use tear gas and shots fired in air to break up

TYPED BY: COL:WSSmith:mg *WRS* DRAFTING DATE 12/23/75 TEL. EXT. 128 CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY: AMBASSADOR ROBERT C. HILL

ARRANGES: AO: ColPACoughlin *WRS* OL/R: DLSmock *WRS* A/DCM: HWoodward

demonstration. Two Embassy communicators were forced from restaurant where they were having dinner and were lined up on street with arms in air along with other patrons. They were not given opportunity to identify themselves, but were released after period of ten to fifteen minutes.

3. "Pocket AF rebellion" served to underline impotence of Mrs. Peron's government. She appeared immobilized and never gave order that it be suppressed. AF did it on its own. Thus, her speech last night (text of which we assume Department has via FBIS) reflected an almost bizarre divorcement from reality. She spoke in first person of having put down rebellion with serenity, of avoiding bloodshed and accomplishing great things for Argentine people. In fact, however, she was not even a protagonist. As La Opinion puts it this morning, speech reflects "certain misinformation concerning reality of the situation through which country is passing." Military are bound to have been profoundly irritated by tone and content of speech, which took all credit for herself and barely mentioned military.

4. Military will also be disturbed by implication that she clearly does not plan to go on leave. On contrary, she emphasized her intention of continuing in office. Doubtless her repeated use of first person was also meant to signal that intention. Meanwhile, her performance of past few days has simply underlined her incapacity. Except for holding sterile cabinet meetings and issuing weird communiques (see septel) she

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took no action at all. Public ~~image~~ image is one of Mrs. Peron cowering and then fainting in Casa Rosada basement during December 20 air-raid scare. An American newspaperwoman who was a close eyewitness reports that when Mrs. Peron emerged from Casa Rosada about 10:00 p.m. December 20, she appeared to be in a trance, grimacing and stumbling. Several of her bodyguards reportedly grabbed her and virtually threw her in the back of her car. Other reports indicate that even during crisis she refused to speak to Interior Minister Robledo, whom she has come to detest. The two communicate through a third party rather than speaking directly to one another.

5. As some observers have put it: "Mrs. Peron's government is dead--has been dead for months." It appears, nonetheless, that its existence as a living corpse has been prolonged for yet another few days, or even weeks. To their credit, the Armed Forces are still hoping civilians will produce some constitutional means of removing Mrs. Peron from office. But time is clearly running out. Unless more graceful way is found, military may soon have to put her on a plane to Madrid, as they did Lopez Rega.

6. Government, and country, remain in state of crisis, but crisis could continue for yet some time to come. Immediate issue, that of AF revolt, has passed. Thus, while we wait for the other shoe to drop, Embassy will terminate sitrep series. In closing out, we repeat observation of Buenos Aires Herald that "there are usually more casualties at a Mexican wedding than in an Argentine revolt."

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FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILL, AR
SUBJECT: Sitrep No. 12: Air Force Revolt
ACTION: SecState WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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Info: DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
AmEmbassy ASUNCION
" BRASILIA
" LA PAZ
" MONTEVIDEO
" SANTIAGO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD
DIA DOD FOR DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3

1. After series of stops and starts, during which agreement seemed to have been reached on at least two occasions yesterday ^{apparently} (December 21), AF rebels ~~seemingly~~ came to terms with AF CINC Agosti early this morning (December 22). Aeroparque has been turned over to loyalist forces and Commodore Ugo Nicolas de Riccio, an officer loyal to Agosti, has taken command at Moron. ^{are} ~~There may still be~~ some individual ^{holdouts at Moron and de Riccio is hav} ~~trouble establishing his authority, but for~~ all practical purposes it would seem rpt seem that this phase is over.

2. CGT had called for sit-down strike beginning at 10:00 a.m.

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REFERENCES: D: ColPACoughlin (in draft) *WSS*
L/R: DLSmock (in draft) *WSS*

A/DCM: HWoodward *HWoodward*

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Strike apparently will begin, but in view of solution to AF rebellion, meeting of CGT leaders also scheduled for 10:00 a.m. may decide to call it off quickly.

3. Terms of Agosti-Capellini agreement are not yet known, but most observers assume former's assurances concerning Mrs. Peron's imminent departure must have been firm; otherwise it is unlikely Capellini would have backed away.


