

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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 Classification/Control Markings

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1. COUNTRY: ARGENTINA (AR) 2. REPORT NUMBER: (b)(3):10 USC 424

3. TITLE: (U) POLITICAL, MILITARY AFFAIRS-ARGENTINE MILITARY LEADERS, HUMAN RIGHTS TRENDS 4. PROJECT NUMBER: N/A

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15. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
~~NOFORN TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO HOST GOVERNMENT~~

D I R C YES NO

16. SUMMARY:
 (U) This report forwards Amembassy telegram 9276 concerning trends in human rights, military leadership and the terrorist attack on Treasury Secretary Alemann.

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20. ENCLOSURES
 1 Enclosure
 A. Amembassy telegram 9276, DTG 092032Z NOV 79, 1 cy, 11 pgs (c)

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21. This IR contains 1 pages.

12-21-79
5-48

TELEGRAM

INDICATE
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(b)(3):10 USC 424

FROM: AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
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INFO

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PP

TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJECT: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - NOVEMBER 2

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO:

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
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REF: BUENOS AIRES 9159

SY
CHRON

(b)(3):10 USC 424

~~(S) SUMMARY: THE CLARIFICATION OF A DISAPPEARANCE AND
INDIVIDUAL IS IN JAIL--AND AN UNSUCCESSFUL TERRORIST
ATTACK WERE THE MOST OUTSTANDING EVENTS ON THE HUMAN
RIGHTS SCENE LAST WEEK. THE FAILED EFFORT TO MURDER THE
TREASURY SECRETARY, APPARENTLY BY MONTONEROS' ARMY GEN
HARDLINERS ANOTHER ARGUMENT TO USE AGAINST THE LEADERSHIP
OF PRESIDENT VIDELA AND ARMY COMMANDER VEOLA. RETIRED
GENERAL MENENDEZ' LETTER TO FELLOW ARMY OFFICER WHICH
GIVES VOICE TO THE COMPLAINTS OF THE HARDLINE WAS
PUBLISHED IN SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS. WHILE THE SENTIMENTS~~

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DRAFTING DATE: 11/9/79
TEL. EXT.: 276
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CLEARANCES:

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Don-Dee

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~~XXXXXX~~
SY:JBLYSTONE *[Signature]*

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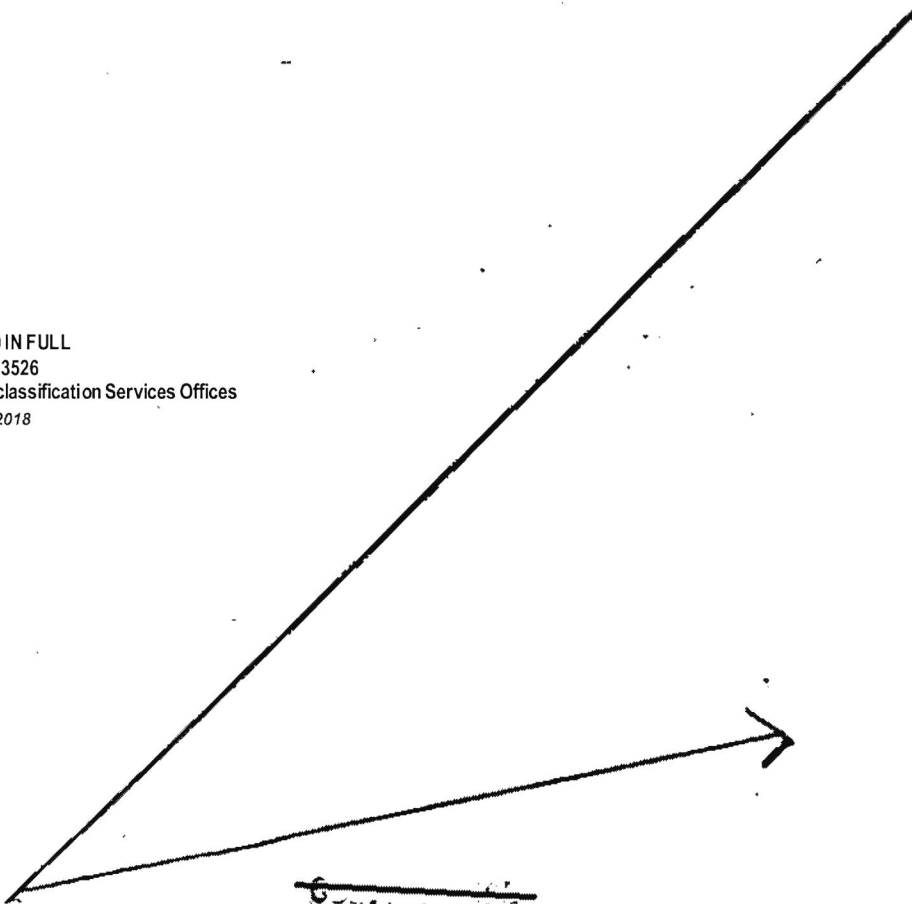
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OPTIONAL FORM 153
(Formerly FS-413)
January 1975
Dept. of State

