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ACTION

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~~NOFORN~~

(b)(3):10 USC 424

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

(b)(3):10 USC 424

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

156

1. (U) COUNTRY: ARGENTINA (AR)/CHILE (CI)

2. (U) REPORT NUMBER: (b)(3):10 USC 424

3. (U) BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE-GOA SCALES DOWN AND REACTIONS
WITHIN ARMED FORCES TO CHILEAN/ARGENTINE AGREEMENT

4. (U) PROJECT NUMBER: N/A

5. (U) DATE OF INFORMATION: 790109

6. (U) DATE OF REPORT: 790111

7. (U) DATE AND PLACE OF ACQUISITION: 790109, BUENOS AIRES

8. (U) REFERENCES: (b)(3):10 USC 424 /CONTINUES

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9. (U) ASSESSMENT: (b)(3):10 USC 424
10. (U) ORIGINATOR:
11. (U) REQUEST EVALUATION: OMIT
12. (U) PREPARING OFFICER: (b)(3):10 USC 424

AIRA

13. (U) APPROVING AUTHORITY: (b)(3):10 USC 424

(b)(3):10 USC 424

14. (U) (b)(3):10 USC 424

15. (U) SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: DIRO-NO NOFORN (b)(3):10 USC 424
(b)(3):10 USC 424

16. (C/NOFORN) SUMMARY: BUENOS AIRES, INDEED ARGENTINA AS A WHOLE, WHICH UNTIL RECENTLY WAS BRACING ITSELF TO A "WINDS OF WAR" SOLUTION TO ITS DISPUTE WITH CHILE, IS NOW "BREATHING EASY" AS CONSEQUENCE OF PAPAL ENVOY SAMORE'S HAVING BROUGHT ABOUT MONTEVIDEO AGREEMENT. TOUGH MILITARY LEADERSHIP REPORTEDLY HAS CONSENTED TO GO ALONG FOR NOW WITH THE AGREEMENT. MID RANKING OFFICERS' RESTLESSNESS CONCERNS THE GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH GDA BELIEVES THAT FOR THE MOMENT THAT MILITARY SEGMENT CAN ALSO BE CONTROLLED. FINAL OUTCOME OF BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE WILL START TO DEVELOP IN A TWO TO THREE MONTHS TIME FRAME AS NEW INFORMATION ON LEADING ACTORS' ABILITY OR INABILITY TO COMPROMISE SURFACES. A TURN FOR THE WORSE IN THE UPCOMING PAPAL MEDIATION COULD AGAIN SURFACE MALAISE AND IMPATIENCE IN ARGENTINE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND MIDDLE RANKS. IF SO, SITUATION MAY AGAIN BECOME CRITICAL AND, PERHAPS, UNCONTROLLABLE.
22. (C/NOFORN) DETAILS: 1. (C/NOFORN)

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4(c)

REPORTED ON

790109 THAT THE COST OF THE INTENSIVE MOBILIZATION UNDERTAKEN BY ARGENTINA IN RECENT MONTHS RE ITS BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE WITH CHILE HAD BEEN ASSESSED AT US\$2.8 BILLION.

HOWEVER, STATED THAT THE AMOUNT, ALTHOUGH HIGH, IS GREATLY LESS THAN WHAT THE COUNTRY WOULD HAVE HAD TO SUFFER IN CASUALTIES AND DESTRUCTION IF A WAR WITH CHILE WOULD HAVE RESULTED.

2. (C/NOFORN) IN FACT, (b)(1);1.4 (c) ARGENTINA ALMOST WENT TO WAR ON 791221, BUT ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS IN BEAGLE CHANNEL AREA AT THE TIME PRECLUDED THE NATION FROM UNDERTAKING MILITARY OPERATIONS. AND LUCKILY FOR ALL, THE PAPAL ENVOY'S VISIT TO THE AREA SOON AFTER THAT DATE PRECLUDED ANY MORE IMMEDIATE CONTEMPLATION BY GDA TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE BY MILITARY ACTION.