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DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

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INDICATE
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILL, AR
SUBJECT: Sitrep No. 11: Air Force Revolt
ACTION: SecState WASHDC IMMEDIATE
Info: DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
AmEmbassy ASUNCION
" BRASILIA
" LA PAZ
" MONTEVIDEO
" SANTIAGO

Hold

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8295

USCINCSO FOR POLAD
XX DIA DOD FOR DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3

1. As of 2 p.m. today (December 21) there had been no new attacks against Moron and no moves against Aeroparque. Negotiations with rebel AF officers continue. Press this morning expressed optimism that solution to this particular problem was near at hand, but other observers have expressed reservations. Army General Majica was dismissed last night, but so far there have been no further repercussions within Armed Forces.
2. Even if AF conflict winds down, of course, larger political problem will remain. In developments related to it:
3. Last night, Interior Minister Robledo made statement in which

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REFERENCES: AO: Col PACoughlin (in substance) *WBS* A/DCM: HWoodward
DL/R: DISmock (in substance) *WBS*

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he said that once discipline is restored in AF, government would be willing to discuss any other problems with military commanders, whether they were problems of a military nature or not. This was taken by all sides to mean that Robledo understands matter will not end with suppression of AF rebellion; rather, full political solution must be negotiated.

4. CGT last night issued statement expressing support for Mrs. Peron and convoking meeting of Central Confederated Committee for this morning. Committee met as scheduled and is now in permanent session. This represents very weak response on part of CGT--for the moment. This is not to say they could not call workers to street as situation develops, but so far their reaction has been tamer than expected.

5. In Congress, opposition parties and some anti-verticalista Peronists continue to press for Mrs. Peron's departure--some favoring leave of absence, others demanding resignation.

Verticalistas in Chamber, on other hand, continue publicly to voice support for President (though in private they too--or at least most of them--reportedly admit that she must go). Debate has at times become extremely bitter. Senior senators are playing a more serious and constructive role in trying to find solution to problem and some constitutional means of removing Mrs. Peron from presidency even if she will not budge on her own.

6. Three developments Embassy has not had opportunity to report which, while not directly germane to military crisis, have impact

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on Mrs. Peron's image and situation are: a) MID at end of week walked out of FREJULI Bloc; or rather, MID declared it was no longer part of bloc since latter had long since collapsed of its own rot. b) On December 19 Chamber of Deputies approved Constitutional Affairs Committee's finding that investigation of corruption in Social Welfare Ministry was not a violation of executive privilege. c) Federal Judge Fasolino late last week issued arrest order for Lopez Rega and his two cohorts, Carlos Villone and Jose M. Vanni. Fasolino reportedly asked Interpol to pick them up. Partial report in Fasolino's hands on what has been described as "paroxysm of venality" in Ministry under Lopez Rega reportedly is so damning that he saw no reason to wait for rest of report before issuing arrest order. Troubles of her former court favorite besmirch Mrs. Peron's banners as well as his. Arrest order, then, could hardly come at worse time for her.

7. Further developments expected during afternoon and evening.


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INDICATE
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FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, AR
SUBJECT: Sitrep No. 10: Air Force Revolt

ACTION: SecState WASHDC IMMEDIATE

Info: DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
AmEmbassy ASUNCION
" BRASILLIA
" LA PAZ
" MONTEVIDEO
" SANTIAGO

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8294

USCINCSO FOR POLAD
DIA DOD FOR DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3

1. In bizarre episode this afternoon AF elements loyal to AF CINC Agosti bombed and strafed Moron Air Base. Attack came after day of intense discussions between Agosti and rebel officers. Agosti reportedly assured officers that since three CINCOS are already insisting on full political solution--i.e., including Mrs. Peron's ouster, there no longer any reason for AF rebellion; rather, AF officers should now all accept discipline of their institutions and get behind new CINC. Assurances obviously were convincing, for commanders of all bases (e.g. Mendoza, Villa Reynolds, etc.) except Moron and Aeroparque ended

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ARRANGES: AO: Col PA Coughlin (in draft) *RS7* A/DCM: HWoodward, *u*
DL/R: DL Smock (in draft) *RS7*

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their rebellion and gave support to Agosti. Brigadier Capellini, who holds Moron and Aeroparque, however, refused. After brief meeting with Capellini this afternoon, Agosti announced that in view of failure of negotiations, he was ordering all loyal troops immediately to evacuate Moron. At 3 p.m., it was announced that since time limit had lapsed, "repressive" action would begin against Moron. Those still there would be considered to be rebels. Moron was attacked by combat aircraft shortly thereafter (apparently Mirages from nearby Moreno). Attack was apparently designed mainly to intimidate, but at least one aircraft on runway, a T-34 Mentor, was set ablaze. There were no casualties resulting from attack--nor have there been any during the entire rebellion.

