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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 DHA-02 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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R 031230Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8893

~~SECRET~~ BUENOS AIRES 0881

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, MASS, AR, US
SUBJECT: US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS

REF: STATE 023271

1. AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL DID INDEED RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES OVER WEEKEND--APPARENTLY ARRIVING HERE JAN 31. AFTER CONFERRING WITH PRESIDENT AND FONMINISTER HE DEPARTED FOR RIO THIS MORNING (FEB 3), PLANNING TO RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES FEB 13 AND THEN FLY BACK TO WASHINGTON FEB 15-16. I INVITED HIM TO LUNCH AND TO BREAKFAST BUT HE PLEADED EXTREMELY HEAVY SCHEDULE AND SUGGESTED WE GET TOGETHER ON FEB 13 OR 14 AFTER HIS RETURN FROM RIO.

2. LONG-TIME EMBASSY CONTACT WAS CALLED INTO MEETING BETWEEN FON MINISTER AND AJA ESPIL ON QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IMPACT ON US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS. AJA ESPIL URGED SOURCE TO COME TO WASHINGTON TO APPEAR BEFORE FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE. SOURCE SAID THERE NO POINT IN DOING SO UNLESS GOA HAD MEANWHILE GIVEN EVIDENCE OF IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. IT WAS, HE SAID, OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT GOA ISSUE LIST OF THOSE DETAINED AND BRING TO TRIAL AT LEAST SOME OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR EXCESSES. SOURCE TELLS US AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL SUPPORTED HIM IN THIS, EMPHASIZING TO FONMINISTER GUZZETTI SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH USG VIEWED THE SITUATION AND POSSIBILITY OF CONFRONTATION UNLESS AT LEAST THE TWO STEPS SUGGESTED BY SOURCE WERE TAKEN.

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3. SOURCE REPORTED TO EMBOFF HOWEVER THAT GUZZETTI HAD STATED FLATLY THAT BOTH MEASURES WERE OUT OF THE QUESTION. FULL LIST OF THOSE DETAINED COULD NOT BE ISSUED, HE SAID, BECAUSE "THAT WOULD GIVE AID AND COMFORT TO THE TERRORISTS." SOME OF THOSE GUILTY OF EXCESSES ARE BEING BROUGHT TO TRIAL, GUZZETTI CONTENDED, BUT PUBLIC TRIALS COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED SINCE THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO DEMORALIZATION OF THE SECURITY FORCES AND DIVISIONS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

4. SOURCE SAID HE LEFT MEETING WITH IMPRESSION THAT (1) AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL HAD CONVEYED TO GUZZETTI STRONG PROBABILITY OF CONFRONTATION WITH USG UNLESS MEANINGFUL RECTIFICATIONS ON PART OF GOA WERE FORTHCOMING ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, AND (2) THAT GUZZETTI'S REACTION WAS THAT GOA COULD NOT RPT NOT DO WHAT USG DESIRED EVEN IF RESULT WAS CONFRONTATION BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS.

5. I HAVE ASKED FOR AUDIENCE WITH FONMINISTER GUZZETTI EARLY NEXT WEEK TO AGAIN EMPHASIZE SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION TO HIM.
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