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FROM

FM (b)(3):10 USC 424

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CONTROLS

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(b)(3):10 USC 424

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SERIAL: (U) IIR (b)(3):10 USC 424

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) **ARGENTINA (AR)**.

SUBJ: IIR (b)(3):10 USC 424 THE SENSATIONAL CARRASCO TRIAL
ENDS; GET READY FOR CARRASCO II (U)

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT
FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED

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- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 960201-960202.

REQS: (U) (b)(3):10 USC 424

SOURCE: A. (U) DAILY NEWSPAPER, "BUENOS HIRES
HERALD", BUENOS HIRES, ARGENTINA, 960201-960202 (U), IN
ENGLISH. INDEPENDENT-LIBERAL NEWSPAPER WHICH HAS BEEN
A FIRM DEFENDER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREQUENT CRITIC OF
THE GOVERNMENT. CONSIDERED INFLUENTIAL WITH
POLICYMAKERS, POLITICIANS, MILITARY OFFICERS AND
BUSINESSMEN.

B. (U) DAILY NEWSPAPER, "CLARIN", BUENOS HIRES
ARGENTINA, 960201, (U), IN SPANISH. INDEPENDENT-
MODERATE NEWSPAPER WITH NATIONALIST ORIENTATION WHICH
PRESENTS A WIDE RANGE OF VIEWS AND INFORMATION.
CRITICAL OF MENEM ADMINISTRATION, PARTICULARLY IN
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS. INFLUENTIAL WITH TOP
POLICYMAKERS, POLITICIANS AND CONGRESSMAN.

C. (U) DAILY NEWSPAPER, "LA NACION", BUENOS AIRES,
ARGENTINA, 960201 (U) IN SPANISH. INDEPENDENT-MODERATE
NEWSPAPER WHICH APPEALS TO THE UPPER CLASS AND

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INTELLECTUALS. TENDS TO REPORT U.S. ISSUES OBJECTIVELY. INFLUENTIAL WITH TOP POLICYMAKERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, POLITICIANS, AND THE MILITARY.

SUMMARY: (b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

2. (U) IN ADDITION TO THE FINDINGS OF GUILT FOR THE FOUR ARMY PERSONNEL, THE COURT CITED ITS NEGATIVE OPINION OF THE ARMY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE'S ACTIVITIES IN THE CASE, ALONG WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF A MILITARY JUDGE IN WHAT WAS CALLED "A PARALLEL INVESTIGATION." THE COURT FOUND THAT THIS MILITARY INVESTIGATION HAD BEEN PREJUDICIAL TO THE CASE BY CONTAMINATING EVIDENCE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN USED IN THE CIVIL TRIAL, AND IT WAS STRONGLY EMPHASIZED THAT THE CRIMES WERE THOSE WHICH ONLY CIVIL LAW WAS COMPETENT TO INVESTIGATE AND JUDGE. FURTHER, A RECOMMENDATION WAS MADE FOR THE ORIGINAL CIVIL JUDGE IN THE CASE TO OPEN AN INVESTIGATION/TRIAL INTO THE PRESUMED COVERUP ACTIVITIES OF 10 ARMY OFFICERS, INCLUDING THE COMMANDER OF THE BRIGADE TO WHICH PVT. CARRASCO WAS ASSIGNED, THE BRIGADE'S INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, THE COMMANDER OF PVT. CARRASCO'S REGIMENT AND SEVERAL OF THE OTHER REGIMENTAL OFFICERS.

3. (U) THE TRIAL, WHICH THE ARGENTINE NEWS MEDIA COVERED WITH GREAT RELISH AND SENSATIONALISM, CREATED A CONTINUING NIGHTMARE FOR THE ARMY IN TERMS OF ITS IMAGE WITH THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE. MEDIA SPECULATION OPENLY CHALLENGED THE FIGURE OF THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF,

GENERAL MARTIN ANTONIO ((BALZA)), ASKING "WHAT HE KNEW OF THE CASE AND WHEN HE KNEW IT" TYPE QUESTIONS. THE INVOLVEMENT OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS IN INVESTIGATING THE CASE FOR ARMY COMMANDERS RESULTED IN AUTOMATIC SUSPICION OF AN INSTITUTIONAL WIDE CONSPIRACY TO THWART JUSTICE AND COVER UP THE CRIME.

4. (U) ARMED FORCES SPOKESMEN WERE CLEARLY RELIEVED THAT THE TRIAL HAD COME TO AN END. MINISTER OF DEFENSE OSCAR ((CAMILION)) NOTED IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE COURT'S VERDICT AND EXPRESSED HIS OPINION THAT THE END OF THE "CASE MAY HAVE LEFT UNSATISFIED THOSE WHO WANTED TO KEEP OPEN AN AIR OF SUSPICION OF GUILT TOWARDS THE MILITARY INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR SENIOR LEADERS." MILITARY SPOKESMEN WERE ALSO QUICK TO POINT OUT THE FACT THAT THE TRIAL DEMONSTRATED THE NEW REALITY OF THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN ARGENTINE SOCIETY BY STRESSING THAT THERE HAD NOT BEEN IMPUNITY FOR THE MILITARY PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE CRIME AND THAT THE ARMY HAD COOPERATED FULLY WITH THE CIVIL INVESTIGATION. INDEED, SOME NEWS EDITORIALS ECHOED THIS FACT. (b)(3):10 USC 424