2. Capellini meanwhile had announced that if attacked he would retaliate by bombing Casa Rosada. This sent Mrs. Peron and other officials scurrying to basement. Mrs. Peron reportedly had attack of nerves and doctor had to be summoned to attend her. She need not have been so concerned, for to best of DAO's knowledge, Capellini has no combat aircraft available to him at Moron to carry out his threat, although T-34's do have two .30 calibre machine guns.

3. At about 5:30 p.m. Agosti announced that repressive measures would be suspended briefly to allow new negotiations with Capellini. These talks also failed, however, with Capellini still refusing to capitulate. As of 9 p.m., therefore, new actions are expected against Moron. Unconfirmed reports also

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indicate AF ground units are being positioned to attack rebel forces still holding Aeroparque. Hopefully, however, new negotiations during the night may defuse the situation.

4. While armed conflict within AF adds bizarre and unfortunate note to developments, it does not alter overall situation described in earlier sitreps (see sitrep No. 7). Three CINCS reportedly remain determined that Mrs. Peron must go as part of any solution. They, however, are still pushing for a solution which would leave power in civilian hands--i.e., Mrs. Peron would leave but presidency would then pass to Luder or to another eligible civilian. Capellini, on other hand, reportedly continues to demand an outright military takeover, with a general in the Casa Rosada. This, plus Agosti's felt need to impose institutional discipline and assert his legitimate authority, is the crux of conflict with Capellini. Action against latter and his followers at Moron, then, does not represent effort on part of Armed Forces to defend Mrs. Peron against rebels. On contrary, all are in agreement on one point: Mrs. Peron must go. Their disagreement is over who (and what) should replace her-- and over who is in authority in the Air Force.

5. In a disturbing incident growing out of the Agosti-Capellini conflict, hard-line Army General Mujica this afternoon issued statement saying armed action against Moron should not be taken. Army CINC Videla has called on Mujica to explain his statements. Disciplinary action could result. Implications for possible

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disunity in Army are serious, since Mujica does have a number of sympathizers in Army even though he does not at moment have troop command. There are, in short, some Army generals with troop commands who may feel as Mujica does and be tempted to move. In fact, there is probably still a great degree of loyalty ~~loyalty~~ for Mujica within the Airborne Brigade at Cordoba. If Capellini represents right-wing nationalists in Air Force, there are like-minded officers in Army. So far, Videla has held them in line. Mujica's indiscipline may make it a little harder. Also, if Army's solidarity begins to crumble, wavering Navy and AF commanders may reassess their positions. DAO sources indicate, for example, that Brigadier Montesano, commander of important First Air Brigade at Palomar Air Base, is supporting Air Force Commander Agosti over the objection of many of his senior staff officers.

6. Comment: Since Capellini has no combat aircraft and his ground units are outnumbered, his position, in the final analysis is untenable unless he receives support. Even if resolved in next few hours, episode is unfortunate, for it has given impression that Armed Forces are not united. As one disgusted citizen remarked to Emboff this afternoon: "We expected Armed Forces to save country from anarchy, not give us comic operas." This may be an overly pessimistic view, but at moment it is an understandable one.


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20 Dec 75

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Ambassy Buenos Aires

CLASSIFICATION
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O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FIHT, HDM, AR
SUBJECT: SITREP No. 9: Air Force Revolt

For yjje
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ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

Info: DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
Ambassy ASUNCION 3249
" BRASILIA 2657
" LA PAZ 2208
" MONTEVIDEO 3652
" SANTIAGO 3792

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8243

USCINCSO FOR POLAD
DIA DOD FOR DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3

No significant developments since last sitrep. City remains calm. Air force planes# buzzed Casa Rosada this morning. It has now been confirmed that Villa Reynolds AF base is also in rebel hands in addition to Moron, Aeroparque and Mendoza bases. Further developments are expected today or tomorrow which may bring situation to a head.