BODY GUARD BOTH WERE WOUNDED BUT, ACCORDING TO ~~XXXXX~~
GOA PRESS RELEASES,
~~XXXXXX~~ NOT SERIOUSLY. THUS FAR, NO GROUP HAS TAKEN
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MURDER ATTEMPT, BUT IT IS
GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT IT WAS PROBABLY THE SAME OR AN
ASSOCIATED MONTONERO TEAM WHICH BOMBED THE HOUSE OF
ECONOMIC COORDINATION SECRETARY WALTER KLEIN ABOUT SIX
WEEKS AGO. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THE REACTION
TO THE TERRORIST ATTACK HAS BEEN MUTED COMPARED TO
THAT WHICH FOLLOWED THE ATTACK ON KLEIN AND HIS FAMILY.
HOWEVER, CONTINUED ACTIONS BY THE TERRORISTS CANNOT
HELP BUT STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF HARDLINERS, WHO OBJECT

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TO THE DIRECTION TAKEN BY PRESIDENT VIDELA AND ARMY
COMMANDER VIOLA.

4. ~~(C)~~ MENENDEZ LETTER PUBLISHED: THE PRESS HAS
PUBLISHED A LETTER WRITTEN BY RETIRED GENERAL LUCIANO
BENJAMIN MENENDEZ WHO IS NOW SERVING A 90-DAY SENTENCE
FOR HIS FAILED COUP ATTEMPT IN SEPTEMBER. THE LETTER
WAS ADDRESSED BY MENENDEZ TO HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES
TO EXPLAIN HIS MOTIVES AND OBJECTIVES IN SEEKING TO
OVERTHROW THE VIDELA REGIME.

MENENDEZ REPEATS HIS NOW FAMILIAR CHARGES THAT THE
VIDELA GOVERNMENT ~~WAS~~ BUCKLED TO FOREIGN PRESSURE ON
HUMAN RIGHTS (IAHRC, TIMERMAN AND CAMPORA) AND IN THE
BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE WITH CHILE. IN ADDITION, HE SAYS
THAT INSTEAD OF BRINGING A NEW DAWN FOR ARGENTINA THE
GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING TO HAND OVER THE COUNTRY TO
"THE PARTY OF FRIENDS," THE SAME LEADERS THAT HE ALLEGES
HAVE CAUSED ALL THE PROBLEMS IN THE PAST.

WE UNDERSTAND FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES THAT MENENDEZ
SENTIMENTS ARE SHARED BY MANY OFFICERS BELOW THE RANK
OF GENERAL. NEVERTHELESS, WHATEVER THEIR BELIEFS,
THESE MEN WERE NOT PREPARED TO BREAK RANKS AND FOLLOW
HIM IN SEPTEMBER AND THEY ARE LESS DISPOSED TO DO SO
NOW THAT HE IS RETIRED. HOWEVER, THE THEMES HE IS
PLAYING PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND AS THE MILITARY.

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CONTINUES TO GRIND THROUGH ITS PROMOTION LISTS,
LOOKING ULTIMATELY TO THE KEY CHANGE -- THE SUCCESSION
TO GENERAL VIOLA.

