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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDUP

REF: BUENOS AIRES 4734

PART I -- NEW EVENTS AND INDICATORS

(THE FOLLOWING IS NOT A COMPLETE REPORT OF ALL NEW
EVENTS SINCE OUR LAST REPORT OF JUNE 16, 1978. A FOLLOW
SEPTTEL WILL BE SUBMITTED NEXT WEEK.)

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP
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IPS by AHM Date 5-16-16

DECISION REPORTED IMMINENT ON PERSONS HELD UNDER
INSTITUTIONAL ACT.

SENIOR MILITARY CONTACTS CONTINUE TO REPORT THAT A
GOVERNMENTAL DECISION SHOULD BE ANNOUNCED
BEFORE AUGUST 1 REGARDING THE 35 PLUS PERSONS PRESENTLY
BEING HELD UNDER THE ACTA INSTITUCIONAL. THE JUNTA
EVIDENTLY IS UNDOUBTEDLY UNEASY ABOUT
THE ACTA WHICH INTER ALIA DETAINS INDEFINITELY A NUMBER

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OF SENIOR PERONIST LEADERS WITHOUT SPECIFIC CHARGES OR
TRIAL. ACCORDING TO MILITARY SOURCES, THE JUNTA HAS

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REVIEW AUTHORITY:
Kathleen Allegrone, Senior
Reviewer

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DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE THAT BEFORE AUGUST 1 ALL PERSONS BEING HELD UNDER THE ACTA SHOULD RECEIVE SPECIFIC SENTENCES AS ACTS OF "REVOLUTIONARY JUSTICE" OR BE TURNED OVER TO THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM FOR CRIMINAL PROSECTUION OR SET FREE. ONE NAVY CONTACT IN EARLY JULY ADMITTED THAT THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN EACH CASE WAS PROVING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT, BUT HE WAS OPTIMIST THE DETERMINATIONS WOULD BE MADE AND APPROVED BY THE JUNTA.

MISTREATMENT OF PRISONERS REPORTED

A NUMBER OF THE EMBASSY'S HUMAN RIGHTS CONTACTS HAVE REPORTED THAT RECENTLY CATHOLIC PAROLED PEACE ACTIVIST ADOLFO MARIA PEREZ EDQUIVEL WAS SEVERELY BEATEN BY PRISON GUARDS IN LA PLATA PRISON SEVERAL WEEKS PRIOR TO HIS RELEASE. A NUMBER OF HIS RIBS WERE BROKEN. SAME SOURCES REPORT THAT ANOTHER PERMANENT ASSEMBLY LEADER (SEPARATE MEMCON) WAS SEVERELY TORTURED DURING HIS INITIAL INTER-ROGATION. (WARNING: XGDS-4. LEAKAGE OF THESE REPORTS IN WASHINGTON MAY PUT THESE MEN IN GRAVE DANGER.)

EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS THAT SOME PEN PRISONERS PRIOR TO THEIR RELEASE FROM LA PLATA PRISON HAVE BEEN BRUTALLY BEATEN BY (25)(X1)DN GUARDS. [REDACTED] (PROTECT) HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN TO EMBASSY REGARDING THE PHYSICAL ABUSE OF PRISONERS IN LA PLATA PRISON.

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MATERIAL WITNESSES REPORTED TORTUED

PERMANENT ASSEMBLY AND NUNCIATURA SOURCES (PROTECT) CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY THAT IN MID-JUNE A FEMALE PSYCHOLOGIST WAS ABDUCTED BY SECURITY FORCES AND HELD FOR 15 HOURS. DURING HER DETENTION, THE PSYCHOLOGIST, A POLIO VICTIM CONFINED TO A WHEEL CHAIR, WAS REPORTEDLY INTERROGATED WITH ELECTRIC PICANA REGARDING THE WHEREABOUTS AND ACTIVITIES OF ONE OF HER PATIENTS.

LOCAL LAWYER WHO ACCEPTS HUMAN RIGHTS CASES REPORTED TO EMBASSY ON JULY 19 THAT THE MOTHER OF ONE OF HIS CLIENTS, DANIEL ALBERTO EGEA, WHO HAS BEEN UNDER EXECUTIVE DETENTION SINCE EARLY 1976, WAS ABDUCTED FOR FIVE DAYS IN EARLY JULY BY MEN CLAIMING TO BE FROM THE SECURITY FORCES. MRS. EGEA

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WAS BEATEN AND THREATENED DURING HER INTERROGATION WHICH FOCUSED ON HER SON'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND FORMER FRIENDS. DURING THE LAST TWO DAYS OF HER CAPTIVITY SHE SAID SHE WAS TREATED KINDLY AND RELEASED WITH APOLOGIES, BUT WITH AN ACCOMPANYING THREAT TO REMAIN QUIET. (WE ARE CHECKING FURTHER AS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REPORTED INTERROGATION OF ALLEGED "POLITICAL ACTIVITIES".)