HILL

FILED BY POL: [unclear]	DRAFTING DATE 12/20/75	TEL. EXT. 128	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED AMB: Robert C Hill
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ARRANGED BY: Col Fouchlin (in substance)
1. [unclear] (in substance)

ADCM: HWoodward

19 Dec 75

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

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INDICATE
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 CHARGE TO

FROM Amembassy BUENOS AIRES

CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652:
TAGS:
SUBJECT:

GDS
PINT, MILL, AR
Sitrep No 7: Air Force Revolt

ACTION:

Secstate WASHDC IMMEDIATE

Hill file
JK

Info:

DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
Amembassy ASUNCION
" BRASILIA
" LA PAZ
" MONTEVIDEO
" SANTIAGO

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POL-3
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DAO
GP-2
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GAT
PERON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8291

USCINCSO FOR POLAD
DIA DOD FOR DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3

1. Negotiations continue but situation at moment appears headed in direction of conflict. In meeting of President, cabinet, three Cincs, et al (see Sitrep No. 6), three Cincs are reported by several very reliable sources to have demanded Mrs. Peron's removal (whether by resignation or leave ~~wh~~ of absence not clear) as condition for solution. Mrs. Peron refused.
2. CGT shortly thereafter indicated it would be calling for mobilization of workers in support of Mrs. Peron within next few hours. This comes at same time that other reports indicate some Army and Navy units are becoming increasingly impatient

DRAFTED BY:

POL: WSmith: *WKS*

DRAFTING DATE
12/19/75

TEL. EXT.
128

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY
AMB: RChill *WKS*

BRANCHES: DAO: ColPACoughlin (in draft) *WKS*
POL/R: DStock *WKS*

A/DCM: HWoodward *WKS*

in their desire to join in effort to oust Mrs. Peron.

3. Sources close to Videla tell us his statement this afternoon (see Sitrep No. 6) was not rpt not meant to indicate support for Mrs. Peron; rather, it intended simply to mark time and to indicate his disassociation from AF initiative. Army is, in fact, in rather enviable position right now. It need not make any overt move to oust Mrs. Peron; rather, it can sit back and watch her try to suppress rebellion on her own. If she calls on Army, they will probably ignore her. Yet, if she cannot soon bring Moron, Aeroparque and Mendoza airbases under control, her position as President may have received fatal blow. In sum, Army need not join in. For moment, it can simply wait. There may be some hotheads, however, who will not be willing to play this waiting game.

4. Comment: As we analyze situation at present time, several conclusions can be drawn: a) It is becoming increasingly unlikely that there can be any peaceful solution unless Mrs. Peron resigns or at least goes on leave. b) ~~XX~~ If Mrs. Peron can be moved aside, constitutional solution is still possible--i.e., Armed Forces might accept Luder or another civilian as President. c) Finally, there is as yet no evidence that Mrs. Peron does intend to step down. On contrary, indications are that she may try to make a fight of it and call on workers to defend her. Whether or not workers would answer call on a Friday night after whistle

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has blown remains to be seen. General strike beginning Monday morning is more likely response.

5. As cable being prepared Cabinet meeting presided over by Mrs. Peron is going on in Casa Rosada.

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WBS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification

DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

1755

INDICATE
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652:
TAGS:
SUBJECT:
ACTION:
Info:

GDS
PINT, MILI, AR
Sitrep No. 6: ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Air Force Revolt

SecState WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DIA DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
AmEmbassy ASUNCION
" BRASILIA
" LA PAZ
" MONTEVIDEO
" SANTIAGO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8290

USCINCSO FOR POLAD
DIA DOD FOR DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3

- At 4:30 p.m. on national radio TV net government announced its firm rejection of demands presented by rebel group and called on populace to remain alert for instructions. CGT communique was read immediately thereafter announcing its "firm repudiation and rejection of golpistas," and placing workers on state of alert.
- At 4:50 rebel AF group in clandestine radio broadcast gave its answer to government's rejection of its demands. Broadcast said that "operations will continue and our flights over the city will demonstrate to the people our will to continue until we achieve our stated objectives." Rebel rejection was followed by rebel

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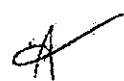
ACCEPTED BY: <i>WJ</i>	DRAFTING DATE: 12/19/75	TEL. EXT.: 121	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED: POL: WSSmith <i>WSS</i>
BY: RRGamble/MO <i>WJ</i> <i>mg</i>			AMB: RChill <i>WJ</i>
REFERENCES: MO: Col PACoughlin <i>WJ</i>			A/DCM: HWoodward <i>WJ</i>

communique No. 5 stating "We are passing through the worst moment in the history of the Republic, and we will not tolerate its continuance."

