ARGENT JBCT (S290000040)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
( ) Release (X) Excise ( ) Deny
Exemption(s): B1
Declassify: (X) In Part ( ) In Full
( ) Classify as 6 ( ) Extend as __ ( ) Downgrade to __
Date 5/15/01 Declassify on _____ Reason 25X 1

6/29/77

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NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON

June 29, 1977 ALØ87
(P, D, F)

Review of the Human Rights Situation in Argentina

Argentine authorities have become increasingly sensitive to human rights criticism and have responded with several conciliatory gestures. There is little solid evidence, however, of any real effort to correct the worst abuses. There are no indications, furthermore, of a halt to the continuing physical annihilation of suspected terrorist combatants by the security forces.

The measures that the government has adopted to make it appear more responsive to human rights concerns include:

--official recognition that abuses have occurred and toleration of broader public discussion of human rights matters;

--suppression of the spectacular exploitation of the anti-Semitic and political overtones of the "Graiver Affair";

--promises to investigate the cases of some 2,000 reported "disappearances"; and

--measures announced on June 14 in anticipation of the June 16 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) votes on Argentine loan requests, including: stepped-up prisoner releases, trials in nearly 1,000 subversion cases, restrictions on an anti-Semitic publication, and restudy of the possible restoration of the suspended constitutional right of state-of-siege prisoners to leave the country.

While encouraging, the foregoing are only image-enhancing moves. They do nothing about such fundamental violations of rights as arbitrary and prolonged detention without charges, torture, and murder. In the meantime:

--"disappearances" continue;

--suspected terrorists get harsh treatment, including psychological and physical torture--

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP
Change to
(✓) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny (✓) Declassify
Exemptions b ( ) E.O. 13526 25x ( )( )( )
Declassify after
With concurrence of: CIA
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and murder in the case of terrorist combatants;

--state-of-siege detention, which was previously reserved for alleged subversives, is now being employed in cases involving so-called economic subversion, corruption, administrative malfeasance, and violations of political censorship regulations; detention procedures regularly disregard due process, and detainees are frequently roughed up and denied access to lawyers and family; and

--anti-Semitism, while not a government policy, continues to be manifested--most recently when threats forced the representative of the American Jewish Committee (an Argentine citizen) and his family to flee Argentina.

(25)(x1)

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unconfirmed information to the effect that some government officials are attempting to curb flagrant abuses:

--Federal Police Chief Ojeda reportedly is trying to tighten command and control over his 30,000-member force with a view to eliminating unauthorized police actions.

--A program is said to have been instituted through which "low-level terrorists"--those not directly responsible for severe damage or bodily harm--are permitted to surrender, exchanging information for guarantees of physical safety and fair treatment; and

--President Videla reportedly intends to (a) end illegal detention for economic crimes and unauthorized political and labor activity by late June, and (b) press for an end to the illegal detention of terrorists.

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There are no indications, however, that security personnel will desist from the systematic elimination of suspected terrorist combatants. President Videla is either unable or unwilling to press his corps commanders and security chiefs on this matter.

INR/RAR:JBuchanan

FOIA(b)(3) - 50 USC 403g - CIA

Concurrence: [   ]

INR/DDR:MPackman

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