3. (C/NOFORN) STRANGELY ENOUGH, HE CONTINUED, THE ARGAF, ONE

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(b)(1);1.4
(c)

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LONG RECOGNIZED FOR EFFORTS AT MODERATION AND PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE, WAS THE ONE MOST ADAMANT IN VOICING FOR MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE NEIGHBORING STATE. ASKED BY (b)(1);1.4 (c) HOW THE HIGH RANKING MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE FIELD MIGHT TAKE THE RECENT GOA-GOC AGREEMENT TO PULL BACK FORCES AND NOT RESORT TO MILITARY ACTION, (b)(1);1.4 (c) GENERALS MENENDEZ, VAQUERO AND SUAREZ MASON (ARMY CORPS III, V AND I, RESPECTIVELY) HAD ALL BEEN INFORMED BY GOA LEADERSHIP OF AGREEMENT WITH CHILE, AND THEY ALL AGREED TO FOLLOW GOVERNMENTAL POLICY, FOR NOW, THE THREAT EXISTED, (b)(1);1.4 (c) FROM THE MIDDLE RANKING OFFICERS WHO MIGHT NOT AT ALL BE COMPATIBLE WITH AGREEMENT UNDERTAKEN. BUT, (b)(1);1.4 (c) THEY CAN FOR NOW BE CONTROLLED AND AS LONG AS ARGENTINA PREVAILS IN ESTABLISHING AND/OR WITHHOLDING ITS CLAIM IN THE CHANNEL AREA, NO DANGER COULD COME FROM THAT SEGMENT OF THE MILITARY, AS WELL AS FROM THE HIGHER RANKING ONE.

4. (S/NOFORN) (b)(1);1.4 (c) WHETHER HE VIEWED VIDELA IN A WEAK OR UNSURE POSITION WITHIN ARGENTINE LEADERSHIP, (b)(1);1.4 (c) RESPONDED THAT THE PRESIDENT, BY VIRTUE OF THE RECENT PAPAL ENVOY'S MEDIATED MONTEVIDEO AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOA AND GOC, IS NOW IN A RELATIVELY STRONGER POSITION. THE FINALITY OF ALL, HE SAID, WILL BE ONE DECIDED BY EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW CARDINAL SAMORE'S VISIT. BUT, (b)(1);1.4 (c) IN THIS COUNTRY "NO ONE CAN PREDICT EVENTS, ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN A GENERAL MIGHT STEP OUT OF BED 'CON LA PATA IZQUIERDA' (THE WRONG WAY)."

(b)(1);1.4 (c) (c) (b)(1);1.4 (c) A FEELING OF EASY BREATHING PERMEATING ARGENTINE (BUENOS AIRES) SOCIETY. NO DOUBT THE COUNTRY WAS PSYCHOLOGICALLY READY TO ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT RESORTING TO MILITARY ACTION WAS ONLY WAY OPEN FOR GOA TO SOLVE ITS DISPUTE WITH CHILE. THE THEME HERE NOW IS THAT NEGOTIATIONS TO FOLLOW THE AGREEMENT WILL BE CRUCIAL AND IN FACT WILL BE THE DECIDING FACTOR, AND A SIX TO EIGHT WEEK WAITING PERIOD IS ONE GIVEN OR TALKED ABOUT. FOR THE MOMENT, THEN, MOST EVERYONE IS SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS ACHIEVED BY CARDINAL SAMORE'S "SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY," BUT AN ATTITUDE OF "WAIT AND SEE" LINGERS HERE, AND NO ASSUMES THE SAME HOLDS TRUE FOR SANTIAGO. WITH THE REPORT THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA SEEMS TO HAVE STRENGTHENED HIS POSITION BY VIRTUE OF THE MONTEVIDEO AGREEMENT WHILE AT SAME TIME SEEMINGLY CONVINCING THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO A POSTPONEMENT OF MILITARY OPERATIONS TO ATTAIN THE NATIONAL OBJECTIVES RE THE BEAGLE CHANNEL, MOST OBSERVERS LOOK TOWARD THE MIDDLE RANKS

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TO BE THE SOURCE OF PROBLEMS TO THE GOA HIERARCHY. THE YOUNG
ONES WERE PRIMED AND EAGER TO "GO AND SHOW." CAN THEY
BE CONTAINED? SEEMS TO BE THE QUESTION. (b)(1);1.4 (c) THAT
YES, BUT--LIKE THE GENERALS--FOR ONLY A WHILE. FUTURE PHASES
IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL NO
DOUBT BRING TO LIGHT HOW DEEP OR INSURMOUNTABLE THEIR
PROBLEMS ARE. INABILITY TO FIND "JUST SOLUTIONS" MIGHT IN
THE NEXT TWO TO THREE MONTHS TIME FRAME SURFACE IMPATIENCE
BY THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND THE MIDDLE RANKS. IF SO, (b)(1);1.4 (c)
(b)(1);1.4 (c) THEY COULD THEN BE CONTROLLED, AND THE SITUATION MAY
AGAIN BECOME CRITICAL.

THIS MSG AMEMBASSY COORDINATED. DECL 11 JAN 2000

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