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SUBJ: THIS IS IR (b)(3):10 USC 424

1. COUNTRY: ARGENTINA (AR)/CHILE (CI)
2. REPORT NUMBER: (b)(3):10 USC 424
3. TITLE: BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE - ARGENTINE PRESS CHARGES
CHILEAN MEDIA IS CONDUCTING PSY OPS CAMPAIGN
4. PROJECT NUMBER: N/A
5. DATE OF INFORMATION: 790105
6. DATE OF REPORT: 790105
7. DATE AND PLACE OF ACQUISITION: 790105, BUENOS AIRES
8. REFERENCES: (b)(3):10 USC 424
9. ASSESSMENT:
10. ORIGINATOR:
11. REQUEST EVALUATION: OMIT

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14. SOURCE: MEDIA "LA OPINION" 790105
15. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: OIRC-NO
16. SUMMARY: (U) THE ARGENTINE PRESS HAS CHARGED, IN A STRONGLY CRITICAL ARTICLE, THAT CHILE IS CONDUCTING A PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARGENTINA, THROUGH ITS NATIONAL MEDIA.

22. (U) DETAILS: FOLLOWING IS A TRANSLATION OF THE 790105 "LA OPINION" TEXT: "THE CHILEAN PRESS CORPS IN GENERAL, AND "EL MERCURIO" IN PARTICULAR, IS WAGING A PSYCHOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN AIMED AT ERODING AND FRAGMENTING THE INTERNAL ARGENTINE FRONT. THE MORNING SANTIAGO NEWSPAPER RECENTLY RELEASED THIS VENOMOUS ITEM: IT SEEMS THAT IN SOUTHERN ARGENTINA, THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IS "DEMORALIZED", AND IS DISPLAYING A "CERTAIN MALAISE" DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF MILITARY FORCES IN THAT REGION. THIS IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN LACKING IN SUBSTANCE. IT REVEALS A LACK OF IMAGINATION. IT ALSO REVEALS THE UNPLEASANT SOURCE OF THE CAMPAIGN, BUT WE WILL NOT PURSUE THAT FURTHER.

2. (U) THE ARGENTINE CIVILIAN KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL WHY TROOPS ARE IN THE SOUTH: FOR THE DEFENSE OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, WHICH, IN THIS CASE, MEANS NOT PERMITTING INFRINGEMENTS ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. THIS SAME TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IS THREATENED BY EXPANSIONISM ON THE PART OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THE DAILY "EL MERCURIO" IS PUBLISHED. THAT IS, CHILE. A FEW DAYS AGO, THE CHILEAN CHANCELLOR (WHO, IF INDEED HE WORKED FOR THE CIA AS REPORTED IN THE US PRESS RECENTLY, SHOULD KNOW ALL ABOUT PSY OPS) ASSERTED THAT THE ARGENTINE PRESS WAS BEHAVING 'HYSTERICALLY.' WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HIS REACTIONS TO SOME OF THE FANTASTIC ITEMS WHICH APPEAR IN THE CHILEAN PRESS, AND WHICH ARE BROADCAST IN HIS COUNTRY.

3. (U) PSY OPS NEVER SURPASS ACTUAL EVENTS IN THEIR IMPACT. IN CERTAIN CASES--THIS NOT BEING ONE OF THEM--THEY DO SUCCEED IN FOMENTING SOME CONFUSION. BUT IN THE LONG RUN, REALITIES PREVAIL. A BASIC RULE FOR PSY OPS IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE PARTIALLY BASED ON FACT--AND NOT ON ILLUSION. FROM NORTH TO SOUTH, AS PROOF OF CIVILIAN MORALE WITH RESPECT TO THE

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PRESENCE OF MILITARY FORCES DEFENDING TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY, THE REALITIES ARE AS FOLLOWS." (ARTICLE CONTINUES BY REPORTING EVENTS IN RIO NEGRO AND IN MENDOZA WHICH DEMONSTRATE STRONG CIVILIAN COOPERATION WITH MILITARY FORCES PRESENT IN THOSE REGIONS.)

4. (U) "THESE EXAMPLES ARE BUT A FEW, BUT WHICH ARE THE BEST DEMONSTRATION OF THE STRONG WILL WHICH PREVAILS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND WHICH SERVE TO PROVE AS ABSOLUTELY FALSE THE 'NEWS' WHICH IS PUBLISHED BY 'EL MERCURIO', AS WELL AS CALLING ATTENTION TO THE INCONSISTENCY OF THE ASSERTIONS MADE BY THE CHILEAN MEDIA.

5. (U) IN ANY CASE, 'EL MERCURIO' COULD BETTER OCCUPY ITSELF WITH COVERAGE OF REAL EVENTS, SUCH AS THE MATTER OF CHILEAN SPYING IN PERU, THE BOLIVIAN CLAIM TO ACCESS TO THE PACIFIC, OR THE ORIT BLOCKADE, WHICH, OF LATE, HAS FORCED CHILE TO LITERALLY BEAT ITS HEAD AGAINST A WALL."
COMMENT: (C) A. (C) WHILE ARGENTINE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE IN THE PAST FOUR MONTHS HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE--"CLARIN" FEATURES AT LEAST THREE FULL PAGES OF BEAGLE CHANNEL RELATED NEWS ON A DAILY BASIS; "LA OPINION", "LA PRENSA" AND "LA NACION" FEATURE BETWEEN FIVE AND TEN BEAGLE CHANNEL RELATED ARTICLE PER DAY--RO WOULD NOT CHARACTERIZE ITS REPORTING AS "HYSTERICAL," GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE DISPUTE, AND THE FACT THAT IT HAS GONE UNRESOLVED FOR OVER A CENTURY. HOWEVER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LA OPINION, WHICH FEATURE ANALYTICAL REPORTING, MUCH OF THE REPORTING IN THE ARGENTINE PRESS HAS CONSISTED OF THE PUBLICATION OF STATEMENTS MADE BY ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT LEADERS OR SPOKESMEN IN RESPONSE TO THE LATEST TURN OF EVENTS. THESE STATEMENTS ARE USUALLY HIGHLY EMOTIONAL IN TONE, AND ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, SHORT ON SUBSTANCE.

8. (C) PURSUANT TO THE USE OF THE MEDIA IN PSY OPS CAMPAIGNS IN ARGENTINA, A VIVID EXAMPLE OF THIS IS THE GENEROUS ACCESSIBILITY GIVEN THE NATIONAL MEDIA WHEN THE ARMED SERVICES CONDUCT MILITARY EXERCISES, WHICH WERE WIDELY PUBLICIZED IN THE PROVINCIAL PRESS, AND COVERED BRIEFLY IN BUENOS AIRES NEWSPAPERS

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

PRESS MAY HAVE COOPERATED WITH THE ARMED FORCES.

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