FOR HIS PART, VIOLA CONTINUES TO VOICE PUBLIC CON-
FIDENCE THAT THE LINES HE AND VIDELA HAVE TRACED WILL
BE FOLLOWED STEP BY STEP TOWARDS DEMOCRACY. AND HE
AFFIRMED TO HIS FELLOW INTER-AMERICAN CINCS WHO ARE
MEETING IN BOGOTA THIS WEEK THAT "THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS
IN THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES". MEANWHILE, A SPOKESMAN
FOR THE ARMY COMMANDER IN BUENOS AIRES SOUGHT TO REFUTE
MENENDEZ ALLEGATIONS. INTERESTINGLY, A POINT IN
DISPUTE WAS WHO COMMANDED -- AND BY EXTENSION ^{WAS} /RESPON-
SIBLE FOR -- THE ANTI-SUBVERSIVE STRUGGLE. MENENDEZ
IN AN EFFORT TO DIMINISH VIDELA AND VIOLA BEFORE THE
OFFICER CORPS, STATES THAT THE CAMPAIGN WAS CONDUCTED
BY THE "TROOP COMMANDERS" LIKE HIMSELF. VIOLA'S
SPOKESMAN QUICKLY REJOINED THAT THE CAMPAIGN WAS
ORDERED FROM THE TOP -- THAT IS BY VIDELA AND THEN
VIOLA.

FINALLY, WE NOTE THAT WHEN INTERIOR MINISTER
HARGUINDEGUY WAS ASKED BY A REPORTER WHETHER MENENDEZ
WAS BEHAVING SUBVERSIVELY, HE REPLIED "NO....ARE YOU
COMPARING HIM WITH FIRMENICH (THE MONTONERO LEADER).
I CANNOT ADMIT THAT AN ARGENTINE WOULD THINK THAT AN
ARGENTINE GENERAL IS SUBVERSIVE."

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5. ~~(c)~~ THE POPE'S WORDS ECHO; THE POPE'S REMARKS ON THE DISAPPEARED AND THE DETAINED, AND HIS CALL TO THE ARGENTINE CHURCH TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS CONTINUED TO ECHO IN THE COUNTRY. HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS HAVE PLAYED BACK THE POPE'S REMARKS TO ENCOURAGE THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHURCH TO MOVE IN THE DIRECTION THE POPE INDICATED. ON THE OTHER HAND, MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ARGENTINE HIERARCHY HAVE SOUGHT TO FUZZ UP THE PICTURE, WHILE SOME OF THEIR MORE CONSERVATIVE ALLIES HAVE BEGUN TO REFUTE THE POPE.

INTERIOR MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE COULD NOT COMMENT ON THE POPE'S REMARKS BECAUSE HE DID NOT KNOW IF THE PRESS REPORTS WERE AN ACCURATE RENDITION OF WHAT THE POPE HAD SAID (HARGUINDEGUY ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT SAID HE HAD ASKED THE CHURCH TO "RATIFY OR RECTIFY THE QUOTE REPORTS," A/XXXXXXXX THAT HAS NOW EMBARRASSED HIM AND CAUSED HIS MINISTRY TO ISSUE A DENIAL). SINCE GENERAL HARGUINDEGUY'S MINISTRY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING THE ACTIONS THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED IF THE GOA WERE TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE POPE'S CALL HIS TREATMENT OF THE POPE'S WORDS IS HARDLY ENCOURAGING.

NEITHER ARE REMARKS BY TWO ARGENTINE BISHOPS

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WHO HAVE RETURNED FROM ROME. THEY BOTH SOUGHT TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF WHAT THE POPE HAD SAID ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS.

FINALLY, THE RIGHTIST NEWSPAPER, ~~LA~~ ^{IA} ~~LA~~ NUEVA PROVINCIA, HAS EXPRESSED ITS "PAINFUL AND DISAGREEABLE SURPRISE" AT THE POPE'S REMARKS WHICH IT SAID ARE "UNACCEPTABLE" AND ILL-FOUNDED. THE PAPER, WHICH ALL BUT ACCUSED THE POPE OF FALLING INTO A TRAP SET BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM, ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER JOHN PAUL II NOW CAN BE A MEDIATOR IN THE BEAGLE DISPUTE WITH CHILE.