3. X Prior to above announcement, President, Cabinet, Military Commanders Videla, Massera and Agosti, CGT Secretary General Herreras and 62 Organizations Chief Lorenzo Miguel held 30-minute meeting at Government House. Military Chiefs had departed meeting at 1500 without making any statement.

4. Just before meeting at Government House, Radio Rivadavia carried text of radiogram reportedly sent by Armed Forces Commander-In-Chief Videla to military units. Salient points were that he (1) was not becoming involved in internal Air Force crisis; (2) recognized the national political implications of crisis, but was not in agreement with proposals put forth for resolving it (i.e., removal of Mrs. Peron and Videla assumption of Presidency); (3) urged appropriate institutions to act rapidly to solve grave problems facing country; and (4) urged Army to maintain unity, discipline and disinterest.

5. Comment: Read carefully, Videla's communique is in line with position he reportedly took with senators last night (see Sitrep No. 5)--i.e., civilians should produce a solution.



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FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES

CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11652: GDS.
TAGS: PINT, MILI, AR
SUBJECT: Sitrep No. 5: Abortive Air Force Revolt
ACTION: SecState WASHDC IMMEDIATE

Info: DIA/DOD WASHDC AmEmbassy ASUNCION AmEmbassy MONTEVIDEO
RXX DIN-2D4/DIR-3B3 " " BRASILIA "" " SANTIAGO
USCINCSO FOR POLAD " " LA PAZ

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8277

- At noon local time situation as follows: AF Brigadier Capellini and his supporters continue to hold Moron, Aeroparque, and, ~~repeatedly~~ reportedly, air base in Mendoza. They refuse to recognize authority ^{of} ~~###~~ new AF CINC Agosti. At same time, neither Mrs. Peron ~~now~~ nor ^{three} ~~#####~~ CINCS have issued orders to suppress dissidents. It is doubtful this dangerous impasse can continue very long.
- According to source close to Army and Navy CINCS, ill-conceived move by Capellini has placed military in difficult dilemma. On one hand, they are reluctant to follow Air Force in carrying out a coup, but neither do they wish to kill ~~the~~ fellow officers in putting down rebellion. Issue is complicated by fact that Capellini and his group represent an

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DRAFTED BY: POL:FJZambito:mg *FJZ*

DRAFTING DATE 12/19/75 TEL. EXT. 121

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED POL:WSSmith *WSS*

REFERENCES: DAO: Col PACoughlin *PAC*

AMB: RChill *RC*
A/DCM: HWoodward *HW*

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extreme Catholic nationalist strain in military whose views not acceptable even to majority of officers who favor coup. As result of above factors, CINCS have for moment taken position that next moves are up to Mrs. Peron. In the final analysis, her options would seem to come down to the following two: a) To order Army to suppress rebellion, in which case there would be large question as to whether Army would obey; and b) To step down as President.

In conversation with Emboff this morning,
3. UCR Bloc Leader Antonio Troccoli in a sense confirmed ~~above~~ above analysis--at least in part. Ball, he said, was now in government's court and military probably would make no move until government showed its hand. Troccoli said he convinced there could be no solution unless Mrs. Peron stepped aside. If she would do so, he thought Army would be willing to let another civilian, probably Luder, take over as President. If she refused, however, then situation would become very dangerous indeed, with increasing likelihood of out-and-out military takeover.

4. DAO sources and Embassy sources in Senate report that Videla talked to several senators last night and told them Army expected civilians to now produce a solution--i.e., to move Mrs. Peron aside.

