

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1979BUENOS00577

Page: 1
Channel: n/a

<<<<.>>>>

[REDACTED]

N043
R

PAGE 01 BUENOS 00577 211314Z
ACTION ARA-15

1/19/79

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 OCS-06 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
L-03 CA-01 /041 W
-----022371 211659Z /43

R 192057Z JAN 79
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9169
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
 Release Excise Deny

Exemption(s):
Declassify: In Part In Full **Decontrol**
 Classify as Extend as Downgrade to
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 0577

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJECT: (U) JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN ARGENTINA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 461 (NOTAL)

1. AMBASSADOR CASTRO MET WITH MR. MILTON G. HENSCHEL, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA, AND MR. CHARLES EISENHOWER, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARGENTINE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CHURCH ON JANUARY 17TH. MR. HENSCHEL, WHO IS VISITING THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' CHURCHES IN LATIN AMERICA, EXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING THE REPRESSIVE MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST THE WITNESSES BY THE PRESENT ARGENTINE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. MESSRS. HENSCHEL AND EISENHOWER DETAILED THE LEGAL AND POLICE HARRASSMENT WHICH HAS BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST MEMBERS OF THEIR CHURCH IN ARGENTINA DURING THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS.

2. AMBASSADOR CASTRO RELATED HIS RECENT DEMARCHE TO ARGENTINE ARMY CINC VIOLA ON THE TREATMENT OF THE WITNESSES (REFTEL). THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT THE POLITICAL WEAKNESS OF THE

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PAGE 02 BUENOS 00577 211314Z

PRESENT GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS OPPOSED BY A NUMBER OF WELL-PLACED HARDLINE ARMY GENERALS, MADE ANY SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENT OF THE TREATMENT OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DIFFICULT.

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1979BUENOS00577

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

HOWEVER, THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT THE PROBLEMS FACING THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN ARGENTINA COULD BE AMELIORATED IF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL LEADERSHIP COULD GAIN EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY. THE AMBASSADOR REPORTED THAT BOTH PRESIDENT VIDELA AND GENERAL VIOLA WERE PERSONALLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE WITNESSES AS INDIVIDUALS, AND THAT IN THIS ATTITUDE LAY PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

3. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT HE WOULD TRY TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN MR. EISENHOWER AND NEW MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AND WORSHIP CARLOS WASHINGTON PASTOR, TO ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE WITNESSES AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

4. MR. HENSCHEL THANKED THE AMBASSADOR FOR HIS INTEREST AND EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN ARGENTINA.

5. DURING THE CONVERSATION, MR. EISENHOWER REPORTED THAT IN LATE DECEMBER 40 WITNESSES HAD BEEN ARRESTED. AND HELD FOR FIVE DAYS BY ARMY TROOPS IN ROQUE SAENZ PENA IN CHACO PROVINCE BEFORE BEING RELEASED. IN EARLY JANUARY 1979 A CONGREGATION OF WITNESSES WAS ARRESTED IN ENTRE RIOS AND HELD FOR TWO WEEKS BY A GENDARMERIA UNIT.
CASTRO

[REDACTED]
NNN

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED