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SUBJ: THIS IS IR
1. (U) COUNTRY: ARGENTINA
2. (U) REPORT NUMBER:
3. (L) TITLE: ARGENTINE MILITARY-POSSIBLE CHANGE IN JUNTA
MEMBERSHIP
4. (U) PROJECT NUMBER: N/A
5. (U) DATE OF INFORMATION: 790312
6. (U) DATE OF INFORMATION: 790312
7. (U) DATE AND PLACE OF ACQUISITION: 790312, BUENOS AIRES
8. (U) REFERENCES:
9. (U) ASSESSMENT:
10. (U) ORIGINATOR:
11. (U) REQUEST EVALUATION: OMIT
12. (U) PREPARING OFFICER:

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[Redacted]
14. [U] Special Instructions: Direct no scoporn and other caveats used to protect sources and to preclude release of sensitive information.

15. (U) Special Instructions: Sec. 3.3(b)(1) has related a number of indicators which he feels may be precursors for a change in junta membership due to the naming of a new Argentine navy commander in chief, admiral Lambruschini, currently the navy CINC, is reported to be still affected by the death of his daughter due to terrorist activity in 7808 (See IR).

22. (Unclassified/Unintelligible/Redacted) Details: There is an air of uncertainty in the navy staff Hq. His assertion that the CINC, adm. Lambruschini may not be totally committed to his responsibilities was linked to the death of adm. Lambruschini's daughter. At the same time, the next senior admiral in the navy, VADM Antonio Vanek (Chief of Argentine Navy Staff) is apparently not well thought of by his fellow admirals. Numerous Argentine naval officers have told that the chief of staff's mismanagement of unidentified staff functions (possibly related to personnel & retirements) were characteristics seen earlier when he was in command of operating forces.

2. (Unclassified/Unintelligible/Redacted) The Argentine navy staff has recently had several retirements that were planned but later cancelled. In December of 1978 that RADM Malugani (Austral region commander and senior naval officer on Tierra del Fuego where the Argentine marines were nearly totally deployed for expected combat) would retire; however, RADM Malugani is not apparently to remain on active duty as director of instruction (USN Chief of naval education and training equivalent). Also RADM Estevez who had been acting operations officer on the navy staff during the tense Nov-Dec 1978 time frame was mentioned as retiring but remains on active duty with exact assignment unknown. He had no logical answer for the question about why two officers with major responsibilities in the near conflict were to be retired.

VADM Ananaya, Director of naval personnel and number four in seniority, had been slated for retirement but was now to stay on active duty.
COMMANDER IN CHIEF BEFORE AND RELATES THE SAME TYPE OF MARSHALLING
OF "INTEREST GROUPS" IS GOING ON NOW. HE SUGGESTED THAT AN OFFICER
MIGHT BE CALLED FROM RETIREMENT TO ACT AS NAVY COMMANDER IN CHIEF
SHOULD ADM LAMBRUSCHINI DECIDE TO STEP DOWN AND VADM VANEK NOT BE
THE HEIR DESIGNATE ACCEPTABLE TO OTHER NAVY SENIORS.

A CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB COULD BE VADM MENDIA WHO RECENTLY (7901
ESTIMATED) RETIRED. HE IS A HIGHLY RESPECTED AND FORCEFUL OFFICER
WHO HAD BEEN SENT OUT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE INTER AMERICAN
DEFENSE BOARD AS THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION
DURING 1977 AND 1978. VADM MENDIA IS WELL THOUGHT OF BY MOST
WHO KNOW HIM--HIS FORCEFUL LEADERSHIP OF THE ARGENTINE NAVY
AND NEW APPROACH TO JUNTA MATTERS COULD BE OF INTEREST SHOULD
WINDS OF CHANGE SENSED BLOW UP TO BECOME A GALE.

MET VADM MENDIA FOR THE FIRST TIME ON 790912 AT A RECEPTION
HOSTED BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE FOR THE VISITING INTER
AMERICAN DEFENSE COLLEGE. VADM MENDIA CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION HE IS MAINTAINING AN ACTIVE INTEREST
IN ARGENTINE NAVY AFFAIRS. HE INITIATED AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE
AMBASSADOR CASTRO ON 790315 AND HE HAD LUNCH DATES
WITH ADM LAMBRUSCHINI 790318 AND WITH VADM VANEK 790320.

B. (U) FOR ANOTHER VIEW ON HOW THE
SELECTION OF SERVICE CHIEFS IS CURRENTLY ACCOMPLISHED, SEE
IR REINFORCEMENT OF THIS IR.

C. (U) THIS REPORT TRANSMITTED URGENT WILL CONFIRM OR REFUTE
INFO CONTAINED HERIN ASAR.

EMBASSY COORDINATED. DECL/REVW 18 MAR 1989
BY
#0064
ANNOTE
PJ 117