NEW DRUG REPORTED INTRODUCED.

A HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCE CONTACT IN THE MEDICAL PROFESSION WHOSE REPORTING HAS BEEN RELIABLE IN THE PAST INFORMED THE EMBASSY IN LATE JUNE THAT TERRORISTS AND SUBVERSIVES SELECTED FOR ELIMINATION WERE NOW BEING ADMINISTERED INJECTIONS OF "KETALAR", WHICH SOURCE DESCRIBED AS A POWERFUL ANESTHETIC, INSTEAD OF CURACE. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, KETALAR IS ADMINISTERED IN AN INTRAMUSCULAR INJECTION TO THE PRISONER AS A PREVENTIVE HEALTH MEASURE, THE SUBJECT RAPIDLY LOSES CONSCIOUSNESS AND VITAL FUNCTIONS CEASE. SOURCE ALLEGES THAT SUBJECTS ARE THEN DISPOSED OF IN RIVERS OR THE OCEAN.

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II - JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES PROBLEMS CONTINUE

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' LEADER INFORMED EMBASSY ON JUNE 28 THAT GOVERNMENT ACTION HAS RESULTED IN THE VIRTUAL

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EXPULSION OF EVERY JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CHILD FROM THE ARGENTINE SCHOOL SYSTEM. THE WITNESSES ABELIEVE THAT MORE THAN A THOUSAND CHILDREN HAVE RECENTLY BEEN EXPELLED. ACCORDING TO THE WITNESSES' SPOKESMAN, MANY SCHOOL SYSTEMS USED THE WITNESSES REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELABORATE JUNE 20 FLAG DAY EXERCISES AS THE PRETEXT FOR THE EXPULSIONS. TO THE WITNESSES PARTICIPATION IN FLAG DAY CEREMONIES IS A FORM OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND IS FORBIDDEN.

THE ARGENTINE WITNESSES HAVE SUBMITTED A DETAILED ARTICLE ON THE REPRESSION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH FOR PUBLICATION IN THE AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MAGAZINE, AWAKE. THE ARTICLE IS EXPECTED TO BE PRINTED IN ALL THE WORLD'S MAJOR LANGUAGES. ACCORDING TO THE WITNESSES' SPOKESMAN, THE ARGENTINE LEADERSHIP PLANS TO DISTRIBUTE COPIES OF THE ARTICLE TO ALL SENIOR EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL OFFICIALS IN ARGENTINA, AS WELL AS TO EACH ARGENTINE

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AMBASSADOR ABROAD.

THE WITNESSES' SPOKESMAN COMMENTED THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WORKSHIP HAS STILL NOT ISSUED THE FORMS FOR THE REGISTRATION OF RELIGIONS IN ARGENTINA UNDER LAW 21,745. HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF THE WITNESSES REGISTRATION BEING APPROVED, GIVEN THE CURRENT DECREE BANNING THE WITNESSES FROM PUBLICLY PRACTICING THEIR FAITH. HE NOTED THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT IS NOW REFERRING TO THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AS AN "ORGANIZATION WITH RELIGIOUS COLORATIONS" (TINTE RELIGIOSA).

ON JUNE 8, THE LOCAL PRESS REPORTED THAT THE PROVINCE OF SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO HAD ISSUED A DECREE PROHIBITING ANY TYPE OF ACTIVITY BY THE WITNESSES. THE DECREE ORDERS THE SEIZURE OF ALL WITNESSES MATERIALS AND THE CLOSING OF ALL WITNESSES' FACILITIES WHERE "PUBLIC OR PRIVATE" MEETINGS ARE HELD.

RED CROSS ACTIVITIES: TORTURE REPORT

SIX RED CROSS SWISS NATIONAL DELEGATES AND TWO SWISS DOCTORS ARE CONTINUING TO VISIT ARGENTINE NON-CRIMINAL PRISONERS THROUGHOUT ARGENTINA. THE RED CROSS PLANS TO VISIT ALL THE MAJOR PENAL FACILITIES IN ARGENTINA THREE TIMES DURING 1978 AND THE SMALLER INSTITUTIONS TWICE.

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(25)(x1) (PROTECT) STATED THAT AT PRESENT SIERRA CHICA WHICH HOLDS 590 PEN PRISONERS AND TINY LA RIOJA PRISON APPEAR TO BE THE COUNTRY'S WORST. IN GENERAL, THROUGHOUT ARGENTINA PEN PRISONERS ARE UNDERFED, HAVE LITTLE OR NO MEDICAL ATTENTION AND NO HEAT IN THE WINTER.