IN SHORT, THE POPE'S WORDS HAVE NOT YET MOVED THE CONSERVATIVES OF THIS COUNTRY. AND THOUGH, SOME SOURCES EXPRESS A BELIEF THAT AN IMPORTANT STRUGGLE IS SHAPING UP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE GOVERNMENT, THUS FAR THE MAJOR ~~SPOKESMEN~~ ^{spokesmen} FOR THE CHURCH HERE SEEM TO BE RALLYING AROUND THE GOVERNMENT, TAKING REFUGE IN THE NATIONALISM THAT MARKS THIS COUNTRY. EVEN THE ARREST OF CHURCH-BACKED DEMONSTRATORS PROTESTING BUENOS AIRES URBAN RENEWAL PRACTICES, HAS PROBABLY NOT CAUSED ANY LASTING DAMAGE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE GOA.

THE BISHOP OF NEUQUEN, JAIME ~~NEVARES~~ ^{Nevares}, HAS BEEN ONE EXCEPTION TO THE HIERARCHY'S COOLNESS TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. ONE HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT ~~NEVARES~~ ^{Nevares} BRIEFED THE POPE ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ARGENTINA AND EFFECTIVELY RECRUITED HIM TO THE

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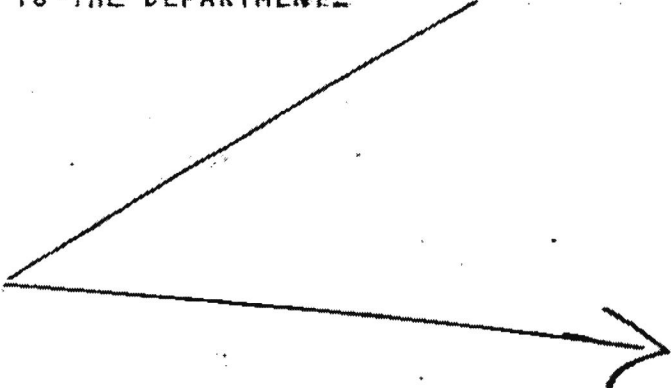
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CAUSE. ONE REPORT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THE GOA PROMISED THE VATICAN LAST MONTH TO TAKE STEPS TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION OF THE DISAPPEARED, TO DECLARE THERE ARE NO UNACKNOWLEDGED PRISONS AND TO TRY THOSE UNDER PEN. THE POPE'S REMARKS IN ROME ARE TAKEN BY SOME AS AN INDICATION OF IMPATIENCE WITH THE GOA'S FAILURE TO FOLLOW THROUGH.

6. ~~(C)~~ A NEW DENUNCIATION OF THE GOA: WE HAVE NOW SEEN A COPY OF A LENGTHY DOCUMENT RELEASED BY THREE CONFESSED MONTONERO WOMEN IN PARIS LAST MONTH. THE WOMEN STATE THAT THEY WERE HELD ^{ABOUT} FOR 18 MONTHS ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ AT THE NAVY MECHANIC'S SCHOOL IN BUENOS AIRES WHICH WAS A MAJOR DETENTION AND INTERROGATION CENTER. THEY STATE THAT PRIOR TO THEIR RELEASE IN LATE 1978 AND EARLY 1979 ~~THEY~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ WERE MEMBERS OF A SPECIAL GROUP OF TRUSTEES RECRUITED TO WORK FOR THE NAVY IN GENERAL AND ~~THE~~ NAVY CHIEF ADMIRAL MASSERA IN PARTICULAR. THE REPORT IS CHOCK FULL OF INFORMATION AND ALLEGATIONS. MUCH OF WHAT THE WOMEN SAY WE HAVE HEARD BEFORE, BUT IN FAR LESS DETAIL. THE REPORT'S NEW DEPARTURE IS ITS EXTENSIVE LISTING -- FREQUENTLY BY NAME AND RANK -- OF THOSE WHO WERE/PART OF THE SCHOOL'S/OPERATIONAL ^{ALLEGEDLY} ^{COMMAND} AND INTERROGATION TEAMS. THE REPORT HAS CIRCULATED WIDELY IN EUROPE AND BEEN PICKED UP BY PAPERS THERE BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO MORE THAN A FEW AND INDIRECT