5. DAO sources tend to confirm ^{information in} ~~analysis~~ paragraphs above.

6. As cable being prepared, AF planes are buzzing Casa Rosada and surrounding area dropping more leaflets.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

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FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NO 11652:
TAGS:
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GDS.
PINT, MILI, AR
Sitrep No. 4: Air Force Revolt

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SecState WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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AmEmbassy LA PAZ
AmEmbassy MONTEVIDEO
AmEmbassy SANTIAGO
DIA/DOD WASHDC
USCINCSO
USAFSO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8252

Ref: a) Smith-Felder telecon b) BA-8247 and previous sitreps (notal)
1. AF rebellion proved more long-lasting than seemed to be the case last night. As of this morning rebels are still holding Moron and Aeroparque. AF aircraft overflew city several times between 5:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. dropping leaflets calling on other armed services to support them, to oust Mrs. Peron's government and install General Videla as Chief of State. Additionally, rebel officers were able to seize three radio stations last night and broadcast same appeal for almost an hour.
2. In confusing episode, Brigadier Orlando Ramon Agosti was

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DRAFTED BY: WSSmith:mg *WSS* DRAFTING DATE: 12/19/75 TEL. EXT.: 128 CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED: AMBASSADOR ROBERT C. HILL

REFERENCES: A/DCM:HWoodward *HWC*
DAO: ColPACoughlin *WSS*
COL/R: DLSmock *WSS*
MILGP: ColRWPart *WSS*

appointed Chief of Air Force just before midnight, replacing Fautario. Interior Minister Robledo announced that institutional crisis had thus been solved and rebellion was over--at same time he had to admit that Moron and Aeroparque were still in rebellion. Obviously, however, scope of AF rebellion had by then transcended simple demand for Fautario's ouster. Why rebel officers released Fautario if they intended to go on with revolt is a mystery. Earlier reports that they had made a deal--i.e., their safety for his release--would appear to have been false. One thesis is that once rebels became aware of decree to name Agosti (which apparently was dictated around 2:00 p.m., though not published until late last night) they lost further interest in Fautario, released him and went about business of trying to topple the government. Another report has it that officer entrusted to guard Fautario simply let him go. Whatever the case, Fautario is no longer a factor.

3. Key element, of course, will be attitude of Army, and to lesser extent of Navy. So far, neither service has been heard from. Videla returned just before midnight last night. Hence, it may be that officers are waiting for word from him as to what they should do. As of 2:00 a.m. Videla was still in session with his top officers.

4. Meanwhile, Congress last night became scene of intense activity. As one Senator's aide put it to Emboff last night, "politicians sense that this could easily expand into full-scale

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[golpe; hence, if they are to save constitutionalism, and themselves, they must pre-empt golpe by getting rid of Mrs. Peron themselves." Thus, in Chamber of Deputies, dissident "Working Group" called for Mrs. Peron's resignation and as patriotic gesture and appointment of Luder as Interim President to defuse the crisis, in the absence of which they suggested immediate impeachment proceedings. Senate also raised possibility of requesting Mrs. Peron to take leave of absence or to resign and asked Interior Minister Robledo to meet with Senate leaders. As of about 2:00 a.m., when senators and deputies left Congress, however, no definite decision had been taken or motion presented. One report indicates Carlos Palacio Deheza, of "Working Group," talked to rebel officers in Moron last night to ask if resignation of Mrs. Peron and appointment of Luder would satisfy their demands. Reportedly, he was given a negative reply and told that dissident officers want the Armed Forces themselves to take over government. This is unconfirmed report, and even if true, reflects attitude of dissident officers at Moron and not necessarily that of Videla, Viola, Massera and other top officers of Army and Navy.

5. CGT and 62 Organizations issued statement last night indicating "respect for right of AF to settle its own institutional problems."

6. Comment: What is clear is that AF rebellion was poorly conceived, poorly planned and was not coordinated with other services. Their hesitation in joining in is therefore understandable. At this point, however, it is not clear that dynamics,

or momentum, of situation may not carry them along whether they
join in
will/or not. We are endeavoring to get some reading of Army
attitude this morning and will report soonest.