(b)(3):10 USC 424;(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

5. (U) THE IMPACT OF THE CARRASCO TRIAL ON THE ARMY AND THE ARMED FORCES IN GENERAL WAS CLEARLY NEGATIVE. ACCORDING TO A POLL TAKEN SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE TRIAL 36 PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS REPORTED A POSITIVE OPINION OF THE ARMED FORCES WHILE ONLY 24 PERCENT INDICATED THAT THEY HELD A NEGATIVE OPINION. DURING THE MOST RECENT SURVEY, WHICH WAS HELD DURING THE TRIAL, THIS RELATIVE LEVEL OF POSITIVE/NEGATIVE OPINION HAD BEEN ALMOST PERFECTLY REVERSED. THE MOST RECENT SURVEY REFLECTED PERCENTAGES OF 26 PERCENT POSITIVE, 34 PERCENT "REGULAR," 34 PERCENT NEGATIVE, AND 6 PERCENT NOT RESPONDING. CONCERNING THE SPECIFIC CASE OF THE CARRASCO TRIAL, 77 PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATED THAT THEY THOUGHT THAT THE ARMY HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY THE CASE, 15 PERCENT THOUGHT THAT IT HAD NOT, AND 8 PERCENT FAILED TO RESPOND. IN COMPARING THE RESPONSES TO POLITICAL AFFILIATION IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THESE OPINIONS CARRIED ACROSS THE BOARD AMONG THE THREE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE CAPITAL AREA, ALTHOUGH

OPINION AMONG MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING JUSTICIALISTA PARTY WAS SOMEWHAT LESS DOWNBEAT ON THE ARMED FORCES THAN WERE THE OTHER TWO PARTIES.

6. (U) IN THE SAME MANNER A PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY QUOTED IN THE MEDIA INDICATED THAT THE POPULARITY OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL BALZA, HAD ALSO DECLINED IN THE PUBLIC'S EYES. LAST JULY, PRIOR TO THE PUBLICITY GENERATED BY THE CARRASCO TRIAL AND SOON AFTER HIS WIDELY RESPECTED MEA CULPA FOR EXCESSES CARRIED OUT BY THE ARMY DURING THE ANTI-SUBVERSIVE "DIRTY WAR" OF THE 1970'S, A SURVEY INDICATED THAT 32 PERCENT OF THE PUBLIC HAD A POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE ARMY CHIEF, AND 24 PERCENT HAD A NEGATIVE IMAGE. AFTER THE PUBLICITY GIVEN THE CARRASCO TRIAL, THE MOST RECENT PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY INDICATED THAT GENERAL BALZA'S POPULARITY WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAD CHANGED, WITH 28 PERCENT REPORTING A FAVORABLE IMAGE OF THE GENERAL, 22 PERCENT A "REGULAR" IMAGE, 30 PERCENT AN UNFAVORABLE IMAGE, AND 20 PERCENT NOT RESPONDING.

COMMENTS: 1. (U) SOURCE A COMMENTS. PERHAPS THE MOST BALANCED EDITORIAL TO APPEAR IN THE NEWS MEDIA DURING THE CLOSING PART OF THE CARRASCO TRIAL INDICATED BOTH BLAME FOR ARMY TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE PAST AND PRAISE FOR THE ARMY'S PROGRESS IN RIDDING ITSELF OF OLD INSTITUTIONAL BAD HABITS. "WHILE ONLY THE RELATIVES AND LAWYERS OF THE ACCUSED WOULD AFFIRM THEIR TOTAL INNOCENCE, THERE IS A FASHIONABLE "SCAPEGOAT" THEORY WHEREBY THE REAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CARRASCO'S DEATH GOES ALL THE WAY UP TO THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND. THIS IS ON THE SAME LEVEL OF ABSURDITY AS SUSPECTING MOSSAD OF TAKING TIME OFF FROM FIGHTING TERRORISM TO SHOOT DOWN CARLOS MENEM JUNIOR'S HELICOPTER (b)(3):10 USC 424. THE PRESIDENT'S SON WAS KILLED IN A RECENT AVIATION ACCIDENT)--UNFORTUNATELY FOR CONSPIRACY THEORISTS, PETTY BRUTALITY IS INFINITELY MORE COMMON IN THE WORLD THAN FANTASTIC PLOTS. MORE VALID WOULD BE TO SEE CARRASCO AS A VICTIM OF CONSCRIPTION BUT THIS HAS ALREADY BEEN SCRAPPED. YET THE REAL QUESTION BEHIND THE CARRASCO KILLING IS THE EFFORT MADE TO PROTECT A SECOND LIEUTENANT AND TWO HUMBLE SOLDIERS--AT LEAST 10 OFFICERS HAVE BEEN IMPLICATED IN THE COVERUP....YET WHILE THIS COVERUP SUGGESTS A MISGUIDED ESPRIT DE CORPS

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IN SOME ARMY CIRCLES WHICH HAS YET TO BE WEEDED OUT,
THE NET RESULT OF THIS HISTORIC TRIAL IS PROGRESS.
THAT AN ARMY BARRACKS COULD BE OPENED UP TO JUDICIAL
SCRUTINY AND THAT THE COURT ARRIVE AT A SENTENCE IN
LESS THAN TWO YEARS ARE BOTH REMARKABLE MILESTONES IN A
COUNTRY WHERE IMPUNITY HAS REIGNED FOR FAR TOO LONG AND
WHERE BOTH THE MILITARY AND JUDICIARY HAVE BEEN ALMOST
ALIEN INSTITUTIONS."

(b)(1);(b)(3):10 USC 424;Sec. 1.4(c)

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