(25)(x1) STATED THAT HAD

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INTERVIEWED ALMOST EVERY PEN PRISONER IN ARGENTINA. HE NOTED THAT ABOUT 90 PERCENT HAD BEEN TORTURED. SOME HAD MERELY BEEN BEATEN UP BUT THE LARGE MAJORITY HAD

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(25)(x1) WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT WOULD BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE ANY CHANGE IN THE WIDESPREAD PRACTICE.

(25)(x1) TORTURE IN ARGENTINA. STATED THAT NO GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD ADMITS THAT TORTURE TAKES PLACE AND A GOVERNMENT CANNOT CORRECT A PROBLEM WHICH IT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE.

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(25)(x1) RECOGNIZED THAT PHYSICAL MISTREATMENT OF PEN PRISONERS IS INFREQUENT AFTER THEY HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE INTERROGATION PHASE, I.E., AFTER THEY HAVE PASSED OFFICIALLY TO THE PEN. HOWEVER, VARIOUS FORMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE PERSIST IN THE PRISONS.

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ESTIMATED PRISON POPULATION AS OF JULY 1, 1978:

PRISON	PEN#	DAM#
LA PLATA PRISON	850	20 TO 50 (MULTISOURCED)
DEVOTO PRISON	750	
SIERRA CHICA	590	UNCONFIRMED REPORT OF OVER 100
CORONDA	450	
(25)(x1) TENCIA	350	20
RAWSON	250	9
(25)(x1) BA	150	50 PLUS/MINUS
CASEROS MUNICIPAL	40	
MENDOZA	22	

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(25)(x1) ESTIMATES (PROTECT)

UNRECOGNIZED PRISONERS HELD AT THE DISPOSITION OF MILITARY AUTHORITIES. (ACCORDING TO SECURITY FORCES THERE MAY BE UP TO 500 AROUND THE COUNTRY AT ANY GIVEN POINT IN TIME.)

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VILLA DEVOTO FIRE UPDATE

(25)(x1) [REDACTED] (PROTECT) INFORMED EMBASSY RECENTLY THAT FOUR PRISONERS HELD UNDER PEN WERE INVOLVED IN THE MARCH 14, 1978 VILLA DEVOTO RIOT AND FIRE. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, ALL FOUR WERE BEING HELD ON DRUG CHARGES BUT SIMULTANEOUSLY UNDER PEN AS WELL, AS THEY HAD FALSE ARGENTINE PASSPORTS WHEN ARRESTED, WHICH PUT THEM UNDER SUSPICION OF BEING POSSIBLE SUBVERSIVES AS WELL. THREE OF THE DRUG TRAFFICKERS DIED IN THE FIRE. THE BADLY BURNT (25)(x1) IVOR TOLD [REDACTED] THAT HE AND THE OTHER PEN PRISONERS HAD NO CONNECTION WITH SUBVERSION BUT WERE DRUG ADDICTS AND TRAFFICKERS WHO HAD OBTAINED FALSE PASSPORTS TO USE IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES.

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WITH REFERENCE TO A MAY 4, 1978 LETTER TO THE SECRETARY IN WHICH COHA DIRECTOR LAURENCE R. BIRNS ARGUES AGAINST EXPORT LICENSES FOR THE SALE OF THREE TROOP-CARRYING BOEING CH-47 HELICOPTERS ALLEGING THAT "HELICOPTERS SIMILAR TO THE ONES BEING SUPPLIED" WERE USED IN PUTTING DOWN THE VILLA DEVOTO PRISON RIOT AND CRUSHING LABOR STRIKES, WE NOTE THE FOLLOWING BASED ON DISCREET INQUIRIES OF SECURITY SOURCES:

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WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT WOULD SUPPORT THE ASSERTION THAT US MILITARY TYPE HELICOPTERS WERE USED IN HANDLING THE RIOT SITUATION AT VILLA DEVOTO. ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT IT WAS NOT A PRISON UPRISING AS SUCH. THERE WERE NO POLITICAL DETAINEES IN THE CELL BLOCK CONCERNED (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE SO-CALLED "SUBVERSIVE ANGLE" TO THE DRUG TRAFFICKERS MENTIONED IN THE PARAGRAPH ABOVE,) AND ALMOST ALL--IF NOT ALL--OF THE DEATHS RESULTED FROM SMOKE AND HEAT CAUSED BY THE FIRE THE INMATES HAD STARTED. ADDITIONALLY, THE SECURITY FORCES STATED THEY DO NOT USE HELICOPTERS TO RUSH STRIKES OR TAKE OVER STRIKE-BOUND FACTORIES BECAUSE IT IS JUST NOT OPERATIONALLY SOUND AND WOULD BE WASTEFUL OF RESOURCES. (WE BELIEVE THAT SMALLER HELICOPTERS WERE USED FOR SPOTTING POSSIBLE SABOTAGE ATTEMPTS ALONG THE RAILROAD LINES DURING THE RAIL STRIKE LAST NOVEMBER, HOWEVER. SEVERAL BOMBS WERE SET OFF ON THE TRACKS DURING THE STRIKE.)