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NNNNVV ESB0068RN217
PP RUESBA
DE RUEBANA #7880 3552320
ZNR UUUUU ZZH ZYN
P 212317Z DEC 75

FM FBIS ASUNCION
TO RUTLAAA/FBIS WASHDC
RULPSEL/FBIS PANAMA
RULPALJ/USCINCSO/ATTN J-2 AND J-5
RULPAKA/CDRUSARSO
RULPASA/USASA DET SOCOM FT CLAYTON CZ
RULBSAA/COMUSNAVFORSO/COMFIFTEEN
RUCLDHA/COMANTDEFCON
RULPAFA/COMUSAFSO
RUEBFGA/VOA WASHDC
RUESBA/AMEMB BUENOS AIRES
FBPY

BT
UNCLAS
MRS PERON LEAVES GOVERNMENT HOUSE

PY212317Y
BUENOS AIRES NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS IN SPANISH 2310 GMT 21 DEC 75 PY
(TEXT) BUENOS AIRES, 21 DEC--PRESIDENT MARIA E TELA
MARTINEZ DE PERON LEFT GOVERNMENT HOUSE AT 2305 GMT. 212310
RHB/AUSTIN/CLR 212322 DEC
BT

found hold
there
16

NNNNVV ESAG15BRN020
PP RUESBA
DE RULPSEL 6448 3551232
ZNR UUUUU ZZH ZYN
P 211231Z DEC 75

FM FBIS PANAMA
TO RUTLAAA/FBIS WASHDC
RUEBFGA/VOA WASHDC
RULPALJ/USCINCSO/ATTN J-2 AND J-5
RULPAKA/T AMADOR G-2
INFO RUCLDHA/COMANTDEFCON
RULPAPA/COMUSAFSO/ALBROOK AFS
RULPASA/USASA DET SOCOM FT CLAYTON CZ
RULBSAA/COMUSNAVFORSO/COMFIFTEEN
RUEBANA/FBIS ASUNCION
RUESBA/AM EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
FBPA

BT
UNCLAS WA
ARGENTINE REBELS DENY AGREEMENT REACHED

PA211231Y

PARIS AFP IN SPANISH 1229 GMT 21 DEC 75 PA

((TEXT)) BUENOS AIRES, 21 DEC--THE REBELS AT MORON AIRBASE DENIED HERE THIS MORNING THE VERACITY OF A GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED 6 SIX HOURS AGO ASSERTING THAT THE CHIEFS OF THE BASE ARE OBEYING THE ORDERS OF THEIR NATURAL CHIEFS.

THE TOP REBEL COMMANDS WERE MEETING AT 1100 ONE ONE ZERO ZERO GMT CONTINUING TO STUDY THE SITUATION, A BASE SPOKESMAN SAID.

211229 BJP/SEBESTA/LAC 21/1235Z DEC

BT

6448

NNNNVV ESA611BRN907
PP RUESBA
DE RUEBANA 7844 3550440
ZNR UUUUU ZZH ZYN
P 210438Z DEC 75

~~FM FBIS ASUNCION~~
TO RUTLAAA/FBIS WASHDC
RULPSEL/FBIS PANAMA
RULPALJ/USCINCSO/ATTN J-2 AND J-5
RULPAKA/CDRUSARSO
RULPASA/USASA DET SOCOM FT CLAYTON CZ
RULBSAA/COMUSNAVFORSO/COMFIFTEEN
RUCLDHA/COMANTDEFCON
RULPAPA/COMUSAFSO
RUEBFGA/VOA WASHDC
RUESBA/AMEMB BUENOS AIRES
FBPY

BT

UNCLAS

ARGENTINA: UCR BLOCS REPUDIATE RADIO CLOSURE
PY210438Y REF PY210401 (BUENOS AIRES NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS
SPANISH 210300--GOVERNMENT CLOSES RADIO)
BUENOS AIRES NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS IN SPANISH 0334 GMT 21
DEC 75 PY

((TEXT)) BUENOS AIRES, 20 DEC--UCR NATIONAL SENATORS ISSUED
A COMMUNIQUE AT NEAR MIDNIGHT IN WHICH THEY DISAPPROVE OF THE
EXECUTIVE BRANCH DECISION TO CLOSE L.S.5 RADIO RIVADAVIA.
MEANWHILE, THE UCR NATIONAL DEPUTIES DRAFTED A STATEMENT
CONDEMNING THE DECISION AND ASKED THE HEAD OF THE CHAMBER TO
INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS TO REVOKE THE CLOSURE DECREE.