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REFERENCES TO IT IN THE BUENOS AIRES PRESS. ADMIRAL MASSERA, CURRENTLY ON A TRIP TO EUROPE, HAS BEEN EMBARRASSED BY ITS ALLEGATIONS. THOUGH THE DOCUMENT IS CLEARLY INTENDED FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES, WE FIND THAT MUCH OF WHAT IT SAYS FITS WITH PREVIOUS FRAGMENTARY REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THE FACTS OF THE SCHOOL ARE SO SHOCKING THAT THE THREE AUTHORS DID NOT ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{seem to} INDULGE IN IMAGINATIVE ACCOUNTS. ~~TO WHICH DEVS. X VSSIX~~ ^{Also chilling} ~~HORRIFYING ACCOUNTS. PHENIXING X~~ IS THAT THE WOMEN WHO WROTE THE REPORT ~~AND~~ BELONG TO AN ORGANIZATION THAT HELPED DRAG ARGENTINA INTO THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE ^{they report. Yet they} THAT LED TO THE ATROCITIES ~~XXXXXX~~ ARE ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ABSOLUTELY UNREPENANT AND, IT WOULD SEEM, ANXIOUS TO GET ON WITH THE WAR THEY WERE FORCED TO ABANDON WHEN THEY WERE ARRESTED. WE ARE POUCHING COPIES OF THIS REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT.



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7. (U) ACTIVE COURT CALENDAR: ARGENTINE COURTS HANDED DOWN A SERIES OF DECISIONS THAT BEAR ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HERE:

-- THE SUPREME COURT OVERTURNED TWO LOWER COURT DECISIONS WHICH HAD ORDERED PEN DETAINEES FREED. THE COURT'S DECISIONS APPEAR TO BE IN LINE WITH PAST PRECEDENTS IN WHICH IT HAS UPHELD THE EXECUTIVES BROAD USE OF ITS PEN POWER:

-- SEVEN PEOPLE ACCUSED OF TERRORIST ACTS IN 1975-1976 WERE GIVEN SENTENCES RANGING FROM ONE YEAR TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT BY A CORDOBA COURT. TWO OTHERS TRIED WITH THEM WERE FREED:

-- ANOTHER CORDOBA COURT ABSOLVED A CORDOBA COUPLE BOTH JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, WHO WERE ACCUSED BY LOCAL SCHOOL AUTHORITIES OF HAVING INCITED THEIR FIVE AND SEVEN YEAR OLD DAUGHTERS TO REFUSE TO SALUTE THE ARGENTINE FLAG:

-- LOWER COURTS INVOLVED IN HABEAS CORPUS PROCEEDINGS HAVE TWICE RECENTLY ORDERED THE PUBLICATION OF THE PICTURES OF THE DISAPPEARED PERSON AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR DISAPPEARANCE. THESE ORDERS ARE SOMETHING OF A DEPARTURE FROM THE PAST:

8. ~~(S)~~ DISAPPEARED LAW PROTESTED: HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS WERE TO FILE AN APPEAL TO THE COURTS NOV. 9:

ASKING THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT LAW ON PRESUMPTIVE

DEATH BE DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THE APPEAL, WE ARE TOLD, CONTAINS A BITTER AND STRONG ATTACK ON THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS AND MOTIVATIONS IN GIVING ITSELF THE AUTHORITY--ALONG WITH FAMILY MEMBERS--TO SEEK A DECLARATION OF PRESUMPTIVE DEATH FOR MISSING PERSONS, EVEN OVER THE OBJECTIONS OF FAMILY MEMBERS. THE LAWYERS WHO HELPED DRAFT THE APPEAL SPOKE TO MARIO AMADEO, THE AUTHOR OF THE LAW AND PRESENTLY THE ARGENTINE NON-GOVERNMENTAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AMADEO CONVINCED THEM THAT HE HAD NO MALIGN INTENTION IN GIVING THE GOVERNMENT A LARGE POTENTIAL ROLE IN THE DECLARATION OF PRESUMPTIVE DEATH. THEY ALSO LEARNED THAT WHEN AMADEO PRESENTED HIS LAW TO THE GOA HE INCLUDED SEVERAL OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS, ALL DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA AND ARGENTINA'S STANDING IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. NONE OF THESE WERE ACCEPTED BY THE GOA. OUR SOURCES HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS MISUSED THE NEW LAW BUT ARE FEARFUL THAT ONE DAY IT MIGHT. THEY KNOW OF A FEW CASES WHERE FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE USED THE LAW TO HAVE A DISAPPEARED PERSON DECLARED DEAD.

CASTRO 

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