THE FEDERAL JUDGE IN CHARGE OF THE VILLA DEVOTO INQUIRY HAS WITHDRAWN FROM THE INVESTIGATION FOR JURISDICTIONAL REASONS. THE CASE IS NOW BEING TURNED CONFIDENTIAL

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OVER TO CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE WHO WAS CHOSEN BY LOT FROM THE CRIMINAL BENCH.

DETENTION FACILITIES REPORTED CLOSED

A LA PLATA HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCE INFORMED THE EMBASSY IN EARLY JULY THAT THE ARANA DETENTION FACILITY OUTSIDE OF LA PLATA HAS BEEN ABANDONED AND ITS PRISONERS TRANSFERRED. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED SEVERAL SIMILAR REPORTS REGARDING THE NAVY MECHANICAL SCHOOL IN BUENOS AIRES. THE NAVY MECHANICAL SCHOOL'S DETENTION FACILITY WAS DESCRIBED IN GREAT DETAIL IN THE SO-CALLED "MAGGIO LETTER" WHICH WAS CIRCULATED TO FOREIGN NEWS AGENCIES AND FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. THE EMBASSY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THE DEACTIVATION REPORTS OF EITHER OF THESE WELL-KNOWN DETENTION FACILITIES.

RELEASE OF DETAINED UNION LEADERS STILL PENDING

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A MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE WORKING GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS (FOWG) INFORMED EMBOFF IN EARLY JULY THAT THE RELEASE OF 14 UNION LEADERS ANNOUNCED JUNE 19 BY THE PERONIST-LEANING BISHOP OF LA PLATA WAS STILL UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. THE FOWG OFFICIAL SAID THAT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO ANNOUNCE THE NAMES OF THE LABOR LEADERS UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT NOTED THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THEIR RELEASE WOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE TIMERMAN CASE

ACCORDING TO TIMERMAN'S FAMILY, THE GOVERNMENT ATTORNEY FOR THE COUNCIL ON PATRIMONIAL RESPONSIBILITY
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(CONREPA) PRIVATELY INFORMED TIMERMAN'S LAWYER ON JUNE 26 THAT THE CONREPA INVESTIGATION HAD TURNED UP NOTHING NEGATIVE AGAINST TIMERMAN. ACCORDING TO THE FAMILY, THE GOVERNMENT ATTORNEY CONFIDED THAT "THIS CASE IS SOMETHING POLITICAL." THE SAME SOURCE TOLD THE FAMILY THAT CONREPA HAS PROVIDED A CONFIDENTIAL RESUME OF THE TIMERMAN CASE TO THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL VIOLA IN LATE JUNE.

TIMERMAN AND HIS FAMILY ARE CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL THAT THE REPEATED PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY ADMIRAL MASSERA THAT THE STATUS OF PERSONS BEING HELD UNDER THE ACTA INSTITUCIONAL WILL BE RESOLVED BY THIS GOVERNMENT BEFORE AUGUST FIRST WILL RESULT IN TIMERMAN'S BEING ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FOR ISRAEL.

REQUESTS BY TIMERMAN'S ATTORNEY THAT HE BE PERMITTED TO SEE HIS CLIENT AND THAT HIS CLIENT ALSO BE PERMITTED VISITS BY HIS DOCTOR AND DENTIST HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY REPLY FROM THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF OR THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. (TIMERMAN IS NOT AMONG THOSE HELD UNDER THE INSTITUTIONAL ACT WHOSE PROPERTY IS EXPROPRIATED IN A RECENT CONREPA DECISION, ACCORDING TO JULY 21 PRESS ACCOUNTS. WE ARE CHECKING FURTHER, BUT THIS TENDS TO CONFIRM THE INFORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT ATTORNEY REPORTED ABOVE. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS ACCOUNTS, CONREPA EXPROPRIATED PROPERTIES BELONGING TO EX-CGJ HEAD CASILDO HERRERAS, EX-SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER JOSE LOPEZ REGA, EX-DEFENSE MINISTER ADOLFO MARIO SAVINO,

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JORGE ROTEMBERG (AN ASSOCIATE OF TIMERMAN AND DAVID GRAIVER IN THE LA OPINION ENTERPRISE) AND GRAVIER'S MOTHER)).
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