THE UCR NATIONAL SENATORS STATE THAT "THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH
CLOSED RADIO RIVADAVIA FOR DUBIOUS MOTIVES" AND ADD THAT
"THIS SHOWS A TOTAL LACK OF RESPECT FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
AND THE PRESS." WITH THIS ACTION "THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH EXHIBITS ITS
PERSISTENT INSTABILITY AND ITS POLITICAL PARTISANSHIP, WHICH
ARE THE ANTI-THESIS OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT."

THE ALMOST-SIMULTANEOUS NATIONAL DEPUTIES BLOC DISAPPROVING
OF THE CLOSURE, ASKS THE HEAD OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES TO
INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS TO REVOKE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH DECREE.
THE STATEMENT SAYS: "WE REPUDIATE THIS ACTION, WHICH REPRESENTS
AN ESCALATION LEADING US TO PRESUME THAT 'THIS MOMENT' WHICH
THE COUNTRY IS EXPERIENCING HAS BEEN USED TO SILENCE THE MEDIA."
210334 MCA/MIKE/JAB 210446 DEC

BT

7844

NNNN

VV ESA625BRN086
PP RUESBA
DE RUEBANA 7857 3551616
ZNR UUUUU ZZH ZYN
P 211612Z DEC 75

FM FBIS ASUNCION
TO RUTLAAA/FBIS WASHDC
RULPSEL/FBIS PANAMA
RULPALJ/USCINCSO/ATTN J-2 AND J-5
RULPAKA/CDRUSARSO
RULPASA/USASA DET SOCOM FT CLAYTON CZ
RULBSAA/COMUSNAVFORSO/COMFIFTEEN
RUCLDHA/COMANTDEFCON
RULPAFA/COMUSAFSO
RUEBFGA/VOA WASHDC
RUESBA/AMEMB BUENOS AIRES
FBPY

BT
UNCLAS
ARGENTINE PRESIDENT MEETS WITH UNION LEADERS

PY211612Y
BUENOS AIRES NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS IN SPANISH 1600 GMT 21 DEC 75 PY
(TEXT) BUENOS AIRES, 21 DEC--UNION LEADERS LORENZO MIGUEL,
CASILDO HERRERAS AND ROGELIO PAPAGNO, AS WELL AS PRESIDENTIAL
TECHNICAL SECRETARY JULIO GONZALEZ AND SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER
ANIBAL DEMARCO, WERE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PERON AT 1245 IN
THE OLIVOS RESIDENCE. 211600 OLC/DONNELL/CGM 211619 DEC

BT
7857

NNNNVV ESA624BRN082

PP RUESBA

DE RUEBANA 7856 3551555

ZNR UUUUU ZZH ZYN

P 211554Z DEC 75

FM FBIS ASUNCION

TO RUTLAAA/FBIS WASHDC

RULPSEL/FBIS PANAMA

RULPALJ/USCINCSO/ATTN J-2 AND J-5

RULPAKA/CDRUSARSO

RULPASA/USASA DET SOCOM FT CLAYTON CZ

RULBSAA/COMUSNAVFORSO/COMFIFTEEN

RUCLDHA/ OMANIDFCOM

RULPAFA/COMUSAFSO

RUEBFGA/VOA WASHDC

RUESBA/AMEMB BUENOS AIRES

FBPY

BT

UNCLAS

ARGENTINA: CGT HEARS HERRERAS REPORT

PY211554Y

BUENOS AIRES TELAM IN SPANISH 1530 GMT 21 DEC 75 PY

((TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE RELEASED BY CGT FEDERAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE
IN BUENOS AIRES ON 21 DECEMBER))

((TEXT)) CONVOKED BY THE CGT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THE FEDERAL
CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAS MET TO DISCUSS THE EVENTS WHICH ARE OF
PUBLIC CONCERN.

AFTER HEARING THE DETAILED REPORT OF OUR SECRETARY GENERAL,
COMRADE CASILDO HERRERAS, IT WAS DECIDED TO REMAIN IN PERMANENT
SESSION AND TO RESUME THE DISCUSSIONS AT 1800 TODAY.

((SIGNED)) ENRIQUE MICO, CGT PRESS SECRETARY. 211530
OLC/DONNELL/CGM 211558 DEC

BT

7856

