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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AR, SHUM

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

1. IN GENERAL THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAS VIEWED INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS WITH CONSIDERABLE SUSPICION. NOTWITHSTANDING ITS RESERVATIONS, THE GOA HAS ALLOWED A NUMBER OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS TO VISIT AND OPERATE IN ARGENTINA.

A) AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, NOVEMBER 1976 VISIT. THE AI GROUP, WHICH INCLUDED CONGRESSMAN DRINAN, MET WITH SENIOR ARGENTINE FOREIGN AND INTERIOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NOT GRANTED AN INTERVIEW

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WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA. THE AI GROUP WAS REPORTEDLY FOLLOWED AND HARASSED BY PLAINCLOTHESMEN OSTENSIBLY ASSIGNED TO PROTECT THEM. A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM AI MET WERE QUESTIONED AND EVEN DETAINED. THE AI REPORT OF THE VISIT

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WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA. CURRENTLY AI HAS LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN (MAY 18) AGAINST POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT, TORTURE, DISAPPEARANCES AND EXECUTIONS IN ARGENTINA WITH VIGILS AT THE OFFICES OF ARGENTINE PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRMS IN THE U.S. THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED UP BY A LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN TO THE GOA.

B) THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS PUBLISHED IN APRIL 1978 A REPORT ENTITLED "ATTACKS ON JUDGES AND LAWYERS IN ARGENTINA", DESCRIBING THE PERSECUTION AND HARASSMENT FACED BY DEFENSE LAWYERS AND BY JUDGES WHO TRY POLITICAL CASES. THIS REPORT WAS A FOLLOW-UP OF AN EARLIER 1975 ICJ MISSION TO ARGENTINA BY A VICE PRESIDENT OF THE BRAZILIAN BAR ASSOCIATION.

C) THE FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES DU CARRIERE JURIDIQUE (PARIS-BASED) VISITED ARGENTINA IN MARCH/APRIL 1977. THEY DID NOT MEET WITH GOA OFFICIALS BUT WITH THE PAPAL NUNCIO AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS IN ARGENTINA.

D) IN JANUARY 1978, THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (PARIS) AND THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF CATHOLIC JURISTS (PAX ROMANA) VISITED ARGENTINA AND WERE CORDIALLY RECEIVED BY SENIOR GOA OFFICIALS.

E) THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE SENT A MISSION LED BY NOBEL LAUREATE CHRISTIAN ANFINSEN TO ARGENTINA IN MARCH WHICH MET WITH SENIOR ARGENTINE OFFICIALS INCLUDING

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PRESIDENT VIDELA. THE GROUP FOUND THE GOA GENERALLY UNFORTHCOMING.

F) AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1977 AND IN JANUARY 1978 (MEETING OF THE ECOSOC ON NGOS) ARGENTINA ATTACKED INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, IN PARTICULAR THE ICJ, PAX ROMANA AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, CHARGING THEM WITH POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AGAINST ARGENTINA AT THE UN, WHICH WOULD DISQUALIFY THEM FROM CONSULTATIVE STATUS. ALTHOUGH NO NGO WAS EXPELLED, ARGENTINA, JOINED BY CHILE AND THE SOVIET UNION DID SPEAR-HEAD THE DRIVE AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS NGOS. THE NGOS THEY SELECTED INCLUDED THOSE WHICH HAD PAID VISITS TO ARGENTINA.

G) THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON EUROPEAN MIGRATION

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MAINTAINS REPRESENTATIVES IN ARGENTINA WHO HAVE ACTED AS OVERSEERS FOR THE RELOCATION OF CHILEAN REFUGEES. ICEM HAS AGREED TO SERVE THE SAME ROLE FOR ARGENTINE POLITICAL DETAINEES UNDER THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM.

H) THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS VISITS ARGENTINE PRISONS UNDER AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOA. THEIR REPORTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL, BUT WE HAVE HEARD THAT PRISON CONDITIONS IMPROVED AFTER THE ICRC BEGAN PRISON VISITS IN JANUARY 1977. (THE VISITS WERE STOPPED FROM APRIL TO NOVEMBER 1977 WHEN THE ICRC PROTESTED ITS INABILITY TO VISIT DETAINEES IN MILITARY BASES; THEY STILL DO NOT HAVE PERMISSION FOR THESE VISITS.)

I) THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES MAINTAINS AN OFFICE IN BUENOS AIRES AND HAS HELPED CHILEANS AND URUGUAYANS LIVING IN ARGENTINA. THE UNHCR HAS NO DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARGENTINES JAILED OR DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA.

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J) THE OAS INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HAS ASKED THE GOA FOR PERMISSION TO VISIT ARGENTINA AND AN ANSWER IS EXPECTED BEFORE JUNE 8. THE LATEST WORD WE HAVE SUGGESTS THE ARGENTINES, WHO HAD CONSIDERED NEGOTIATING A FUTURE DATE FOR THE VISIT, ARE NOW UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT AN IAHRM MISSION.

K) OUT OF SEQUENCE ITEM: THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE SENT ITS PRESIDENT EMILIO DADDARIO TO BUENOS AIRES IN DECEMBER 1977. HE MET WITH GOA OFFICIALS INCLUDING PRESIDENT VIDELA. DADDARIO FELT THERE WAS SOME PROGRESS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. HE WAS ABLE TO TALK TO A LARGE NUMBER OF ARGENTINE SCIENTISTS. VANCE

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