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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00  
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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7950

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, OAS, PINT, SHUM, AR  
SUBJECT: GOA'S IAHRIC ANNOUNCEMENT: BACKGROUND AND FALLOUT

REF: A) BUENOS AIRES 7988; B) BUENOS AIRES 8171

SUMMARY. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED ON OCTOBER 17 THAT THE GOA HAD RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO THE INTEREST EXPRESSED BY THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO SEND A DELEGATION TO ARGENTINA FOR A SITE VISIT. STORY RECEIVED PROMINENT PRESS PLAY. CLARIN'S STORY INDICATED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS REOPENING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IAHRIC TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS FOR THE VISIT.

RECONFIRMING WHAT HE HAS SAID IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, A WELL-PLACED PRESIDENTIAL AIDE ASSURED US THAT MONDAY'S FOREIGN MINISTRY NOTE TO THE IAHRIC PUTS INTO OPERATION AN AGREEMENT PREVIOUSLY WORKED OUT CONFIDENTIALLY BETWEEN THE GOA AND THE COMMISSION. THE COMMISSION WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE LATITUDE, ALTHOUGH IT WILL NOT BE GIVEN ACCESS TO MILITARY BASES. THIS CONCESSION HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN WITHOUT SOME RESISTANCE FROM HARD-LINE MILITARY SECTORS AND THEIR ALLIES, AND THE PRESS PLAY SURROUNDING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT SUGGESTS THE GOA MAY

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BE RPREPARING PUBLIC OPINION GRADUALLY FOR THE GOA TURN-AROUND. THE COMMISSION VISIT IS EXPECTED IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1979. GOA RETAINS AN INTEREST IN HAVING A VISIT BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY, BUT OUR SURCE

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP  
Change to  
( ) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny ( ) Declassify  
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Declassify after  
With concurrence of:  
IPS by          Date 12-7-78 not obt. 16

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4. NOTWITHSTANDING THE AIDE'S ASSURANCE THAT THE TERMS HAVE BEEN MUTUALLY AGREED UPON, HE SUGGESTED THAT USG

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00  
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USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO IMPRESS UPON COMMISSION CHAIRMAN AGUILAR THAT THE GOA'S BASIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE IAHRCTERMS WAS NOT REACHED WITHOUT A DEGREE OF DISCOMFITURE AND RESISTANCE IN HARD LINE ARGENTINE MILITARY CIRCLES. THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE SOURCE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE COMMISSION WILL CONDUCT ITSELF WITH UTMOST DISCRETION DURING ITS STAY IN ARGENTINA. THE AIDE ELABORATED THAT DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ALLARA WAS FURIOUS ABOUT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AGREED UPON BY THE CASA ROSADA, AND HE ALLEGED THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY HUMAN RIGHTS COORDINATOR ARLIA GOES ABOUT "ACCUSING THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE OF TREASON".

5. THE AIDE INQUIRED WHAT WE PLAN TO DO NEXT, NOW THAT THE GOA COMMITMENT ON IAHRCT INVITATION WAS FULFILLED. HE ASKED WHETHER WE WERE MOVING AHEAD ON PLANS TO HAVE ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY VISIT ARGENTINA. EMBOFF REMINDED THE AIDE THAT HE HIMSELF HAD EARLIER SUGGESTED (REFTEL A) THAT VAKY SHOULD NOT VISIT ARGENTINA UNTIL AFTER THE COMING CABINET CRISIS WAS RESOLVED. EMBOFF THEN INQUIRED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES. THE AIDE STATED THAT THE CHANGES IMPLY A REDISTRIBUTION OF FORCES IN THE CABINET ON THE PART OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THAT

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THE NAVY WAS RESISTING PRESIDENT VIDELA'S PLAN TO REMOVE  
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THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, THE SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY AND  
THE INFORMATION SECRETARIAT OF THE PRESIDENCY FROM  
THE NAVY'S JURISDICTION.

6. (ACCORDING TO THE AIDE, VIDELA'S PLANS CALL FOR  
CIVILIANS TO TAKE OVER THE ECONOMY--I.E.,  
MARTINEZ DE HOZ WOULD STAY--, SOCIAL WELFARE, JUSTICE  
AND EDUCATION MINISTRIES. THE ARMY WOULD RETAIN LABOR  
AND INTERIOR. THE NAVY WOULD GET DEFENSE AND PLANNING  
AND THE AIR FORCE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE AIDE ALSO  
STATED THAT, WHILE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE  
IN "COMPATIBILIZING" THE SEPARATE POLITICAL PLANS OF THE  
THREE SERVICES, THE ARMY HAD AN UPHILL STRUGGLE AHEAD  
TO UNDO THE RATHER DETAILED POLITICAL PLAN AND TIMETABLE  
PROPOSED BY THE AIR FORCE WHICH IS LARGELY BASED ON THE  
BRAZILIAN MODEL AND WITH WHICH PRESIDENT VIDELA AND THE  
ARMY REPORTEDLY ARE IN DISAGREEMENT.)

7. THE AIDE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IN ADDTION TO THE  
CABINET CHANGE FACTOR HE SUSPECTED THE TIMING OF MR. VAKY'S  
PROPOSED VISIT MIGHT BECOME COMPLICATED IF ARGENTIAN AND  
CHILE HAVE NOT REACHED AN AGREEMENT ON THE BEAGLE  
CHANNEL PROBLEM BY NOVEMBER. (THE AIDE GAVE US TO BELIEVE THAT  
BOTH THE ARGENTINES AND CHILEANS ARE HANGING-TOUGH ON  
THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS, THE ARENTINES INSISTING ON  
FIXING THE BOUNDARY TO SOME SPECK OF LAND AND THE CHILEANS  
STICKING TO A MARITIME FRONTIER CONCEPT. THE AIDE  
ASSERTED THAT ARGENTINA'S INTERNATIONAL LAW EXPERTS  
MAINTAIN THAT A BOUNDARY BASED ON LAND IS LESS VULNERABLE  
TO THE EXPLOITATIVE ECONOMIC INCURSIONS OF THIRD  
COUNTRIES, ALTOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT ARGENTINA'S  
ANTARCTIC CLAIMS MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ITS  
INSISTNECE ON LAND-BASED BOUNDARY LINE. WE TOOK HIS

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COMMENTS AS MEANING NOT THAT A MILITARY CONFLICT MAY BE  
BREWING IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE BUT RATHER THAT DIPLOMATIC  
TENSIONS MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE AS THE STATUTORY  
DATE FOR THE END OF THE BILATERAL TALKS APPROACHES. WE

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WILL HEAR MORE ABOUT THE VAKY VISIT FROM OUR ARGENTINE COLLEAGUES, AND HAVE PROMISED TO STAY IN TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT.

8. COMMENT: EMBASSY WILL GIVE FURTHER ANALYSIS TO NEWS STORIES AS THEY APPEAR REGARDING THE IAHRG VISIT. WHEN WE REFERRED TO CLARIN'S "CURIOUS" PRESENTATION IT WAS BECAUSE WE WERE STRUCK BY ITS AMBIGUITY AND MUDDLEMENT. THIS PROBABLY RESULTED FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN CLEAVAGES. THE INVESTIGATIVE LATITUDE THE COMMISSION'S CHARTER AFFORDS IT WAS DESCRIBED--WITHOUT PRECISELY STATING THAT THE ARGENTINE DOOR WOULD BE OPENED SO WIDE. WHAT MATTERS HOWEVER IS THAT THE SPLASH OF COLD WATER HAS BEEN ADMINISTERED, AND THE FACT OF THE COMMISSION'S VISIT IS BEFORE THE PUBLIC.  
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